



## Session 7: Re-dressing socio-environmental injustices through urban recovery

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26.06.2023

# Expected learning outcomes of this session

1. Understand key dimensions of socio-environmental injustices
2. Reflect on policies and practices for resilient and green recovery and how they might resonate with your own experiences and cases.
3. Collectively develop key questions that you need to ask of urban recovery processes to identify, and redress, environmental injustices.

# Outline of the session

- Integrating environmental perspectives into urban recovery: why and how (40 min)
- Group work (30 min)
- Feedback, plenary discussion, commentary and closure (20 min)



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# What we know about major environmental impacts of conflicts/wars

- Degradation goes beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries of the war/conflict
  - In Bosnia-Herzegovina, about 200,000 ha of agricultural land is still mined
  - Countries at the receiving end experience disproportionate environmental devastation
- The reasons for environmental degradation are complex and contextual
  - Deforestation due to guerilla activities and movement of vehicles, mining of metals in forests to finance conflicts, increased logging by IDPs
  - Degraded water quality due to bombs/missiles creating craters that compact soil and contribute to erosion
  - Droughts and crop failures as Afghanistan has lost 70% of its irrigation network

# What we know about major environmental impacts of conflicts/wars

- We need to think beyond the conflict/war, to its preconditions and legacies
  - “Treadmill of destruction” - environmental impacts of militarisation
  - Resource curse - externalities and the environment itself as a reason for conflict
  - Low-income countries and/or countries with low levels of democracy see a decline in their national biocapacity in the long run (Pathak 2020)
- Focus of today's session: thinking recovery not only as a reversal to the status-quo, but as pathway towards social & environmental justice and sustainability.

# What do we know about major environmental impacts of the war in Ukraine so far?

- Toxic waste generated by war equipments (water, air, soil) impacting households and economy
- Increased use of individual oil-powered generators, armed vehicles, increase in oil-powered transportation - traffic / carbon emissions
- Illegal grain/production facilities export - resource extraction and overuse and industrial waste
- Destroyed buildings and infrastructure - mass internal and out-country migration and industrial waste

The direct implications on human and environmental health, biodiversity loss, climate change, etc:

- Contamination and shrinkage of drinking water and food insecurity; danger of spread of infectious diseases and lowering capacity of controlling and overcoming them
- Loss of plant and animal species; land pollution; deforestation.

# The explosion on Kakhovska Dam 6.06.23 and the consequences of flooding

Intersection of personal responsibility for housing as a private property and a “common” environmental disaster: economic and social effects:

- Where to evacuate?
- How to repair? (5000 UAH = 124 EUR per person)
- + General drinking water shortage, electricity disruption, and the suspension of public infrastructures



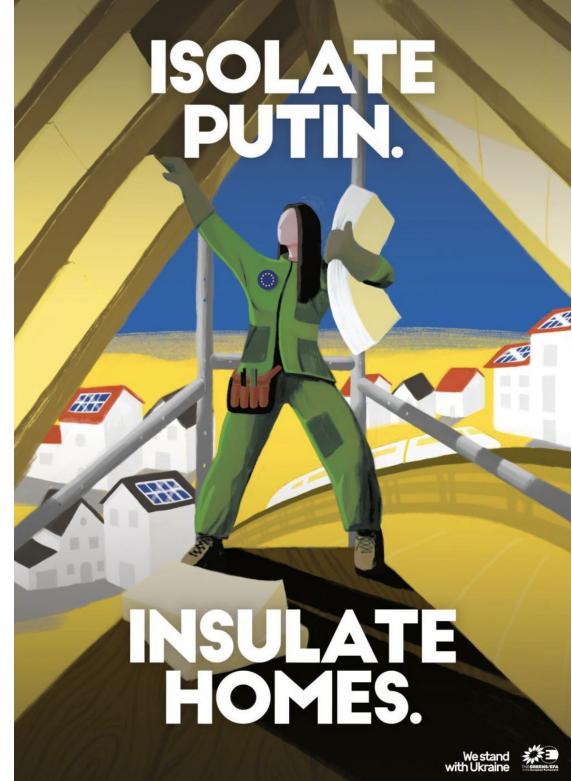
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Think about the case study of your final assignment, or a city/case you are familiar with. Which negative environmental impacts has it experienced?

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Deforestation	Deterioration of agricultural land	Contamination of water	Soil erosion	Flooding	Exploitation of rare materials	Other

# Policy commitments

- Pre-war climate policy and green transition
- EU integration requires commitments towards becoming a “climate neutral continent by 2050” and Sustainable Development Goals 2030
- The call for a Green Marshall Plan (w/industry, public and private sector) and recent pledges from EU to contribute \$40billion to its first phase
- Lugano declaration 2022



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# Urban resilience and “building back better”



Resilience promotes:

- Integral and systematic perspective
- Capacity for self-organisation and adaptability of a system
- Responding to the urgency and uncertainty of major challenges with visions of persistence, adaptation and transformation

Questions to Consider	
Who?	Who determines what is desirable for an urban system? Whose resilience is prioritized? Who is included (and excluded) from the urban system?
What?	T What perturbations should the urban system be resilient to? R What networks and sectors are included in the urban system? A Is the focus on generic or specific resilience?
When?	D Is the focus on rapid-onset disturbances or slow-onset changes? E Is the focus on short-term resilience or long-term resilience? O Is the focus on the resilience of present or future generations?
Where?	F Where are the spatial boundaries of the urban system? F Is the resilience of some areas prioritized over others? S Does building resilience in some areas affect resilience elsewhere?
Why?	? What is the goal of building urban resilience? What are the underlying motivations for building urban resilience? Is the focus on process or outcome?

Source: Meerow et al. 2016

# Some housing challenges in environmentally sustainable urban recovery

- Reduced affordability and displacement through green gentrification
- Disaster risk management: Relocation and in-situ risk reduction
- Re-framing infrastructural transformations as political rather than just technical questions
- Providing for energy efficiency and sufficiency



## POLICY AND PLANNING TOOLS FOR URBAN GREEN JUSTICE

Fighting displacement and gentrification and improving accessibility and inclusiveness to green amenities

April 2021

**BCNUEJ** Barcelona Laboratory for Urban Environmental Justice and Sustainability

**UAB**  
Universitat Autònoma  
de Barcelona

**icta**

**IMIM**  
Institut Municipal d'Investigacions  
Mèdiques

**European  
Commission**

**ICLEI**  
Local Governments for Sustainability

**erc**  
European Research Council

# Major trade-offs in Housing in Ukraine

The political will to preserve the dominance of private homeownership (compensations for destroyed property in the Law of Ukraine from 23.02.2023 № 2923-IX) versus the housing crisis (mass displacement, housing shortage, increasing poverty and rent prices in “perceived” safe territories and economic stagnation).

Support of the private construction sector in the lowering of the construction standards and the simplification of the land allocation vs the need for more sustainable and affordable housing options

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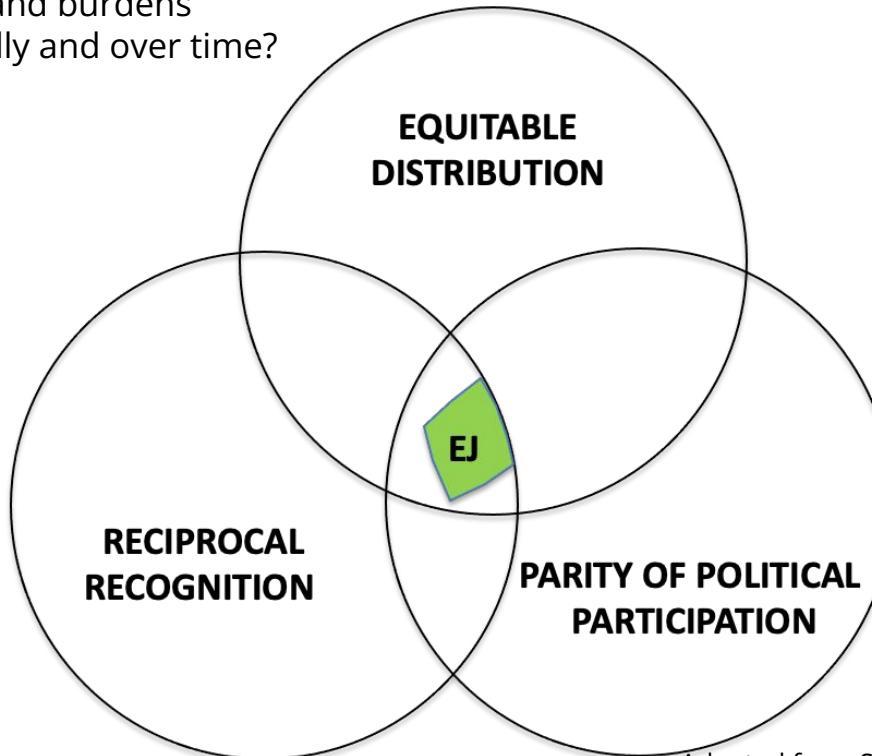
Thinking about the same case as before: describe 1 key trade-off it already experiences/you expect it to experience

# Environmental justice perspectives

Who has (owns, accesses, etc) what?

How are benefits and burdens distributed, spatially and over time?

Who is rendered in/visible in their vulnerabilities and capacities to act? Who is routinely disparaged in stereotype public and cultural representations? Who overlooks or privileges whom and with what consequences?



How are unequal distributions created? Who decides? Who has influence? Who has choices? How are power, choices and influence exercised in formal and informal decision-making spaces?

Adapted from Schlosberg 2013, see also Kronenberg et al 2020 for EJ in post-socialist countries

# Breakout group discussion (25')

- (15') Think about the city/case you are proposing for your final assignment (or another case you are familiar with) and exchange with your group:
  - Which environmental challenges from the presentation resonate with your case?
  - Which additional ones do you identify?
- (10') What questions do you need to ask (and answer) to be able to redress environmental injustices?
  - Selecting 1-2 cases from your group, formulate 3 questions as a group and assign 1 representative to present them

We will post the questions and the link to the Miroboard in the chat. Please copy them to your clipboard and *do not open the link yet*.

Only 2 people per group should access Miro, so please wait until you are in your group and decide then who will document the discussion on Miro and report back.

# References

BCNUEJ (2021). Policy and planning tools for urban green justice. Fighting displacement and gentrification and improving accessibility and inclusiveness to green amenities. Available at:

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Meerow, S., Newell, J. P., & Stults, M. (2016). Defining urban resilience: A review. *Landscape and urban planning*, 147, 38-49.

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