

An Abstract of PhD Thesis

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Abstract

As a global challenge, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) requires “*common but differentiated responsibilities*” of all countries. In light of this, Iran has set out national climate strategies and measures since 2005. Comparing performance against targets, however, reveals an apparent ineffectiveness of the strategies and measures to achieve mitigation goals. Transportation, in particular, has shown the worst climate performance amongst the national economic activities.

This research views transitions towards low-carbon transportation as a response to a complex, unstructured problem which incorporates diverse stakeholders and is surrounded by fundamental uncertainties deeply rooted in societal structures and institutions. This premise is embodied within the ontological foundations and theoretical bases of the so-called *transition approach* which has been increasingly used, tested, grounded and reflected within sustainability transitions studies and experiments over the last decade.

The assumption underlying this research is that the theoretical knowledge and practical experience with sustainability transitions offers descriptive notions and prescriptive principles which could potentially be used in a complementary manner for whole-system analysis and governance of transitions towards low-carbon transportation in Iran – which have been severely lacking to date.

To test this assumption, a Delphi survey was conducted through which an *ex-ante* evaluation of the *importance*, *desirability* and *feasibility* of employing the *transitions approach* to the analysis and governance of transition towards low-carbon transport within Iran’s 2025 climate vision was explored from societal actors’ perspective.

The findings showed the value of the notions and principles underlying the *transition approach* to serve as a set of criteria with which a whole-system assessment of the processes and conditions of transition towards low-carbon transportation in Iran was carried out. However, re-conceptualisation of some notions and more elaboration of some principles were required in order to better adapt them to the case-study as well as the case-study context.