

OPEN SEMINAR

Responsibility, Polity, Value

The changing norms of contemporary planning practices

GUEST SPEAKER



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Planners increasingly address urban problems by promoting innovative practices able to transform planning institutions and socio-spatial relations. Yet, the actual meaning of transformation is often not explicit nor problematized. This paper deploys a sociological-institutionalist perspective to build a critical analysis of changing planning practices. It understands practices as embedded within a nested system of three types of norms: operational norms that define and allocate responsibilities; collective norms that (re)produce planning polities; and constitutional norms that substantiate the idea of value. To stimulate critical enquiry on transformative practices, the paper argues that contemporary planning practices convey a (a) shifting of responsibility towards individuals; (b) disaggregation of city-regions through localism; and (c) reproduction of the process of accumulative valorisation of land. These conclusions will be contextualized in an ongoing research project about the institutional challenges of the 'circular economy': a rising hype in urban experimentalism and socio-technical transition thinking in Amsterdam and Europe.



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