### 2019: The politics of making and un-making (sustainable) futures

Though sustainability as a guiding idea has now become less controversial, the imperatives for action such as decarbonization still don’t seem to be very effective in pushing transformation processes. Making futures more sustainable is often discussed as a matter of technological, scientific or economic concern—in other words, futures have become depoliticized. This special feature investigates the hurdles to and potentials of future making on the level of political and social practices. Future practices can be divided into futures for the present, as concrete visions and plans that are made to facilitate decisions in the present, and presents for the future, as images and knowledges that evolve in the present and affect the future. Future practices (i.e. the implicit or explicit building of relations and making of references to future situations and people) take place between the past, present and future. They evolve in interactions concerning the production and organization of knowledge and within certain structures. Impulses and necessities of change, hopes and plural imaginaries about the future influence the development of future practices. Two thematic areas are covered in the SF: (1) Presents for the future: Analyses of future practices in policy fields and institutions that involve sustainability related topics (e.g. the energy transition, green innovations, international climate policies) and (2) Futures for the present: Critical engagements with alternatives and visions in future-making in sustainable transformation initiatives, social movements, educational practices and programmes or investment strategies.

### 2019: Theoretical Traditions in Social Values for Sustainability

The content and structure of social values has been an area of substantial scholarship in the social sciences over the past 60 years, and is attracting increasing attention in conservation and sustainability literature. The aim of this special feature is to present and critically evaluate theories, concepts and methods relating to the assessment and application of social values in conservation and sustainability planning and management. It will be the first journal to present a holistic perspective on social values theory applicable to sustainability science problems in a continuum from transcendental to contextual values theory and applications. This includes integrating values collected at different scales into international biodiversity assessments, addressing multiple aspects of ‘relationality’ when valuing ecosystem services, and aligning epistemology, research paradigm and research methods when applying value concepts. It will build upon a recent special issue in Ecosystem Services (edited by Kenter, 2016) by offering theoretical and disciplinary depth using case examples with a global geographic scope.

### 2019: Exploring interactions among the Sustainable Development Goals: case studies from three continents

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a comprehensive, internationally agreed-upon set of objectives aiming to vastly improve economic, social and planetary well-being. How exactly to achieve these goals is an urgent and immediate science-policy question. Increasingly, stakeholders and experts are finding the efficiency of implementation to be a central issue. This efficiency in turn, is, related to the fact that the goals are all interconnected: In some cases steps towards achieving one goal may hinder the achievement of one or more other goals, leading to unintended “trade-offs”, or inefficiencies in implementation. But at least as often, actions towards a particular goal can have a positive influence on other goals, setting up beneficial “synergies” among the SDGs. Actions that take advantage of these synergies might be the key to implementing them efficiently because it is hypothesized that many different goals can be achieved at the same time; this suggests that fewer resources are needed to achieve the whole set of goals. Saving resources would be a major benefit to countries confronted with the high costs of implementing the SDGs. But at the root of the issue of “efficient implementation” is a lack of understanding about interactions among the SDGs. The objective of this Special Feature is to increase this understanding by addressing such key issues as, What is the nature of SDG interactions at the community, national and international levels? What interventions are effective in minimising trade-offs and/or taking advantage of synergies among the goals? How do the manifestations of economic globalization such as global supply chains, international debt, and international trade agreements influence interactions among the goals? The Special Feature will present results from multi- and interdisciplinary studies conducted in five low- and medium-income countries and the UK, as well as at the global level.
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| 2019 | **Feeding back on the health of our planet: A milestone year for intergovernmental assessment reports**  
(May cancel or postpone) |
| 2020 | **Blue Degrowth and the Politics of the Sea: Rethinking the Blue Economy**  
This special feature aims to bring a rather unconventional spin to the discussions around the mainstream understandings of the blue economy, Blue Growth, and ocean governance by exploring its different dimensions through the critical lens of relevant theoretical frameworks. Ocean-based economies reflect the role of the ocean, as a new exciting element in the illusion of economic growth. This highlights the new shift towards the exploration of new markets and the exploitation of the ocean, seas, and coasts.  
The ‘Blue Growth’ agenda has become part of the mainstream approaches and discussions around ocean governance and of most policies promoted by various institutions such as the European Union, United Nations as well as other actors at different political levels. An in-depth analysis and expansion is required in order to explore this agenda, and its linkages with sustainability.  
This special issue will initiate an interdisciplinary debate around the sustainability of ocean governance and the blue economy through an investigation of new dimensions in the theoretical framework on Sustainable [Blue] Degrowth whilst addressing the roots of the problems embedded in unsustainable and unequal relations. A link with future ambitions around the use of marine commons (space and resources) will be established. This will contribute to an improved understanding of (ocean) sustainability, and offer propositions for paths towards more ecologically and socially sustainable and just nature-society relations. |
| 2020 | **Exploring the transformative capacity of place-shaping practices**  
Transformations so far provoked many unsustainabilities in and across places, such as inequalities, exclusion, poverty, economic shrinkage, resource depletion, ecological hazards and food insecurity. Nowadays we witness a wide array of grassroots initiatives developing sustainable practices and building the capacities to transform their place according to their ideas, needs and demands. The aim of the SUSPLACE research program ([www.sustainableplaceshaping.net](http://www.sustainableplaceshaping.net)) is the explore of the transformative capacity of place-shaping practices and their contribution to sustainable, place-based development.  
Empirical research has been done in 15 different research projects across 6 European countries. A wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches have been applied in studying very different cases. The engagement of the researchers in both exploring and enhancing sustainability transformations has amongst others resulted in a toolkit to enhance the participation of stakeholders in sustainability transformations. The Special Feature will present the foundation and proceedings of the research program and in the end will reflect on the contributions to sustainability sciences. |
| 2020 | **Developing sustainable bio-energy systems with local bio-resources: Cases in Asia**  
In Asia, bio-energy has been regarded as an essential component in replacing fossil fuels. The forerunner, Japan, has approved a total of 16 GWe biomass power generation capacities by the end of 2017. The current development relies heavily on biomass import, implying that the country will drastically attract a huge amount of bioresources in the region if the majority of the approved capacities would be realised. However, such import-oriented development has raised concerns about the availability and sustainability of biomass supply.  
It is therefore important also for the Asian countries to explore opportunities from utilizing local bio-resources to cover domestic energy demand, especially considering the synergies with healthy landscape management in conjunction with bio-production. On the one hand, carbon removal and disaster prevention capability can be further enhanced with proper forest and landscape management while improving productivity. On the other hand, biomass can be strategically used to replace fossil fuels for both local heating and power generation based on locations. Moreover, enhancing local bio-production may become a key to revitalising rural areas through various innovative business models based on local socio-economic conditions.  
This SF intends to engage a variety of essential knowledge in understanding the interactions between bio-production, ecosystem services and human systems, particularly for cases in Asia. Potential works |
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<td>made through co-production of knowledge are especially encouraged, including communicating with both experts and non-experts, and integrating knowledge from different disciplines like forestry, social studies or energy system sciences.</td>
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| 2020 | **Agroforestry for sustainable landscape management**  
Across much of the world, agricultural systems, ecosystem health, and rural resource-based livelihoods are in crisis. Over the next 50 years, agriculture will be forced to go through an extraordinary transition to meet production needs sustainably, in the context of climate change, growing populations, and economic transformation. Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation efforts will need to shape new strategies in the face of agricultural growth. Populations and businesses will have to find new ways to manage their natural resource base to secure the full range of goods and services needed from their landscapes, identifying synergies and reducing tradeoffs.  
Landscape approaches are an essential building block towards such sustainability transition. Sustainable landscape management supports conservation and restoration of biodiversity, the production of food, the protection of critical watershed functions, and rural livelihoods as joint objectives, rather than dealing with them in isolation. It has been taken up by landscape-level platforms and partnerships throughout the world, providing the mechanisms by which the UN-Sustainable Development Goals can be implemented.  
Agroforestry (land-use systems and practices that deliberately integrate trees and shrubs with crop and animal systems) promises to play a major role in the transformation of agriculture within sustainable landscapes. Agroforestry offers a wide range of environmental, social, and economic benefits at landscape scale, but how to capitalize on this potential has not been fully explored yet.  
This special issue is dedicated to scrutinizing the role of agroforestry in sustainable landscape management strategies. In particular, contributions will examine:  
- Drivers, processes, and social-ecological impacts of expansion or decline of agroforestry landscapes,  
- The performance of agroforestry in terms of multiple sustainability objectives at landscape scales,  
- Ways to operationalize multi-stakeholder strategies for sustainable landscape management through agroforestry,  
- Tools for analyzing agroforestry adoption and impacts at landscape scale. |
| 2021 | **Energy scenarios for long-term climate change mitigation: Towards a sustainable energy system in Japan**  
Japan is in the midst of transition to a clean, sustainable energy system in order to mitigate climate change and address the trilemma of energy policy. Under the Paris Agreement, Japan has pledged to reduce its emissions by 26% by 2030, and plans to cut by 80% by 2050.  
Designing a policy framework to achieve these goals is an enormous challenge. In particular, Uncertainty abounds with regard to renewables, carbon capture and storage (CCS), nuclear, decarbonization of end use (e.g., electrification vs. switch to hydrogen). For instance, renewables have been booming but they remain expensive in Japan, unlike many jurisdictions in the world, despite general policy support from the feed-in tariff scheme. The debate on the role of nuclear power lingers, even several years after the Fukushima nuclear disaster. The government is investing heavily in hydrogen, and yet when hydrogen economy will be realized remains highly uncertain.  
Against this background, the Stanford Energy Modeling Forum (EMF) 35 (Japan model intercomparison, or JMIP) was launched in 2018 ([https://emf.stanford.edu/projects/emf-35-japan-model-intercomparison-project-jmip-long-term-climate-policy](https://emf.stanford.edu/projects/emf-35-japan-model-intercomparison-project-jmip-long-term-climate-policy)), which aims at producing policy-relevant long-term energy scenarios for Japan and analyzing different kinds of uncertainties, including technology availability and progress, public acceptance, and policy ambitions, etc., in order to facilitate debate on transition to sustainability. This Special Feature (SF) is intended to summarize various scenario and policy analyses being conducted in Japan. The SF will begin with the contributions from the EMF 35 JMIP project, and welcomes additional, external papers related to Japan’s energy policy, welcoming topics such as near-term or sectoral policy design, lessons from past policies, transdisciplinary scenario co-production, and stakeholder engagement as well as political economy considerations. |
Note:

In general planning a special feature takes around 1-1.5 years to prepare and publish. The process can be accelerated if we aim for papers from a particular event or conference, as we don’t have to issue an open call. Even so we need a minimum of 8-9 months for the review process after submission through online editorial manager (EM) and an additional 3 months of fixed production time required by the publisher. Thus around 12-14 months are required to plan a special feature from a particular conference. For special features involving an open call for papers we need an additional 4-6 months.

We welcome special feature proposal(s) from 2019 onward.