

Sustainability in the City and Beyond

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Urbanization and the Environment: Mapping Anthropogenic and Natural Dynamics

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The contexts of rampant urbanization and of environmental crises, including climate change, call for a deeper understating of the impacts of various forms of urban development. There is a general consensus in the literature that points to the high environmental costs of urban sprawl. Three intertwined sets of characteristics of sprawl – low residential densities, low intensity and segregated land-use, and generalized dependence on the automobile – are seen as key drivers of environmental change. However, the causes and consequences are often difficult to untangle. Some development practices take a direct environment toll, whereas other such costs are incurred indirectly. Other development practices increase our vulnerability to the actual and anticipated effects of current environmental crises. This paper aims at mapping the anthropogenic and natural dynamics associated with environmental crises in the age of the Anthropocene in order to clarify the status of physical planning as a contributor and as a remedy to the current state of affairs.



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