Design for urban places of reconnection with the biosphere

Matteo Giusti∗1

1Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC) – Sweden

Abstract

The extinction of nature experiences in cities is a widespread phenomenon that strongly undermines the possibility of urban dwellers to directly perceive non-human life. Personal interaction with the biosphere is however crucial for the emergence of an affiliation for the biosphere and it is also a primal step towards intentional behaviors of nature conservation. Since the urban form is the decisive cause for the distribution of time in the urban landscape, the development of cognitive and emotional frames are subdued to the spatial configurations of the urban landscape. It is on the landscape that routines occur and it is the landscape that allows the premises for those routines to be established. This speech addresses the state of art of urban design, neurology, environment psychology and spatial analysis to discuss the intentional design of urban green spaces that support a reconnection with the biosphere. The speech covers the sensory interaction with space in relation to the creation of human places, how urban forms influence accessibility of urban spaces and consequently how they foster the mental construction of places of reconnection with the biosphere. The distribution of nature experiences in the urban landscape reflects the emergence of cognitive and emotional affiliation towards the biosphere. How humankind chooses to design the natural qualities of its most common habitat has the potential to favor the kind of emotional and cognitive attachment to nature that many scholars in the sustainability sciences are calling for. The abstract is intended to be part of the session "The role of Spatial Experiences of Urban Nature in Re-connecting with the Biosphere". The abstract and the related work could also be presented in other relevant sessions.

Keywords: Reconnection with the biosphere, Urban design, social, ecological systems, ecosystem services, environmental psychology, ways of knowing, urban space

∗Speaker