

Entanglements of Change: More-Than-Representational and Practice-Based Approaches to the Spatialities of Socio-Ecological Transformation

Call for Papers for a Session at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, London, 2026

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Transformation toward a more sustainable, post-fossil, and just society is not a master plan. In the context of the climate crisis and post-fossil ruptures, socio-ecological transformations unfold – and happen – in everyday life, in concrete spaces, through bodies, objects, emotions, and relations. Transformations are neither linear nor purely technological; rather, they are contradictory, contested, situational, and spatially differentiated processes. They emerge within historically sedimented power relations, producing disturbances, detours, and losses (Storm 2020), while simultaneously opening up new spaces of possibility, hope, and alliance. Transformation thus becomes a lived practice (Walker 2020) that is locally embedded, emotionally experienced (Emery 2020), and relationally negotiated (Görmar & Kinossian 2022), giving rise to diverse modes of subjectivation and agency. Building on this conceptualization, the session approaches socio-ecological transformation as a **more-than-representational practice** and seeks to sharpen a **spatially sensitive perspective** that understands change as a situated relational entanglement. By foregrounding the political characteristics of space – friction and renegotiation, diversity and encounter, situatedness and relationality – together with the analytical potentials of practice-theoretical approaches (Hui et al. 2017; Schäfer & Everts 2019; Schmid & Smith 2020), the session aims to make visible both the conflictive and differentiated nature of transformations as well as their creative dimensions.

Central to such an approach, then, is a focus on the **everyday dimensions** of transformation (e.g., Schurr & Strüver 2016; Domínguez-Guzmán et al. 2023) – routines, improvised practices, and modes of engaging with change that unfold “under the radar” of dominant regimes of attention. Equally important is the exploration of the **emotional dimensions** of transformation (Martiskainen & Sovacool 2021), including unevenly distributed phenomena such as transformation fatigue, transition pain (Bogner et al. 2024), climate emotions (Neckel & Hasenfratz 2021), as well as hope, confidence, and utopian imaginaries (Feola et al. 2023). Finally, a spatially sensitive and practice-oriented approach enables an analysis of **diversity and difference** in transformation processes. How do categories such as gender, class, or migration background structure local negotiations of transformational movements, within which differently positioned subjects embody differently lived relationships to change (Meier & Aytekin 2018; Braunger & Walk 2022)? From this perspective, transformation is an ongoing re-negotiation of relationships (Haraway 2016) – between diverse subjects and groups, between individuals and environments, between self and other (Zhang 2024).

In order to further develop a spatially sensitive and more-than-representational perspective on the situated practices of transformation, we invite empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that address one or several of the following interrelated perspectives (or other, related ones):

- **Transformation in everyday relations:** How are transformation processes made visible, tangible, and understandable in everyday life? What do differently situated subjects *point to*, and *where do they lead us* when they aim to *show* transformation(s) and its conflicts? With which local objects and materialities are transformation processes entangled? What material elements or environments have the capacity to affect (whom) *as* transformation (as a promise, as a threat, as an uncertainty, as an opportunity)?
- **Relations between transformation imaginaries and lived experiences of everyday change:** How do subjects *relate* the circulating imaginaries of sustainable, post-fossil transformations – promoted or demanded in dominant discourses – to the multiplicity of diverse forms of (emotional, embodied) everyday change? Under what local conditions do subjects connect or disconnect imaginaries of

sustainable transformation with what forms of everyday transformation? What **‘language(s) of change’** do situated actors develop? And how do these processes generate conflicts or open up potentials for collective action? We argue that a spatial and practice-oriented perspective is particularly fruitful for addressing these questions, as it allows us to explore situated experiences of **complex, overlapping changes** and the ways these are taken up, negotiated, and enacted in local everyday practices.

- **The manifestation of transformation (conflicts) in local assemblages:** Transformation processes – and their imaginaries, subjectivities, and capacities – are shaped in and through a *“thrown-togetherness” of heterogeneous elements* (Massey 2005; Dihlmann & Helbrecht 2024). Transformation must be conceived as emerging from the messiness of everyday life. If we understand transformation through local assemblages, we can analyse the interplay of diverse trajectories of change that constitute a *spatial simultaneity of diverse temporalities and contrasting stories* – stories of loss for some and development for others.
- **Simultaneities, temporalities, and visibilities:** These entanglements shape the visibilities of transformation. For instance, the closure of a community centre due to financial pressures or population decline in disadvantaged parts of a city may spatially coincide with the installation of new electric vehicle charging stations or urban PV systems just next to it. While these processes are not directly or causally linked, they *localize conflicting simultaneities*, potentially creating the impression of a hierarchical prioritization of certain developments over others, and thereby complicating the societal mediation of transformation goals. A spatial perspective captures such constellations of (in)visibility and (dis)attachment (Anderson 2022), viewing transformations as contentious *assemblages*.
- **Dealing with uncertainty:** Not least, we consider it productive to think of transformation as a process that generates multiple uncertainties and insecurities – including various epistemological disruptions (Altstaedt, Fladvad & Hasenfratz 2022). What is needed, then, are analyses of the situated ways in which subjects engage with the “geographies of uncertainty” (Senanayake & King 2021).

We welcome contributions in the form of **short abstracts** (200 words) to be submitted by **15 February 2026**. Please send abstracts to hermine.baehr@geo.uni-halle.de, cheyenne.wolf@strukturwandel.uni-halle.de, and jan.winkler@geo.uni-halle.de. We look forward to the exchange!

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