

Ecologies beyond the Human- Reimagining Nature-based Solutions through Relational and Multispecies Perspectives.

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Abstract:

Despite growing interest in Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and their promise to deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits for society, their human-centred utilitarian functionality raises questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of NbS. Now, with two-thirds of the world's population projected to live in cities by 2050, this trend could potentially accelerate biodiversity loss and wildlife habitat destruction, ultimately weakening our resilience against the looming planetary ecocide.

This paper offers a critique of Nature-based Solutions, focusing on their anthropocentric framing and explores how this can be reimagined through relational thinking and multispecies perspectives to envision resilient cities where all species thrive in harmony.

This study will employ a horizon scan approach for literature review, which allows for capturing the recent, fast-changing dynamics of NbS, urban planning, and more-than-human approaches. In particular, it examines recent developments at the intersection of NbS and multispecies justice to address human exceptionalism in urban planning and the built environment. We propose a moral shift that addresses ecological justice issues through transformative policy reform, plural knowledges and reimagined pedagogies, and more-than-human urban design.

Keywords: nature-based solutions, multispecies, more-than-human, urban planning, relational concepts

Main highlights:

- Current Nature-based Solutions are predominantly anthropocentric and utilitarian
- Multispecies assemblages play a pivotal role in shaping the urban fabric

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- Reorienting urban planning to include multispecies relationality can address human exceptionalism
- Integrating the ethics of care and kinship in cities can address ecological justice issues