

Title: "Spatial Justice in Design Research: A Transdisciplinary Discourse"

This track tackles the complex topic of “spatial justice,” engaging with its numerous dimensions and intricate nuances. The concept recognizes that justice is not a legal abstraction. Instead, it can only be realized by literally taking “place” in the lives of individuals and communities that are inexorably spatial. Moreover, the concept also highlights how injustice is both experienced and perpetuated spatially through the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and services that both reflects and compounds other forms of injustice, including race, gender, and class-based disadvantage. Spatial injustice can manifest in various ways, including but not limited to inadequate access to quality housing, disparities in educational opportunities, lack of quality healthcare, exposure to environmental hazards, and limited employment and recreational opportunities, depending on where people live. Defining and advancing justice spatially is a means of advancing systemic social and economic change that requires concrete design solutions spanning policy reform, urban planning, and community empowerment as restorative measures to combat racial capitalism.

Our commitment to this subject resonates with a wide range of professionals—including designers, technologists, researchers, legal advocates, and policymakers—passionately involved in cultivating fairer environments. Our exploration transcends the boundaries of physical spaces to include virtual landscapes, underscoring the burgeoning role of the digital.

The track both addresses spatial disparities in resource allocation, opportunities, and power and highlights multidisciplinary, community-responsive projects that advance the spatial dimensions of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Harmonizing perspectives from geography (space) and law (justice), the track is especially interested in exploring the digital dimensions of spatial (in)justice, from material digital infrastructures (e.g., network access, the siting of data centers) to emerging experiences of our “data-doubles,” or unique digital personas. We aim to understand how these digital manifestations and their material infrastructures influence experiences in blended environments that integrate physical and digital elements and the often invisible spaces of extraction and labor that enable them.

Design is essential in advancing transformative justice In the face of multiple overlapping global crises, including climate change, escalating warfare, migration, human rights, and pandemic disease. This track holds space for multidisciplinary design research on the intersection of spatialized justice, historical trauma, digital security, and inequality to build more profound, more informed responses to systemic violence and racial tension. Our strategy prioritizes proactive advocacy for wellness, sustainability, and equity. We emphasize the vital role of legal advocacy, digital literacy, and critical legal empowerment in promoting spatial justice.

In conclusion, this track is designed as a dynamic platform for stimulating intellectual discussions, fostering collaborations, and facilitating knowledge exchange that advocates for spatial justice in design at a global level. With a forward-looking perspective toward the future,

we are committed to promoting innovative, inclusive, and fair design solutions serving physical and digital communities worldwide.

Track Objectives:

This track seeks to critically examine the theoretical and practical foundations of spatial justice and its significance within design research. It aims to unpack the intricate ties that bind spatial justice to social, economic, and environmental factors, illustrating how these relationships shape our understanding of equity in various spaces.

Aiming to foster a collaborative and dialogic environment, we invite researchers and practitioners across various disciplines to participate. The track intends to shed light on effective practices, methodologies, and tools designed with a keen consciousness of spatial justice. Through showcasing a selection of case studies, ideations, and reflections, we will illustrate the application of transdisciplinary strategies in different settings and contexts. Moreover, our discussions will navigate the inherent complexities of the challenges and prospects linked to designing for spatial justice.

Track Themes:

We invite submissions that address or pertain to the following themes:

- Theoretical frameworks for defining spatial justice within design, policy, and law.
- Transdisciplinary strategies for addressing spatial justice include urban planning, policy, architecture, human rights, and environmental justice.
- Community engagement and participatory design methods for promoting spatial justice.
- The ethical implications and social responsibilities inherent in designing for spatial justice.
- Exploring how data-driven technologies can be used to exacerbate spatial injustice or further spatial justice.
- Case studies of design and research initiatives prioritizing spatial justice.
- Debates spotlighting policy implications and governance structures for propelling spatial justice initiatives.
- The intricacies and opportunities in designing for spatial justice across various cultural and geographical contexts.

Intended Audience:

This track is tailored to engage a diverse audience of researchers, designers, policymakers, attorneys, community organizers, and practitioners from disciplines such as urban planning, architecture, landscape design, law, sociology, geography, anthropology, environmental studies, and more.

Submission Guidelines:

Individuals are invited to submit comprehensive abstracts or other formats describing how and what will be shared during the session (up to 500 words). This can include:

- A traditional presentation

- **Multimedia Presentations:** These might include animations, short films, or interactive digital presentations, allowing researchers to present their findings dynamically and engagingly.
- **Performance-based Presentations:** Some researchers might present their findings through performance art, such as a dance or a play. This would be particularly applicable for research related to embodied experiences or spatial design.
- **Virtual or Augmented Reality:** Given technological advancements, VR or AR can be used to present design research. This would allow attendees to immerse themselves in the design, providing a unique perspective.
- **Storytelling/Narrative presentations:** Rather than a conventional, linear presentation, researchers might present their findings as a story, making it more engaging and memorable for the audience.

Individuals are encouraged to submit abstracts or alternative proposals (up to 500 words) detailing their research, presentation, case study, or theoretical insights related to the track themes. Submissions should demonstrate the transdisciplinary aspects of their work and provide insights into the potential implications of designing for spatial justice.

Review Process:

An expert panel of academics and practitioners in spatial justice, policy design, human rights, PAR, and other transdisciplinary design research will anonymously review all submissions. They will assess submissions based on relevance to the track themes, originality, theoretical and practical significance, and clarity of presentation.

Track Chairs:

- Dr. Miriam Tedeschi, an Academy of Finland PostDoc Researcher at the Faculty of Law, is also a Docent in human geography at the Department of Geography and Geology, University of Turku
- Dr. Amalia Verdu Sanmartin, Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS) Postdoctoral Researcher, Law
- Sarah Kanouse, Associate Professor of Media Arts, College of Art Media and Design, Northeastern University
- Jules Rochielle Sievert, Creative Director, NuLawLab, Northeastern University School of Law and Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Student College Of Art, Media, and Design. Jules was an Ambassador for Health Equity at Policy Link.

We envision this track as a dynamic platform for enriching discussions, knowledge exchange, and collaborations, paving the way for inventive and inclusive strategies for designing spatial justice. We look forward to your **contributions** and the opportunity to facilitate insightful discourse on this critical subject.

Email j.sievert@northeastern.edu for details about the call.