

Planning Perspectives, Special Issue: Aerial Affairs

Deadline: Jun 29, 2026

Lisa Henicz

Planning Perspectives: Special Issue "Aerial Affairs. Planning Histories and Practices of Spatial Perception, Data and Power".

The Journal Planning Perspectives invites submissions of scholarly papers for the special issue "Aerial Affairs. Planning Histories and Practices of Spatial Perception, Data and Power".

Guest editors Prof. Dr. Katrin Albrecht, Dr. Angela Gigliotti, and Lisa Henicz

Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences OST | SNFS Sinergia Aerial Spatial Revolution

Aerial Affairs

The conquest of the air at the threshold of the 20th century and the discovery of the air as a new element for movement and communication have profoundly transformed our way of perceiving, thinking and practicing space. New airborne technologies and visual media such as aerial photography, satellite imagery and drone vision have since become powerful means for surveying, representing, planning and designing cities, infrastructures and landscapes.

The gaining of a new vision indicated a revolutionary shift in planning practice and theory, even if first balloon surveying attempts were doubted to "ever be found practical and prove of more than theoretical interest" (E. Deville 1895). Whereas air views could show the "beauties and defects" (P. Abercrombie 1919) of the fast-growing historical cities by revealing a "new urban façade and perspective never before known" (J. L. Sert 1942), they would soon equally facilitate planning in remote, yet unmapped and seemingly uninhabited regions by enabling rapid data collection containing a striking "abundance of details" (R. Danger 1933) and by providing efficient tools for exploring and conquering new territories. Beyond the technical, analytical and documentary value of aerial means for planning and research, the changing perception and experience of spaces and bodies were assumed to also impact the overall "sensing of gravity, dimension, density and quantity" (P. Zucker 1929), and, consequently, to "enlighten and expand the spirit" (Le Corbusier 1942) of all urban and architectural projects.

Given the interdependence between spatial perception, representation and design, the special issue "Aerial Affairs" aims to assemble and relate new studies that investigate how aerial photography and aerial planning tools have reshaped urban design, examining how flight and the view from above and afar have catalysed new approaches to structuring cities, territories, landscapes and infrastructural networks for modern living in the 19th and 20th century.

The special issue builds upon the ongoing SNFS-funded project "Aerial Spatial Revolution. The Conquest of the Air and its Impact on Architecture, City and Territory".

Participation

Papers should present original unpublished historical research on aerial planning. They may focus on specific projects, places, figures, institutions, networks, documents and processes that address topics on physical-material expressions of space, its formal treatment as well as its intrinsic conception related to aerial planning. Authors are invited to discuss methods and practices of modern urban design practices; ideas and ideological underpinnings of planning, city and territory revealed by the aerial; new conceptions of space developed by the conquest of the third dimension; medial, iconographic and instrumental characters of aerial imagery; remote planning methods.

Papers should address one of the following thematic blocks:

- on Media and Representation for Aerial Planning:

eg. drone or satellite images, photogrammetry, and its use in planning

eg. models, three-dimensional physical or/and digital modelling

- on Projects and Impacts of Aerial Planning:

eg. planning projects, urban extension plans, urban scale

eg. planning and recoding landscape

- on Networks, Agencies and Processes in Aerial Planning:

eg. conceptualization of space, planning historiography

eg. institutional and professional networks, colonial and imperial agencies, knowledge production and circulation, labour and authorship.

We are interested in contributions that critically address the entanglement of aerial technologies with colonial and techno-imperial projects and offer alternative historiographies of already well-known aspects or so far overlooked materials that enable to bring about unconventional methods and lens to explore aerial planning instances. The call encourages investigations into how aerial planning has intersected with issues of race, gender, class, and labour—both in the production and reception of aerial imagery and in the implementation of planning practices. Authors are invited to explore how these dynamics shaped territorial control, resource extraction, and infrastructural development, as well as how they informed cultural narratives and planning ideologies.

Submission

- title, abstract of max. 1500 words in English, Word format (.doc, .docx)

- proposal of max. 15 figures with captions

- short biographical note of author, status and affiliated institution

Please send your extended abstract to: katrin.albrecht@ost.ch, angela.gigliotti@ost.ch and lisa.henicz@ost.ch

All submissions are reviewed and selected by an initial editor screening. Final papers will range from 3'500 to 7'500 words. Accepted papers will be evaluated according to the journal's practices of double anonymized refereeing by at least two referees.

Tentative schedule

Call for papers: March 2026 – June 2026

Submission extended abstracts: June 29th, 2026

Selection extended abstracts, with editor's feedback: July 17th, 2026

Submission full papers: September 21st, 2026

Double peer-reviewers' feedback: Late January 2027

Final submission of revised papers: February 2027 – March 2027

Publication: Autumn 2027

Editors Planning Perspectives: John R. Gold, Margaret Gold

Guest Editors Special Issue "Aerial Affairs": Prof. Dr. Katrin Albrecht, Dr. Angela Gigliotti, Lisa Henicz

Planning Perspectives is an international, peer-reviewed, hybrid open access journal of history, planning and the environment, published by Taylor and Francis.

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