

Tipping Point:

Adaptation and Transformation



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Tipping Point: Adaptation and Transformation

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- What is transformation?
- Why care about transformation?
- An evolving understanding of adaptation and transformation
- Conclusions: considerations for research and practice

What is Transformation?

“Transformation is the deepest form of adaptation indicated by reform in overarching political-economy regimes and associated cultural discourses on development, security and risk” (Pelling, 2011: 50)

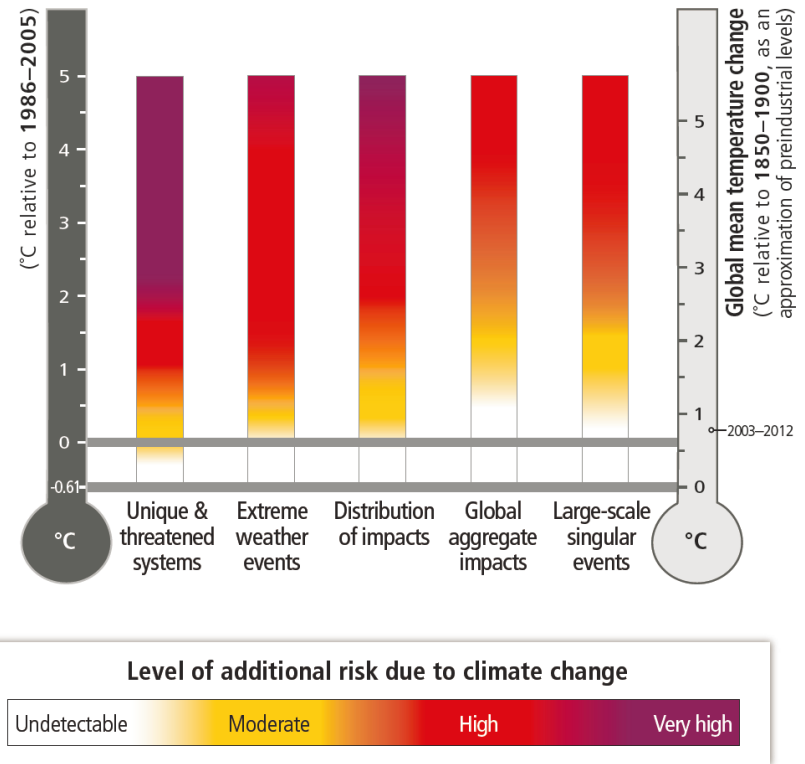
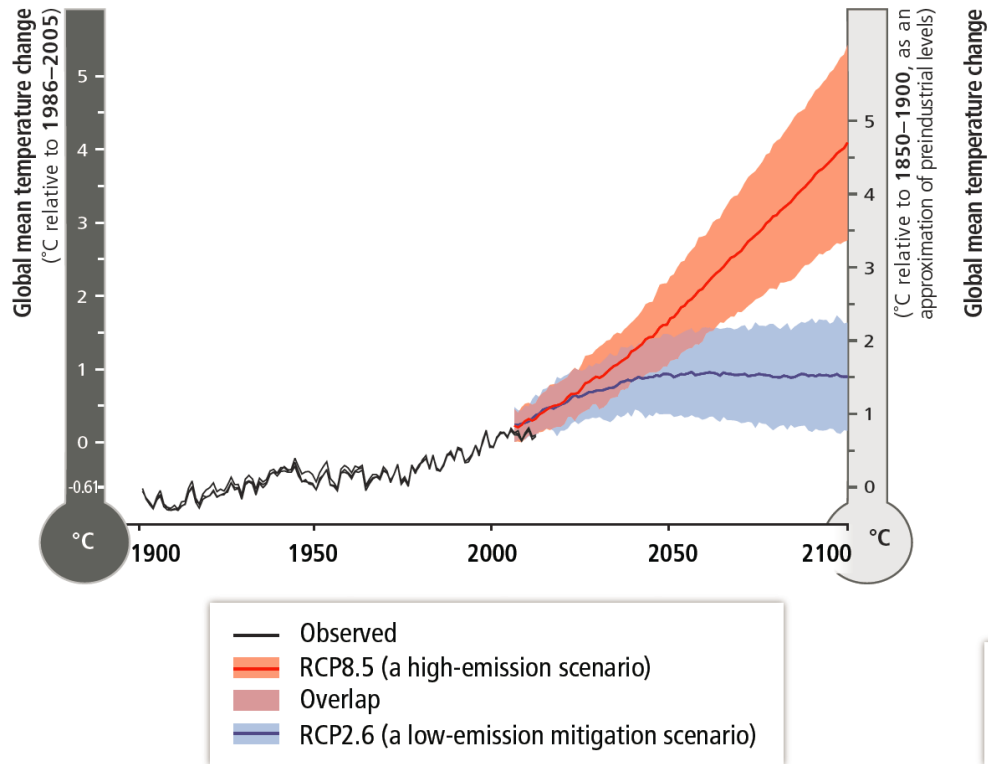
“The altering of fundamental attributes of a system (including value systems; regulatory, legislative, or bureaucratic regimes; financial institutions; and technological or biological systems)” (IPCC, 2012: 564).

“Fundamental change in the functioning of a system” (Matyas D and Pelling M (2014) Positioning Resilience for 2015: An Elaboration of Resistance, Incremental Adjustment and Transformation in the DRM Policy Landscape *Disasters*)

Why care about transformation?

IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (2014)

Projected risk.....will transform us




IPCC (2014) Fifth Assessment Report, Working Group II, Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability
<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Why care about transformation?

Unsustainable development:

- Growing populations
- Accelerating consumption
- Increasing inequality

An aerial photograph showing a severe urban crisis. A large bridge is completely clogged with a massive traffic jam, with hundreds of cars and trucks packed closely together. The surrounding city is in a state of flooding, with murky brown water covering streets and low-lying areas. In the foreground, a blue pedestrian bridge is visible. The background shows dense urban development with various buildings and structures. The overall scene depicts a major disaster or the consequences of unsustainable urban development.

Political demands and responses
Cascading risks
Teleconnected risks and responsibilities

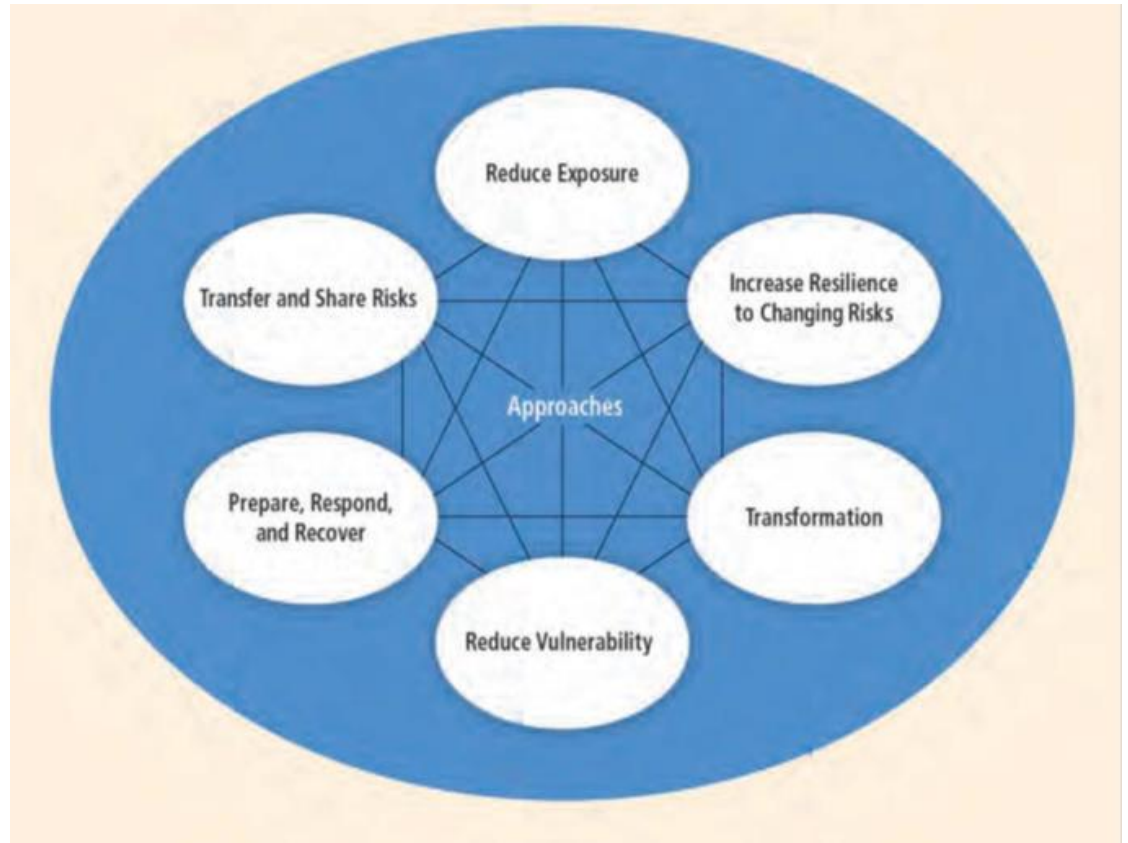
An evolving understanding of transformation

IPCC (2012) Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation' (SREX)

The Solution Space...
(could transform us)

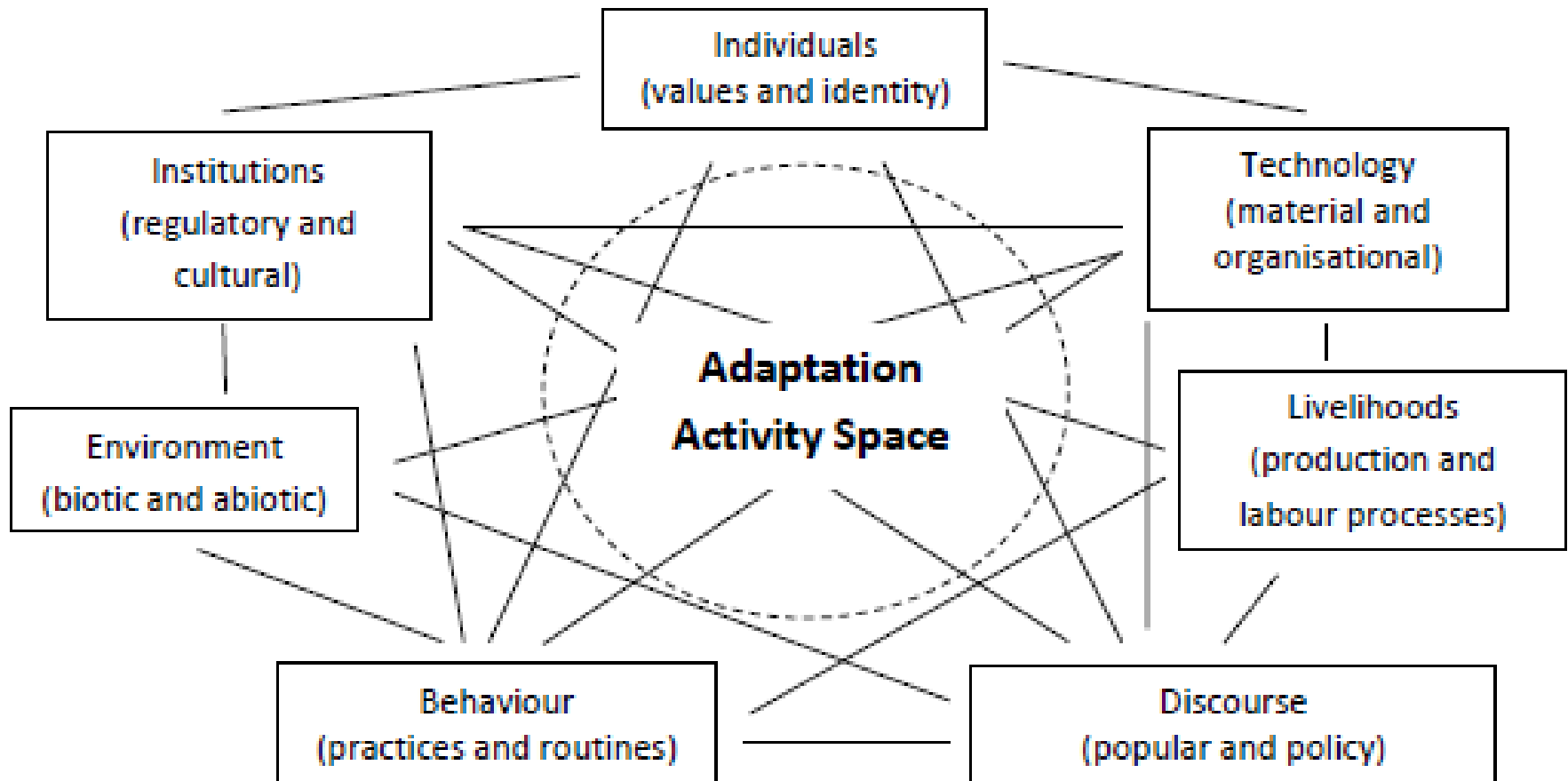
AR5 narratives:

- Limits
- Root causes
- Big stuff



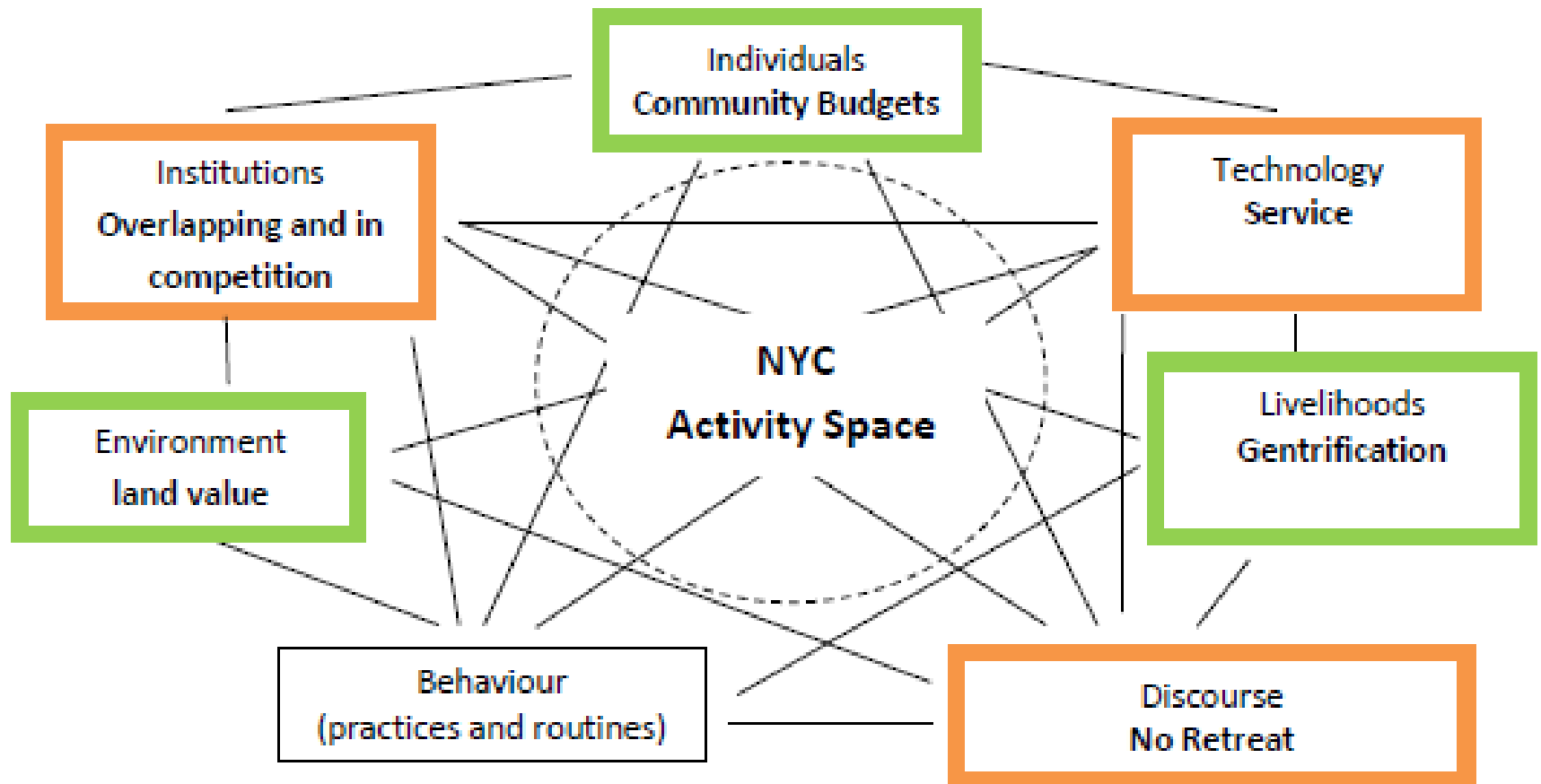
Unpacking the analytical challenge

Adaptation activity spheres (based on Harvey 2010)



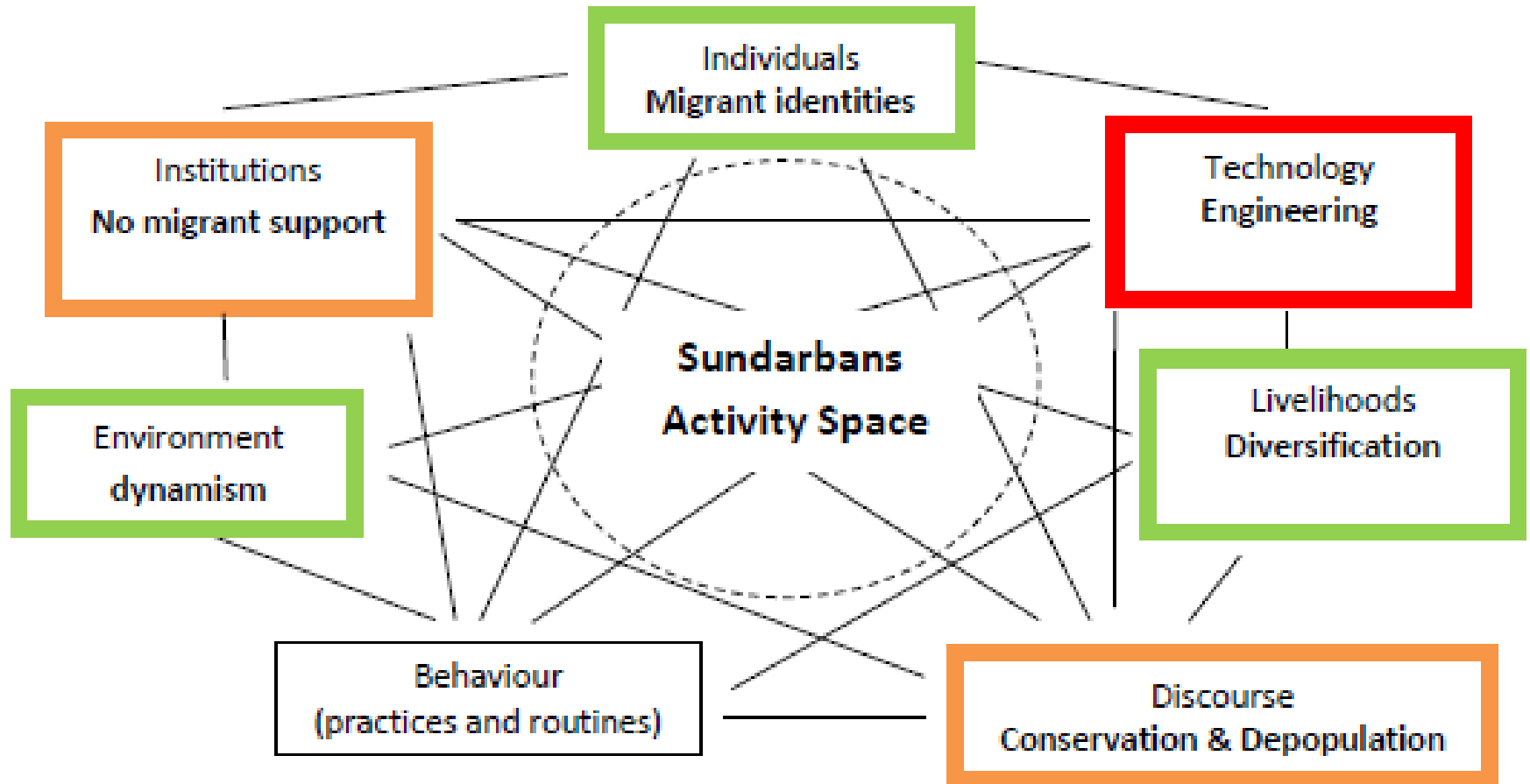
Q: Initiation, phasing, interactions and completeness

Case I: New York City, post Sandy



Sector and site transformation within overarching incremental change

Case 2: West Bengal



Individual and local transformations align with stated aims of major development actors

Conclusions: Considerations for Research and Practice

- Empirical research to exemplify transformation pathways and consequences – from multiple scales/viewpoints.
- Research to identify early warning of social systems approaching transformation, or where transformative potential is being blocked.
- Research embedded in decision making processes - action research, longitudinal studies and historical lens needed