

# INTERPRETIVE POLICY ANALYSIS CONFERENCE 2021

## Panel Title

*P26 - Making just transitions: Re-assembling communities and scale*

## Panel Convenors:

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## Abstract

As part of wider dynamics of sustainability transitions, social and policy actors have been challenging established spatial and governance scales. Energy cooperatives, climate activists and local governance actors for instance, seem to unmake and remake political, institutional, and physical spaces, thereby challenging and diverging from territorially defined governance regimes (Carr & Affolderbach, 2014). In particular, the role of *community making* and cross-territorial commitments to solidarity and justice seem to rescale political communities, citizenship and policy practices (consider e.g. the role of Extinction Rebellion, Transition Towns, regional food communities, new municipalism, (cf. Fraser, 2005)). Relatedly, socio-technical infrastructures, material participation and natural environments (e.g. energy technologies, social media, regional forests) also play a role in rearranging scales and political communities. The socio-material remaking of communities and scale poses critical questions to sustainability-oriented spatial planning and statehood (Brenner, 2019), but also harbours the potential for radical democratic networks that align with (inter)national climate objectives. To be sure, the entangled rescaling of political communities and sustainability action raises important questions about the significance of green political spaces and the de- and re-territorialisation of sustainability governance.

This panel invites contributions that explore and interrogate the *rescaling of socio-material communities* in the context of sustainable and just transitions. Potential contributions could be theoretical or empirical, and could focus on the efforts of reassembling scale and sustainable communities, and related spatio-political contestation and negotiations. Possible questions to consider include:

- How can we understand heterogeneous communities in relation to dominating conceptions of complex or socio-technical and social-ecological 'systems'?
- How do translocal and transnational sustainability engagements relate to institutional forms of participation and democratic governance?
- How do sustainability and social justice concerns conflict or intersect in the rescaling of political communities?

# INTERPRETIVE POLICY ANALYSIS CONFERENCE 2021

- How do urban and rural community-making diverge and converge in specific sustainability projects?
- What role do (or should) academics and scientific knowledge production play in redrawing scalar boundaries for communities committed to just and sustainable futures?

## References

Carr, C. and J. Affolderbach (2014). 'Rescaling sustainability? Local opportunities and scalar contradictions'. *Local Environment* 19 (6), 567–71.

Fraser, N. 2005. "Reframing Justice." *New Left Review* 36: 1–19.

Brenner, N. (2019). *New urban spaces: Urban theory and the scale question*. Oxford University Press.