

Title: Operationalizing the concept of transformation towards sustainable development and resilience: ideas from systemic risk research.

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Abstract:

In view of increasingly more impactful risks, calls for transformative approaches to risk management as well as adaptation to facilitate a radical and fundamental change towards more resilient futures are steadily growing louder. However, there is a clear ‘operationalisation gap’ in terms of translating the transformational change ambitions into concrete measures that can be directly applied in practice. To bridge this gap, we suggest harnessing ideas and insights from systemic risk research to indicate ways forward for operationalising transformation in this context. We argue that from a systemic risk perspective a transformational change of a given system is achieved through transformative actions that eliminate systemic risk in its sub-systems that it sees as unacceptable on the system level. However, due to divergent views of decision makers on the system boundaries and interactions, including consequences and responsibilities, there must be iterative approaches applied to avoid involuntary transformation and to guide transformation in the best way possible. The best way would mean in our case avoidance of other systemic risks appearing due to systemic risk reduction in the system.