

Transformation Through Compromise

Pragmatic Muddling Through as a Strategy of Limited Agency in Urban Densification

Sebastian Bornschlegl

Contribution to the Session »Building agency in the climate transformation« of the Sektion Umwelt- und Nachhaltigkeitssoziologie

Introduction

Cities are facing massive challenges due to a growing urban population and the associated lack of housing, as well as the negative impacts of climate change—to which they have contributed significantly. In this context, the ideal of the compact city and similar forms of sustainable urbanism (city of short distances, 15-minute city, green city, smart city, etc.) (Jabareen 2006) provide overarching visions of the future and concrete implementation guidance. Urban densification plays a key role in this, as it helps limit outward growth by intensifying use of already developed or underused land. This article analyzes how experts in Germany negotiate the potentials and challenges of densification in practice, allowing for a realistic view of the status quo.

As a sociotechnical process, densification concerns a broad range of professionals and other stakeholders like politicians, planners, developers, housing associations and companies, architects, consultants, industry representatives, civil society organizations, and residents. As densification affects all major aspects of urban life, there is a large number of internal and external influencing factors to consider (Bornschlegl and Kropp 2025), e.g. infrastructure provision, neighborhood demographic composition, or characteristics of the existing stock. In Germany, densification could be crucial for reconciling two otherwise competing policy targets: creating 400,000 new dwellings annually while reducing daily land consumption below 30 hectares by 2030. Indeed, the potential for densification is substantial: nationally, 2.3 to 2.7 million dwellings could be created (Tichelmann et al. 2019) and, for example, around 40,000 to 46,000 in Stuttgart alone (Held et al. 2022).

However, actually realizing this potential is a challenging process. Construction in the existing stock is much more complicated than on greenfield sites due to limitations imposed by the built environment, strict regulation, as well as fragmented ownership structures (Puustinen et al. 2022). Even though densification is often framed as a win-win scenario with positive effects like improving attractiveness or provision of essential services (Ahlfeldt and Pietrostefani 2019), a wealth of research and practical experience points out recurring issues: it can actually increase emissions, segregation, and displacement (Rice et al. 2020; Cavicchia 2023; Lutz et al. 2024). Therefore, densification is first and foremost an

“implementation challenge” (Wicki and Kaufmann 2022, p. 10), as there is no simple equation between density and sustainability, and outcomes depend on local contextual factors. Recent research moves away from bivariate density metrics toward exploring distributive, procedural dynamics and relations (Haarstad et al. 2023; Bornschlegl and Kropp 2025). Densification shifts benefits and burdens between people and locations, having disparate effects across areas (McFarlane 2020). Urban practitioners must adapt their strategies to local conditions while balancing competing demands: sociopolitical visions, private and institutional interests, investors’ expectations, and development objectives.

The goal of the presented study is to explore how experts from diverse fields in Germany deal with the identified challenges of densification. This was assessed empirically through a group Delphi procedure (Niederberger and Renn 2018) with 15 participants realized in 2023. The research question is: How do experts reconcile different professional perspectives on room for maneuver when balancing development and sustainability goals? Conceptually, densification presents a nexus of ‘wicked’ problems (Rittel and Webber 1973), meaning that there’s no objectively right or wrong approach. Rather, it revolves around the negotiation of diverse professional practices and planning values, and its effects cannot be fully anticipated. This entails juxtaposing different visions of sustainability through what Sheila Jasanoff (2022) terms ‘spaceship’ and ‘stewardship’ imaginaries: centralized, abstract knowledge and metrics versus locally grounded strategies. The analysis reveals how experts acquire agency through their stewardship role, deciding on small, incremental, and often conflicting steps similar to Charles E. Lindblom’s (1959) conceptualization of ‘successive limited comparison.’

We first outline the study design and methodology, then present the Delphi findings with attention to expert interactions. Next, we examine stewardship’s incremental, practice-oriented character, before concluding with reflections on the inherent ambivalence of densification.

Research Design

Given the importance of steering densification during implementation, exploring how responsible experts assess the issue was considered a fitting approach. In earlier research on controversial assessments, the Delphi method (Cuhls 2019) has been successfully used for generating prospective evaluations and recommendations despite incomplete knowledge, based on experts’ intuitive experience and normative stances. While studies differ in their design, the basic principle is to identify consensus and dissent on survey questions over multiple rounds. A key limitation of survey-only designs is that the reasoning behind responses remains unknown. The group Delphi variant (Niederberger and Renn 2018) addresses this limitation through additional discussion sessions for deliberation among participants who represent diverse fields. Yet this approach introduces its own trade-offs: anonymity is lost, participant numbers are limited to 12–25, and the time investment is higher.

As the research centered on negotiating contested goals and practical considerations, the group Delphi approach was considered more suitable than a survey-only design. The initial selection of potential experts was based on contacts made during a seminar by the German Institute of Urban Affairs (Difu), professional networks, local projects linked to the International Building Exhibitions 2027 (IBA), and desk research on prominent urban densification projects in Germany. From a pool of 127 invited experts, 15 agreed to participate, representing diverse and overlapping areas of expertise. The largest groups were in administration and planning (6 each), followed by consulting (5), research (4), architecture (2), business (1), and politics (1). The gender distribution was balanced, with seven female and eight male participants. All participants worked in West German metropolitan regions, concentrated in Baden-Württemberg and Hamburg. Their expertise was deemed sufficiently diverse, though business,

housing industry, and civil society representation remained limited due to time constraints and low private-sector response rates. In hindsight, representatives from smaller, rural municipalities would have complemented the metropolis-centered discourse.

Geographic dispersion and scheduling constraints motivated a hybrid online approach, informed by positive departmental experience (Niederberger and Zwick 2023). Following an introductory meeting, data collection proceeded over two rounds combining asynchronous standardized surveys with synchronous group discussions. The first-round survey comprised 20 items across six thematic blocks using 10-point Likert scales and confidence ratings, plus sociodemographic items. It was pretested internally and by two external experts. Topics covered social requirements and quality criteria for construction in the existing stock, densification potentials and risks, mixed-use implementation challenges, experience with the Urbane Gebiete (MU) zoning type (Schuchert et al. 2021), and socioecological criteria for assessing construction projects. Consensus and dissent were identified via a variation coefficient threshold of ≥ 0.5 (Kuhn 2020). In the first discussion session, seven questions were selected via the predefined dissent threshold or the low confidence rating of the associated thematic block. The second-round questionnaire was reduced to these items plus one additional question based on participants' input. Plenary sessions drew on group discussion methodology (Kühn and Koschel 2018), using statistical results as entry points to explore the reasoning behind responses.

A key analytical challenge was re-familiarizing oneself with the transcripts after completing the descriptive, more technical report for participants, shifting focus toward the research question and sensitizing concepts. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2024) guided this process, selected for its theoretical flexibility, capacity to integrate inductive and deductive concepts, and attention to latent meaning central to investigating expertise performance. Coding proceeded in two rounds, employing inductive codes (e.g., relativization of principles, contextualizing assessments, dealing with ambivalences) alongside deductive codes derived from the Delphi method and theoretical concepts (e.g., negotiation patterns such as agreement and dissent, regulations, references to forms of expertise and experience, influencing factors). Initial themes still contained content descriptions of the planning and construction issues discussed. Codes were then regrouped and themes refined to capture how tensions between goals and constraints were negotiated through the interplay of different forms of expertise and situatedness. Finally, themes with limited narrative significance were either excluded from further synthesis or integrated into other theme definitions.

Results

Before each group session, survey results were analyzed to identify controversial topics. In the first round, the range of responses to the selected questions spanned from seven to nine, suggesting highly divergent assessments among the experts and potential for controversial discussion. Interestingly, during the session, there was remarkably little direct confrontation. The assumption was that in the second round, replies would therefore move closer together and become less controversial. However, this proved not to be the case: the range of responses to the repeated questions remained remarkably divergent, with item ranges fluctuating by no more than one point in either direction. Only in a single instance did the variation coefficient drop below the threshold of ≥ 0.5 . Still, the second discussion was non-confrontational as well, save for a small number of specific issues. Across both rounds, participants practiced an incremental, additive discourse, building upon rather than questioning prior statements. They explained the reasoning behind their survey responses, tying it to their own context of work and experience with densification. The results were comprehensive problem descriptions rather than a clear

consensus on measures suggested by the questions. Participants referred to what is at stake, how the issue is handled across contexts, and how the situation might develop or improve. The following quote exemplifies this dynamic by agreeing with the previous speaker while adding context-specific information and explaining one's normative stance:

So what S1 also just / I agree with that, it has to happen at certain densities. In [city] we don't build single-family houses anymore, actually reject that to the greatest extent possible, but rather try to develop on land that lies within our municipal territory.¹

The additive approach to discussion meant that potential conflicts indicated by the survey results mostly did not materialize, yet it also failed to produce meaningful convergence between viewpoints. This dynamic aligns with the observed reluctance of participants to position themselves in relation to the suggested planning measures directly. Debate usually started with problematization of the item itself, especially during the first session. Participants repeatedly argued the wording was too general to permit clear answers, leading them to relativize their own survey response behavior:

[...] such absolutes / I struggle with those, and I have to say, that's how it went for me with all the questions [...], right, so, you can't really answer it in such absolute terms [...].

During the discussions that followed, participants were unable to establish generalizable principles or approaches. In instances where a spontaneous consensus emerged, such as no further demolition of the existing building stock, it was immediately qualified by another participant with reference to contextual factors. However, more flexible goals achieved agreement when they allowed sufficient room for local adaptation. Examples include pursuing minimal outward expansion and, when necessary, ensuring such growth is dense and efficient; or demolishing as little existing housing stock as possible and, when unavoidable, targeting substandard and low-density structures. In both cases, more radical stances faced strong criticism for undermining the agency of experts to fulfill their responsibilities and achieve their objectives under current constraints.

These performances of expertise contribute to its third major characteristic: the core competency of experts lay in the identification of limiting factors and framework conditions. When the participants expressed clear stances, predictions, or recommended actions, these were always tied to the presence of certain factors and constraints without a claim to universal truth. While there was overlap between perspectives, these frames of reference could not be fully synthesized, leading to the aforementioned juxtaposition rather than integration of perspectives. The result was a complex web of conditions that determine how densification occurs and how much agency urban practitioners can exercise. These include policies across different levels and fields, growth and migration trends, regulations such as zoning types and noise protection, subsidies for specific measures and their eligibility criteria, financial and human resources, industry standards, market forces, actor constellations of projects, consumer preferences and needs as well as their socioeconomic composition, and usage conflicts. Evaluating and managing interactions between these diverse factors presents a key challenge, as one participant illustrates:

Because, in our planning practice this topic [noise protection] is of course a major one and also enormously difficult. With our planning instruments [...], we often struggle. So [...] to exhaust the technical possibilities, that's not always possible, depending on whether [DIN] 18005 or the TA Lärm applies [Technical Instructions on Noise Abatement]. [...] And now besides industrial noise, social noise is also a big topic. The courts

¹ The author translated all direct quotations from the German transcripts into English, maintaining the original wording as faithfully as possible.

have supported cities in this regard, that for example the sounds of children at play are not considered noise [...].

This statement hints at another major theme of the discussion: throughout the whole process, participants from different fields lamented severe limitations to their agency when implementing densification. They identified gaps between the values and objectives they deem essential for sustainable transformation and what is considered feasible under current constraints, a challenge documented in the transformation efforts of municipal administrations in Germany (Graef and Kropp 2026). Such tensions characterized several problem areas that densification research has examined (Bornschlegl and Kropp 2025): the preservation and renovation of existing buildings, complicated by strict regulations, prohibitive costs, destructive measures, and displacement risks; the creation of affordable housing through densification, which depends on sometimes poorly aligned subsidies and profit-driven developers; the need to reduce per-capita living space without direct means of influence; curbing urban sprawl, hindered by limited resources and expertise, particularly in rural areas; and the pursuit of fine-grained mixed use, complicated by conflicts between commercial and residential functions. In these areas, no universally applicable or mutually beneficial resolution could be identified. Instead, participants reported compromise-ridden, localized approaches that advance certain objectives while sidelining others. Still, experts are confronted with the expectation of uniting goals that seem incompatible, as one participant from a public housing company underlines:

[...] so we calculated this three years ago [...] for our housing stock, whether we can achieve the goal of climate neutrality and still keep total rent neutral. And it was already not achievable back then. That was before we had the interest rate shock and the construction cost explosion. That means, today it's much more difficult to achieve that.

Through such statements, it became clear that key conflicts between goals related to densification, e.g. between economic attractiveness and environmental goals, cannot be solved in a straightforward manner. Up to this point, it seems experts shared a rather homogeneous set of sociopolitical and planning values and differed only in the individual paths taken for pursuing these objectives through densification, sparking little fundamental debate. However, the topic of mixed use and reforms of the Federal Land Utilization Ordinance (BauNVO) regarding the addition of the MU zoning type revealed that experts do indeed represent diverging interests, and that there were two sides to this issue: On one side were planners from a major city who welcomed the flexibilization of densification with regard to mixing both housing and commerce, a change they saw as enabling mixed-use configurations reminiscent of the historic Gründerzeitviertel of the late nineteenth century, as well as the perceived facilitation of the approval process for such projects:

And one of the reasons [for the new zoning type] was among other things the topic of mixed use, because the existing categories, especially Mischgebiete [mixed-use areas], encompass this equal balance between living and working, and that one wanted to move away from that toward more flexibility regarding the mixing ratio.

On the other side of the conflict, a representative from a local chamber of commerce voiced major criticism regarding the ramifications of more flexible zoning: from their perspective, it threatens resident businesses in these areas, and, by extension, the very objective of mixed use. As there is no longer a prescribed minimum level of commercial use, businesses could face displacement in the long term, particularly due to changing noise protection regulations:

A flexibilization of mixed use, that's what everyone strives for. City of short distances, basic services. And that's also in the interest of commerce [...]. But as I said, Urbane

Gebiete [MU] do not prescribe a [minimum] commercial share. And that carries the risk that these areas can quickly tip. [...] And then we have a different situation with legal claims, which then actually always have to be interpreted to the disadvantage of businesses.

Consensus on this issue was reached incrementally over both sessions in the form of a proposed practical compromise: voluntarily, a minimum share of commercial use could be defined for those areas to protect both interests, which the planners have already implemented in some projects.

Discussion

Overall, the discussion revealed a central tension between what experts deem feasible regarding densification under current regulatory and political regimes and what they consider beneficial and necessary. While the general conflicts remain similar across contexts, the specificities and chosen approaches differ depending on the situation and professional field. Drawing on Jasanoff (2022), experts are involved in a process of co-production through which the 'is' of the current sociomaterial and regulatory-institutional fabric of cities and the 'ought' of sociopolitical visions, assumed requirements, and necessary transitions co-constitute each other. This became apparent in the discursive strategy of relativization and the refusal to rely on universal principles as part of experts' deliberation. As the analysis shows, there is no linear pathway from a problematic status quo to an ideal urban future, nor does a repertoire of predetermined transformative actions exist. Instead, solutions remain partial and bound to situated practice.

The participants can be interpreted as negotiating between two overarching visions of sustainability (Jasanoff 2022): their professional expertise is anchored in universal, ostensibly objective 'spaceship' notions, such as climate science and corresponding metrics, alongside national and international urban policies like climate adaptation, reducing land take to specified thresholds, or implementing particular ideals of sustainable urbanism. However, while this vision of sustainability serves as orientation, it is too abstract for direct implementation. Practitioners are therefore primarily guided by more incremental 'stewardship,' emphasizing local adaptation to their work contexts while adhering to the precautionary principle of foreseeing and preventing potential knock-on effects, such as social segregation and displacement that may follow more disruptive densification strategies (Cavicchia 2023). These two interrelated visions help to explain seemingly contradictory stances taken during the Delphi: for instance, while continued outward expansion demonstrably reinforces climate change and biodiversity loss, experts acting as stewards realize that a complete halt will produce complex interactions that undermine their agency in addressing urban development pressures, such as housing demand in growing cities.

A key finding is that negotiations between the global and the local, and between principles, planning values, and interests and the concrete scope of action, constitute an ultimately subjective, highly localized, and differentiated practice. This means that depending on the location, professional field, institutional context, and makeup of involved stakeholders, the same course of action might be deemed appropriate or misguided. While 'spaceship' notions sensitized participants to actions that should be implemented regardless of context, they remained acutely aware of the many intervening factors and limitations to their agency that require them to make ambivalent, contradictory compromises. The experts thus recognized the relational character of densification and its effects across outcome dimensions like urban livability, exchange processes, and social conflicts (Haarstad et al. 2023). In his canonical paper on the "science of muddling through," Lindblom (1959) described a method for decision-

making in administration that still seems to hold true for deliberation during the Delphi. Planning never starts from a blank slate: the course of action is not determined by identifying essential values and goals in the abstract, then translating them directly into action. Rather, involved stakeholders compare concrete, feasible options that present minor alterations to current trajectories and favor gains on certain criteria over others. This process is then repeated iteratively rather than decided once and for all, allowing for incremental adjustments along the way. Thus, expertise as performed in the Delphi involves not only knowledge of what needs to be done, but also a situated sense of what can realistically be achieved, under what constraints, and at what cost. Participants “muddle through” the transformation process, navigating the potentials and risks of densification via situated compromises. This observation aligns with adaptive strategies employed in public administration (Graef and Kropp 2026). While the paradigm of neutrality often limits municipal employees in Germany to incrementalism, diplomacy, and alignment with prevailing political agendas, the experts’ leading roles still allowed for stronger political positioning and orientation toward transformation.

As Lindblom cautions, selecting between straightforward options risks ignoring values essential to an acceptable compromise. This became apparent in the conflict surrounding the flexibilization of mixed use: without the chamber of commerce representative, a central stake might have been overlooked. Good stewardship thus hinges on the breadth of perspectives involved, since a compromise reached without affected interests risks systematic blind spots. This conflict also illustrates a key difference between Lindblom’s administration-focused perspective and the planning and implementation of densification projects and sustainability transformations in general: the latter inevitably span many actors across society, from administration, utility companies, and service providers to civil society groups, private companies, investors, and individuals. Densification entails an interest-laden politics of value (Habermehl and McFarlane 2023) regarding the unequal distribution of benefits and burdens (McFarlane 2020) among stakeholders, resulting in distinct actor constellations and land policy conflicts (Puustinen et al. 2022). In this context, stewardship is not neutral but a deeply political, positional practice. Ideas of the common good and transformation objectives are therefore defined operationally rather than nominally: they emerge as a workable agreement that diverse stakeholders are willing to forge, mediated by regulations, standards, institutional and market logics, and administrative processes.

Conclusion

The deliberations as part of the Delphi group discussion sessions show that experts act as stewards of compromise. They remain mindful of overarching societal visions of the compact city and sustainable urbanism while steering specific densification processes in a way that adheres to the practical constraints in their fields and contexts of work. The results are incremental, ambivalent steps full of trade-offs rather than comprehensive solutions. As became clear during the discussion, participants recognized their transformative agency as deeply limited and interconnected, each carrying their own set of constraints and priorities that have to be integrated. The relations between densification processes and projects, influencing factors, professional perspectives, and framework conditions are simply too complex for the direct translation of transformative visions onto local realities. Experts have to approximate goals according to their beliefs and situated assessments, recognizing that there are no universally beneficial or correct solutions, and that their colleagues might decide for a different course of action in another situation.

As Lindblom emphasizes, such contextual, comparative processes can nonetheless prove systematic and generate meaningful change: because different experts represent different forms of knowledge,

values, and realities, the results of deliberation among them reflect this diversity. This was evident in an additive, context-bound discussion of densification objectives and strategies that yielded detailed problem descriptions and preliminary suggestions based on experiential knowledge, rather than resolutions of fundamental value conflicts. At the same time, unintended consequences and downstream conflicts become more likely when key stakeholders are missing from decision-making, or structural conditions severely constrain actors' capacity for deliberation. This suggests a direction for future studies on densification practices: while the represented perspectives were quite diverse, municipal planning and research voices predominated, whereas the singular perspectives of local business and the housing sector proved highly valuable to the discussion and could have been expanded. Citizen and civil society perspectives remained marginal due to the method's focus on professional expertise, even though they are essential for grounding densification in residents' lived experiences and securing local acceptance of what they may otherwise perceive as threatening changes to their immediate surroundings (Wicki and Kaufmann 2022).

Finally, whether incremental and often contradictory densification policies and practices can deliver the sustainable transformation necessary to address both the climate and housing crises remains an open question. The sustainability benefits of densification are contested, frequently yielding gains in one domain while producing losses in another. Participants agreed there is no alternative to this strategy, but pointed out inherent tensions and value conflicts that remain difficult to resolve. From their perspective, densification is but one tool and problem nexus among many in steering urban development, not a panacea for the many ills cities face. Experts will be urged to align material changes with prevailing framework conditions and goals, prioritizing certain gains and losses over others according to the sociomaterial and institutional context.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy – EXC 2120/1 – 390831618.

References

- Ahlfeldt, Gabriel M., and Elisabetta Pietrostefani. 2019. The economic effects of density: A synthesis. *Journal of Urban Economics* 111:93–107.
- Bornschlegl, Sebastian, and Cordula Kropp. 2025. Co-agency in urban densification: Understanding hybrid agents and their consequences for sustainability. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development* 17:252–267.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2024. Thematic Analysis. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, Michael D. Giardina, and Gaile S. Cannella, 385–402. London: SAGE.
- Cavicchia, Rebecca. 2023. Urban densification and exclusionary pressure: Emerging patterns of gentrification in Oslo. *Urban Geography* 44:1474–1496.
- Cuhls, Kerstin. 2019. Die Delphi-Methode – eine Einführung. In *Delphi-Verfahren in den Sozial- und Gesundheitswissenschaften: Konzept, Varianten und Anwendungsbeispiele*, eds. Marlen Niederberger, and Ortwin Renn, 3–31. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

- Graef, Marie, and Cordula Kropp. 2026. Enacting neutrality or enabling change? The contested role of city administration in socio-ecological transformation. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 59:101073.
- Haarstad, Håvard, Kristin Kjærås, Per Gunnar Røe, and Kristian Tveiten. 2023. Diversifying the compact city: A renewed agenda for geographical research. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 13:5–24.
- Habermehl, Victoria, and Colin McFarlane. 2023. Density as a politics of value: Regulation, speculation, and popular urbanism. *Progress in Human Geography* 47:664–679.
- Held, Tobias, Lutz Deutz, Lars Riach, Ansgar Schmitz-Veltin, and Attina Mäding. 2022. Wohnungsbedarfsanalyse Stuttgart 2030. Stuttgart: Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart.
- Jabareen, Yosef R. 2006. Sustainable Urban Forms. Their Typologies, Models, and Concepts. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26:38–52.
- Jasanoff, Sheila. 2022. Spaceship or Stewardship: Imaginaries of Sustainability in the Information Age. *Historical Social Research* 47:29–47.
- Kuhn, Rainer. 2020. *Das Gruppendelphi: eine diskursive Methode zur Ermittlung von Expert*innenurteilen*. Doctoral dissertation. Universität Stuttgart, Institut für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Kühn, Thomas, and Kay-Volker Koschel. 2018. *Gruppendiskussionen*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Lindblom, Charles E. 1959. The Science of “Muddling Through.” *Public Administration Review* 19:79.
- Lutz, Elena, Michael Wicki, and David Kaufmann. 2024. Creating inequality in access to public transit? Density, gentrification, and displacement. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science* 51:2196–2212.
- McFarlane, Colin. 2020. De/re-densification. *City* 24:314–324.
- Niederberger, Marlen, and Ortwin Renn. 2018. *Das Gruppendelphi-Verfahren*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Niederberger, Marlen, and Michael Zwick. 2023. Online Focus Groups: Opportunities and Challenges From the Perspective of Research Practice. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research FQS* 24:5.
- Puustinen, Tuulia, Pauliina Krigsholm and Heidi Falkenbach. 2022. Land policy conflict profiles for different densification types: A literature-based approach. *Land Use Policy* 123:106405.
- Rice, Jennifer L., Daniel Aldana Cohen, Joshua Long and Jason R. Jurjevich. 2020. Contradictions of the Climate-Friendly City: New Perspectives on Eco-Gentrification and Housing Justice. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 44:145–165.
- Rittel, Horst W. J., and Melvin M. Webber. 1973. Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences* 4:155–169.
- Schuchert, C. Lars, Matthias Bürgin, Selina Lutz, Ben Gabriel and Peter Schwehr. 2021. Qualitäten „Urbaner Gebiete“. Baulich-gestalterische Strategien und stadträumliche Qualitäten für eine neue Baugebietskategorie. BBSR-Online-Publikation 08/2021. Bonn: Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung.
- Tichelmann, Karsten Ulrich, Dieter Blome, Tanja Ringwald, Matthias Günther and Katrin Groß. 2019. Deutschlandstudie 2019. Wohnraumpotenziale in urbanen Lagen. Aufstockung und Umnutzung von Nichtwohngebäuden. Darmstadt: TU Darmstadt.
- Wicki, Michael, and David Kaufmann. 2022. Accepting and resisting densification: The importance of project-related factors and the contextualizing role of neighbourhoods. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 220:104350.