



## ***BeMInE***

TOWARDS INFORMED PLANNING PRACTICE

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## From Trajectories to Challenges

- The awareness of **environmental problems** has become mainstream, but urban planning and urban policies still have problems in dealing with them
  - The ecosystem services (regulating, provisioning, supporting and cultural) are potentially endangered in the context of **urban growth and density**
  - Urban **concentration and sprawl** makes it difficult to organize services for the ageing population
- The growth of **immigration** challenges planning and design for “all”.
  - In planning and urban policies there is an implicit references to a **uniform culture** and **bio-politics** (planning based on biological features such as age, gender and disability, ignoring cultural differences)
  - Since this is no longer reality, planning has to build a relationship to **multi-culturalism**.
- Planning directed at, and contained within, specified geographical areas, is challenged by **multi-locality** of employment and housing
  - The increasing role of **ICT** in working practices has made working possible in several locations.
  - Social connections and the related space-related life-styles are forming **networks**, at the same time as urban and regional planning and policies concentrate on **areas**.

## Using knowledge in urban planning and policies

- Urban and regional planning and urban development is by its nature ***interdisciplinary***
  - Some knowledge is produced outside their main domains (such as in ecology, sociology, economics, political science and philosophy)
  - Some knowledge is created through its own practice, where knowledge often has a tacit dimension (such as in design, communicative skills, creativity, visioning, meaning-creation).
- There is ***no straightforward path*** from explicit knowledge to practice
- The inevitable connectedness of ***knowledge and power*** (power/knowledge)
  - Professionalism, political regimes and discourse coalitions have to be taken into account.
  - Theoretically, thus, it is necessary to understand this relationship between episteme and praxis, which often prevents dialogue between experts and stakeholders.

## Research questions



- 1. What kind of **discourse formations** has been formed and is forming with respect to these challenges, with all of their "discontinuity, break, threshold, or limit" (Foucault 1969)?
  - The empirical material used consists of documents and interviews, but also the workshops etc. that are organised in the main project.
- What kind of **input could research bring** to planning practice in order to help planners and policy makers to deal with these new challenges (strategies, representations, arguments, and theoretical input that has not yet found its way to the planning discourses)?
  - This is done by actively developing textual and visual representations to accommodate the mentioned need for new discursive formations.

## Level of knowledge

- We noted from the current structure of MALPE the difficulty to fully operate in the context of different sectorial administrative cultures and approach to urban development within local governments.
- Multi-locality, ecosystem services and immigration are blurring these boundaries.
- Multi-local living has been mainly distinguished through the relationship of the housing situations. However, the emerging working arrangements and practices are also influencing the multi-local living itself.
- Even though in Finland there is an advanced scientific knowledge of GI and ES, this knowledge has not yet reached most of the planning policies and practices. There is still a lack of a coherent policy framework of GI and ES, as well as a knowledge gap between academics, practitioners and policy makers.
- The coexistence of different cultures in the city is not a new phenomenon, but it lacks a mechanism for realization. As a reflection of this state-of-the-art, one can read a systematic avoidance of the cultural features of social groups and forms of urban living.

## Path dependencies

- What is happening, in the discourse formations of planning is of our interest here. However, since planning is a normative discipline, planning research should also have a developmental attitude: what input research can give to the planning and policy discourses to help them better respond to these challenges.
- In addition to the socio-economic path dependencies (migration, investment, employment, etc.) there are also path dependencies in discourse formations: current ways of conceptualizing urban and regional phenomena are dependent on earlier ones (continuity, juxtaposition, ideologies, professionalism)
- Referring to the participation of MALPE work, we will mostly focus on two path dependencies:
  - How new knowledge on the dynamic interconnections between agglomeration, migration, mobility, ecosystem services and multiculturalism are taken on board and
  - re-conceptualizing urban phenomena and development in its genealogical context