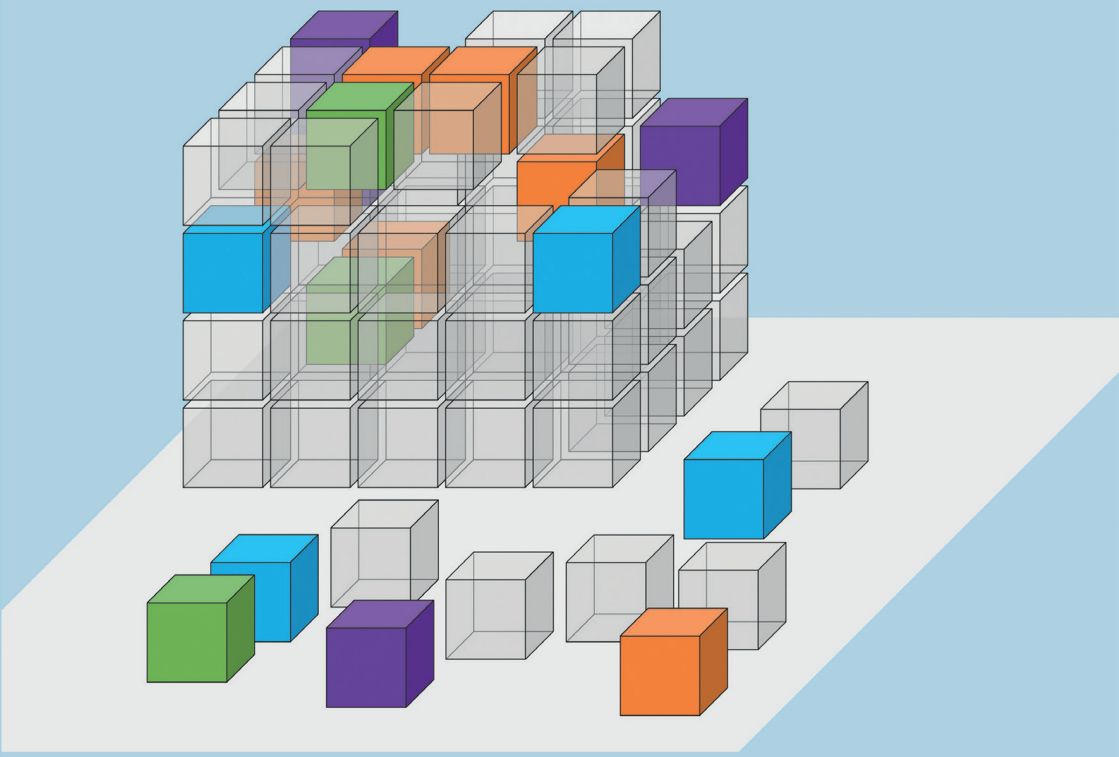
Benedikt Schmid

MAKING TRANSFORMATIVE GEOGRAPHIES

Lessons from Stuttgart's Community Economy



[transcript] Social and Cultural Geography

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Benedikt Schmid
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Lessons from Stuttgart's Community Economy

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In the light of social and environmental unsustainability and injustice, the continuing attachment to the idea that a growth-based economy is reconcilable with human prosperity and ecological limits seems increasingly implausible. Tracing and dissecting the complexities of social change, »Making Transformative Geographies« speaks about the development of visions, alternatives, and strategies for a radical transformation beyond accumulation and growth. Covering an empirical sample of 24 eco-social organizations, projects, and groupings in the city of Stuttgart (Germany), the book drills down into the social, spatial, and strategic dimensions of transformation. It advances a conceptually and empirically grounded assessment of the possibilities and limitations of community activism and civic engagement for shifting transformative geographies towards a degrowth trajectory.

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Introduction

> Capital against the earth – one or the other
> may survive but not both.
> *Hardt and Negri, 2017, p. 167*

"Something largely unnoticed is happening in cities across the world," Paul Chatterton (2019, p. 1f.) notes in his recent book *Unlocking sustainable cities – A manifesto for real change*. "There are countless projects where people from all walks of life and city sectors are creating, resisting and intervening in their unfolding urban story. In spite of the overbearing weight of corporate power, loss of public space, bureaucratic hierarchies, ingrained inequalities and even the presence of war and violence, people and projects are emerging to lay down markers for very different urban futures." A few years before, Paul Mason (2016, p. xv) popularized the term "postcapitalism" to describe this development: "almost unnoticed, in the niches and hollows of the market system, whole swathes of economic life are beginning to move to a different rhythm. Parallel currencies, time banks, cooperatives and self-managed spaces have proliferated." Chatterton and Mason are in good company as there are numerous scholars that draw attention to old and new forms of community economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, et al., 2013), alternative economic spaces (Leyshon et al., 2003), social and solidarity economies (North and Cato, 2017), commoning (Bollier and Helfrich, 2012), and reconsiderations around well-being and the good life (Gudynas, 2011; I.L.A. Kollektiv, 2019; Rosa and Henning, 2018).

These hopeful gestures, however, contrast with an incessant flow of bad tidings. Global climate continues to destabilize; species become extinct; rainforests and other ecosystems turn into wastelands; soils erode; pesticides, plastic, nuclear waste, and toxic chemicals contaminate oceans, freshwater, lands, animals, and people "all feeding into a multi-dimensional sustainability crisis that leaves politicians (as well as the market) utterly helpless" (Blühdorn, 2017, p. 42). Lately, four of nine planetary boundaries have been crossed, threatening to change the earth's ecosystems uncontrollably and irreversibly (Steffen et al., 2015). Economic growth and progress in the name of which parts of humanity exploit nature and lives (Patel and Moore, 2018), thereby, fail the mass of population. Billions lack clean drinking

water, sanitation, nutrition, shelter, safety, access to education, and political participation. Others work "bullshit jobs" (Graeber, 2018) to keep alive an extractive economy that deepens inequality (OECD, 2011; Piketty, 2017) and entangles existences in ways that pitch interests against each other so one person's well-being becomes another person's exploitation (Brand and Wissen, 2017).

While all this is going on, daily routines in the Global North persist seemingly unperturbed by the possibilities and threats of planetary futures. Judging by the continuation of business-as-usual, ecological and social crises appear to be little more than small nuisances that require the shift of some habits, market expansion to hitherto non-marketized areas, and the technological innovation of not-yet-so-smart cities. The green economy – like its predecessors ecological modernization and sustainable development – sets out to reconcile capital accumulation with social justice and the earth's ecosystems. Virtually no government in the Global North seriously questions an economy based on self-interest and dependent on continuous growth, ignoring the evidence that makes an absolute decoupling of growth and resource consumption highly implausible and employing economic metrics that have limited significance for general social well-being (Jackson, 2017).

Taking a sincere look at things raises a number of profound questions. What is the real scope of the global social and ecological crises? Can progressive politics reconcile markets and states with the requirements of a truly sustainable future? Or does humanity need a revolutionary break with growth economics and interest-driven politics? Will community-based initiatives and peer-to-peer economies creepingly replace a rampant global capitalism? Can autonomous, democratic, and decentralized associations oust corrupt governments? Should we be hopeful to realize the possibilities of other forms of economic organization and togetherness? Or does optimism veil the difficulties and contradictions of community activism? Should we be devastated, horrified, and furious in view of the sweeping contempt for human and non-human lives? Or does pessimism turn into paralyzing nihilism and cynicism? Are we responsible to change our lives dramatically to avoid emissions and exploitation? Or is it the responsibility of politicians and managers to enable a sustainable lifestyle for everyone? Who should we vote for, address, judge, and organize with?

Geography and other disciplines cannot provide clear answers to these questions (and if they attempt to, one should be rather careful). They do, however, provide a number of conceptual and methodological tools to approach the complexities of transformation. Situated between natural sciences and the humanities, geography links social practices and ecological processes to capture the complex spatialities of more-than-human interaction. It sheds light on both sides of transformation. Transformation as the fundamental change of ecological, technological, cultural, and institutional relations that unfolds seemingly removed from anyone's sphere of influence. And transformation as the engagement, struggles,

and promises of activists, communities, eco-social organizations, and progressive politicians for a more just and sustainable future. Transformative geographies, consequently, unfold through and between global change and local agency, collective engagement and individual resubjectivation, grant narratives and small actions. In this sense, the notion of 'transformative geographies' captures the *spatial struggles and negotiations over just and sustainable forms of (more-than-) human co-existence*.

This work explores the forces and possibilities of transformation in a polarized world of elating community economies and an ostensibly overwhelming global capitalism. It looks at 24 eco-social organizations, projects, and groupings – at some of them closer than others – in the city of Stuttgart (Germany) and its vicinity. By means of qualitative exploratory research methods, the study develops an understanding of the complex interplay of possibilities and constraints, individual efforts and community organizing, politico-economic coercion and windows of opportunity, place-based practices and politics beyond place that all feed into processes of transformation. Drawing on the processual ontologies of community economy and practice theory scholarship, the work develops a perspective that acknowledges agential and structural moments of transformation and articulates inspirations for hope as well as reasons for concern. The remainder of this introduction elaborates on the study's focus and research question as well as its contributions and limitations. It concludes by giving an overview of the structure of this work.

Focus and research question

Thematically, this work situates itself within the debates on degrowth and postcapitalism in critical geography and cognate disciplines (Chatterton and Pusey, 2019; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Kallis, 2018; Latouche, 2009). Degrowth convenes a number of theoretical and practical approaches that seek to abandon economic growth and related narratives of development, innovation, and progress as guiding principles of human co-existence and instead propose a reflective recalibration of economic, political, and social institutions to support a temporally and spatially equitable, sustainable, and dignified survival of human and non-human species (Schmid, 2019a). Opposing economic growth inevitably challenges the institution of capital and thus involves perspectives on a postcapitalist future that abandons the societal project of "accumulation of surplus value, individualization, commodification and enclosure" (Chatterton and Pusey, 2019, p. 15). Both degrowth and postcapitalism entail critiques of incumbent social institutions and foster dialogues about new values that guide potential futures.

Despite a sophisticated case made by social and natural scientists on the perils and glaring injustice of current patterns of overconsumption and exploitation,

there is a lack of adequate policy and planning responses. Much critical research, therefore, shows discontent with top-down responses to climate change; biodiversity loss; soil erosion; contamination of water, lands, animals, and people; exploitative economic relations; social inequality; and human suffering due to a lack of access to fresh water, nutrition, shelter, and sanitation. Instead, many scholars turn to community activism and civic engagement. Although the present work does not dismiss the necessity and possibility of transformative impulses from incumbent political and economic institutions entirely – and indeed provides a sophisticated framework to include such a perspective – it places its primary focus on community-type initiatives and organizations.

This work centers around the question, *how can community activism and civic engagement channel transformative geographies towards a degrowth trajectory?* It is interested in the diverse and often ambiguous practices of community-led initiatives, activists, and eco-social enterprises that devote energy and reflection to social and ecological issues and devise strategies to have a positive effect. Notions of sustainability, thereby, vary as much as the approaches to remedy grievances. The study's interest translates into three connected research questions:

a. What practices follow from and accompany (radical) critiques of unsustainable and unjust social relations?
b. How do facilitating and constraining moments become relevant in sustainability-related practice?
c. How can a deeper understanding of transformative geographies contribute to the development of knowledge and strategies for a degrowth transition?

Research question a. focuses on different notions of sustainability and "narratives of change" (Avelino et al., 2017, p. 3) as well as the ways in which individuals and organizations translate these ideals into practice. The main focus at that is on organizations that advocate a shift away from a narrow perspective on economic growth and are skeptical of current neoliberal attempts on market-based sustainability transitions. Research question b. builds on that by carving out various internal and external factors that facilitate and catalyze or inhibit and blight sustainability and degrowth-oriented practices in particular. In doing so, the book attempts to paint a differentiated picture that includes both, the possibilities of a postcapitalist future and the forces that militate against it. Eventually, question c. takes this work in a more hopeful direction. Instead of getting bogged down in quarrels over the probability of change in the magnitude required, the book develops a degrowth research agenda that takes both possibilities and constraints into account to devise strategies for a degrowth transition.

Geographically, the book's focus primarily pertains to the Global North. I use this established but partially misleading term to refer to spaces of a relative (mate-

rial) wealth that is generally related to the exploitation of social and environmental conditions elsewhere (the Global South) (Brand and Wissen, 2017; Patel and Moore, 2018). The Global North does not necessarily map onto national territories (Trefzer et al., 2014) but rather encompasses the places, bodies, and networks which profit materially from currently instituted global economic relations. Consequently, while global relations continue to be important for the book's argument and, in fact, constitute a major aspect of the crises it addresses, the book revolves around the role of the Global North.

Empirically, this orientation translates into the focus on 24 eco-social organizations, projects, and groupings in the city of Stuttgart. Stuttgart is located in the South of Germany, in a prosperous region with a strong manufacturing sector. It is home to a number of global players but has also a long-standing tradition of small and medium sized enterprises. In this context, Stuttgart's landscape of alternative organizations and actors provides a compelling window into the possibilities of alternative economizing. It is a highly dynamic case which shows a number of substantial social and technological innovations in conjunction with degrowth-oriented practices and strategies. Above all, a strong interconnectedness between several sustainability-related organizations opens a perspective beyond individual projects. A prominent role of supra-organizational connections, furthermore, feeds into the book's interest on the possibilities of broader (institutional) change.

Conceptually, this book turns to processual and relational perspectives that reject the ontological privileging of spatial hierarchies. Practice theory and community economy thinking, each in their own way, renounce and counter determinative conceptions of structures, systems, and globalism (Schmid and Smith, 2020). Instead they turn to performances and practices in and through which the social world is (re)enacted, bringing diverse routines and possibilities of social co-existence into focus. Despite being bonded over a processual ontology, both perspectives conceptualize the world in quite different ways. Community economy scholarship (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006; Gibson-Graham and Community Economies Collective, 2017; Roelvink et al., 2015) cuts capitalism's ground by exposing economic relations as a site of radical difference. Drawing on a wide variety of inspirations from feminism, poststructuralism, queer theory, and antiessentialist Marxism, community economy thinking deconstructs capitalocentric narratives and subjectivities and seeks to resocialize and repoliticize economic practice. In doing so, the focus is on becoming and difference of postcapitalist subjectivities. Critics, however, see community economy's research agenda around the disidentification with capitalism as attempt to think away its institutions, materialities, and power relations (Castree, 1999; Glassman, 2003). A gap which practice-theoretical perspectives can help to fill.

Practice theory is grounded in a long genealogy of thought around the writings of Marx, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Dewey, Bourdieu, Giddens, and others (Geisel-

hart et al., 2019; Nicolini, 2013; Reckwitz, 2002). While community economy scholarship localizes the social primarily in discursive orders and epistemes, practice theory turns away from representationalism towards routinized performances that assemble bodies, artefacts, meanings, and discourses into relative stable patterns of activity that establish, order, and uphold social co-existence (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 1996; Shove et al., 2012). Practice theory advances a perspective on the materialization of social performances that productively speaks to community economy's focus on contingency and diversity. The book sees merit in combining both approaches to acknowledge the possibilities that dwell in economic difference – liberated by community economy's ontological politics and put into perspective through practice theory's appreciation of routinized activities that institute, condition, and channel possibly transformative activity.

Methodologically, the work turns to ethnographic research methods and interviewing. Participant observation, in a way, is the methodological counterpart of practice theory (Reckwitz, 2016). It allows the researcher to capture the 'silent' part of human activity – the supposedly irrelevant, the taken-for-granted, the clandestine, the ineffable, the routinized, and the unconscious. Participant observation, however, faces a number of limitations around accessibility, temporality, and expenditure. Interviews partly make up for these shortcomings, in particular by easing access and providing orientation. Furthermore, the work follows action research methodologies in their rethinking of data collection, knowledge production, and research objectives along notions of empowerment and social justice. While truly collaborative co-production of knowledge faces a number of issues in the present study, such as the limited availability of co-researchers, action research informs the study's active participation in Stuttgart's community economy.

Contributions

This book contributes both conceptually and empirically to the research and activism of transformative geographies. In joining a community economy perspective with practice theorizing, it combines two strands of scholarship that explore possibilities of a societal shift towards more sustainable trajectories but hitherto lack productive interaction (Schmid and Smith, 2020). Community economy's ontological politics and practice theory's grounding of change in the repetitive enactment of conventionalized patterns of activity inspire a research agenda around the materialization of postcapitalist possibility. Such a research agenda reacts to critiques of community economy's emphasis that to change our understanding of the world is to change the world (Gibson-Graham, 2006). The book makes an elaborate argument that emancipatory research requires the consideration of both possibilities and restrictions to formulate strategies for societal change. In doing so, it speaks to

pertinent debates in the literature on social change. In particular to the tension between antagonism and imagination – that means opposition against 'undesirable' practices on the one side and the emphasis of plurality, possibility, and openness on the other side – as different modalities of resistance (Zanoni et al., 2017; see also R. Lee, 2016; North and Cato, 2017).

Based on a practice-theoretical reading of community economy scholarship, this book develops an analytical framework that operationalizes a degrowth research agenda through a perspective on the diverse patterns of practices' relatedness ('logics'). As such it reacts to spatially naive approaches that focus on locally bound community activism on the one hand and an abstract globalization, which is frequently conceived of in aspatial terms, on the other hand. Following relational notions of space, such as Massey's (2005, 2008) demand for a politics of place beyond place, the 'diverse logics perspective' embeds empirical findings in a conceptually grounded notion of practices' broader alignments. In doing so, the book develops notions around degrowth practices and degrowth politics that describe *conventionalized patterns of activity that reflectively relate to practices' broader alignments in ways that found the assumption that these activities have an effect in line with degrowth's principles.* Transformation, or more precisely a degrowth transition, then, is the *change of practice-alignments towards a degrowth trajectory following breaks, substitutions, and shifts of dominant patterns in practices' relatedness.* The work, thus, makes an important contribution to bridge the conceptual and methodological chasm between context-specific enactments of alternatives and more general notions of social change.

Space is not only at the root of the book's conceptual argument but also informs a differentiated view on the geographies of transformation, acknowledging different forms of socio-spatial relatedness. Drawing on the spatial concepts of place, scale, network, and territory, the book explores the different spatialities through which transformative processes unfold. It attunes different social dimensions with transformative strategies through common spatialities, carving out particularly viable socio-spatial degrowth strategies.

Empirically, the study investigates a highly dynamic case in a prosperous context in the Global North. In contrast to places with a longer trajectory in alternative organizing, the case of Stuttgart is relatively inconspicuous at first. Lacking a significant "alternative milieu" (Longhurst, 2015) until recently, a contemporary generation of activists and organizations create a rather undogmatic and pragmatic landscape of alternatives, addressing a broad range of issues around social inequality and environmental unsustainability. In terms of its empirical focus, the study stands out in at least two ways. First, it covers the dynamic unfolding of alternative forms of economic organization in a place without a long-standing tradition of community-led activism. By capturing both enabling and constraining moments in that development, this book sheds light on the possibility of building alternative economies outside and beyond the 'usual' places. Second, the work pays close

attention to the links between organizations, which is crucial for the development of an alternative milieu beyond disparate hubs of alternative organizing. Both aspects broaden the focus and contribute to a better understanding of transformative processes.

Limitations

Research on transformation in general, and this study in particular, faces a number of limitations that require further reflection. First, due to its orientation towards possible futures, research on transformation inevitably involves speculation – something scientific studies are inherently uncomfortable with. Simply extrapolating possibilities from the present, however, ignores the wealth of possibilities that remain hidden and underacknowledged. This book takes on this challenge by grounding future-oriented assumptions in conceptually and methodologically sound argumentation. It finds an optimistic and hopeful tone, while being aware of and transparent about the hypothetical character of its forward-looking orientation. Second, research on transformation involves a politics. While research is never simply neutral or objective, the prospective character of research on transformation renders it distinctly normative. As a consequence, any articulation needs to be transparent about its origin and intent. I do acknowledge this circumstance at different points throughout this work. Specifically in part I, which establishes the study's critical stance against growth-based economic and political institutions, and in part III, in which I reflect on the study's methodology and my own positionality. Finally, research on transformation deals with complex processes that involve dispersed moments and places. It needs to engage the limited resources at its disposal to generate useful and empowering knowledge. This last point needs further elaboration to explain the study's approach.

Broadly speaking, there are two ideal-typical (in a Weberian sense) strategies on how research can mobilize its limited resources to account for the complexity of transformative geographies. On the one hand, it can focus on a particular object or practice and its relations across different places and times. On the other hand, it can look at the complex interplay of objects, practices, and relations in a specific geographical context. The former enables the research to gain insights into the effects, tendencies, and interdependencies across dispersed sites. It can, however, only make limited assertions about the processes and interdependencies outside of the relations in focus. The latter, in turn, works to capture the complexity of relations in place. It can, however, only make limited assertions about the relations beyond that geographical and temporal context. Of course, there are also numerous combinations of both strategies.

This work primarily follows the latter strategy but seeks to include the former by creating conceptual and methodological tools to link its empirical focus to moments and places beyond. In concrete terms that means, although the work's empirics are geographically and temporarily bound to the context of Stuttgart between 2016–2019, it considers the relations beyond place which remain outside of its direct focus. This 'outside' is a simplified and homogenized space that emerges through literature and experience – sometimes on/of specific sites, sometimes on social relations more generally – such as analyses of value chains, research on social and environmental injustice, and involvement in translocal networks. My discussion of transformation, consequently, is grounded in rich empirical data from a specific site squared with the many-sided (and sited) but less direct insights beyond place. This work spends much time on providing a thematic overview and developing conceptual tools to enable a perspective on a politics of place beyond place (Massey, 2005, 2008), as reflected in its structure.

Structure

This book structures into five parts that follow the classical trajectory of literature review, conceptual framework, methodology, findings, and discussion. Each part divides into a number of chapters that are consecutively numbered for simpler orientation and cross-referencing and build towards the question how community activism and civic engagement can shift transformative geographies towards a degrowth trajectory. Part I contours the field of tension between (economic) growth, capitalist cheapening, sustainable consumption, and community economies that activism and civic engagement challenge, co-create, and navigate. Part II, then, advances a conceptual argument how different sites interlink in practice and works towards the development of a research agenda to trace the complex processes of transformation and transition. Part III translates the foregoing considerations into methodological tools that guide data collection and analysis of transformative practice. Part IV presents empirical evidence on alternatives, as well as enabling and constraining moments thereof. Part V, finally, returns to the initial question and examines the (im)possibilities of a degrowth transition in practice. The individual parts are interspersed by interludes that explicate transformations' spatialities and draw out its decidedly geographical character. While the book exhibits a spatial sensitivity throughout, these sections highlight the merit of developing a sophisticated spatial literacy and provide a corresponding groundwork. The remainder of this introduction gives a more detailed overview that looks at the individual chapters.

Part I discusses social and ecological crises in the context of growth-based economic, political, and cultural institutions in the Global North and traces the var-

ious responses of scholars, activists, policy-makers, and entrepreneurs. Chapter 1, thereby, exposes both the unsustainability and the institutionalization of economic growth. It outlines the ensuing contradiction that modern societies depend on growth which, at the same time, runs up against social and ecological limits. Approaches around sustainable development and green growth that continue along present trajectories, the chapter concludes, ultimately deepen social and ecological crises and constitute an implausible orientation for a sustainability transition. Chapter 2, then, scans the landscape of political and economic alternatives for approaches that question existent relations of work, property, and decision-making, which lay at the base of modern growth-dependency. It drills down into degrowth and postcapitalism, two approaches that oppose economic growth and capital accumulation, as guidance for a radical (as in addressing the root cause) theory and praxis. Chapter 3, lastly, turns to transformation and its agents. It traces the diverse actors involved in translating more or less radical critiques into social practice, including community grassroots initiatives, eco-social enterprises, and policy-makers. Furthermore, it sets up the conceptualization of transformative geographies – deepened in part II – by proposing an etymologically grounded distinction between transformation and transition. While transformation means to 'change in shape', which, at first, does not imply a particular agent or directionality, transition emphasizes the (strategic) passage from one state of affairs to another and thus includes both the notion of an orientation and the active connotation of an agent.

Part II formulates a conceptual agenda of transformative geographies around politics and its disagreements, encounters and identities; space and its materialities; and the dynamic unfolding of the social through its routines, shifts, and ruptures. Chapter 4 propounds a political sensitivity by exploring the inherent togetherness of human co-existence. It follows the philosophical thought of Jean-Luc Nancy – brought into Geography most prominently through the writing partnership of Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham – to ground economic practice in an ontological sociality. From the vantage point of a 'community economy', the chapter explores the contingency and politics of economic being-in-common alongside the limitations of poststructuralist transformative imaginaries. Chapter 5, in response, turns towards the materiality of social life. Drawing on practice theory, it traces how human togetherness materializes in bodies, artefacts, and things, stabilizing across time and space. The notion of practice, with its processual and materially grounded ontology, adds to a perspective on social reproduction and change in the spirit of a poststructuralist materialism. Chapter 6 deepens this perspective on the materiality of social co-existence by looking at concepts of scale and power. This brisk chapter prepares the operationalization of transformative geographies, an issue the subsequent chapter turns to. Taking up the conceptual grounding of space, politics, and change, chapter 7 translates the deliberations on

transformative geographies into a perspective on concrete practices. Based on notions of degrowth practices and politics, this chapter proposes to consider diverse logics – patterns in practices' relatedness – to structure the research on transition.

Part III expands the books's thematic and conceptual thrust of a poststructural-materialist perspective on degrowth transitions with methodological and empirical deliberations. Chapter 8 outlines the implications of the work's conceptual orientation for its methodological and analytical set-up. Against the background of practice theory's non-dualistic sensitivity, the chapter conceptualizes implicitness/explicitness and discourse/practice along continua of explicitness and material engagement. Chapter 9, then, translates the general methodological considerations into a research design that guides this work empirically. It schematically presents the different methods the study draws on – desktop research, semi-structured interviewing, participant observation, and focus groups – and relates them both methodologically and chronologically. Chapter 10 takes a more reflexive angle and contemplates research itself as a practice which is exposed to and imbued with cultural, political, ethical, and economic moments. After situating the present study within action research methodologies, it turns to issues around positionality and normativity. Chapter 11, finally, weaves in foregoing critical reflexivity with the book's thematic and conceptual deliberations to formulate an elaborate coding scheme. It details the procedures around data analysis to bare the study's handling of the different kinds of data collected through different methods.

Part IV presents the study's findings. In continuation of the conceptual and methodological considerations which find expression in the study's coding scheme, presented in the previous section, this part is structured into four chapters – alternatives, constraints, enablement, and compromise. Chapter 12 focuses on the ways in which individuals and organizations diverge from incumbent practice. Oriented by the diverse logics identified in parts II and III – economy, governance, communality, subjectivity, and technology – the chapter exposes a range of activities that jar with prevailing norms and rules. Chapter 13 continues by highlighting moments of constraint that impede the enactment and stabilization of heterodox practices. In contrast, the subsequent chapter 14 traces moments that enable and encourage alternative practices. Chapter 15, then, brings together alternatives, constraints, and enablement by tracing the compromises that characterize the everyday practices of sustainability- and degrowth-oriented organizations. Part IV closes with some considerations on transformation, sounding the bell for the ensuing discussion.

Part V, reviews the study's research findings and insights. Chapter 16 (re)turns to the question of a politics of place beyond place and combines the study's conceptual and contextual insights with its empirical findings to sketch the possibility of a degrowth transition. Chapters 17 and 18, then, propose more nuanced perspectives on practices and organizations respectively, elaborating on the concepts of

degrowth practices and degrowth organizations. Against the background of a notion of degrowth politics, these chapters discuss how practices and organizations reflectively relate to practices' broader alignments in ways that found the assumption that they have an effect in line with degrowth's principles. Chapter 19 discusses the difficulties in identifying, let alone singling out, transformative processes of a degrowth transition. Rather than losing itself in the hybridity, contingency, diversity, and processuality of transition, it traces the development of possible strategies for a degrowth transition around 'hybrid infrastructures'. Finally, chapter 20 links the social, spatial, and strategic dimensions of transformation to identify particularly viable socio-spatial strategies for a degrowth transition.

This work wraps up with a reflection on its contributions and limitations as well as the possibilities it identifies. Transformation towards a sustainable future, it concludes, while still involving much speculation and hope, is most likely to come about through tactical compromising – informed by socio-spatial strategies – to build up potential for alternative organizing.