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The Challenges of Planning and Designing Urban Green Networks in Scandinavian and Chinese Cities

Abstract During the 20th century, a variety of concepts were developed aimed to provide frameworks for green space planning and design in urban areas. Both China and Scandinavia represent important experience in green space planning and management. However, none of the current concepts is generated based on the explicit combination of both a Western and Eastern context. In this paper, based on the analysis of various green space planning concepts and their development, a novel 'hybrid' approach is introduced. This 'Green Network' concept focuses on green and blue connectivity in urban areas and comprises the network of green spaces and the surface water system within and around settlements. The concept offers a platform for integrating best practices from Scandinavian and Chinese open space planning and can provide a guiding tool for sustainable urban development.

Keywords: city structure, fragmentation, green-blue space planning, green concepts, landscape connectivity, network analysis

1 Introduction

2 In urban areas, habitat fragmentation is usually considered as a major threat to biodiversity and a contributor
3 to the present species extinction crisis (Collinge 1996; Adriaensen *et al.* 2003). Fragmentation has dramatic
4 impacts on landscape structure and landscape connectivity (McGarigal, Cushman 2002; McKinney 2003;
5 Pauchard *et al.* 2006; Hamer, McDonnell 2008; Vergnes *et al.* 2012), while also hampering the provision
6 of essential ecosystem services by urban green spaces (Harman, Choy 2011). In order to deal with this
7 challenge, communities, decision makers and researchers have attempted to provide better urban planning
8 initiatives and approaches. One of the widely accepted concepts today is that of green corridors - linear
9 landscape elements that connect isolated habitat patches (Viles, Rosier 2001). Similar to green corridors,
10 greenways provide connectivity between urban places through the establishment of green spaces along
11 transport arteries in the form of boulevards and parkways (Parker *et al.* 2008). Green infrastructure, in its
12 turn, encompasses the conservation planning aimed at integrating and expanding open space within a urban
13 framework in order to ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources (McMahon 2000). All of these
14 green concepts have become widely applied in both Western and Eastern cities and have influenced current
15 open spaces planning and design practice to differing degrees.

16 In the light of challenges such as fragmentation and the loss of ecosystem services, cities in both
17 developed and developing countries are searching for more integrative and effective green space planning
18 approaches. Moreover, these approaches have to address specific local ecological and cultural histories
19 (Ignatieva *et al.* 2011).

20 China is one of the countries that look for novel green-blue space planning approaches due to rapid
21 urbanization and green space fragmentation (Jim, Chen 2003; Li *et al.* 2005; Yu *et al.* 2005; Kong *et al.*
22 2010; Ren *et al.* 2011). One of the parts of the world that provides inspiration for this is Scandinavia, as

1 this region is well known and recognized by urban planners and ecologists for its successful green space
2 planning approaches (Lahti *et al.* 2006). For example, well-known Swedish architect and urban planner
3 Professor Ulf Ranhagen from consultancy company SWECO and the Royal Institute of Technology brought
4 the idea of the Sustainable City to China during the year 2000. He was subsequently hired then to implement
5 new town planning in several Chinese cities, such as Caofeidian Eco-city in Tangshan city and Luodian
6 Swedish Town in Shanghai. Planning and design of these cities is inspired by the model of Hammarby
7 sjöstad in Stockholm and has become an influential green-blue space planning principle, namely that of the
8 Sino-Swedish eco-city planning (Yin, Feng 2012). On the other hand, Scandinavian countries like Sweden
9 are
10 also facing new challenges, as they are going through a phase of urban densification and are looking for
11 new models for sustainable green infrastructure (Berg, Rydén 2012). Thus China cannot only learn from
12 Scandinavian experiences, but Scandinavia can also benefit from the Chinese experience of dealing with
13 green areas establishment in compact, rapidly urbanizing environments.

14 The purpose of this paper is to review the emergence and implementation of 20th century green space
15 planning concepts and approaches in Western (and primarily Scandinavian) and Chinese cities, namely the
16 concept of greenbelt, green wedges and fingers, greenway, green corridor, and green infrastructure. Based
17 on this review of concepts and approaches in both China and Scandinavia, a ‘hybrid’ and innovative
18 approach is discussed in the form of the Green Network concept.

20 **Framework for comparing green concepts**

21 In describing and comparing concepts of green space planning, the paper starts from a worldwide
22 perspective and then zooms in on Scandinavian and Chinese examples. Based on the international literature
23 and general recognition of major concepts, three of these green space planning approaches are in focus –
24 greenbelt and green wedges (fingers), greenways and green corridors, and green infrastructure. Three key
25 components of each concept are discussed: their structural elements, functional focus, and the methods (or
26 experience) it comprises. These components exist in all green space planning concepts but are highly
27 dependent on regional, historical and cultural contexts. The assessment of green concepts based on
28 international literature and novel projects focuses on China and Scandinavia. In both of these parts of the
29 world, the three major concepts and approaches are widely used but with local adaptation.

30 **Development and implementation of the green concepts in the twentieth-century**

31 Greenbelt and green wedge (fingers)

32 ‘Greenbelt’ is the first comprehensive concept for a green space planning (Cohen 1994) originating from
33 Europe. The greenbelt of London, for example, has a long history but was formalised in the 1940s. As a
34 policy and a city and regional planning approach, the greenbelt concept has been used to retain areas of city
35 and largely undeveloped land surrounding or neighbouring urban areas. In greenbelt planning areas, many
36 different urban construction activities are strictly limited in order to prevent an urban expansion. The main

1 function of a greenbelt thus is controlling further urban sprawl. But greenbelts such as the Greater London
2 greenbelt are also aimed at nature conservation and providing recreation opportunities (Amati 2008).

3 Over time, greenbelts have become more multi-functional. Notable examples are Stockholm's
4 National City Park and the European Green Belt. As a Royal National City Park, the Ulriksdal-Haga-
5 Djurgården- Brunnsviken area in Stockholm was connected and designated as a greenbelt comprising a
6 unique historical landscape of national importance from a cultural heritage and ecological perspective, but
7 also having high importance for recreation (Fig.1). On a larger, international scale, the European Green
8 Belt aims to integrate the entire strip of land from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea from a landscape
9 perspective. Its key value is for nature conservation and sustainable development with habitats and
10 ecological areas as part of an international network of valuable ecosystems in 24 countries. The European
11 Green Belt contributes to safeguarding Europe's natural heritage and helping fulfil the commitments to
12 halting biodiversity loss by 2010 (Riecken *et al.* 2006).

13 One noticeable point in both the European Green Belt and Stockholm's Royal National City Park is
14 that their emphasis is on remnants of native vegetation. Moreover, both are combining human activities
15 with ecological protection. For instance, the Royal National City Park was the first national park of its kind
16 located within the city boundaries, and it includes existing building, infrastructure, parks, waters, flora and
17 fauna. As for the European Green Belt, its northern part is a wild belt comprising of vast coniferous forests
18 along the former no-man's land of the Iron Curtain (physical boundary divided Europe as Soviet Union and
19 its satellite states and non-Soviet-controlled areas from 1945 until end of cold war in 1991) and the Baltic
20 Green Belt constitutes the seaside belt. The Central European Green Belt is made up of a variety of cultural
21 landscapes such as agricultural fields and memorial landscapes, and the southernmost part is a mountainous
22 belt with heterogeneous mosaics of natural landscapes, forests and stepping habitats, and the like.

23 In China, the concept of greenbelt was borrowed from Europe after 1949 and has become one of the
24 planning concepts integrated in master plans. For example in Xi'an, Beijing and Shanghai, urban-encircling
25 greenbelts were established or are being developed (Qiu 2010). In Beijing, the current spatial concept of
26 greenbelt is based on the 1958 Master Plan, which was confirmed in 1992 (Li *et al.* 2005). It consists of
27 two greenbelts: the inner greenbelt and the outer greenbelt. However, nowadays both the two greenbelts
28 are of greater importance for city greenery and recreation than for controlling urban sprawl (its original
29 function). On the other hand, the concept of greenbelt was introduced as an approach to restrict urbanization,
30 but it eventually failed because of the acceptance of market economy followed by tremendous growth in
31 traffic. In Xi'an, the current and updated green space plan (2008-2020) divides the greenbelt into two
32 categories: greenbelts along the highways and greenbelts along the river. Green belts are both circular
33 (along the ring-road) and linear (along the waterways) in configuration. The city greenbelt of Shanghai is
34 98km long with an area of 6208 km² (Fig.2). Different from traditional greenbelts in Europe that retain the
35 undeveloped areas surrounding urban areas, the Shanghai greenbelt is mainly artificial in nature through
36 tree-planting combined with construction of parks outside the city. The purpose of this greenbelt is to
37 control urban sprawl and divide urban and neighbouring fringe areas to improve the urban ecological
38 environment and provide recreational areas for citizens. An example of a greenbelt of an equivalent scale
39 to the European Green Belt is the Three-North Shelter Forest Program, also known as the Green Great Wall,

1 which covers 40% of the land area of China. This program comprises a series of planted forest strips at
2 national scale designed to prevent the expansion of the Gobi Desert. Sand-tolerant vegetation is selected in
3 order to suit desert condition and stabilize the sand dunes (Wang *et al.* 2010).

4 'Green wedge' is a concept that originated from Scandinavia (Sweden and Denmark). During the
5 1990's, the Regional Planning Office in Sweden launched the concept of Stockholm's Green Wedges
6 (Fig.3). It derives from the star-shaped settlement pattern in between the urban areas which form a system
7 of parks and open spaces that make up a region-wide system linked by paths and green arterials. These are
8 setting off from the rural parts of the region and leading right into the city centre. Several factors lead to
9 extensive implementation of green wedges in Stockholm, the foremost one of which is as a result of
10 Stockholm's unique topography. Fourteen isolated islands are intertwined by common structures such as
11 settlements, industries, infrastructure and urban forests. This complex planning context has been a subject
12 for an integrated spatial planning approach on a regional level. Under this circumstance, the concept of
13 green wedges was first put forward for urban growth. It means that urban growth followed the public
14 transportation system and then formed long built areas with wedge-style open spaces left in between. This
15 radial pattern enables ten accessible, ecologically beneficial long green wedges with differentiated
16 functions: recreational, connecting and ecological (Höjer *et al.* 2011) (Fig. 3).

17 The Fiver Finger Plan in Copenhagen, Denmark, forms a network that penetrates urban fabrics at a
18 regional scale (Vejre *et al.* 2007) (Fig. 4). Jørgensen (2004) noted that the main principle of the Finger Plan
19 is to think about future city development along existing and future public transport corridors such as
20 railways. Green wedges are preventing urban development and become important urban corridors. The
21 ecological diversity and functionality of the landscape is guaranteed in the Finger Plan by a heterogeneous
22 structure of the fingers pattern. From a natural perspective, it is also trying to incorporate a settlement
23 structure and a system of intensified agricultural areas in an ecological system. Until 2007, the Copenhagen
24 plan was one of the models that incorporated greenbelts and green wedges together aiming to control urban
25 sprawl, for nature protection and recreational purposes.

26 In the updated Copenhagen plan of 2013, green wedges are still an important part, but the greenbelt
27 is gradually disappearing (Fig.4). This shows that urbanization will have an important impact and
28 development will be in favour of slender fingers along the railways and other transport arteries. Hence, the
29 concept of greenbelt which was widely utilized through the 20th century is challenged by the needs of
30 current city development.

31 Greenways and green corridors

32 The concept of 'greenways' was generated in North-America at the beginning of the 20th century. Fabos
33 (1995) noted three benefits of greenways: ecological, recreational, as well as historical/cultural. From urban
34 planning and landscape architecture point of view, greenways also relate to visual connections in broad
35 spatial dimensions (Ignatieva *et al.* 2011). These were created to develop greenway systems that
36 interconnected cities and natural areas or forest zones in metropolitan areas e.g. in US and other cities
37 (Jongman *et al.* 2004; Zhang, Wang 2006). For example, as a result of the challenge of competing land uses

1 and high density urban living, Singapore's greenway movement started in the late 1980's with the aim to
2 create an island-wide network of greenways using parks as the connectors (Tan 2006). Greenways in
3 Singapore inherited more to the approach of American cities due to the city states intensive traffic situation
4 and dense highway network.

5 In Europe at the beginning of the 1990s, societal and scientific discourses changed as conceptual
6 approaches were developed that embraced new nature conservation strategies (Jongman *et al.* 2004). Green
7 corridors were designed as habitat areas for connecting wildlife populations (through e.g. colonization,
8 migration, interbreeding and so forth) that had become fragmented by human activities or structures (habitat
9 fragmentation). The length and the width of green corridors have varied from regional to local level.

10 In Copenhagen, a plan for a network of green paths was approved in 1936 (Jongman *et al.* 2004)
11 and the city's Finger Plan of the 1940s (see previous section) includes an important component of green
12 corridor planning. The plans aimed at accommodating demands of urban growth, recreation and
13 infrastructural functions in urban and rural areas on the urban fringe (Vejre *et al.* 2007). Corridors can be
14 found to various degrees in a number of cities in Scandinavia, for example in Helsinki where the Central
15 Park (Keskuspuisto) has served as an important green corridor which penetrates straight into the city-center
16 (Beatley 1999). Green corridors provide important connection between places with high biodiversity, as
17 stepping stones, as well as recreational places for millions of city residents (Barthel *et al.* 2005).

18 As for Chinese cities, the concept of greenways was introduced from United States in the 1990s.
19 However this introduction could build on a Chinese tradition of contextual greenway planning extending
20 for more than 2000 years according to Yu *et al.* (2006). It is different from modern Western greenway
21 planning, but shares some similar principles. For example greenway was used to enrich the visual effects
22 along transport corridors in urban areas, and greenway was regarded as good blessing to local people in
23 feudal China from culture's perspective. Yu *et al.* (2006) also characterized the evolution of greenway
24 planning and implementation in China mainly as a 'top-down' approach; planning and management of
25 greenways were normally done by a centralized administrative system (e.g. the empire dynasty) without a
26 scientific basis or public participation. The functions of the greenways in China have primarily been
27 directed towards ecological protection and nursery production, with little concern for human uses such as
28 recreation by cyclists and pedestrians.

29 He *et al.* (2010) noted that the traditional Chinese planning and design philosophy (Fengshui)
30 inspired the planning of the Pearl River Delta Regional Greenway (PRD) (Fig.5). For example the two
31 greenways in Pearl River are two energetic sources that can help revitalize overall regional energy and
32 bring fortune to the cities in this region. The PRD project has referred to European and North American
33 models of regional scale, such as the London Greenbelt and American greenway networks. Its main
34 principle is to link major green areas in the region through greenways along riversides, valleys, ridges and
35 man-made corridors like railways. The conservation wildlife and ecological conservation at large can be
36 guaranteed by the integration of fragmented green spaces, including parks, nature reserves, scenic areas,
37 historical and cultural relics.

38 In contrast with the application of the greenway approach in Western countries, close-to-natural
39 planning is the concept advocated by Chinese designers and planners in recent years. It corresponds to the

1 principle of respecting and learning from nature and emphasizes the protection of both the natural
2 ecosystem and the social and cultural values of landscapes (such as the sociocultural and educational
3 meanings of landscape). An example is the Qinghai-Tibet railway (QTR), the world's highest-elevation
4 and the longest highland railway with total length of 1956 km (Fig. 5). Several green aspects were
5 implemented during its construction and resulted in the QTR project's new name: the Green Railway. First,
6 more than 33% of total budget was allocated to ecosystem restoration and environmental protection of
7 natural ecosystems, such as water and soil conservation. Second, in order to avoid disrupting the seasonal
8 migration routes of wild animals and also protect the rare and fragile vegetation, planners carefully selected
9 locations where it was necessary to remove earth and establish construction sites (Peng *et al.* 2007). Third,
10 efforts were made to reduce noise of construction work in order to avoid the alarming of animals. But such
11 a large proportion of budget and the serials of approaches for ecological restoration are not common in
12 China. The potential negative national and international media attention concerning construction impact on
13 the fragile plateau environment may have influenced the decision of the central government. These
14 programs, together with Three-North Shelter Forest Program, have been proposed and implemented by
15 central Chinese government. However it is complex behind the decision of these expensive and grandiose
16 green space planning interventions.

17 Green infrastructure

18 Like the greenway concept, the green infrastructure concept also originates from the United States (in the
19 mid-1990s). It is appearing more and more frequently in land conservation and development discussions
20 around the world. Benedict, McMahon (2002) emphasised that green infrastructure refers to an ecological
21 framework needed for achievement of environmental, social and economic sustainability. It encompasses
22 a wide variety of natural and restored native ecosystems and landscape features that make up a system of
23 "hubs" and "links" in regional or city scale. In a Chinese context, Alan *et al.* (2009) used the term "green
24 infrastructure" to describe all the green spaces within and surrounding an urban settlement as a single entity,
25 whose planning, design, management and maintenance should be integrated and continuous. Zhang *et al.*
26 (2009) consider green infrastructure as a combination of hubs (core area that provide space for native flora
27 and fauna, including a variety of open space and green areas), links and corridors (connect the core areas
28 together that can be used for movement and spread of species) represented by greenways, rain gardens,
29 wetlands, green roofs, swales, porous pavement and so forth. Although definitions of green infrastructure
30 differ, one commonality for Western and Chinese definitions is that green infrastructure in an urban context
31 refers to all of a city's green and open spaces.

32 In recent years, there has been a growing awareness amongst local governments of the need to plan
33 for green infrastructure. Since 1992, Swedish legislation has been modified to pay special attention to
34 sustainability, including the importance of green infrastructure in and around urban areas. According to the
35 revised planning legislation, Swedish towns and cities are recommended to develop a green infrastructure
36 plan as an essential part of the mandatory structure plan (Sandström 2002). In Stockholm, green
37 infrastructure was integrated in the Regional Development Plan for Stockholm (RUFSS) from 2010.

1 Hammarby Sjöstad and Norra Djurgårdsstaden as a part of green wedges of Stockholm are two examples
2 that implemented green infrastructure planning on a smaller, neighbourhood scale (Fig.6). The former
3 environmental program emphasizes environmental issues during the planning and implementation stages.
4 An ecosystem with an on-site sewage works was officially opened in 2003. Sewage and waste water are
5 treated, heating energy recovered and nutrients extracted via new technology for use on farmland. Norra
6 Djurgårdsstaden is still in its planning stage since 2001 and its development is expected to run until the
7 year of 2020. It is targeted to accommodate approximately 5000 housing units, commercial, social services
8 and so on. Its planning considers a continued presence of energy providing functions in the vicinity as a
9 result of its original function as a gas works and industrial area.

10 In China, the green infrastructure concept is still in an earlier stage of development since its initial
11 introduction in the 2000s. Zhang *et al.* (2009) refer to green infrastructure as a promising new approach
12 aimed at city planning and ecological protection. Government officers and planners in different fields are
13 trying to integrate the concept of green infrastructure into a Chinese context and some initial experiences
14 have been obtained. First, apart from city master planning, most cities in China have established special
15 parts for green space system planning, including Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Second,
16 establishing and spreading the concept of green infrastructure is occurring first in scenic spots (Qiu 2010),
17 taking scenic areas as the “stepping stones” to connect other landscape patches together. (In 1982, the
18 concept of scenic spots was established. It is similar to national parks in Western countries but with focus
19 on the visual values of places. Scenic spots are managed areas that attract visiting domestic and international
20 tourists and should meet the needs of sightseeing, recreation and entertainment, sports and fitness, as well
21 as knowledge distribution through appropriate facilities and services). For instance Hangzhou West Lake
22 Scenic Area is an important stepping stone that links surrounding small tracts of green space, such as parks
23 and gardens (Fig. 7). Third, close-to-nature (near-nature) and low-carbon city planning are two approaches
24 led by the government, focusing on improvement of green space rate and living standard of people. The
25 master plan of Taizhou (2005) is based on the concept of green infrastructure on regional, medium and
26 small scales in order to resolve issues of urban sprawl and heavy flooding. Three types of processes are
27 targeted to be safeguarded: abiotic process (flood control), biotic process (native species and biodiversity
28 conservation) and cultural process (heritage protection and recreational need) (Yu *et al.* 2005).

29 **Comparison of green space planning concepts in China and Scandinavia**

30 Based on different city structure and context, green space planning and management vary both across China
31 and Scandinavia. However, in spite of variation within these two regions, overall differences between the
32 two can be noted. Table 1 provides a comparative overview of these differences. All of the mentioned
33 concepts were initiated and developed in the 20th century, and subsequently implemented throughout
34 Scandinavia and China, but under very different economic, environmental, political and social conditions.
35 As is evident, green space planning and management no longer refer only to ‘green’ space but extend to
36 blue spaces and urbanized areas as well.

37 Greenbelt was the first concept in green space planning that took urban development into
38 consideration. It tried to achieve control urban sprawl through green space planning. After its introduction

1 in China, Beijing was the first city that implemented this concept but presently its application seems to
2 deviate from its original principles of urbanization restriction towards more focus on recreation and
3 environment protection. As for other cities, greenbelts are always along the outer highway around the city
4 and because of the city's typical 'pie-expansion', the form of the greenbelt is generally circular (Xi'an,
5 Shanghai, and Beijing). Apart from its common functions (controlling urbanization, recreation and
6 environment protection), China uses the greenbelt approach for desert restriction as well (3-North Forest
7 Program). Meanwhile, greenbelt in Scandinavian countries has experienced another situation due to their
8 unique city topology, and greenbelts were altered to slender green fingers or green wedges. The concept of
9 green wedges is based on the hypothesis that urbanization will develop in a thin radial pattern where
10 greenbelts cannot meet the city's needs. Green wedges in different locations serve varied functions
11 (recreation, biodiversity conservation, connection of city and suburbs, etc.) but with the common goal to
12 provide urban inhabitants with good and nearby access to open spaces. Greenbelts and green wedges have
13 in common that their spread and development often follows (public) transport corridors, and especially
14 railways.

15 While the greenway concept emerged in North America and the green corridor concept derives from
16 Europe and specifically Scandinavia, both originated from a different ambition and emphasis. China applies
17 the concept of greenways more than that of green corridors due to its traffic situation (construction of
18 highways in city and regional level). From a historical perspective, greenways have existed in China for
19 more than 2000 years, but were not formulated as such a specific concept for planning and design. Rather
20 they served the purposes of production and protection with little concern for scenery and recreation. At
21 present, the concept of greenways is widely accepted in Chinese cities and many cities have their own
22 greenway network that is designed for both scenery and environment. The concept not only involves the
23 planning and design of green spaces along roads but also encompasses the need for construction processes
24 to be 'green'.

25 Green corridors in the Scandinavian countries usually remain at a low level compared to the
26 implementation of green wedges and green infrastructure, something which is influenced also by
27 topography since cities expand linearly along traffic roads. Multifunctional foci are stressed in spite of the
28 starting point for green corridors being environment conservation. Since the Second World War nature and
29 biodiversity conservation have had a central role in Nordic planning, but in China these aspects were not
30 considered until the 1980s. Present cases have however evolved with an increasingly biological and
31 environmental focus.

32 Green infrastructure is a current concept that is still under development, and both China and
33 Scandinavia have their own understanding and practice with an overall point of view. Like the Taizhou in
34 China ecological infrastructure plan in China, city growth patterns are analysed from regional to city to
35 neighbourhood scales. Hammarby Sjöstad in Sweden is a good example of urban development that has
36 integrated environmental goals from the very start, with focus on waste, energy, water & sewage
37 management. It embodies a combination of planning, design, engineering, and environmental management.
38 Compared with other concepts presented and discussed in this paper, green infrastructure is no longer a
39 concept that focuses only one aspect, but rather takes an overall view of planning and design including

1 recreation, culture, ecology, energy, sewage, flood control, storm water management and so on. It also
2 reflects that a new multidisciplinary or even transdisciplinary approach to the planning and design of green
3 space requires integration between the above aspects and well as the various disciplines and professionals
4 involved.

5 **Towards an integrated Green Network approach**

6 For all the mentioned concepts that have been implemented in China and Scandinavia, open space is always
7 defined by its single specific shape (belt, corridor, wedge, finger, way and infrastructure). The presented
8 green concepts have been discussed and used extensively by city planners around the world as a tool for
9 solving a problem of habitat and landscape fragmentation. However, in spite of more comprehensive
10 planning and management, an increasing amount of green spaces become the victim of urban development
11 and urban sprawl. Linkages between green and blue spaces are often ignored by planners, although green
12 and blue connectivity is important in habitat conservation. Individual green concepts were developed for
13 resolving particular urban problems, e.g., the greenbelt concept was geared towards urbanisation control,
14 even though its function was broadened afterwards according to social and ecological processes. There is
15 lack of an overall picture and concrete approaches emphasising the entire city's habitat connectivity.

16 Different countries developed green concepts under their own context (based on their economic,
17 social and cultural peculiarities) and formulated different focusing points of green space planning and
18 management. However, none of the existing concepts combined a balanced approach that takes into account
19 both the demands of ecological conservation and social requirement, both in a Western and Eastern context.

20 We therefore introduce a new concept, that of integrated Green Networks, as a way to meet the
21 needs for international harmonization of terminology, with an approach that takes connectivity into
22 consideration when planning and designing public communal places. Our definition of the green network
23 concept is based on the needs of both humans and the nature. We define urban green networks as a set of
24 networks of social and ecological functions, linked into a spatially coherent entity through flows of
25 organisms, and interacting with the landscape matrix. Urban green network is based on spatial structure
26 and function of the area + the patch-corridor- matrix model (Forman 1995) + the dot-line-network model
27 (Cantwell, Forman 1993). Green structure as well as surface and ground water occurring in the urban
28 landscape link to the surrounding landscape. Green areas may advantageously be interconnected by
29 themselves but sometimes stretch in combination with a road route. Hence, the definition is based on three
30 categories of networks: river (or blue) network (served as corridors and lines), green space network (served
31 as patches and dots) and transport greening network (served as corridors and lines as well). The ultimate
32 aim is the combination of the three networks as an overall green network (served as matrix and network)
33 (Fig. 8).

34 1) River network - river or water system and runoff in urban surface, including all types of rivers and
35 other waterways within the city green spaces that provide possible habitat refuge and scenic places
36 for humans. They link ecological habitats and social scenery, as well as green spaces.

- 1 2) Green space network - protected natural and man-made green areas, such as parks, gardens,
2 woodland, swales, preserved or natural areas. These provide the space for plants and animals to
3 flourish while serving as landscape scenery spots. Green space network here is defined as
4 vegetated land within or adjoining a city except greenery along the transportations;
- 5 3) Transport greening network –plantings and street greening on and along transport corridors within
6 and around settlements, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, railroads, etc. Transport greening
7 offers a functional support system of urbanized areas, following transport corridors which can link
8 out into the urban area and help enhance the area’s biodiversity, quality of life and sense of place
9 through connecting green-blue spaces in the city. The transport greening network is critical from
10 an engineering, industrial, and public safety point of view. It provides for the linkage of the green
11 space network and the river network.
- 12 4) Integrated green networks - a concept that integrates the above concepts, but analyses and
13 addresses the entire city’s green and blue structure. In this approach, landscape architects and
14 urban designers shift their attention from single-shaped planning (green corridor, green belts and
15 so forth) to a big-pictured, multi-functional planning (green infrastructure). However, specific
16 ways to bridge and integrate current green concepts together are often still missing, as for example
17 the link between green and blue spaces. Green networks use network connectivity as a tool for
18 integrating the concepts discussed above with ecological and social functions; jointly rather than
19 separately for ecology (green corridor) and recreation (greenways). One of the characteristics of a
20 network is that even if an individual uses only a small part of the network, he or she gains access
21 to a system and knows that he/she can use all of its parts. The ‘individual’ here is not only referring
22 to human being but also flora and fauna. Green networks can be designed to shape city structure
23 and provide a framework for future growth- a framework to connect the green space and blue
24 space in the future.

25 This definition embodies a strategic approach to the problems of intensified land use and
26 fragmentation in urban areas. Green network is a multi-scaled concept and tries to refer to the function and
27 the structure of the network, as a key feature of networks is that they can have different configurations and
28 still serve the same goal (Opdam *et al.* 2006). Its aim is to achieve connectivity in urban landscape and to
29 provide attractive and high quality environments for people live, visit and work on the one hand, and for
30 connecting habitats for plants and animals on the other. Another attractive element of green network is its
31 sim to integrate green and blue spaces. Green space is not a lonely island that is isolated from blue space,
32 neither spatially, socially nor ecologically. Both green and blue spaces play the same significant role in
33 offering wildlife habitats as well as, social, recreational, educational and historical places. No species lives
34 in one without the other. Moreover, China and Scandinavia are heading in the direction of green-blue
35 integration as well. For example the proposal for greenbelt plan in Xi’an highlights the importance of river
36 belt at the same level as the green belt. Hammarby Sjöstad as a successful model of modern town planning
37 also combines both green and blue spaces into one approach. In order to analyze and realize the concept
38 into a practical network approach, visualization from actual green-blue spaces in a city should be
39 accomplished first. Graph theory then could be a suitable method to convert geographical landscape into a

1 visualized representation. Dots and lines are two important components of graphs. Corresponding to the
2 definition of green network in this paper, dots can be defined as important habitat patches and lines
3 represent species dispersal in between. Habitats are usually plants communities that located in green space
4 network (Kong *et al.* 2010) and lines are those linear characters of river and transport greening networks.
5 For analyzing and selecting important habitat patches in green space network, not only ecological but also
6 social functions, such as connection to nature, species dispersal, etc. should be considered since we assume
7 that various users should share benefits of green networks fairly. So sociotope and biotope maps could be
8 valuable references since they provide varied values of areas for differentiated groups (sociotope for human
9 and biotope for wildlife). Based on the work of Ståhle (2006) on multiple use values of sociotope mapping,
10 a series of maps have been created in many Swedish municipalities (including Stockholm, Uppsala and
11 Gothenburg) focusing on the commonly perceived direct open use values of specific open space by groups
12 of citizens. Similarly, a biotope is an area of uniform environmental conditions that provides a living place
13 for flora and fauna (Shih *et al.* 2009). Its subject is a biological community and biotope mapping is the
14 collections of biotopes serving different species (Fig.9).

15 Parallel maps of dots for social and ecological functions of green space network are then merged
16 with the river and transport greening system and elaborated into green network maps. Strategies for
17 connected social and ecological referencing maps will be created based on green and blue recourses
18 collections, analysis and evaluations of green network afterward. Priority principles, landscape pattern
19 analysis based on landscape metric, and network structure analysis will be combined as well in subsequent
20 empirical case studies. Since green network will be a practical framework with concrete approach that
21 provide valuable references to local and international planners, case studies in different regions, such as
22 Western and Eastern, and Scandinavian and Chinese cities would be necessary to see how green network
23 would be generated as a concept and then implemented as a method.

24 Furthermore, in this globalized world all urban dwellers require adequate opportunity for interaction
25 with urban green networks and urban open spaces, in all geographic locations. In this respect, the concept
26 of green network mapping represents an interesting and valuable opportunity for both Scandinavian and
27 Chinese city planners, and international scholars, although its implementation as a new approach will be
28 challenging. Strategies towards elaborating both social and ecological functional maps of green network
29 also need to be tested and implemented since we hypothesize that this working model needs differentiated
30 adjustment in attempt to apply into different contexts. Experience and models from both regions can provide
31 a range of navigation tools and can strengthen understanding between the two regions. The interaction and
32 comparison of implementation methods can be highly beneficial for sustainable urban development in both
33 West and East. Through comparing and contrasting, we can obtain better understanding of the cases in
34 different country, draw lessons and identify good practices, and provide guidance to planners.

35 **Conclusion**

36 Modern green space planning has different roots and paths in West and East. Scandinavia and China are
37 two examples that demonstrate how green space concepts differ in two regions. Europe including

1 Scandinavia of course has had a longer time of planning development than China. Different planning
2 schemes and driving forces have resulted in similar concepts with differing implementations. In Western
3 countries some of green space concepts were proposed and supported by local organizations following
4 bottom-up grassroots movements (a political movement from the local by the fundamental constitutes of a
5 community to affect change at the local, regional and even larger level) before becoming mainstream
6 government policy. Examples of this are the Council for the Preservation of Rural England in the case of
7 the greenbelt, and greenway organizations to implement greenway ideas. However, the Chinese top-down
8 planning system is central-government led. It may be effective in grandiose mega-scale projects like Three-
9 North Shelter Forest Program and the QTR. But for localized green space planning, it lacks consideration
10 of important aspects. The feasibility of Sino-Swedish eco-city planning in China is also as a result of Ulf
11 Ranhagen's idea of Sustainable City that was accepted by central government. In this sense, it is necessary
12 from a landscape architect's (and also grassroots') perspective to propose a planning concept and strategy
13 in consideration of contexts in both regions.

14 Green networks then encompass a comprehensive and integrative approach to green and blue spaces
15 management and network planning. They can be utilized in urban areas fulfilling at least two roles, namely
16 geared towards connecting habitats for wildlife and for human beings respectively. Green networks help
17 facilitate wildlife movement and connect wildlife populations between habitats in human dominated areas
18 (Kong *et al.* 2010), upgrading and connecting green and blue space into a unified framework; and thus
19 making an important contribution to creating sustainable cities. In this system, plants and animals can
20 support ecological flow by increasing the area of core habitat relative to edge habitat. As for communities,
21 green networks' trees and other vegetation can increase the amount of publicly available recreation areas
22 (Bolund, Hunhammar 1999), allowing urban communities to enjoy greenery within the city. More
23 connected green networks will encourage the creation of accessible open areas for outdoor physical activity,
24 which will increase both physical and psychological well-being (Bolund, Hunhammar 1999).

25 In this paper, we reviewed a series of leading green space planning concepts that aim to reduce
26 habitat fragmentation and have had following in both Scandinavian and Chinese cities. Conclusions from
27 the analysis and comparison between the two regions show that all the green concepts are usually originate
28 from Western (including Scandinavian) countries. Second, China imported these green space planning
29 concepts and integrated them within its own tradition and context. Hence the application of green concepts
30 in China developed in a different direction, meeting different needs. Third, and not only in China, green
31 space planning concepts experienced multiple functional transformations even in their region of origin. For
32 example, greenbelt was altered to green wedges and green fingers, and from a single shape (greenbelt, green
33 corridor and greenway) to a larger picture (green infrastructure). Fourth, modern technology and the
34 widespread use of GIS in particular, have created new opportunities for green space planning and
35 management, and also for specific concepts and approaches.

36 However, none of the past green space planning concepts was created based on the overall
37 perspective to specifically address the fragmentation problem in urban areas. Each concept has its
38 disadvantages in terms of how landscape connectivity is addressed. Moreover, every green concept is
39 designated to resolve one aspect of city challenges (ecological or social) but none of them initially

1 considered a fully socio-ecological approach, although several concepts (e.g. green infrastructure) have
2 gradually developed in this direction. Another issue that green networks deal with is integration of green
3 and blue spaces, although neither Scandinavia nor China considered it before. Both have been heading in
4 this direction recently since more and more people and governments have become aware of the realized
5 benefits and indispensability of green-blue connections. Hence, the new concept of green network offers
6 potential for a more comprehensive analysis and promotion of green and blue spaces' connectivity and
7 landscape integration. Implementation of sociotope and biotope mapping, as well as other elements of the
8 new approaches, offers opportunities for combining state-of-art knowledge from both China and Europe.
9 The development of green networks will be an ambitious undertaking which will link green space, road
10 systems and river networks as elementary components in built-up urban areas. The planning and design of
11 green networks can be seen as multidisciplinary or even transdisciplinary endeavor, involving a wide range
12 of ecological and recreational public open spaces within the city. Its implementation will require
13 cooperation of different disciplines and fields, such as landscape architecture, city planning, forestry, nature
14 conservation, environmental management, and the like.

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Figures

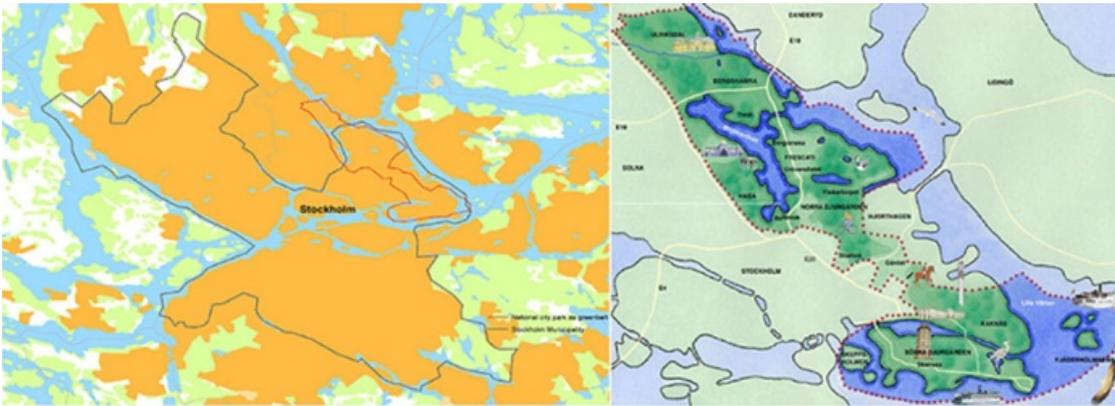


Fig. 1 Greenbelt of the Stockholm National City Park, with its wide range of significant natural, cultural and recreational values situated in the middle of a big city (text and right image by Ann Nyström for Association of Eco-park, Förbundet För Ekoparken, FFE 2010)

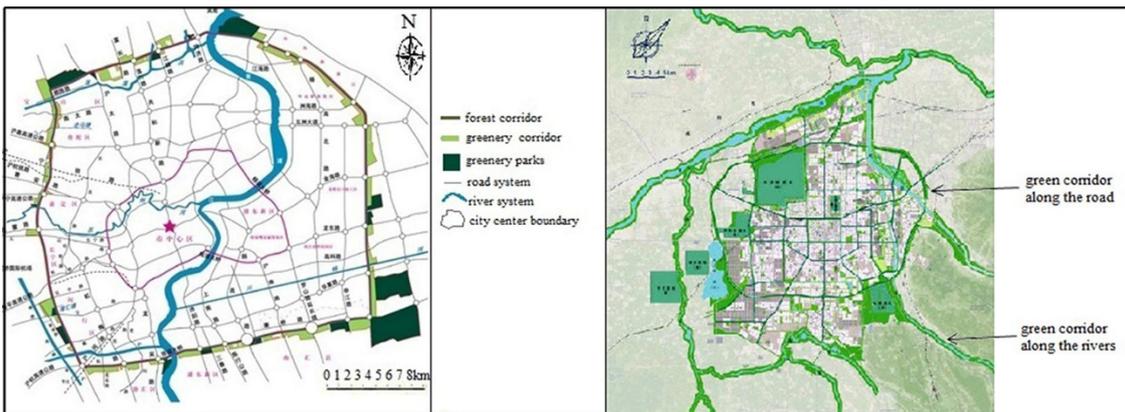


Fig. 2 Greenbelt plans of Shanghai (left) and Xi'an (right). Based on the road system, the Shanghai Greenbelt Plan was categorized into two main belts. The first is the forest belt, 100 meters wide with trees to build a stable environment for ecological communities, while the second is the greenery belt, 400 meters wide with productive nurseries, memorial landscape and agricultural fields. Another notable point in the Shanghai Greenbelt Plan is that parks are designed as connectors of different greenbelt areas served for recreational function (from Shanghai City belt Institution of Construction and Management 2005 and Xi'an Urban Planning and Design Bureau 2008)

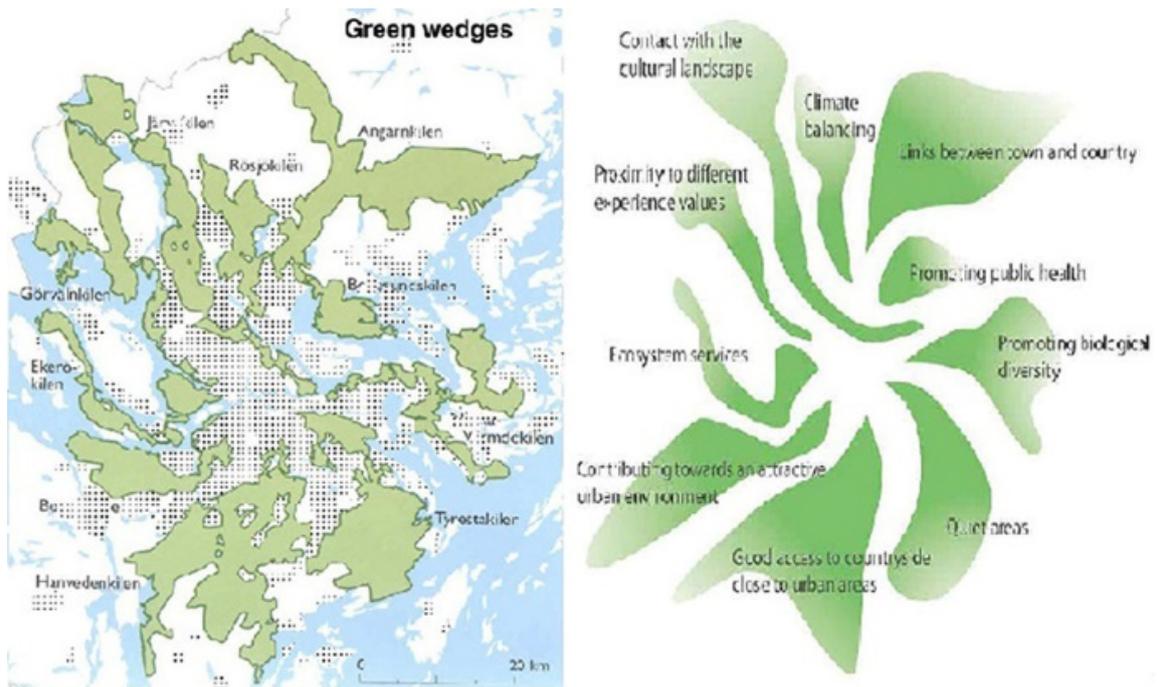


Fig. 3 Map of Stockholm's Green Wedges, comprising 10 wedges with a number of benefits (from Lahti *et al.* 2006 (left-hand part)) and RUSF, 2010 (right-hand part))



Fig. 4 Copenhagen Finger Plan. The left part of the figure shows the five fingers, green wedges and greenbelt in Copenhagen, 2007 (the hand shape - the urban fabric and its infrastructure, the wedge shape- green wedges between urban settlements and the arc shape- greenbelt around Copenhagen). On the right the updated plan from 2013 is shown green wedges are between urban settlements and infrastructure and transport corridors (from Danish Nature Agency 2007 and 2013)

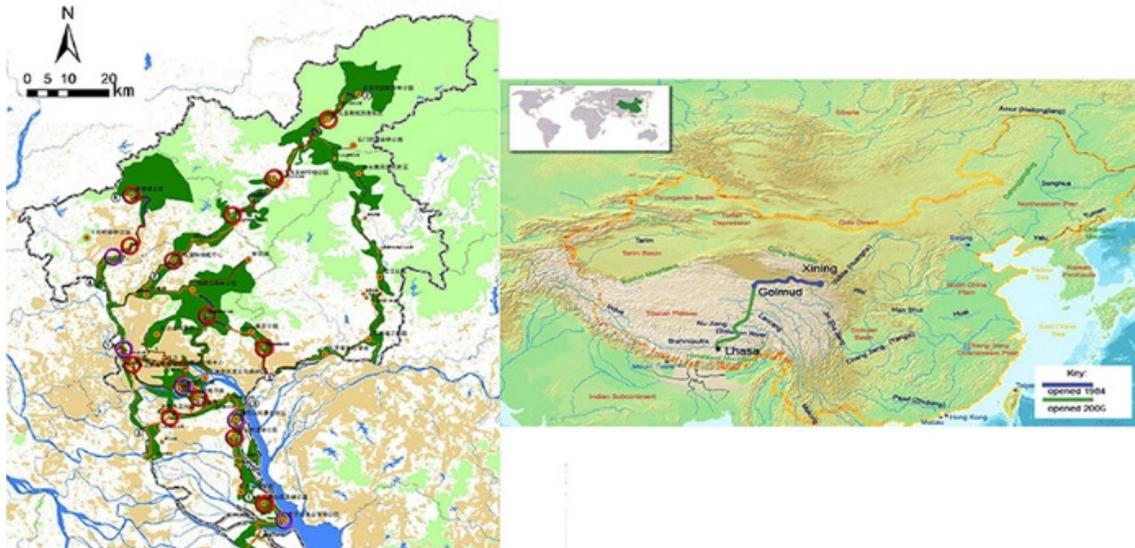


Fig. 5 Map of Pearl River Delta Regional Greenway (PRD, left) and Qinghai-Tibet railway (QTR, right) in China. On the left, the layout of the PRD is shown, while the right-hand figure shows the QTR (from Guangdong Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development 2007 and Tibet Railway Bureau of China 2010)

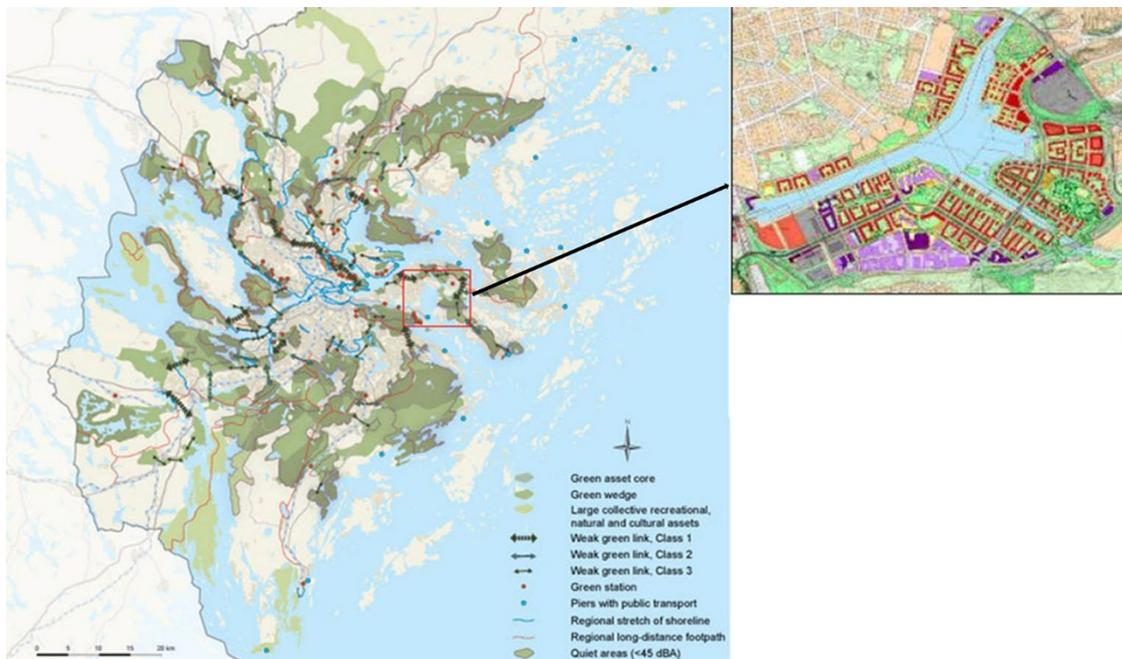


Fig. 6 Master plan for Hammarby Sjöstad (right) and its location in Stockholm's green wedge structure (left) (from RUFs 2012 for the map on the right, and Hammarbysjöstad Kommun 2007 for the left-hand map)



Fig.7 Map of West Lake Scenic Area in Hangzhou, showing West Lake as a scenic area that serves as a “stepping stone” to link up surrounding green spaces (from China Tourist Map 2010)

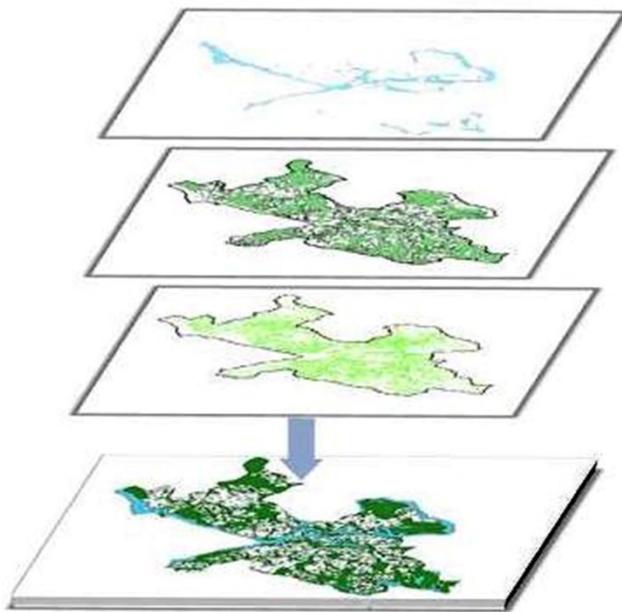


Fig. 8 The structure of the Stockholm green network

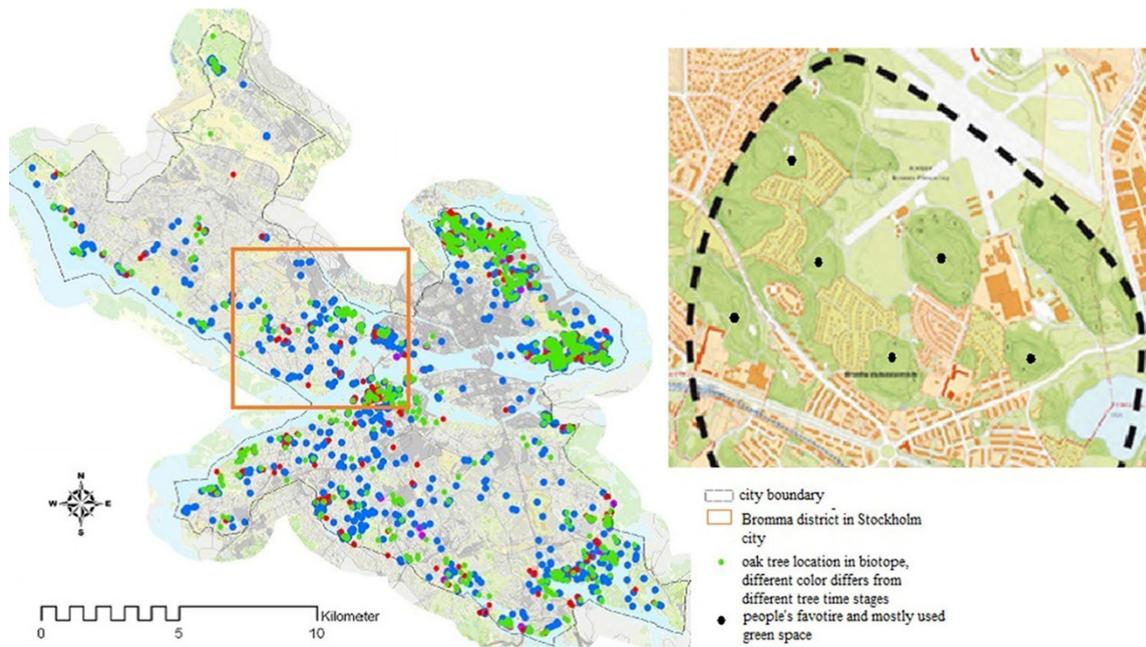


Fig. 9 Biotope (left) and sociotope (right) map of Bromma, Stockholm. Biotope mapping in Stockholm uses oak trees as one of the important habitats that provide refuge, reproduction and connection areas for many fauna species. A sociotope map is based on people's perception of green spaces. The dark green color represents the favorite and most frequently used places among residents, urban planners and other people (from Stockholm Municipality 2009 for biotope and 2013 for sociotope maps)