Champions, Change Drivers, Pioneers, and Early Adopters: A Typology of Transformation Processes

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Agenda

08:45 – 08:55	**Welcome and Introduction**
08:55 – 09:15	Champions, Change Drivers, Pioneers, and Early Adopters: A Typology of Transformation Processes An Exploration of Key Actors in Organizational Change
09:15 – 09:20	Questions and Remarks
09:20 – 09:40	Collection of local Examples
09:40 – 09:55	Summing Up
09:55	Thank you and Bye

Champions, Change Drivers, Pioneers, and Early Adapters: A Typology of Transformation Processes

An Exploration of Key Actors in Organizational Change

Introduction

- Objective of the talk: Exploration of the roles of Champions, Change Drivers, Pioneers, and Early Adopters in Transformation Processes

- Background: Sustainable Innovation and Resilience: Territorial Transformation Capacity

- Key Questions:
  - How do different types of actors shape and influence transformation in organizations and societies?
  - How to they fit/support TTC

Transformation Processes (I)

- A set of processes of significant, fundamental changes in an organization, community, or system

- Dimensions of change: Society, economy, environment, politics, culture, education, and science

- Complex and difficult-to-understand processes:
  - Parallel and opposing objectives,
  - Synchronous and asynchronous speeds,
  - Diachronic and multi-scalar spatial manifestations,
  - Thematic diversity
  - Interrelations in causal structures and effects

- System/subsystem relationship:
  - Socio-technical
  - Socio-ecological
  - Ecological

- VUCA world: Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity

Transformation Processes (II)

- Disruptive Transformations (radical changes):
  - 20–30 % of all organisational transformations
  - Ca. 30 % successful

- Incremental Transformation (gradual, step-by-step changes)
  - 70–80 % of all organisational transformations
  - 60-70 % success rate

- Linear (predictable, structured) vs. Non-linear (complex, emergent, unpredictable):
  - Linear transformations: Short time scale of 3 – 5 years
  - Non-linear/complex transformations: around 10 years

Key issues in transformation processes

Factors

- Internal Factors: Organizational culture, leadership, structure.

- External Factors: Market forces, societal trends, regulations.

- Barriers: Resistance to change, resource constraints, lack of knowledge.

- Enablers: Strong leadership, clear vision, effective communication.

Challenges

- Resistance to Change: How different actors encounter and manage resistance.

- Sustaining Momentum: Keeping the energy and support for change over time.

- Balancing Innovation and Stability: Managing the tension between keeping things stable and pushing for change.

Overview of Key Actors in Transformation

- Champions: Visionary leaders who advocate for change and mobilize support.

- Change Drivers: Actively push and lead the change process, often with significant organizational authority.

- Pioneers: Individuals who experiment with new ideas and practices in early stages.

- Early Adopters: Influential individuals who embrace change early and encourage others to follow.

Detail: Champions

- Role: Creation of **<u>momentum</u>** for change (vision, energy, persistance)

- Key factor in initial phase of change

- Few inspiring people might influence many others

- Social position with high impact

- Charismatic personalities (Steve Jobs)

Detail: Change Drivers

- Individuals or groups that actively influence the **direction of change** within an organization.

- Strong proactive commitment to change

- Source of inspiration

- Focus on overcoming resistance and creating structures for change

- (smaller focus on the content of change)

Detail: Pioneers

- Individuals who **test** new ideas or technologies at the early stages

- Risk-taking

- Open to experiments and loops of refinements

- Feed-back culture

- Used to uncertain conditions

- Start-ups or small enterprises

- Unlikely in large and public organisations

Detail: Early Adopters

- Early users of a new innovation who support diffusion processes

- High visibility in social media

- High influence as opinion leaders (social media)

- Early adoption a business model

- Less risk taking as failure might affect business model
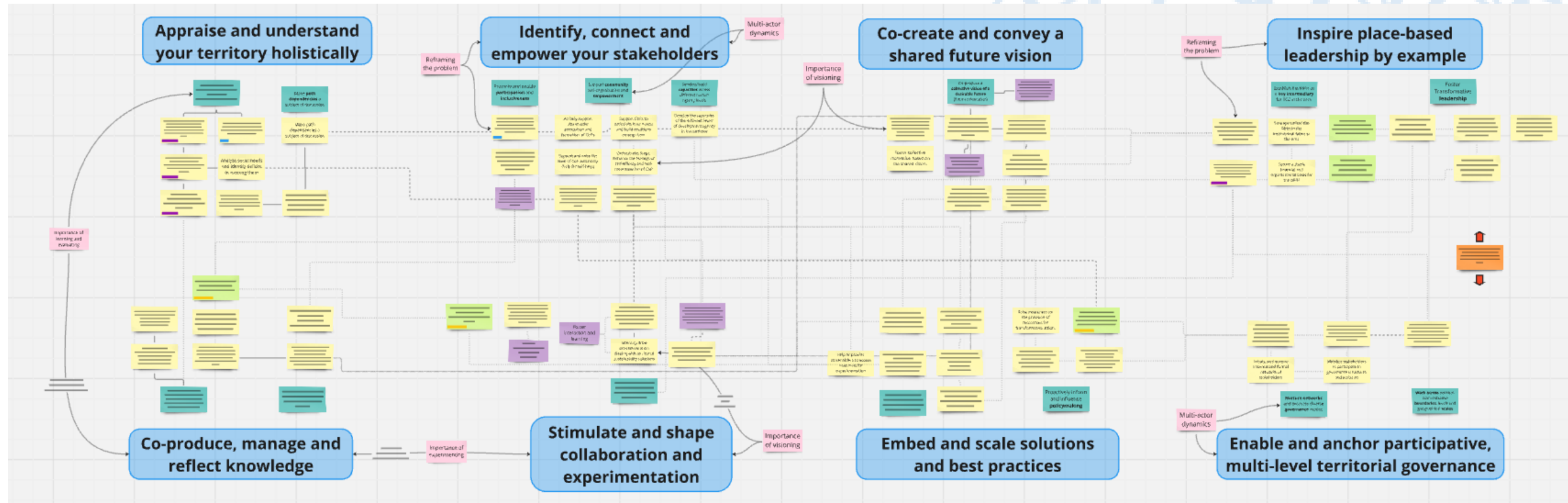
Challenge: Combining Actors and Processes

Disruptive Change

- Champions initiate

- Pioneers test

- Early Adopters follow

Incremental change

- Change drivers lead
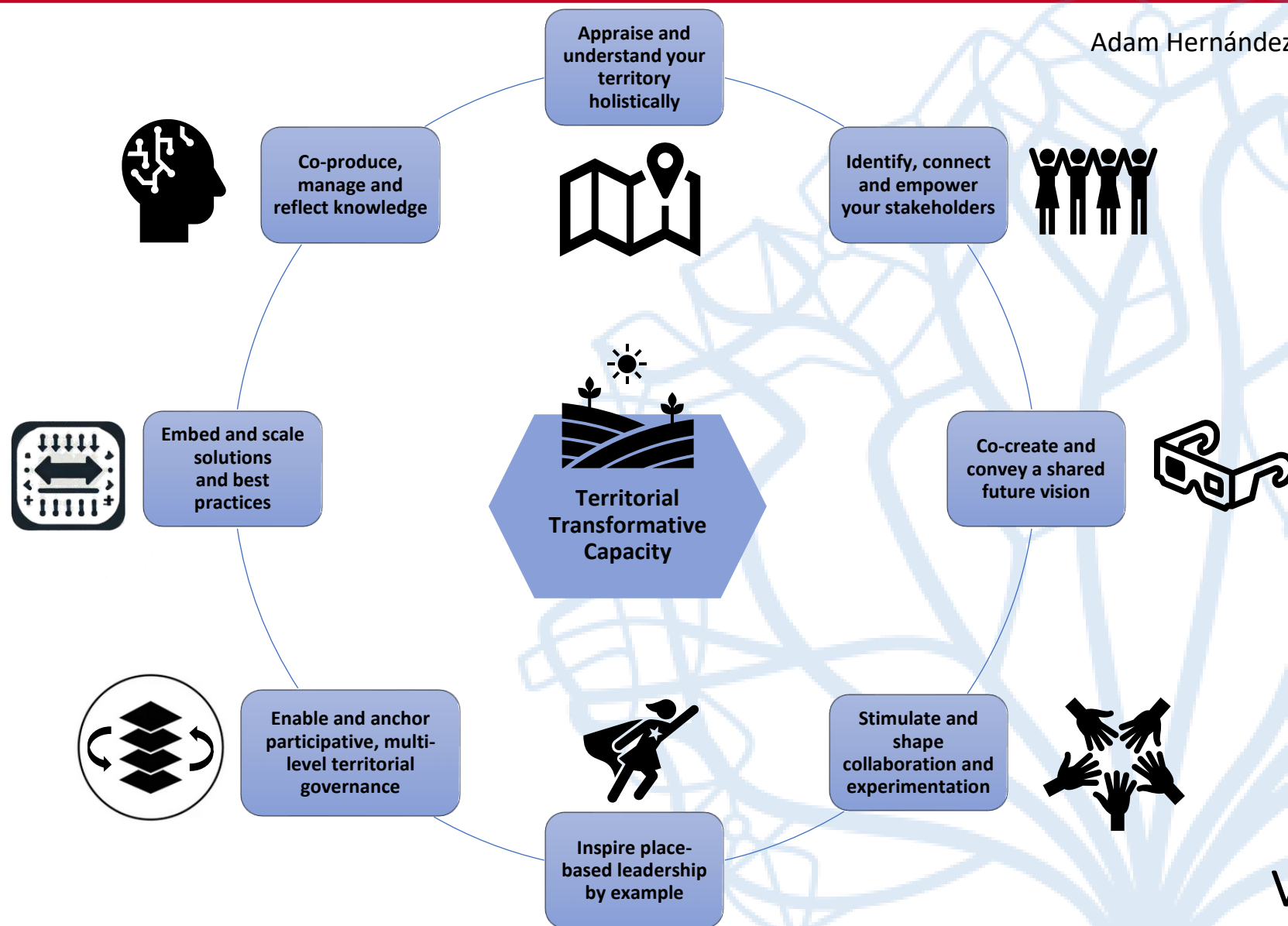
- Champions guide

- Early Adopters follow slowly

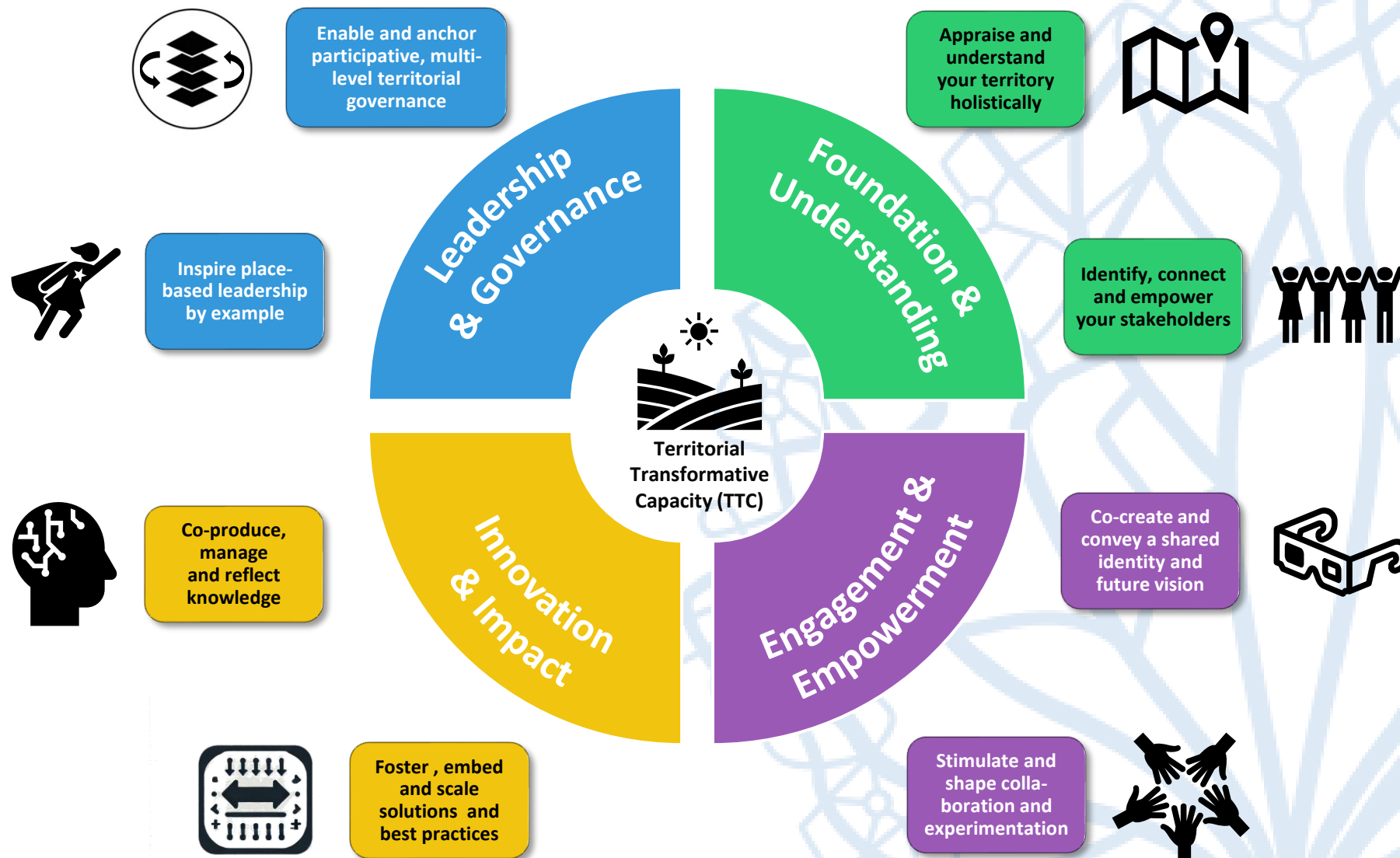# Territorial Transformative Capacity

A draft analytical framework for TTC in SIRR

8 framework dimensions

Adam Hernández (2025)

- Appraise and understand your territory holistically
- Identify, connect and empower your stakeholders
- Co-create and convey a shared future vision
- Stimulate and shape collaboration and experimentation
- Inspire place-based leadership by example
- Enable and anchor participative, multi-level territorial governance
- Embed and scale solutions and best practices
- Co-produce, manage and reflect knowledge

Territorial Transformative Capacity

Version 1.0

A draft analytical framework for TTC

Version 2.0

Where to focus on Champions, change drivers, etc.?

🔵 **Layer:**   Leadership & Governance

🌀 **Dimension:**   **Inspire place-based leadership by example**

🌟 **Key Message:** "Lead by enabling —model collaborative leadership and cultivate/support local changemakers to drive transformation."

🏛️ **Builds on:** Emerges from shared vision (Dim 3) and stakeholder empowerment and collaboration (Dim 2 and 4)

💪 **Enables:**   Participative, multi-level territorial governance (Dim 8)

Conclusion

- Identify the role of people in the hub and the transformation process

- Identify the role of internal or external factors of change

- Differentiate the change process (complexity, speed, balance of persistance or change)

- Analyse the whole system to understand the Territorial Transformative Capacity

Sharing of Experience

Which were the main innovations in your area in the last 10 years?

Who were Champions, Change Drivers, Pioneers, and Early Adapters and how would you characterise them?

Which support do you offer to Champions, Change Drivers, Pioneers, and Early Adopters

In the context of innovation diffusion, would you support a Top-Down or a Bottom-Up-Approach? Or any other?

Summing up

What have we learned?

Thank you very much!