

Multispecies Cities:

Co-designing more-than-human well-being in the Asia-Pacific



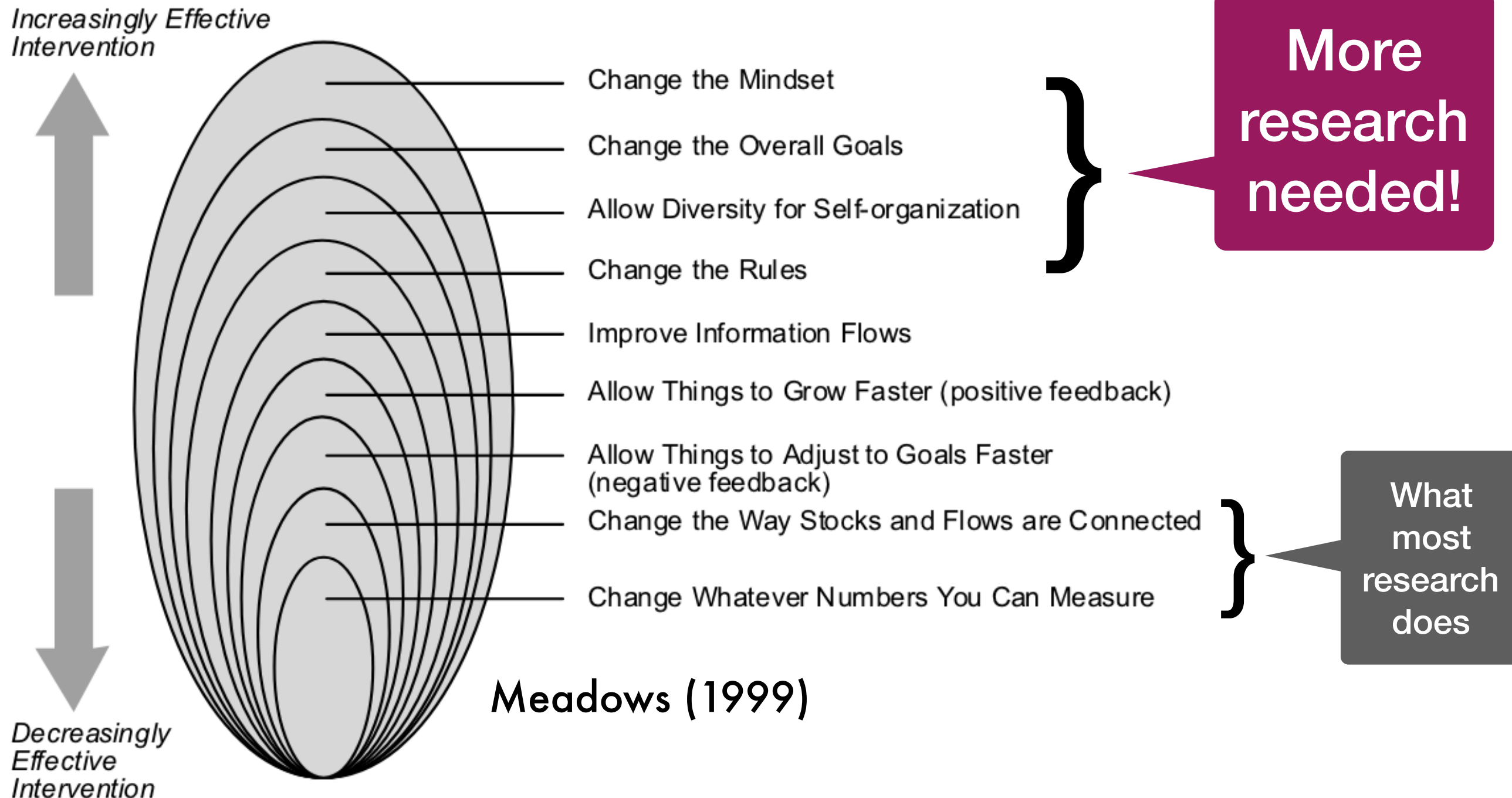
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Senior Researcher, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, Kyoto

Forthcoming!

- Project proposal & call for collaboration
- Proposal for Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (Kyoto)
 - “solve global environm. problems”
 - transdisciplinary research
 - anyone can propose!
- 5 years (plus 2-3 year prep)



Research impact: leverage points



**“anthropocentrism does not spark joy
...so it will have to go”**



anthropocentrism

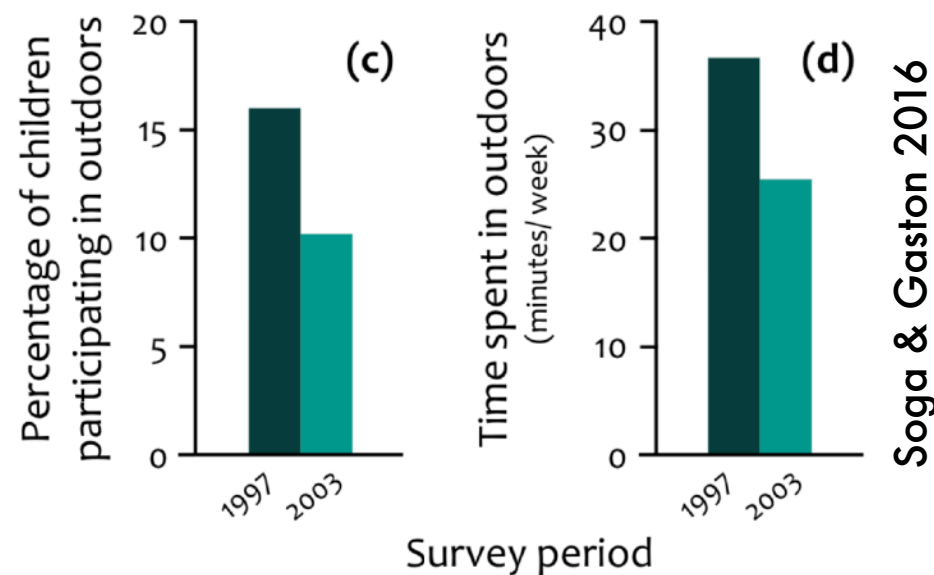
**multispecies
sustainability**

**cities of multi-
species well-being**

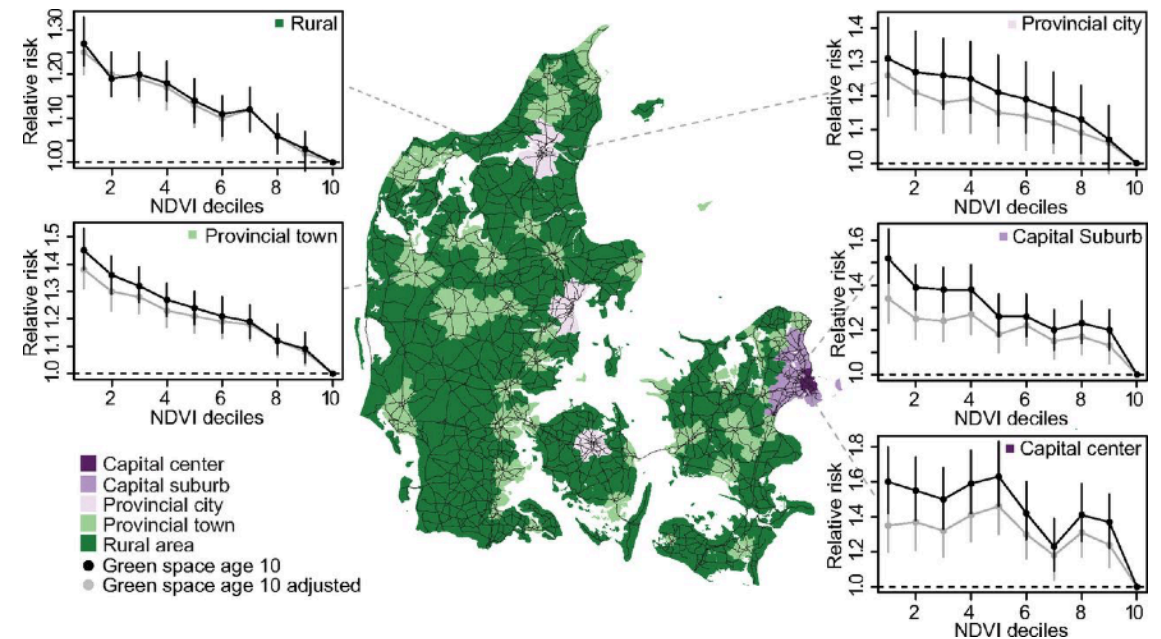
Cities as places of relations

1. Cities & human health

Extinction of experience

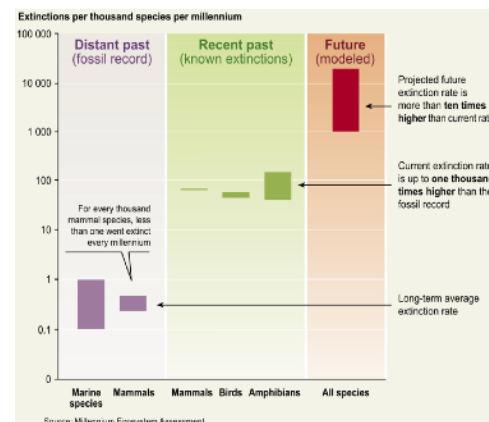


Mental health issues

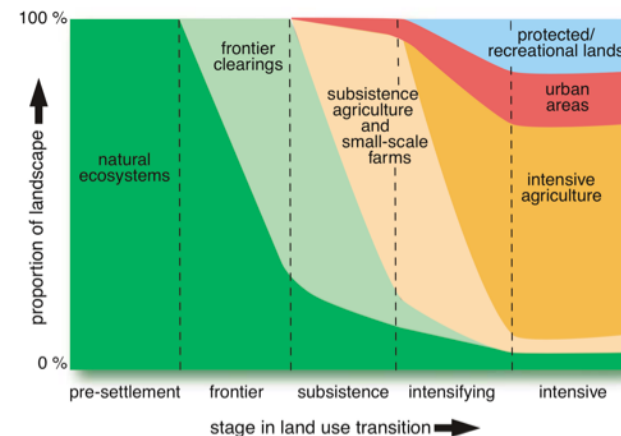


2. Cities & planetary health

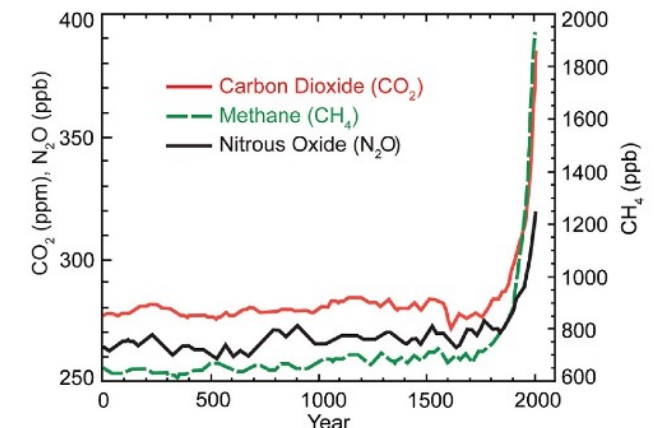
“Pigeon paradox”



Human land use footprint



GHG / Climate change



Rethinking “human nature”

1. HEALTH & MEDICAL RESEARCH

- Humans are holobionts, ecological units: microbes, viruses, microbial host
- Ongoing exchange with environment: food/diet, air, microbes, medicine etc.
- Human health depends on surroundings

2. HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

- Human nature: an interspecies relationship
- Being & becoming = being & becoming together
- All living beings communicate, incl. across species
- All living beings have agency
- Theoretical advances: ANT, multispecies thinking

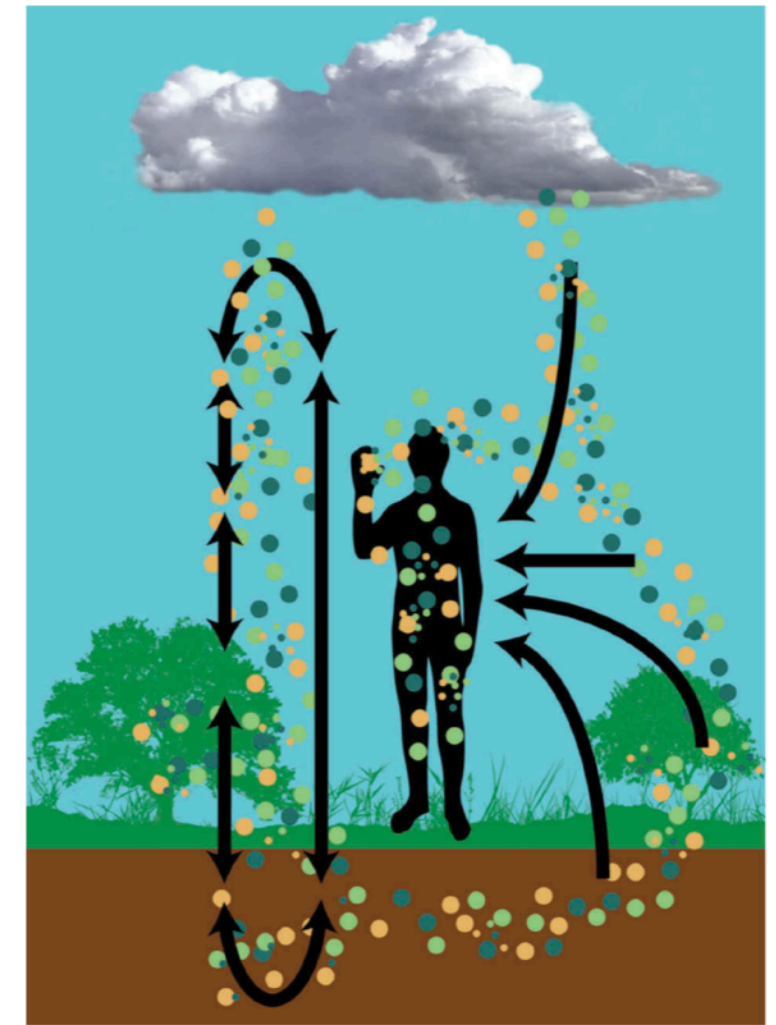
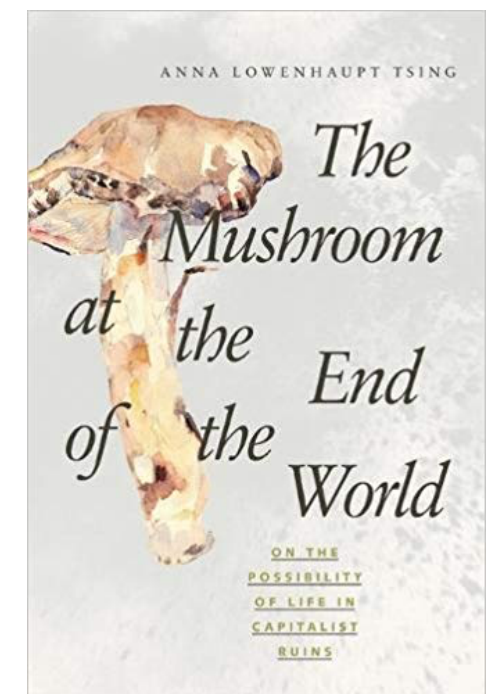


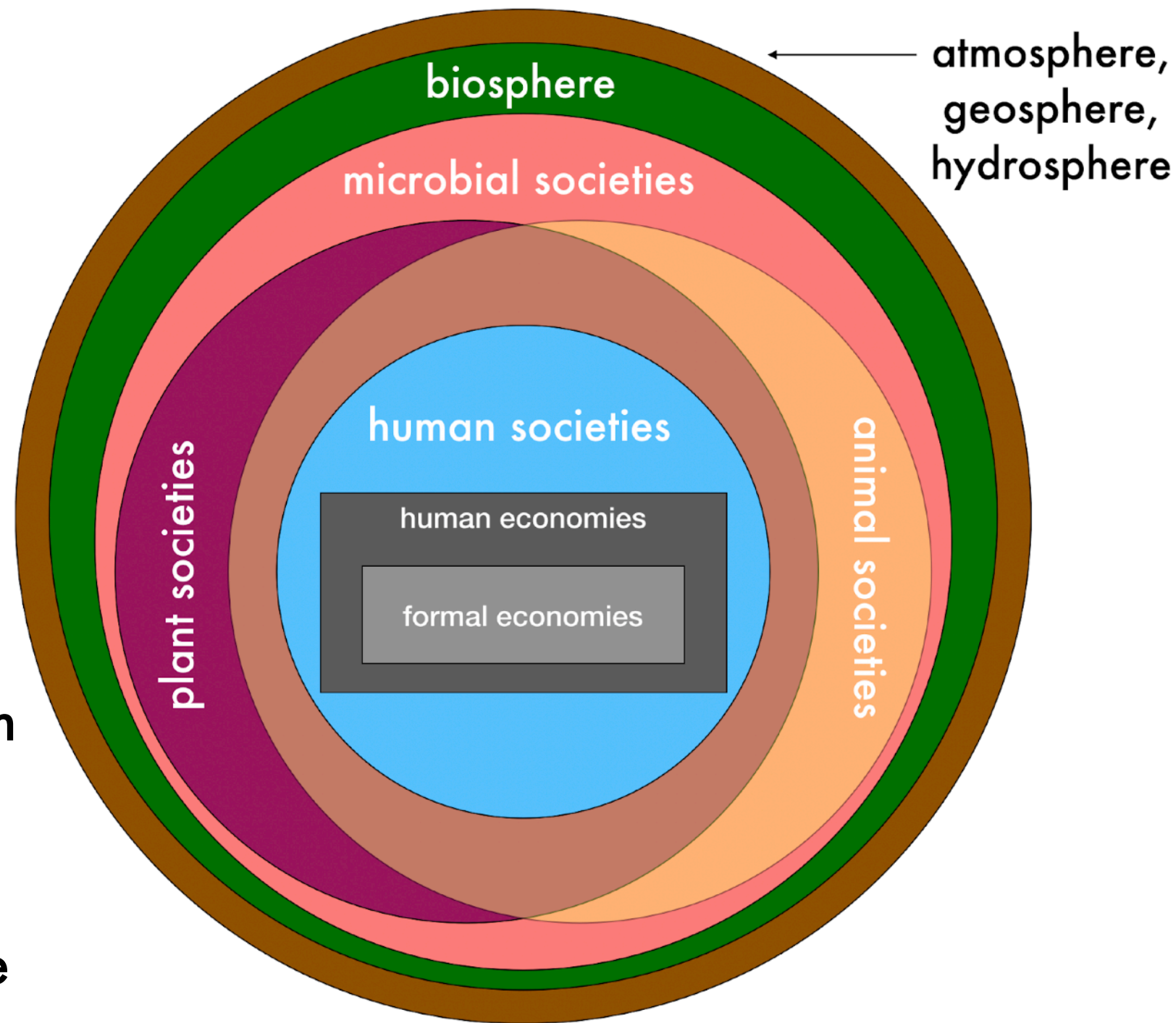
Figure 4. Humans are exposed to microbes from a variety of environmental sources including the soil, water (standing water and rainfall), air and plants.

Flies et al. 2018



Theoretical frame: Multispecies thinking

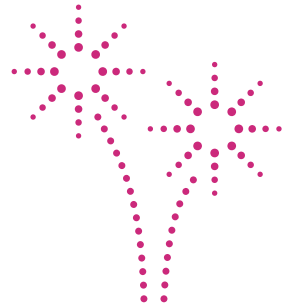
1. Humans & other life interconnected, inseparable
2. Non-human agency key to understand the world
3. Relational perspectives replace dualism (nature-culture, human-nonhuman)
4. Narrow focus on humans ignores research, need to go beyond anthropocentrism
5. Research that highlights intersections: ecological relations, politics and culture
6. Multispecies thinking across scales: minds, bodies, cities, landscapes?



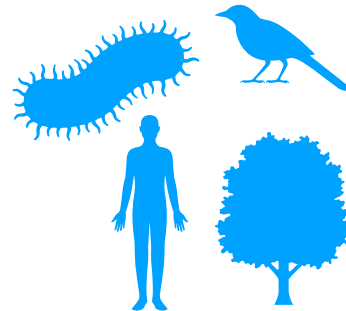
Multispecies sustainability concept
Rupprecht et al. (forthcoming)

Multispecies Cities: building on RHN research

wellbeing: dependent on cross-scale interconnectedness



minds



bodies

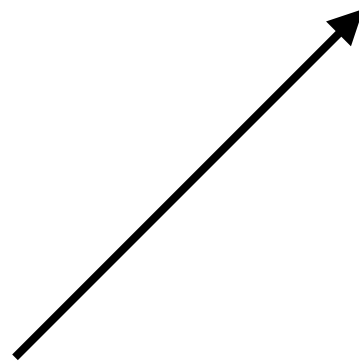
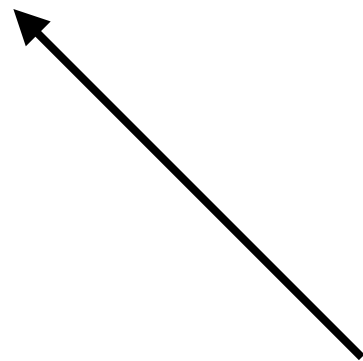


landscapes

**Re-imagining cities:
multispecies places**

**Re-planning cities:
multispecies stakeholders**

**Re-connecting cities:
multispecies landscapes**



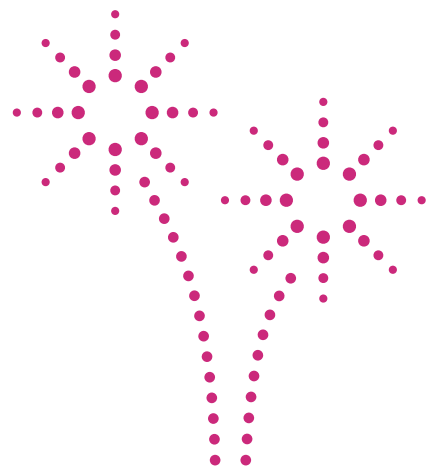
Megacities (2010-2014)
residential environment,
variety of stakeholders, city history

Ecohealth (2008-2012)
recognize interactions of
environment/health/society

Co-designing more-than-human urban well-being

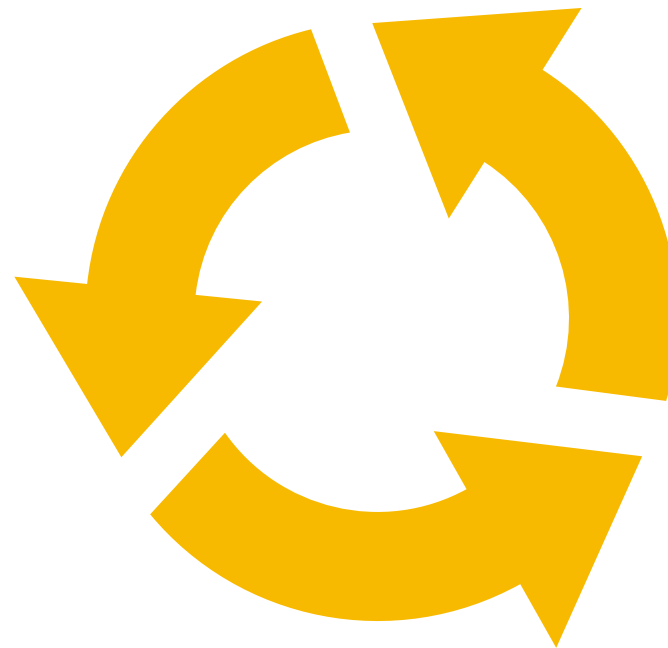
re-connecting cities
in multispecies landscapes

how are people & other species
linked across scales?



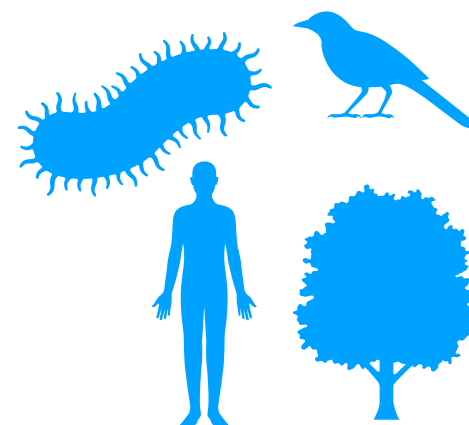
re-imagining cities
as multispecies places

how do multispecies relations
change ideas and values?

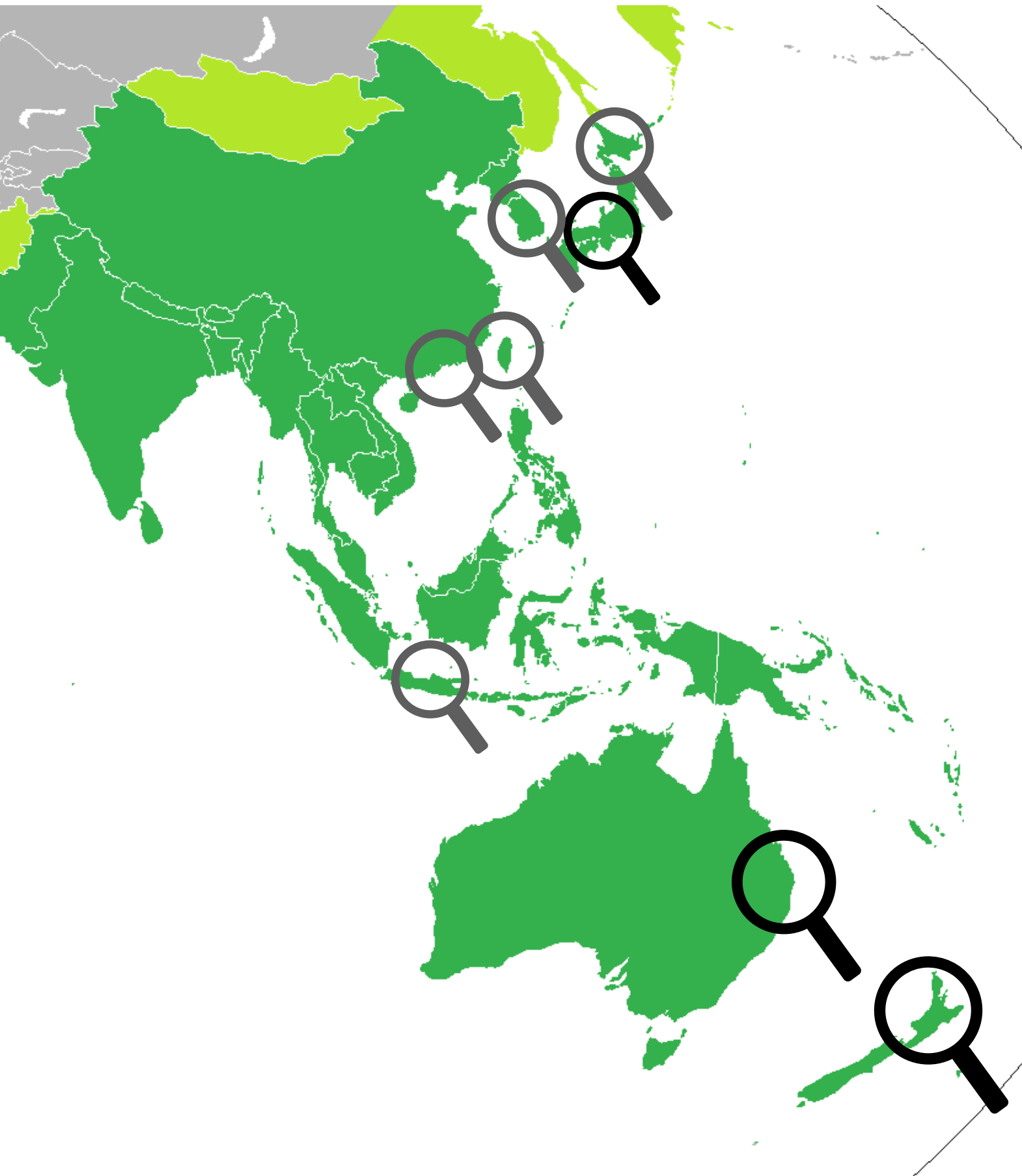


re-planning cities
with multispecies
stakeholders

how can multispecies
stakeholders be
engaged?



Multispecies wellbeing: Asia Pacific region



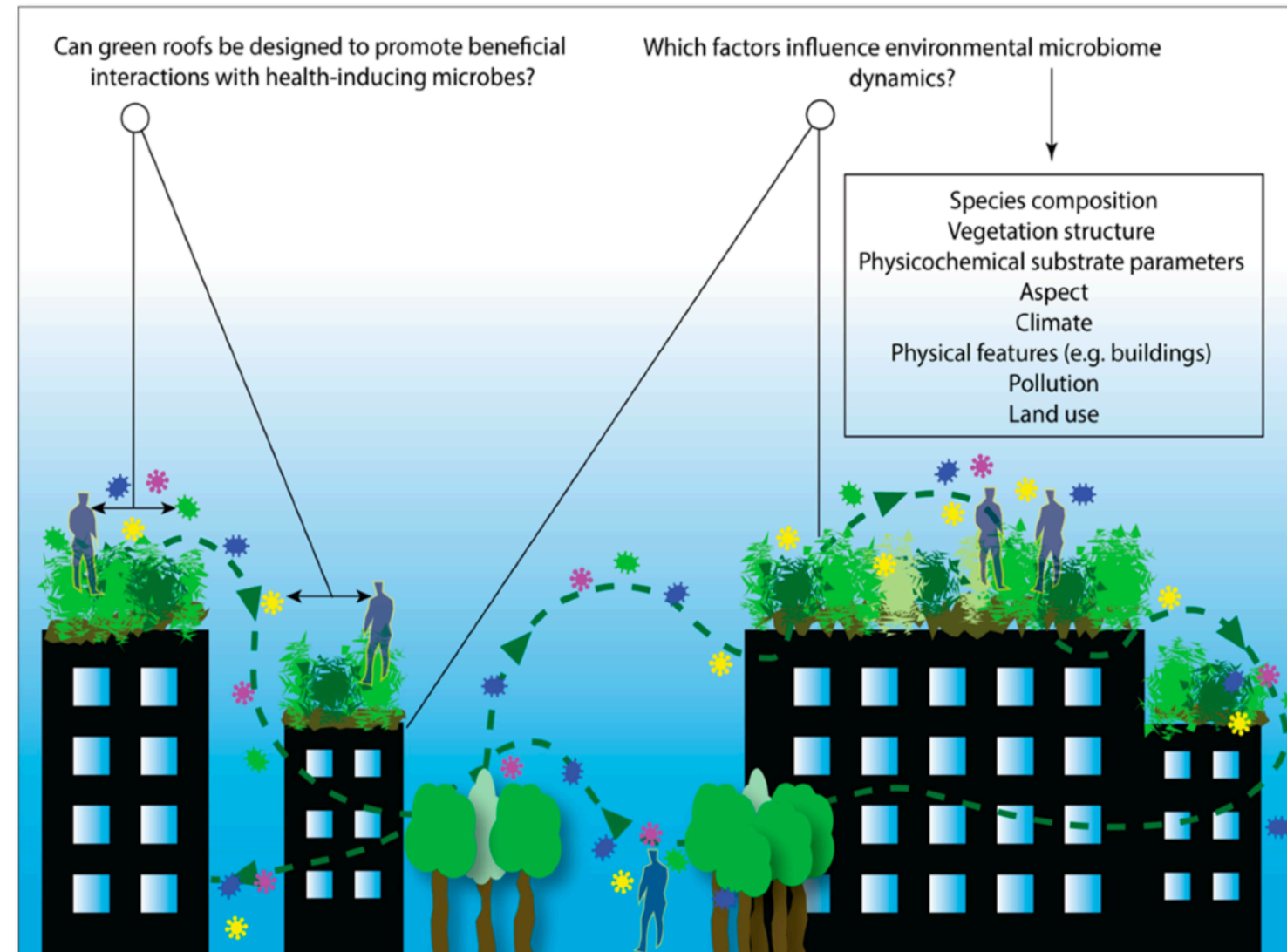
- Large diversity of practices & history of thought close to multispecies thinking
- Challenge EU/US-centric urban futures imaginaries
- World-leading examples of multispecies policy (e.g. Aotearoa/NZ)
- Cities rapidly urbanizing & rapidly shrinking
- Initial period: Kyoto, Auckland, Brisbane
- Later: possibly Sapporo, Seoul, Taipeh, Hong Kong, Semarang?

Re-connecting cities in multispecies landscapes: How are people & other species linked across scales?



1. HEALTH RESEARCH & THEORY

- Collaborate with HUMI initiative (UN-partnered)
- Research on 20 microbially biodiverse urban green space sites from 2020, track their health impact
- Joint research to compare perception & process across sites (social science, policy)
- Develop multispecies health concept (see: ecohealth)

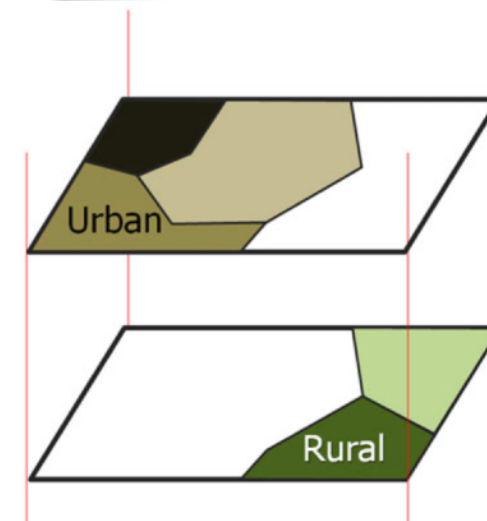


Re-connecting cities in multispecies landscapes: How are people & other species linked across scales?

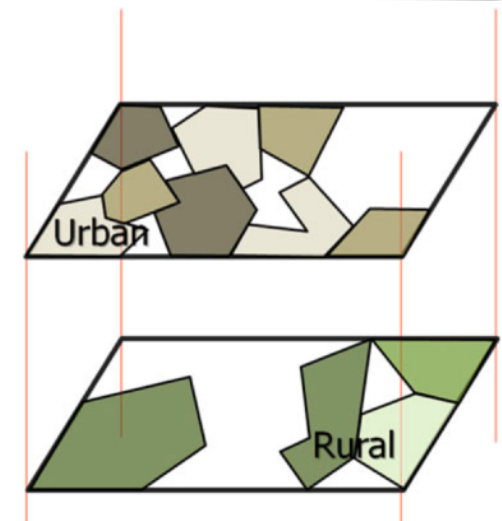


2. LANDSCAPE THEORY RESEARCH

- Research on implications of multispecies perspective for sustainable landscapes
- Multispecies connections between urban & rural areas in Asia-P. context?
- How “urban” can cities be to
 - 1) still provide multispecies wellbeing?
 - 2) not compromise rural wellbeing?
- Zoning paradigm vs functional urban-rural landscape integration: planning enabling multispecies coexistence?

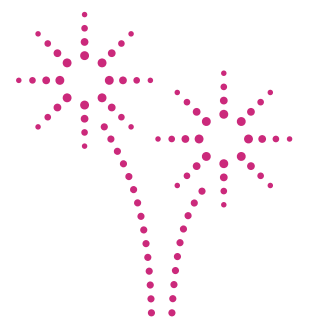


Mainstream separate urban-rural land use (US, Australia)



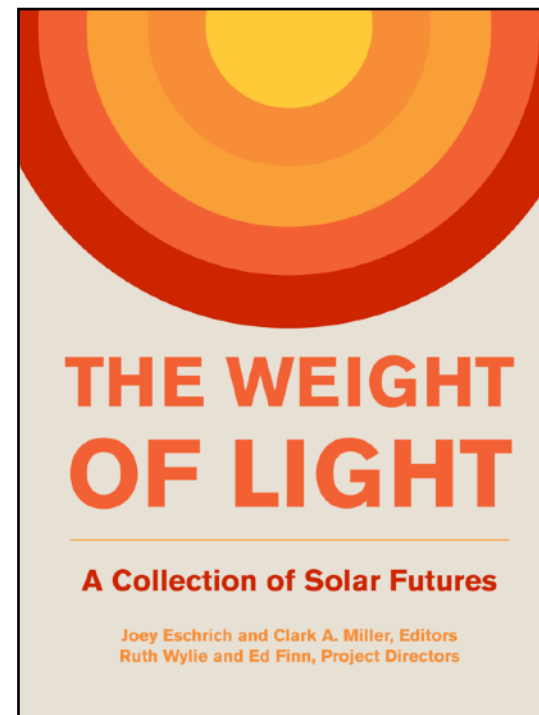
Overlapping/mixed urban-rural land use (Japan)

Re-imagining cities as multispecies places: How do multispecies relations change ideas & values?

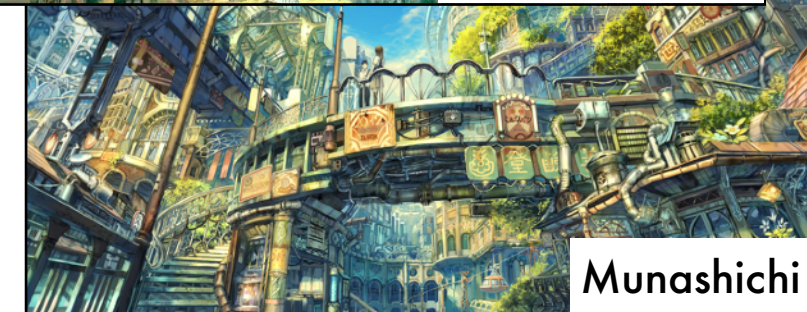


IMAGINING MULTISPECIES CITIES

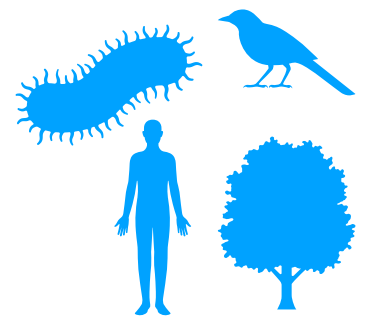
- Exploring the meaning of multispecies place (vs space): grounded in local contexts of cities in Asia-Pacific region
- Collaboration with creative professionals (artists, writers etc) to co-create visions
- Humanities-based research on created art/literature etc.
- Communicating visions: how to envision urban futures bottom-up, not top-down?



ASU story-essay
joint publication



Re-planning cities with multispecies stakeholders: How can people engage with MS stakeholders?



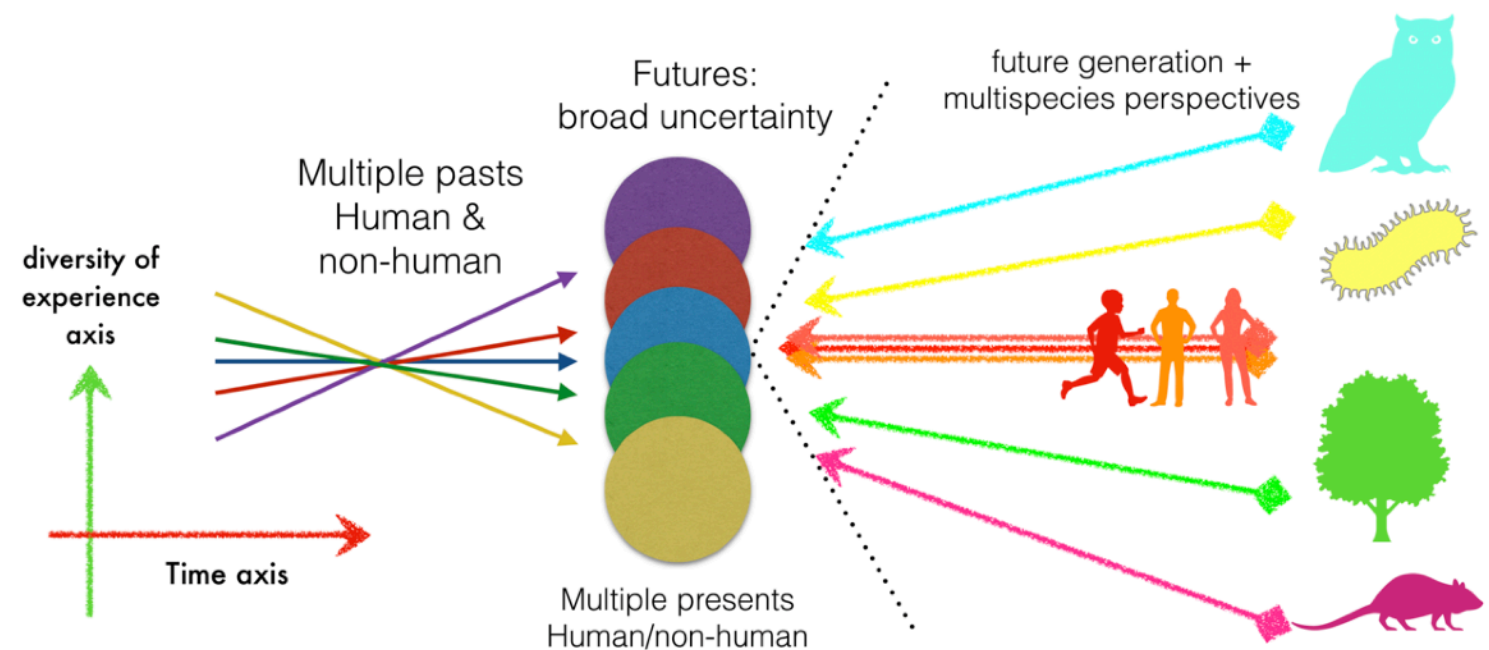
MULTISPECIES PLANNING

- RIHN megacities project & transdisciplinary science: diverse stakeholders vital
- Multispecies stakeholders:
 - 1) analysis of precedents
 - 2) developing methods
- Methodological experiments:
 - 1) Rights vs negotiation?
 - 2) Representation vs role-play
 - 3) Context-specific vs general
 - 4) Combining traditional & multispecies stakeholders
- Synergies with Future Design, anticipatory governance etc.



Rights of nature debate

Example: Aotearoa/NZ



Join us...?



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