

**Call for papers for a special issue**

**Planning for sustainability transformations:**

**Theoretical approaches, practical experiences, and political consequences**

Transformative change is in! Global environmental changes, high resource consumption, biodiversity loss, and rising social inequalities have made sustainability transformations more necessary than ever. As a result, transformation research has become a dynamic and multidisciplinary field, and a “transformative turn” has gained traction in the sustainability sciences (Blythe/Silver/Evans et al. 2018). New ways of theorizing, empirically exploring, and supporting transformations have emerged, building on the normative premise that radical socio-technical and social-ecological innovations, institutional, economic, and political reforms and behavioral shifts are essential to support desirable futures (Blythe/Silver/Evans et al. 2018). But so far, contributions by urban and regional planning scholarship to multidisciplinary debates on broader sustainability transformations have been limited (exceptions include Wolfram 2016; Carroli, 2018; Levin-Keitel/Mölders/Othengrafen et al. 2018; Hofmeister/Warner/Ott 2021; Lukkarinen/Nieminen/Lazarevic 2023), or have focused almost exclusively on the transformation of land use (e.g., Larsson 2006; Hersperger/Oliveira/Pagliarin et al. 2018). Conversely, transformation research has contributed little to urban and regional planning scholarship and has often sidelined the rich insights available in planning theory and methods, e.g., on policy integration, multi-level governance, science-policy coordination, stakeholder participation, institutional reform, or the normative and ethical foundations of policymaking.

Therefore, this call for papers for a special issue of [Raumforschung und Raumordnung | Spatial Research and Planning](#) will foreground the contribution of spatial planning scholarship and, more broadly, the spatial sciences, to debates on sustainability transformations. We welcome contributions that reflect on 1) how the theoretical foundations of spatial planning scholarship contribute to research on sustainability transformations (and vice versa), 2) empirical research on practical experiences of planning for such transformations, and/or 3) the procedural, institutional, and/or substantive reforms needed to increase the transformative capacity in urban and regional planning. Contributions to the special issue may address, but are not limited to, some of the following questions:

- How are sustainability transformations understood in spatial planning debates, and how has this understanding evolved over time? How are sustainability transformations conceptualized (e.g., regarding their spatiality and temporality, modes of governance, normative foundations, or planning paradigms)? How are research problems and problems of planning practice framed?
- What kinds of solutions are envisioned by spatial planning to solve identified problems, and what kinds of methods, techniques, and instruments are used to generate knowledge and societal solutions to sustainability transformations?

- What are the commonalities and differences between planning scholarship and scholarship on sustainability transformations (e.g., on socio-technical transitions, socio-ecological transformations, sustainability pathways)? What are the potential synergies and the incommensurabilities of these two epistemic communities?
- What roles do planners play in shaping sustainability transformations? How do they construct their professional self-image and that of their organization (administration, planning consultancy, etc.)? Which institutional conditions (rules, responsibilities, hierarchies), power relations, or procedural approaches enable or inhibit planning for sustainability transformations?
- How can we explain the gap between the normative ambition of spatial planning to support sustainability transformations and spatial planning's limited transformative capacity in practice (e.g., land consumption, mobility patterns)?
- Can we build on experiences from formal and informal planning contexts to enhance sustainability transformations? If so, how? And what options exist for integrating sustainability transformations into existing formal and informal planning approaches?
- What can critical planning approaches such as insurgent, radical, or gender planning make to planning practice for sustainability transformations? What sustainability issues are insufficiently addressed in spatial planning practice?
- How can we increase the transformative capacity of spatial planning to stimulate and support desirable urban and regional futures? What procedural, institutional, and substantive reforms are needed to achieve this?
- What requirements should planning scholarship and education meet in order to reflect the societal needs for transformative change?

We invite papers that reflect on the theoretical foundations of planning scholarship and practice or that engage with empirical research with conceptual, methodological, and critical ambitions. We welcome papers focusing on planning contexts in the global North or South, as well as studies of urban and infrastructural transformations in historical and contemporary contexts. Please send us a 300-word paper proposal in English or German by **30 June 2024**. Initial feedback and notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent before 15 July 2024. The deadline for submission of full papers for peer review is **30 October 2024**.

**Guest editors:**

Prof. Dr. Tanja Mölders, Chair of Environmental Planning and Transformation, University of Freiburg, [anja.moelders@upt.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:anja.moelders@upt.uni-freiburg.de)

Prof. Dr. Jochen Monstadt, Professor of Governance of Urban Dynamics and Transitions, Spatial Planning Chair, Utrecht University, [j.monstadt@uu.nl](mailto:j.monstadt@uu.nl)

Niclas Ruppert, PhD candidate, Environmental Planning and Transformation Chair Group, University of Freiburg, [niclas.ruppert@upt.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:niclas.ruppert@upt.uni-freiburg.de)

For subject-related queries, please contact the guest editors, for organisational queries, please contact the Editor-in-Chief of *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* | Spatial Research and Planning, Prof. Dr. Andreas Klee (andreas.klee@arl-net.de).

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