

# Mikael Brunila

Postdoctoral researcher  
McGill University  
Department of Geography  
Platial Analysis Lab

mikael.brunila@gmail.com  
github.com/maybemkl  
mikaelbrunila.com  
+1 438 882 8754

## Education

2023	Visiting Scholar, INCITE Columbia. Supervisor: Professor Peter Bearman.
2018–2024	PhD in Geography, McGill University, Montreal (defended in October 2024, awaiting graduation). Thesis supervisors: Professors David Wachsmuth & Grant McKenzie.
2017–2018	MA in Quantitative Methods for the Social Sciences, Columbia University, NY. Thesis supervisor: Dr. Greg Eirich.
2015	Visiting Scholar, City College of New York, NY. Supervisor: Prof. John Krisnky.
2013–2019	MSc in Political Science, University of Helsinki, Finland.
2010–2011	Nordplus exchange student, University of Copenhagen, Department of Sociology.
2009–2010	Erasmus exchange student, Universidad de Complutense in Madrid, Department of Political Science.
2007–2013	BSc in Political Science, Economics, Computer Science, University of Helsinki, Finland.

## Academic Employment

2024–	Researcher, Applied Probability & Areal Interpolation, Curbcut, Montreal.
2024–	Research assistant, topic modelling for political geography, Professor Benjamin Forest, McGill University, Montreal.
2019–2024	Graduate Research Assistant, Urban Politics and Governance research group, McGill University. Supervisor: Professor David Wachsmuth.
2020–2021	NLP Researcher, “Social Media for Weather Impacts”, McGill University. Supervisor: Professor Renee Sieber.
2019	Research Assistant, Harvard University, Department of Sociology. Supervisor: Professor Ya-Wen Lei.
2015–2017	Research Assistant, “Learning in Productive Social Movements”, Department of Pedagogy, University of Helsinki, New York–Barcelona–Helsinki. Supervisors: Professors Yrjö Engeström and John Krinsky (CUNY, NY).
2011	Research Assistant, Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki. Supervisor: Professor Hanna Wass.

## Teaching Experience

2025	Course instructor, “URBP 505: Geographic Information Systems”, School of Urban Planning, McGill University
2023	Teaching Assistant, “COMP 550: Natural Language Processing”, Computer Science Department, McGill University. 🏆TA Award, School of Computer Science
2023	Teaching Assistant, “URBP 642: Introduction to Planning Statistics”, Urban Planning Department, McGill University.
2023	Teaching Assistant, “URBP 640: Introduction to Planning Data”, Urban Planning Department, McGill University.
2023	Head instructor, “AI Track”, private programming bootcamp, Trois-Rivières, QC, Canada.
2019	Head instructor, “URBP 644: Multivariate Analysis”, Urban Planning Department, McGill University.
2019	Teaching assistant, “GEOG 407: Introduction to Programming for the Spatial Sciences”, Department of Geography, McGill University.
2018	Head instructor, “Data Science Track”, private programming bootcamp, Asheville, NC.
2012–2015	Head instructor, “How to Change Society?”, Töölö gymnasium, Helsinki.

## Non-Academic Employment

2023–2024	Part-time instructor for LangChain course, DataCamp, remote.
2018	Data Scientist, Houston Analytics, Helsinki (hybrid).
2014–2015	Part-time journalist, Taloussanommat, Helsinki.
2014–2015	Part-time journalist, EUObserver, Brussels (remote).
2013–2014	Part-time journalist, Hufvudstadsbladet, Helsinki.
2007–2013	Freelance journalist (NyTid, Voima, Basso, Hufvudstadsbladet), Helsinki.

## Software

2020–	Co-developer and co-founder, “DRIFT–A progressive web app for private mapping and end-to-end encrypted spatial feature sharing”, <a href="https://github.com/driftmap">https://github.com/driftmap</a>
2021	Co-developer, “WMDecompose: A Framework for Leveraging the Interpretable Properties of Word Mover’s Distance in Sociocultural Analysis”, <a href="https://github.com/maybemkl/wmdecompose">https://github.com/maybemkl/wmdecompose</a>

## Honors, Awards & Fellowships

2025–2027	Post-doctoral Grant, Kone Foundation, EUR127,100.
2024	TA Award, Natural Language Processing (COMP 550), School of Computer Science, Fall 2023 Semester.
2023	Outstanding paper, EMNLP (26/1048 papers).
2020–2023	Doctoral Grant, Kone Foundation, EUR114,000.
2020	Book of the week (2012 book on the far right), Helsingin Sanomat.
2019	Rathlyn GIS Award, McGill University, Department of Geography, CAD5,700.
2019–2022	McGill Engineering Doctoral Award (MEDA), CAD24,000/year.
2018–2022	McGill Engineering International Tuition Award (MEITA), CAD8,000/year.
2018–2019	Schulich Graduate Fellowship, McGill University, Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning, CAD25,000.
2017–2018	ASLA-Fulbright Graduate Scholarship, Fulbright Finland, EUR22,000.
2012	Project Grant, EUR900.
2010	Public Information Grant, EUR3,000.

## Publications & Presentations

### Books

2023	<b>Brunila, M.</b> , Saarinen, V. & Sandell V. <i>Kuulumme toisillemme – Kirjeitä ja kirjoituksia ystävyyden politiikasta</i> [We belong to each other - Letters and writings about the politics of friendship]. Khaos Publishing.
2014	<b>Brunila, M.</b> & Kallio, K (eds). <i>Verkko Suljettu—Internet ja avoimuuden rajat</i> [The Web is Closed—The Internet and the Limits of Openness]. Into kustannus.
2012	Andersson, L., <b>Brunila, M.</b> , & Koivulaakso, D. <i>Äärioikeisto Suomessa—Metapolitiikkaa ja vastarintamiehiä</i> [The Far Right in Finland—Metapolitics and resistance men]. Into kustannus.
2011	<b>Brunila, M.</b> , Ranta, K., & Viren, E. <i>Muutaman töhryn tähden—Helsingin töhrysoita 1998-</i> [For the sake of a few graffitis—The tag wars of Helsinki 1998-]. Into kustannus.

### Book Chapters

2024	<b>Brunila, M.</b> . “Mikä tekoälyä vaivaa?” [“What’s the matter with AI”]. In P. Purokuru & V. Lahtinen, <i>Mikä internetiä vaivaa?</i> [What’s the matter with the internet?] (pp. 227–242). Kosmos.
2024	Engeström, Y., <b>Brunila, M.</b> & <b>J. Rantavuori.</b> . The Politics of Expansive Learning: A Study of Two Social Movements. In A. Levant, K. Murakami, & M. McSweeney (Eds.), <i>Activity Theory—An Introduction</i> (pp. 137–173). ibidem Press (Columbia University Press).
2017	Engeström, Y., Ranta, K., Rantavuori, J., & <b>Brunila, M.</b> . Oppiminen tuotavissa yhteiskunnallisissa liikkeissä [“Learning in Productive Social Movements”]. In H. Savolainen, R. Vilkkö, & L. Vähäkylä (Eds.), [ <i>Oppimisen tulevaisuus The future of learning</i> ] (pp. 196–122). Gaudeamus.
2014	<b>Brunila, M.</b> . “Runsauden räjähdys: Internet hakutalouden jälkeen” [“The Explosion of Excess: The Internet after the Search Economy”]. In M. Brunila & K. Kallio (Eds.), <i>Verkko Suljettu</i> [The Web is Closed] (pp. 69–134). Into kustannus.

## Translated Books

- 2009 | Fleischer, R. *Postdijitaalinen manifesti [The postdigital manifesto]*. Into kustannus. (Translation from Swedish to Finnish.)

## Journal Articles

- 2023 | St-Hilaire, C., **Brunila, M.** & Wachsmuth, D. “High rises and housing stress—A spatial big-data analysis of rental housing financialization”. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2022.2126382>.
- 2022 | McKenzie, G., Romm, D., Zhang, H., & **Brunila, M.** “PrivyTo: A privacy-preserving location-sharing platform”. *Transactions in GIS*, 26(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/tgis.12924>.
- 2020 | Romascanu, A., Ker, H., Sieber, R., Greenidge, S., Lumley, S., Bush, D., Morgan, S., Zhao, R., & **Brunila, M.**. “Using deep learning and social network analysis to understand and manage extreme flooding”. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 28(3), 251–261. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12311>.
- 2019 | Caldwell, H., Krinsky, J., **Brunila, M.**, & Ranta, K. “Learning to Common, Commoning as Learning”. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 18(6). <https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1763>.

## Conference Proceedings

- 2023 | **Brunila, M.**, LaViolette, J., CH-Wang, S., Verma, P., Fére, C., & McKenzie G. “Toward a Critical Toponymy Framework for Named Entity Recognition: A Case Study of Airbnb in New York City”. *Proceedings of the 2023 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*. EMNLP 2023, Singapore. <https://aclanthology.org/2023.emnlp-main.284/> 🏆 **Outstanding paper.**
- 2023 | **Brunila, M.**, Verma, P. & McKenzie, G. “When Everything Is ‘Nearby’: How Airbnb Listings in New York City Exaggerate Proximity”. *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Geographic Information Science (GIScience 2023)*. [https://drops.dagstuhl.de/opus/frontdoor.php?source\\_opus=18911](https://drops.dagstuhl.de/opus/frontdoor.php?source_opus=18911).
- 2022 | **Brunila, M.**, McConnell, M. & Grigg, S. “DRIFT: End-to-end encrypted spatial feature sharing & instant messaging”, *Proceedings of the 6th ACM SIGSPATIAL International Workshop on Location-based Recommendations, Geosocial Networks and GeoAdvertising* <https://doi.org/10.1145/3557992.3565987>
- 2022 | **Brunila, M.**, & LaViolette, J. “What kind of company do words keep? Revisiting the distributional semantics of J.R. Firth & Zellig Harris”. *Proceedings of the 2022 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics: Human Language Technologies*. NAACL-HLT 2022, Seattle, WA.
- 2021 | **Brunila, M.**, & LaViolette, J. “WMDecompose: A Framework for Leveraging the Interpretable Properties of Word Mover’s Distance in Sociocultural Analysis”. *Proceedings of the 5th Joint SIGHUM Workshop on Computational Linguistics for Cultural Heritage, Social Sciences, Humanities and Literature*, 154–167. <https://aclanthology.org/2021.latechclfl-1.18>
- 2021 | **Brunila, M.**, Zhao, R., Mircea, A., Lumley, S., & Sieber, R. “Bridging the gap between supervised classification and unsupervised topic modelling for social-media assisted crisis management”. *Proceedings of the Second Workshop on Domain Adaptation for NLP*, 33–49. <https://aclanthology.org/2021.adaptnlp-1.5>

## Selected Essays & Periodicals

- 2025 | **Brunila, M.** “Taking AI into the tunnels”. *e-flux* Issue #151. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/>.
- 2020 | **Brunila, M.** “Döden och den eviga återkomsten, eller Muminrollet i antropocen” [“Death and the eternal return, or, the Moomintroll in the anthropocene”]. *Kritiker* 57-58. <http://www.kritiker.nu/nummer57/index.html>.

## Languages

Finnish	Native speaker
Swedish	Native speaker
<b>English</b>	<b>Fluent</b>
French	Good
Spanish	Good
German	Good
Danish	Fair

## Programming & Software

Languages	Python, R, JS (Node), Bash, Stan (C++), Markdown, HTML/CSS, Excel
DL & ML	torch, transformers, sklearn, Wandb
NLP	spaCy, nltk, CoreNLP, gensim
GIS	QGIS, ArcGIS, sf, sp, geopandas, shapely
RS & CV	ENVI, PySTAC, TorchGeo, GEE, OpenCV, YOLO
SNA	tidygraph, networkx, igraph, ggraph
Data Viz	matplotlib, seaborn, ggplot
Inference	Stan, JASP/SPSS
Dev Ops	Git, Docker