

Transgovernance:

Sustainability governance in knowledge democracies

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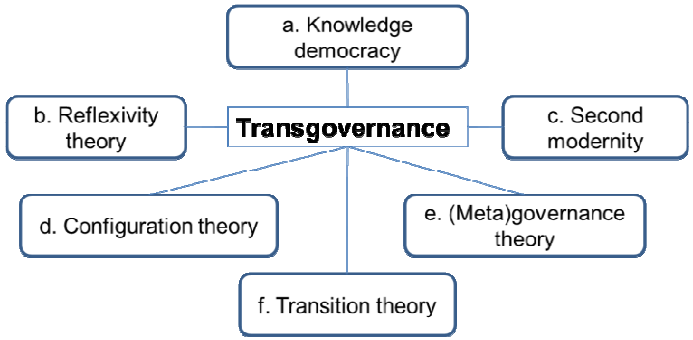
The argument

1. The existing **arrangements** for collective decisions **fail to produce sustainable policies**.

2. Social sciences provide seldom-used **criteria for improvement**, which we have put together in the ***transgovernance*** approach.



3. The **Rio 'zero draft'** (Jan. 2012) matched with these criteria, and the outcomes are **not very promising**.

RIO+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

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1. Existing sustainaibility governance arrangements fail to deliver

Common misconceptions:

1.We need centralised and legal arrangements

2.Hegemonic leadership is better than pluralism and tolerance

3.Only formal institutions are useful

4.Cultural diversity is a hindrance to sustainability

5.There is no alternative to mainstream thinking on economic growth

6.Only ‘objective’ scientific knowledge is valid

7.Public and business involvement is only a fashion.

These misconceptions share a dislike of variety and complexity -> simplification is not acceptable, so we need to accept complexity

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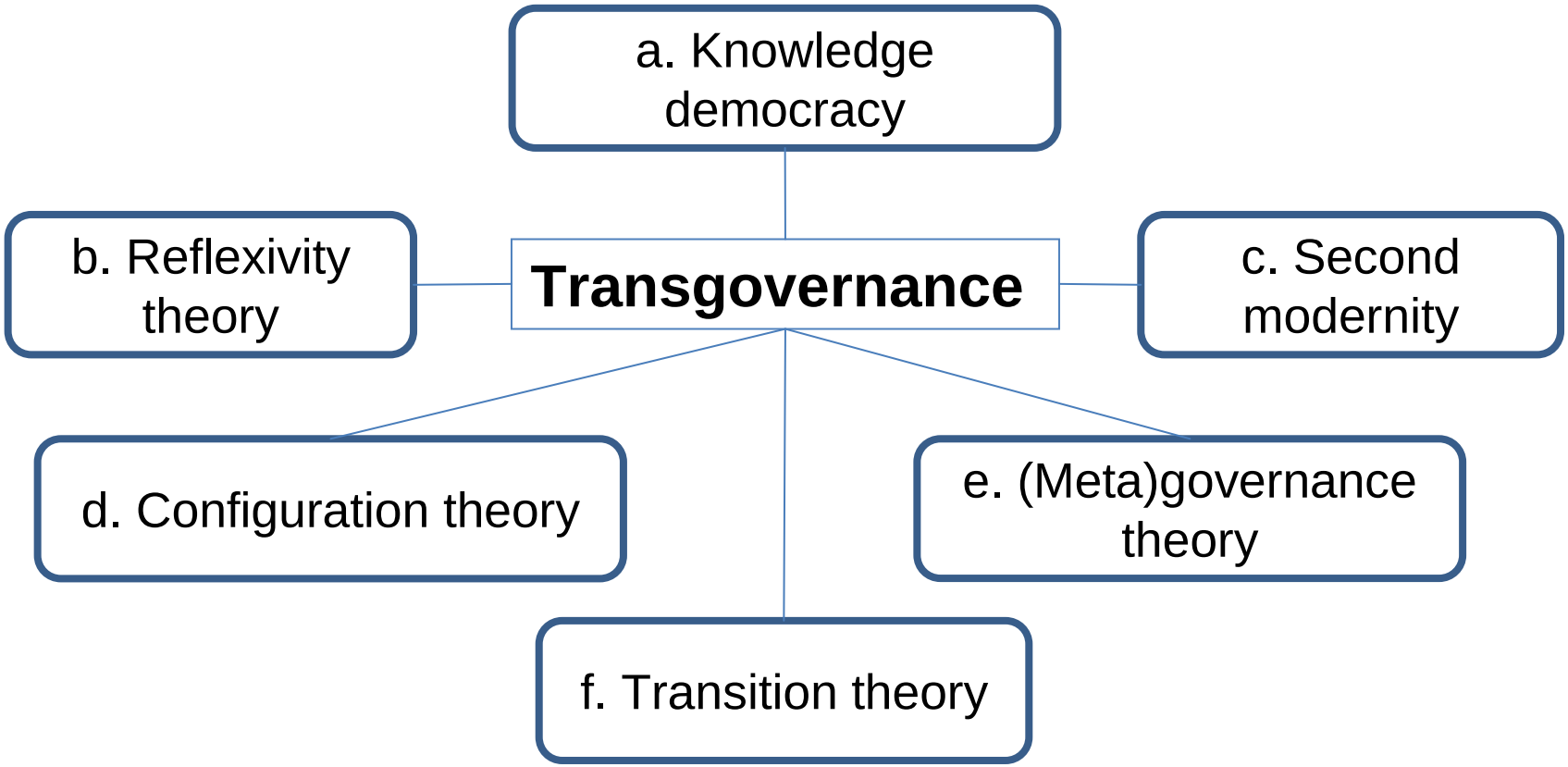
2. Criteria for improvement: The Transgovernance approach

TransGov combines 6 analytical concepts for understanding and dealing with complex issues in contempory societies



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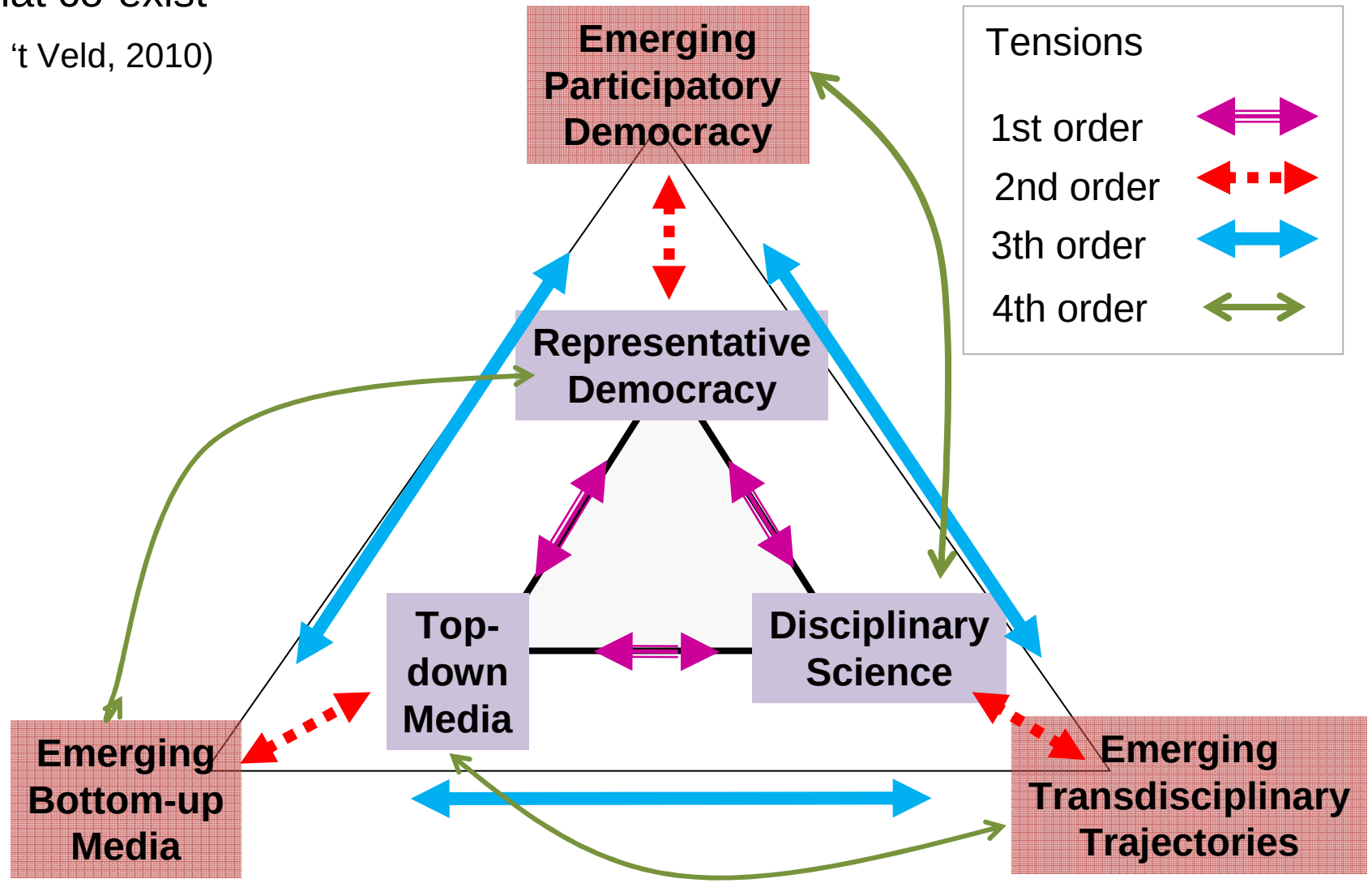
2a. Knowledge democracy: Turbulence and unpredictability

Tensions between old and new forms of politics, science and media, that co-exist

(In 't Veld, 2010)



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Three domains: science, politics and media

Powell's presentation in the UN on mass destruction weapons in Irak:

- Media: neutral transfer of informaton?
- Evidence-based policy?
- Democracy at work?

Nightmare: lies, manipulation,criminal acts

Democracy 1

- Representative democracy weakening because of fragmentation of value patterns, loss of ideologies

- (but also because of the hype dominance caused by the interaction between politics and the corporate media)

Democracy 2

- Individual treated by public bodies as institutional role player:
  - Voter
  - Client

Citizen as a creative contributor neglected

Democracy 3

- More participatory democracy necessary to overcome the weakness of representative democracy
- Participation based upon territory, function, interests, talent
- Participation in many degrees: advise, cocreation, autarchy
- Burning questions as to the relations between participatory and representative democracy

Science and society

- Humboldtian ideal of cloister science: relates to basic research
- Senseful accumulation of knowledge is the only objective
- Much production of knowledge however is related to the world

From a Democratic Perspective 1

- Knowledge production, dissemination and use have to meet certain conditions that are based on democratic values
- Legitimacy
- Pluralism
- Independence
- Credibility

From a Democratic Perspective 2

- In a wicked problem environment these criteria start to melt down because of lack of consensus

- We switch to process criteria like
- Relevance
- Participation
- Accessability
- Accountability

From a Democratic Perspective 3

- Relevance
- Participation
- Accessability
- Accountability

- These conditions can cause tensions, because people tend to regard knowledge as a power tool

Science 1

- Discipline as the main basic organisational unit of science
- Scientific knowledge immunised by methodological requests
- About the world but not connected to the world
- No real world problems bear a monodisciplinary character

Science 2

- Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary efforts cause loss of accuracy but may gain in relevance, and are less immune

- Transdisciplinarity refers to processes of a mixed nature: science and creation of an action perspective, future related

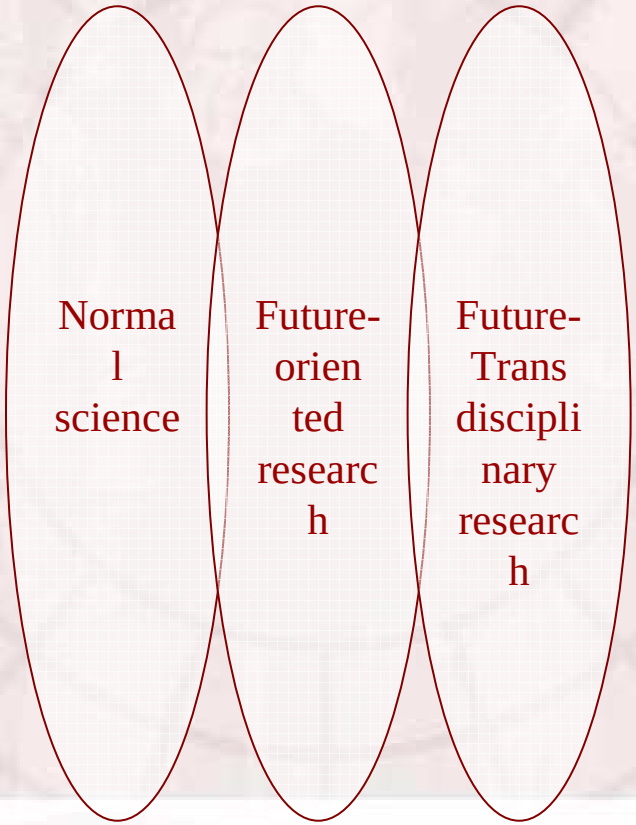
fragmented

detailled

immune

certain

Not related to real activities



holistic

raw

vulnerable

uncertain

Related to real decisions

Strategic perspectives

- Sharing of problem perceptions
- Design of integral visions by changes of perspectives – dimensions scale and time
- Connecting with logic of action (oriëntation)

Logic of action

- Connect with objectives and interests of actors
- Look for proprietors/owners of problems
- Take account of *momentum*

and of

- Receptivity of the related organisations

Logic of research

- Basic, normal: curiosity, meaningful accumulation of knowledge, no external interests relevant
- Problem- oriented: meeting with problem owners, at least interdisciplinary character of research

Today’s political agenda’s

- Wicked problems dominate
- No consensus on values, no consensus on knowledge
- Extreme complexity and uncertainty
- Authority fails systematically

Wicked problems

Values / Knowledge	consensus	dissensus
consensus	technical	Classical, political
dissensus	Scientific discourse	WICKED

Tensions

- Many conflicting truth claims, and many conflicting beliefs are simultaneously present; authority is in decay
- Therefore other policy preparing processes necessary: broad participation is a necessary but not sufficient condition
- Transdisciplinarity should be combined with participatory democracy
- Participating citizens, publics and crowds are agents of connectivity but competitors to representation

Observation

- Administrative and knowledge infrastructure are not adequately equipped to cope with knowledge democracy

Prognosis

- In overstressed democracies neither participation nor transdisciplinarity can flourish;

  alas the contrary is true for increasing populism
- This will lead to economic deprivation and as a consequence intensify tensions and stress

2b. Second modernity

(Beck, 1992,2007 and others)

- The world evoluates in multiplicity; **contradictory tendencies and institutions need each other**, therefore:
- It is impossible to design a single structure, institution or instrument that can guarantee successful roads towards sustainability
- Problem complexity requires a plurality of solutions: therefore: **co-existence ('and') is better than substitution ('or')**

  Examples of terms expressing necessary coexistence:
  - Glocalisation (= globalisation **and** localisation)
  - Fragmegration (= fragmentation **and** integration
- **A certain amount of redundancy is recommendable**

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2c. Reflexivity

(Popper, Simon, Giddons, and others)

- Reflexivity: interrelationships between cause and effect
- **Social systems are reflexive in nature**

Therefore:

- Social systems can not be forecasted
- **A high degree of uncertainty is a normal situation**

Therefore:

- **Governance should be reflexive in itself**

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2d. Configuration theory

Because governance is a relational concept, **configuration theory** is important: (e.g. Termeer, 2000)

- Organising = reflexive processes of argumentation and communication, leading to a common inside view
- Development of common sense/frame in a group => configuration
- Consensus leads to fixation, end of reflection and of learning
- Center of configuration filled with social fixation: no innovation
- People are multiple included in configurations; the marginal actor is the innovator
- **Successful steering is from within configurations (by *intra*ventions), not from outside *inter*ventions**

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2e. (Meta) Governance theory

(Meuleman 2008/2010/2012, In 't Veld 2011/2012 and others)

- **Governance** = a collection of normative insights on the organisation of influence, steering, power, and checks and balances in human societies

- Hierarchical, network and market governance mechanisms and values tend to undermine each other, but we need them all in our 'sustainability governance-toolbox'

- Therefore it is necessary to design and manage situationally successful combinations (= '**metagovernance**')

- Metagovernance cannot ignore **existing cultures (values & traditions)**
  - No 'best practices' but: 'what works where and why?' (Niestroy 2007)
  - Cultural diversity is a requisite, not a hindrance to sustainability governance (Meuleman 2012)

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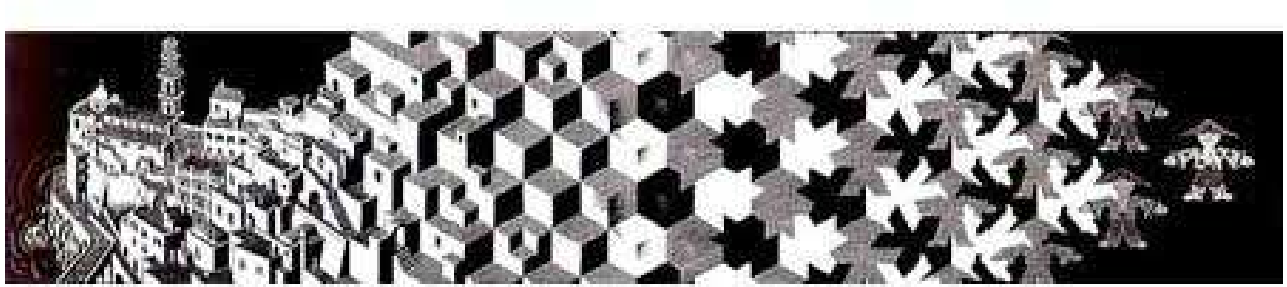
2f. Transition theory

- Understand dynamics
- Focus on fundamental change
- Transition theory: Interaction of ‘niches’, ‘landscapes’, ‘regimes’ (Grin/Rotmans/Schot 2011)
    - **Niche** development of sustainable technologies can lead to replacing dominant technologies;
    - Then a new socio-technical **regime** develops for the new technology;
    - Regimes are embedded in socio-technological **landscapes**



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Transgovernance: a new attitude

We need governance arrangements which cross traditional borders, fixations and stereotypes

Sustainability requires **transgovernance:**

- *Beyond* mainstream governance styles, towards culturally sensitive metagovernance
- *Beyond* disciplinary science, towards more transdisciplinarity
- *Beyond* borders of states /institutions, towards multi-layer approaches
- *Beyond* conventional means to measure progress, towards new and interactive means
- *Beyond* linear innovation, towards open innovation
- *Beyond* cultural integration or assimilation towards creating compatibility

INTRAVENTIONS are often more effective than INTERVENTIONS

Sustainability: multidimensional concept

Unifying and vague
3 P's essential, so beyond environment
Interdimensional trade-offs problematic
Cultural diversity equivalent to biodiversity

So uniformity of governance is a threat to cultural diversity

Cultural diversity leads to a criterion of compatibility
as a governance norm for sustainable development

Transgovernance: rather a method than a recipe

- With a transgovernance attitude, very varied, diverse solutions to sustainability challenges can be designed

- Transgovernance leadership for sustainable development is allowing/stimulating situationally excellent solutions:

  - With a view on the long term
  - Choosing/switching between ‘steering’ and ‘surfing’
  - Aiming at resilience and mindfulness instead at ‘final’ results
  - Brave and courageous, but also empathetic and listening
  - Urgent but not alarmist
  - Subtle, not bold
  - Convincing, not commanding
  - Considering variety as a treasure, not a burden

Better conditions for long-term decision making

- Distinguish between cases with long lead times, and cases demanding a continuous long-lasting series of interventions
- Prolong the life cycle of policy issues
- Recognise the limitations of decision support systems
- Further participative future orientation, design and research
- Make long-term policies resilient
- Invest in processes that reflect long-term values of citizens

Transgovernance: a new method, not a recipe

We need sustainability governance arrangements that cross traditional borders, fixations and stereotypes: Transgovernance includes:
(in 't Veld 2011, Meuleman 2012)

Beyond…..	**….towards more**
1. Disciplinary science	**Transdisciplinarity**
2. Mainstream governance	(culturally sensitive) **Metagovernance**
3. Cultural integration	**Cultural compatibility**
4. Fixed (state) borders	**Multi-layer approaches**
5. Government alone	Collaboration with **business, civil society and science**
6. Interventions	**Intraventions**
7. Conventional means to measure progress	New and **interactive me**ans

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Suggestions for action

The following 10 suggestions for action appear robust in the context of reflexivity, knowledge democracy and second modernity, and are meant to encourage creating more/other actions:

1. **Stimulate technological evolution through global networks of governments and large corporations**
   - Combines value structures of entrepreneurs with moral standards of citizens/consumers in a knowledge democracy
   - Clarifies the position of the corporate world in the global sustainability debate

2. **Organise sustainable innovations tournaments for SMEs**
   - Per sector/domain
   - Considerable prizes (offered by UN)
   - Role for existing networks of cities

Suggestions for action

3. Develop a new diplomacy for international agreements

- Complexity of solutions must match the complexity of problems
- Consider regional agreements uniting culturally relatively homogenous countries besides global ones
- International agreements should be accompanied by additional national and sub-national arrangements
- A single treaty is often inferior to a portfolio approach

4. Create conditions for more transdisciplinary science system

- Disciplinary science should be supplemented with constructions furthering transdisciplinarity
- Natural scientists should pay some attention to social sciences discourses

5. Improve checks and balances in science communication

- Intermediaries between science and politics (advisory councils, planning bureaus) can help improving communication
- Sustainability knowledge should be open source, not elitist

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Suggestions for action

6. Upgrade the relevance of city initiatives

- National governments should support cities to become more sustainable, instead of tell them what to do

7. Bring nation states in new role of process architect

- The effectiveness of global institutions is furthered by the simultaneous existence of local and regional ones
- Nation states are the natural process architects to link global and subnational arrangements

8. Work more with crowds sourcing and volatile publics

- Classical alliance-building with well-established stakeholders can be supplemented with crowd sourcing and the utilisation of event-related groups (‘publics’)

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Suggestions for action

9. Create space for new institutions

- We need new institutions for conflict resolution, e.g. truth committees
- Unsustainable institutions can be hollowed out from within (intraventions)

10. Measure progress through dialogue

- Performance indicators as well as important parameters in cost-benefit analyses should be decided upon in societal dialogues

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3. Transgovernance-proof? The Rio 'zero draft'

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
1. Transdisciplinarity	☆☆☆ . .	

Civil society should bring in their specific knowledge and practical know-how into policy-making. Create a knowledge-sharing Platform for Green Economy. More cross- and interdisciplinary approaches. Teach sustainable development at universities across all disciplines.

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
2. Metagovernance	☆	

Different styles of governance are recognised, but without a view on how to prevent different governance actions from undermining each other. No sign that failure of rigid governance approaches is understood.

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Transgovernance-proof? The Rio 'zero draft'

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
3. Cultural compatibility	☆☆☆. .	

We acknowledge the diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind and the protection of the Earth's life support system. We emphasize the importance of culture for sustainable development. There are common but differentiated responsibilities. We recognize the value of having a set of differentiated strategies, tailored to the needs of different countries and different sectors.

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
4. Multi-layer/level	☆☆. . .	

Many references to "all levels" etcetera, but no concrete suggestions how to improve the current situation

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Transgovernance-proof? The Rio 'zero draft'

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
5. Bus./civ.soc./science	☆☆☆. .	

Many references to the inclusion of business, civil society and science in SD. New is: also leadership of private sector asked and their participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships. On national level, sustainable development councils are needed with full participation of all stakeholders.

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
6. Open innov./redundancy	☆	

Shocking lack of reference to innovation, and even more to open innovation, open source science, meaning of social media etcetera!

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Transgovernance-proof? The Rio ‘zero draft’

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
7. Intraventions	. . . . .	

No reference who are good change agents, and where in organisations change is usually originating.

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	
8. Interactive monitoring	☆☆ . . .	

All stakeholders invited to measure progress on global SD goals. How?
What about measuring progress on national, local levels?

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Transgovernance-proof? The Rio 'zero draft'

Transgovernance aspect	Assessment	Possible improvements
1. Transdisciplinarity	☆☆☆ . .	▪ Promote good examples ▪ More open source science
2. Metagovernance	☆	▪ Promote good examples ▪ Prevent undermining gov.
3. Cultural compatibility	☆☆☆. .	▪ Bring cultural sciences in ▪ Balance uniform/diverse
4. Multi-layer /level	☆☆. .	▪ Also beyond governments in driver seat
5. Bus./civ.soc./science	☆☆☆. .	▪ Cultural change: not only advocacy but also action
6. Open innov./redundancy	☆	• Raise awareness on need and opportunities
7. Intraventions	. . . . .	▪ Show good and bad cases
8. Interactive monitoring	☆☆ . . .	▪ Develop mechanisms ▪ On all levels/scales

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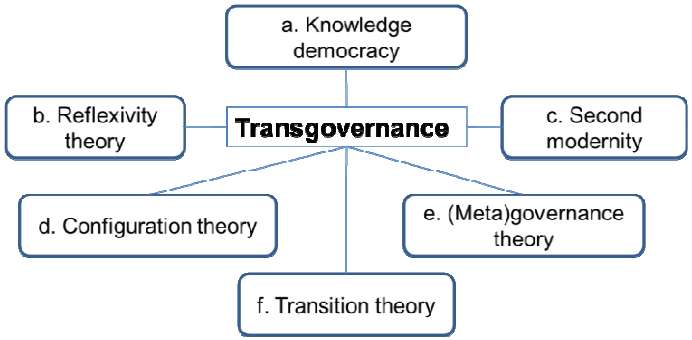
Applications of our normative concept

- How is open innovation applied?
- How is reduncancy evaluated in a positive manner?
- How much trust is invested in intraventions?
- How much interactive monitoring, in particular between levels takes place?

Recapitulation 1:

1. The existing **arrangements** for collective decisions **fail to produce sustainable policies**.

2. Social sciences provide seldom-used **criteria for improvement**, which we have put together in the ***transgovernance*** approach. En die is relevant voor eigen problematiek.



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Recapitulation 2

- We need really dynamic (meta)governance to deal with major long term wicked problems, transitions
- Able to estimate long lead times and act timely
- Able to persevere where drop-bucket effects dominate
- Dealing with knowledge democracies, reflexivity, second modernity and multi-level characteristics