

Abstract

This abstract provides an overview of my PhD-project that aims to explore more-than-human perspectives in urban planning with a focus on urban planning practices in Danish municipalities and their efforts to include urban nature and biodiversity as strategic elements in urban development projects.

The project is driven by the recognition of the Anthropocene and the biodiversity crisis together with growing political efforts to integrate urban nature and biodiversity into cities. This is argued by some to be causing a paradigm shift in urban planning, where considerations of relations with non-humans in the construction of our cities is emergingⁱ. The theoretical foundation of the project is rooted within posthuman thinkingⁱⁱ and particularly the potentials and challenges that more-than-human perspectives pose to planning theory and practice. An emerging field is already using the perspectives to reconceptualize and challenge the notion of human exceptionalism within urban planningⁱⁱⁱ and emphasize the interconnectedness and coexistence of human and nonhumans^{iv}, which highlight challenges of existing understandings of biodiversity^v and the material aspect of urban planning which is highly mediated^{vi}. Still, research to what this means for urban planning practice and the spatiality of the built environment is underdeveloped.

The problem statement hypothesizes that the anthropocentric perspective of urban planning is being challenged and that new demands are being placed on planning frameworks and strategies due to the biodiversity crisis. The project seeks to investigate the challenges and potentials in this shift in urban planning practice by exploring the relationships between 1) strategic and discursive levels and 2) urban space level, to develop and qualify new urban planning practices, framework, and tools. The research questions focus on understanding the role of urban nature and biodiversity in urban development strategies and plans, as well as the specific spatial measures implemented for more-than-human urban spaces and their impact on user experiences and their relationships with nature. The methodology of the project involves discourse analysis of strategies, plans and qualitative interviews, cartographic mappings, and urban space analysis. Overall, the project aims to contribute with knowledge and new understandings of the complexities and dynamics of a shifting context for urban planning where the inclusions of more-than-human dimensions actors highlight questions of agency, materiality, subjectivity.

ⁱ Kirsten M. Parris et al., 'The Seven Lamps of Planning for Biodiversity in the City', *Cities* 83 (2018): 44–53,

ⁱⁱ Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Duke University Press, 2007); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ Donna Houston et al., 'Make Kin, Not Cities! Multispecies Entanglements and "Becoming-World" in Planning Theory', *Planning Theory* 17, no. 2 (2018): 190–212; Jonathan Metzger, 'Cultivating Torment: The Cosmopolitics of More-than-Human Urban Planning', *City* 20, no. 4 (2016): 581–601.

^{iv} Ihnji Jon, 'Deciphering Posthumanism: Why and How It Matters to Urban Planning in the Anthropocene', *Planning Theory* 19, no. 4: 392–420.

^v Parris et al., 'The Seven Lamps of Planning for Biodiversity in the City'.

^{vi} Yvonne Rydin, 'The Challenges of the "Material Turn" for Planning Studies', *Planning Theory & Practice* 15, no. 4: 590–95.