



The Role of Universities in Regional Transitions towards Sustainability

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Message from the Guest Editors

The transition of sociotechnical systems towards sustainability has been studied comprehensively based on the multilevel perspective. Universities and other public research organizations have been identified, by this literature, as an important change agent for sustainability transitions. Besides numerous investigations of the incorporation of sustainability into the structure of universities, scientific research into their real impact on sustainable development is still in its infancy. We therefore identify the need to better understand the interdependence between agency of universities and, in particular, the emergence of transition paths from a spatial perspective. The agency of universities in their specific regional context is usually related to their so-called ‘third mission’. It is exercised by activities of individual scientists and organizational strategies in research, teaching, and the operation of the university itself. Universities thereby come into effect in the course of regional sustainability transitions based on a wide variety of forms and multiscale actor constellations.





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