META-ORGANIZING CLUSTERS AS AGENTS OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE THROUGH 'RESPONSIBLE ACTORHOOD'

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CONTEXT : SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS

Urgency of tackling climate change and socio-environmental issues

Planetary boundaries increasingly exceeded, which poses a threat on the "safe operating space" for humanity (Rockstrom et al 2009)

Need for a new "deep transition" of industries, ecosystems, modes of production and consumption, multi level transformations of niches, socio-technical regimes and institutional landscapes (transition studies, e.g. Geels 2002, Schot and Steinmueller 2018)

Transformative outcomes, innovation, policy : those that contribute to these multi-level transitions

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DESIGN OF NEW STI POLICIES FOR TRANSITION

A new frame of STI policy is needed, to sustain these transformative change, with a focus on local experimentations and deliberative governance (Köhler et al., 2019, Schot & Steinmueller, 2018)

Clusters = seen as an outdated policy instrument rather than a complementary agent to be used for transformative change in sustainability transition, that created inequalities and governance issues due to the emphasis on competitiveness (Schot & Steinmueller, 2018)

Omnipresence in the world, both emergent dynamics and results of past public policy

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OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

How to organize clusters as local agents of transformative change, i.e. players that actively contribute to systemic sustainability transitions anchored in territories ?

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META-ORGANIZATIONAL LENS ON THE DESIGN OF ECO-INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERS

Industrial ecology literature & Science and Technology Innovation policy & Geographies of regions and territories

'Responsible actorhood' of clusters is a key organizational condition for clusters to act as local agents of transformative change.

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META-ORGANIZATION

Autonomous organization made of autonomous organizations, different from network and institution, (Ahrne and Brunsson 2008) with elements of organizationality
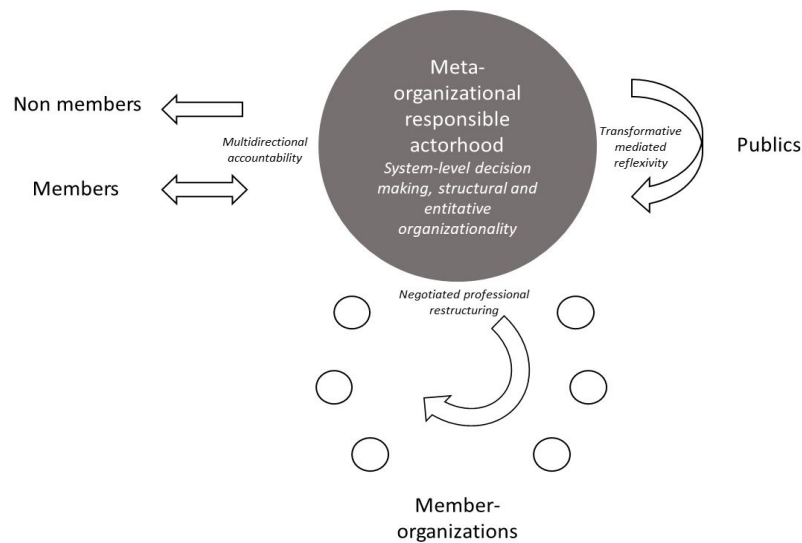
MO's nature, functioning, life cycle, differ from individual-based organizations

Tension on autonomy (Kerwer 2013), MO acts as a neutral space among members to take joint decision and build collective capabilities (Berkowitz 2018)

Can be a transformative agent, under certain conditions, which we investigate here, focusing on clusters

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ANALYSIS

Concept	Definition	Main outcome
Responsible actorhood	A system of autonomous decision making externally recognized as an actor, and which decisions highlight a care for future generations and a commitment to enacting a sustainable future	Enabling clusters and meta-organizations in general to have transformative outcomes
Multi-directional, meta-organizational accountability	Complex ties of accountability between the meta-organization and its members, and between the meta-organization, members and external publics	Addressing the answerability issue
Transformative mediated reflexivity	A continuous process mediated by the meta-organization and consisting in identifying, reflecting upon and integrating external changes as well as impacts on all publics (including nonhuman publics)	Mitigating the path dependency towards growth
Negotiated professional restructuring	A deliberative process enabling cluster's stakeholders to renew and adapt their professional and labor activities to technological or social ruptures, especially as a result of meta-organizational accountability and transformative mediated reflexivity	Transforming risks of labor resistance into labor adaptation to the new professions and sectors of the transition

TAKE AWAY AND CONTRIBUTIONS

o Achieving responsible actorhood through:

o Gaining 'multi-directional meta-organizational accountability'

o Nurturing 'transformative mediated reflexivity' about technological ruptures and ecological performance

o Developing 'negotiated professional re-structuration' to establish new knowledge processes at work

o Contributions to the literature on clusters, STI policy and Meta-organization

o Policy and practical implications for the design and (self-)steering of eco-industrial clusters

o In other settings than clusters based in developed countries

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