

NETWORKS, MARKETS & PEOPLE - NMP2024

THEMATIC SESSIONS - TS

TS-09

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING FOR URBAN BIODIVERSITY. HOW CAN SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS MAKE CITIES MORE INCLUSIVE AND SOCIALLY COHESIVE?

Keywords: Urban Biodiversity; Socio-Ecological Innovations; Urban Planning; Collaborative Governance; Co-Creation.

Environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are among major challenges on the agenda of a growing number of cities worldwide. As a response, a range of policies and initiatives to promote urban biodiversity are increasingly being developed by governments at different levels, recognizing the multiple benefits that urban biodiverse green spaces can provide to local communities. One open issue regards the urge to tackle the trade-offs present in policies and plans between biodiversity conservation - as general objective - and increased social inclusion and cohesion - as a result. The effort of planners and policymakers needs to be oriented towards integrating ecological objectives with social ones, so that for instance the restoration of animal and plant habitats and the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable social groups would be mutually addressed via democratic and collaborative governance processes. This means ensuring that greening interventions would not exacerbate - but rather contrast - existing patterns of socio-spatial inequalities, and that the co-benefits of urban biodiversity would be fairly distributed across the whole local community. Indeed, the main challenge would be to shape socio-ecological innovations able to strengthen human-nature relationships and dynamics, avoiding the production of negative side effects at the societal level. By socio-ecological innovations, we mean innovations that are capable of mutually improving the functionality of ecosystems and habitats and of responding to emerging social needs that are not typically met by market dynamics. This thematic Session calls for contributions that explore and investigate how socio-ecological innovations can sustain the transition towards more biodiverse and socially cohesive cities, urban areas, and metropolitan regions. Submissions should place emphasis on community-led practices, innovative local plans, policies and projects, collaborative governance arrangements, and co-creation processes whose focus is to restore, preserve or enhance urban biodiversity in cities, promoting social integration and fighting existing socio-spatial disparities.

CHAIRS

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Israa Mahmoud is an Assistant professor in urban and regional planning at Urban Simulation Laboratory, Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano. She is an expert on Nature-based solutions implementation in urban regeneration. She is lately involved in the National Biodiversity Future Center (NBFC) as a researcher on co-creation and co-governance themes related to urban biodiversity in living labs. After her PhD in Urban regeneration in 2018, she was involved in several European and national projects related to urban greening, placemaking and social cohesion.

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Luca Lazzarini is an Assistant Professor in Urban and Regional Planning currently working in the National Biodiversity Future Center (NBFC) on the mapping and monitoring of the socio-spatial impacts of biodiversity interventions in urban contexts. He holds a PhD in Urban and Regional Development (2019) at DiST/Politecnico di Torino. Between 2019 and 2023, he was postdoc research fellow in spatial planning at Politecnico di Torino, Politecnico di Milano and University IUAV of Venice working on different topics including urban/rural relationships, territorial governance and cohesion, and social innovation in inner peripheries.