

## Completed Sustainability Transitions in Europe: Systematic Identification and Comparison

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**Suitable for:** Bachelor's level / Master's level

**Language of thesis:** German / English

### Description:

This thesis explores **completed sustainability transitions in European countries**, aiming to systematically identify and compare cases across different sectors such as energy, agriculture, and urban systems. The goal is to develop a structured overview of completed transitions and define **criteria for selecting suitable empirical cases** for future in-depth analyses of transition pathways and system states.

Possible tasks for the student include:

- Conducting a **systematic literature review** to identify completed sustainability transitions in Europe, drawing on academic studies, reports by international organizations (e.g., OECD, European Commission), and relevant case studies.
- Assessing the **degree of completion, data availability, and diversity of actors** involved in these transitions.
- Developing a **set of selection criteria** to evaluate and categorize cases based on their empirical suitability for transition research.
- Creating a **comparative overview** that maps identified transitions according to sector, geography, and time frame.

Methodologically, the thesis focuses on **literature-based analysis, database exploration, and the development of analytical criteria**. The specific **research question will be formulated by the student** as part of the proposal, but it should clearly link to the theoretical foundations of sustainability transitions (e.g., Geels & Schot, 2007; de Haan & Rotmans, 2011; Kanger, 2021).

### Introductory literature:

Belz, F.-M. (2004). A Transition Towards Sustainability in the Swiss Agri-Food Chain (1970–2000): Using and Improving the Multi-level Perspective. In B. Elzen, F. W. Geels, & K. Green, *System Innovation and the Transition to Sustainability* (p. 3335). Edward Elgar Publishing.

<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781845423421.00016>

Geels, F. W. (2005). The dynamics of transitions in socio-technical systems: A multi-level analysis of the transition pathway from horse-drawn carriages to automobiles (1860–1930). *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 17(4), 445–476. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537320500357319>

Geels, F. W., Kern, F., Fuchs, G., Hinderer, N., Kungl, G., Mylan, J., Neukirch, M., & Wassermann, S. (2016). The enactment of socio-technical transition pathways: A reformulated typology and a comparative multi-level analysis of the German and UK low-carbon electricity transitions (1990–2014). *Research Policy*, 45(4), 896–913. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2016.01.015>

Geels, F. W., & Schot, J. (2007). Typology of sociotechnical transition pathways. *Research Policy*, 36(3), 399–417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2007.01.003>

Kanger, L. (2021). Rethinking the Multi-level Perspective for energy transitions: From regime life-cycle to explanatory typology of transition pathways. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 71, 101829. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2020.101829>

- Turnheim, B., & Geels, F. W. (2013). The destabilisation of existing regimes: Confronting a multi-dimensional framework with a case study of the British coal industry (1913–1967). *Research Policy*, 42(10), 1749–1767. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2013.04.009>
- Turnheim, B., & Geels, F. W. (2019). Incumbent actors, guided search paths, and landmark projects in infra-system transitions: Re-thinking Strategic Niche Management with a case study of French tramway diffusion (1971–2016). *Research Policy*, 48(6), 1412–1428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2019.02.002>