



RSA Research Network (2023-2026)

Past Event

Conceptualising Transformative Knowledge Regions

Workshop 26th / 27th of October 2023

Venue: Institute for Work and Technology / Hier ist nicht da, Bochumer Straße 138, 45886 Gelsenkirchen (GER)

The TRAKR network aims at exploring the shift from knowledge-intensive to “transformative-knowledge regions” to renew the understanding of knowledge as an asset in regional development in light of ongoing sustainability transitions. The network was kicked-off this year at the Regional Studies annual conference. It strives to further conceptualise sustainability transitions and innovation directionality challenges from an explicit knowledge perspective.

This workshop was the 2nd TRAKR event and addressed the following questions:

- In which ways does transformative knowledge creation connect to space? How do transformative knowledge actors connect within and across space and places?
- How should we understand a transformative knowledge ecosystem? Which configurations of regional knowledge ecosystems, including their variety of actors, learning communities and multi scalar connections, seems especially suited for realizing transitions?
- Do the knowledge ecosystems in regions with high performance in sustainability transitions have distinct transformative capacities compared to regions with lesser sustainability performance, for instance regarding involvement of citizens, households and neighbourhoods?
- Are the institutional thickness and complexity of urban areas compared to peripheral and rural areas an advantage or a weakness in terms of transformative knowledge creation and ecosystems?
- What would be a typology of varying territorial transformative knowledge ecosystems?

You can find the complete playlist of TRAKR videos [here](#).

The workshop included keynotes by leading scholars, opportunities for participants to present and discuss their ideas, interactive sessions, site visits and a social programme. You can watch the keynote recordings below:

Placing Knowledge Regions in Processes of Transformation: Initial Points, Transit Stations or Receiving Ends

Keynote speaker 1: Oliver Ibert, Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space

Oliver Ibert examines the terminology and the relational processes that are at the core of transformative knowledge. He then depicts the topological and territorial dimensions of these processes to finally conclude with what transformative knowledge regions could be.



Living labs on urban manufacturing in the Ruhr as path to a transformative knowledge region?

Keynote speaker 2: Kerstin Meyer, Institute for Work and Technology, Westphalian University of Applied Sciences

Kerstin Meyer analyses the scope and challenges of living labs in producing and disseminating transformative knowledge. Based on her experience of developing several living labs in the Ruhr, she highlights the potential of such initiatives to emerge as well as their actual limitations to consolidate for long-term action and social change.



What makes regions conducive for experimentation, contestation and deliberation in transformation?

Keynote speaker 3: Lars Coenen, Mohn Centre for Innovation and Regional Development, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Lars Coenen explores transformative knowledge regions through the notion of experimentation. He suggests 'flipping the perspective' of innovation optimism to address the questions that really matter: What's really being tested? Who and what defines success or failure? What institutional logics prevail? Who orchestrates experimental portfolios? What happens next?

