



food production are firmly embedded in society due to strong institutionalization and support from powerful actors. Despite its performance, this current agricultural and food system simultaneously results in a number of outcomes that are counterproductive to the fundamental objective: when more and more people in wealthy countries suffer from, for example, obesity and diabetes, this is largely due to dietary patterns. In addition, the dominant practices cause a number of undesirable externalities (especially in the environmental domain) that question their sustainability. Nevertheless, the current regime seems to be only to a limited extent destabilised by these pressures. Typical system properties of rigidity and inertia apply, in relation to an inherent change aversion and a strong lock-in on an (infra) structural and mental level. In addition, there are a number of ‘defense mechanisms’ the current regime employs, such as highlighting success, shifting responsibility to others, and thinking in terms of loss in the case of change. Also because the momentum to change seems insufficiently strong to date, there is no real destabilization of the dominant system. And if that system is changing, these changes are mainly of an incremental nature, mainly based on technology, and within a framework of ‘optimization’. No serious challenging of the underlying world views, objectives and visions currently takes place. The latter does occur within a number of niches (such as organic farming, short food supply chains, multifunctional agriculture) that strive for ‘upscaling’ through structural support and institutionalization. In this way, they try to move into a phase of acceleration. In the Flemish context, there is therefore a tension between these pathways of ‘transformation’ (incremental change from the regime) and ‘transition’ (scaling up of niches). However, coexistence and even mutual reinforcement seems to be a more workable and effective model than that of demolishing the old and building up something new. Therefore, an active and strong connection between the two pathways seems essential, thus creating a coherent narrative that can be a lever for acceleration dynamics. Systems with sufficient and good connections are the most effective and resilient.

The analysis of energy system in Flanders (chapter 4) describes how the energy system of today has been created by upscaling and liberalization. The energy system, primarily based on fossil and nuclear energy, is characterized by high availability, reliability and affordability of energy. At the same time, persistent problems exist - such as greenhouse gas emissions and climate change - that put pressure on the system and create a need for fundamental system transformation. Just like in other societal systems, however, there is strong resistance to change arising from existing energy infrastructures, regulations, and dominant values, norms, beliefs and daily practices. Nonetheless, the current energy transition – amongst others due to a relatively strong impetus from European and Flemish policy - has already reached a significant momentum. Various transition activities have been set in motion that can potentially change the system in a structural way. Zooming in on some alternative sustainable energy constellations, we observe that the constellation based on local energy production by consumers (‘prosumers’) has reached the stage of a niche regime. At the same time, there are constellations such as those of local energy communities (LEC’s) that are still in the niche phase, but have potential for upscaling. For each of these constellations (energy regime, prosumer niche-regime, LEC’s niche), we give examples of the types of strategies these constellations adopt. The regime, for example, besides maintaining their current position, also focuses on creating new institutions to adapt to a changing energy system. The prosumer niche-regime seems to focus on the creation of institutions across the various institutional pillars (cultural-cognitive, normative, regulatory) to facilitate further upscaling. The LEC niche seems to focus primarily on the cultural-cognitive and regulatory pillars, where the latter is crucial to facilitate experimentation in the current context. The analysis illustrated how the diagnostic procedure can be used to further explore which strategies can be deployed to facilitate the further development of constellations. For various steps of the diagnostic procedure, a number of examples are included to illustrate how the system traps described in chapter 2 play a role in the societal dynamics.



