

## **RT03 | TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH: AN ADEQUATE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR SPATIAL PLANNING STUDIES CHAIRS**

### **Chairs**

- Thomas Weith, University of Potsdam.

### **Speakers**

- Jana Zscheischler, PhD student at Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF), Institute of Socio-Economics;
- Nadin Gaasch, research associate at Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF), Institute of Socio-Economics.

### **Description**

Knowledge management forms an essential component for spatial planning (Davoudi 2015). During the last decade, an elaborated system of participation and information management in spatial planning has emerged. This is also reflected in planning theories (cf. Friedmann, 1987; Healey, 1996; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Rydin, 2007) and in changes in planning traditions, too (cf. Ibert, 2003; Vonk, 2006; Laurian and Shaw, 2008). Transdisciplinarity seems to be a promising research approach for co-producing and integrating different knowledge stocks to foster the development of innovative, robust, and applicable solutions for sustainable land use.

Comprehensively, transdisciplinarity constitutes a hub of sustainability research (Kajikawa, Tacoa, Yamaguchi 2014). Thus, dealing with transdisciplinarity as an research approach might be helpful to face current challenges of spatial developments by generating transformative knowledge.

Particularly, it might be an adequate approach for handling complexity and uncertainty in spatial planning.

However, the discourse on transdisciplinary research approaches in spatial planning studies is poor. A literature search for the combination of the words 'spatial planning' and 'transdisciplinarity' in the Web of Science (performed in December 2016) displayed only five articles. Thus, research on transdisciplinarity in the field of spatial planning might be intensified to address current challenges of land use research. This does not refer to a simple improvement of participation processes in planning procedures but rather implies a stronger debate on co-design, co-production and co-dissemination, and in planning research processes, too.

We define transdisciplinarity as a “collaborative process of knowledge production that involves multiple disciplines and stakeholders aiming at solutions for highly complex real-world problems” (Zscheischler, Rogga and Weith 2014). In contrast to interdisciplinary research, transdisciplinary approaches also involve non-academic or non-certified stakeholders in all research phases from problem definition and solution development up to solution implementation. This distinguishes transdisciplinarity from stakeholder participation that involves stakeholders only at specific moments during the research process.

The proposed Roundtable takes up the overall question: *In which contexts transdisciplinary research - as an methodological approach – constitutes an added value for spatial planning research?* Hence, the Roundtable should lead to discussions about options of knowledge exchange and integration (co- design and co-evolution of knowledge) between stakeholder confusion and methodological triviality.

The topic is likely to be of great interest for AESOP Conference because it focusses on the improvement of land use planning and land use governance by discussing research methodology. This will qualify both, planning research and planning practice.

## **Organization**

- 1) Welcome and Introduction (Thomas Weith/ Jana Zscheischler, 20 min.)
  - Transdisciplinarity – some understandings
  - Transdisciplinarity in spatial planning studies – state of the art
  - Chances and challenges of transdisciplinarity in spatial sciences – presentation of theses
- 2) Three parallel roundtables with the participants, discussing the presented theses (Thomas Weith/ Jana Zscheischler/ Nadin Gaasch; 3x15 min.)
- 3) Open dialogue with the participants of the Roundtable: Under which conditions transdisciplinarity represents a serious methodological approach in spatial science? (Nadin Gaasch; 20 min)
- 4) Summary and conclusion by the chairman (Thomas Weith; 5 min)