SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: T14i

Whose scenario? Citizen participation in social-ecological scenario planning

Hosts:

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
Host (s):	Dr Matthew Kirby	Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee, 13 Perth Rd, Dundee DD1 4HT	mkirby001@dundee.ac.uk
Co-host(s):	Dr Morten Graversgaard	Department of Agroecology, Aarhus University, Tjele, Denmark	morten.graversgaard@agro.au.dk
Other organiser(s):	Prof Mel Woods	Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee, 13 Perth Rd, Dundee DD1 4HT	m.j.woods@dundee.ac.uk

Abstract:

Applied social-ecological research continues to make progress in how and when to incorporate citizens perspectives into decision making for just transitions and provision of diverse ecosystem services (Turnhout, 2024; Valente et al., 2022). Within the toolbox of social-ecological methods, scenario planning provides a structured, holistic and coherent way to explore diverse futures ranging from the probable to the visionary. However, the diversity of scenarios and the methods used to produce them have led them to be critiqued as methodological chaos due to their unbound and sometime inconsistent applications (Whaley, 2008) as well as their limited applicability and uptake of scenarios in policy (Riddell et al., 2018). Participatory scenario planning, which advocates co-creation with diverse stakeholders have been shown to be effective in creating desired futures which represent a broad segment of society (Graversgaard et al., 2021; Kirby et al., 2025; Oteros-Rozas et al., 2015). Yet, citizens, who are one of the most affected groups, are often absent in the scenario planning processes, and when they are present, they typically have a contributory role (Kirby et al., in preparation).

Building on participatory scenario research undertaken as part of the Urban ReLeaf project and the newly launched TRANSFORM project this session aims to collate, advance and innovate methodological best-practice in incorporating citizens in scenario planning, from inception to implementation across urban, peri-urban and rural land-use and planning contexts. Urban ReLeaf, focuses on sustainable grey to green transitions in urban landscapes, using citizen science, scenario planning and urban foresight, whereas TRANSFORM explore how rural living labs in three Danish municipalities can support a just and strategic transformation of national land use under the landmark Green Tripartite Agreement. Together, these projects provide concrete testbeds for reflecting on and advancing methods of co-producing land-use futures and scenarios across scales, with a citizen a central focus.

Using a world café format our session will explore and discuss the following questions as a research community:

1. What are the benefits of incorporating citizens in social-ecological scenario planning?
2. What are the barriers to incorporating citizens in social-ecological scenario planning? And are there times where it may not be appropriate to involve citizens? (i.e. are there risks of reinforcing local conflict or inequalities)
3. What tools, approaches and methods are effective for engaging citizens in scenario planning? (i.e. making digital tools and data accessible and useful to non-experts)

4. What are the ethical considerations for working with citizens in social-ecological scenario planning? (i.e. avoiding tokenism and political contention)
5. How can scenario planning achieve greater real-world impacts and influence whilst staying relevant in the rapidly changing systems they are framed within? (i.e. scaling up, legitimatising and actioning scenarios)

Goals and objectives of the session:

This world cafe session aims to collate, advance and innovate methodological best-practice in incorporating citizens in scenario planning, from inception to implementation across urban, peri-urban and rural land-use and planning contexts. Specifically, it has three objectives:

- **Objective 1**: To critically assess the benefits, limitations, and ethical considerations of incorporating citizens in social-ecological scenario planning.
- **Objective 2**: To identify barriers, contextual appropriateness, and enabling conditions for meaningful citizen participation in scenario planning.
- **Objective 3**: Use knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer discussion to innovate citizen participation in scenario planning processes to achieve real-world relevance and impact.

Planned output / Deliverables:

Building from the methodological reflections and innovation amongst the ESP community a collaborative publication (Target journal: Ecosystems and People) will be developed to disseminate the key findings from the session and propose a framework for citizen participation in social-ecological scenario planning. Participants in the world cafe will be invited to contribute to this as possible co-authors.

Session format:

- **Part 1**: The session will start with a provocative scene setting presentations (30 minutes) by the session hosts drawing from their project as well a relevant submitted contribution.
- **Part 2**: This will be followed by the world café (1 hour and 10 minutes) where groups will move between the five question tables. The session will conclude with a short plenary discussion and presentation from the facilitators (20 mins). Total duration 1 hour 30 minutes.

We are flexible on timings to be longer or shorter to fit with the conference planning, furthermore this could be a two separate time slots of part 1 and 2 or a longer one, as best fits with the programme."

Voluntary contributions accepted:

Yes, I allow any abstract to be submitted to my session for review

Related to ESP Working Group:

TWG 14 – Application of ES in Planning & Management

References:

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Whaley, R. (2008). Comments on Chermack's paper on scenarios and theories. Futures, 40(3), 310–312. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2007.08.011