

Beyond Experiments: Embedding outcomes in climate governance

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RHUSH Seminar

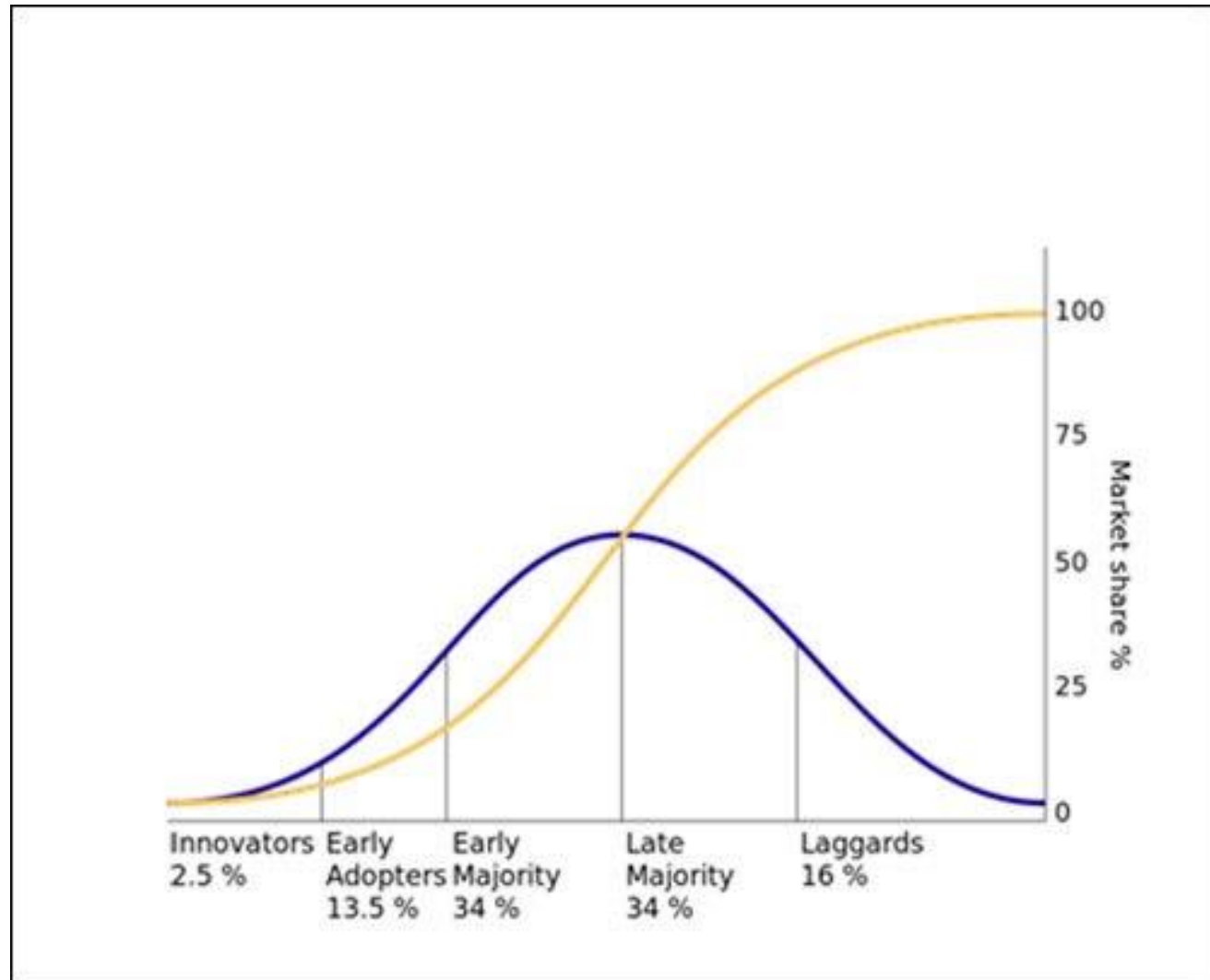
The problem

- The societal transition to Net-zero Carbon emissions will require a continuous flow of innovations which have systemic effects
- Many of these innovations will emerge from bottom-up policy and socio-technical ‘experiments’ – cities as incubators
- Experiments are small-scale initiatives, pioneering new ways of doing things
- But the processes by which outcomes of experiments expand, diffuse and ‘add up’ are under-theorised – often a notion of ‘scaling up’

Climate experiments



A standard diffusion model (Rogers, 1962)



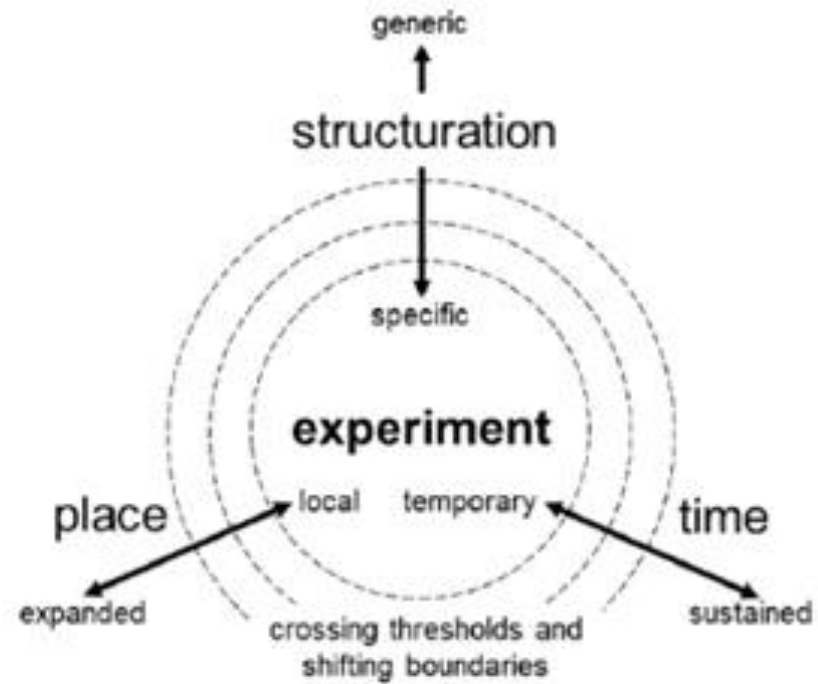
Diffusion of experiments as 'embedding'

Outputs of experiments may include:

- New ways of doing things (Schumpeter's 'neue kombinationen')
- New technologies and capabilities
- New institutions and regulations
- New coalitions of actors
- New 'imaginaries'

Diffusion or proliferation of rarely a simple process of *adoption*, but an evolutionary process of *mobilisation*, *generalisation*, *embedding* and *reconfiguration* of socio-technical systems

Conceptual territory beyond the experiment



Four 'embedding mechanisms' for experimental outcomes

	Object and kind of mobility (What becomes mobile? And how?)	Object and kind of generalization (What becomes generic? And how?)
Replication & Proliferation	Mobility of experiments across settings Mimetic process (with minimal variation)	Templates for replication Conserving process (similar units)
Expansion & Consolidation	Growth in scope (size/time/jurisdiction/publics) Broadening process (with adjustment)	Templates for scope expansion Amplifying process (broader units)
Challenging & Reframing	Mobility of experimental outcomes Extractive process (from outcomes to rules)	Normalization and depoliticization Reductive process (simplified units)
Circulation & Anchoring	Mobility of enablers (knowledge, people, ideas) Mimetic process (with minimal variation)	Extraction of situated knowledge Reductive and amplifying process

Some illustrative examples

- **Replication/Proliferation:** Cap and trade schemes (RECLAIM, LA)
- **Expansion/Consolidation:** Carsharing (Switzerland)
- **Challenging/Reframing:** Climateers (HK) and #FridaysforFuture
- **Circulation/Anchoring:** Community Choice Aggregation (Mass)