



**UP2030 URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN READY FOR 2030**

**THE**

# **SPATIAL JUSTICE**

**ROCCO, GONÇALVES, LOPEZ, DĄBROWSKI**

**UP2030**

# UP2030 COLOPHON

## UP2030 SPATIAL PLANNING & DESIGN READY FOR 2030



Funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. This project has received funding from the Horizon Innovation Actions under the grant agreement n° 101096405.

This Spatial Justice Handbook has been developed within the framework of the UP2030 Horizon project, generously funded by the European Union. As a cornerstone contribution to work package three (WP3), this manual aligns with the project's overarching goals of innovating and enhancing spatial justice in urban planning and design by 2030. Furthermore, it is a complementary resource to the Spatial Justice Benchmarking tool developed by the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). This integration ensures that the manual not only provides theoretical insights and practical guidance for advancing Spatial Justice in sustainability transitions but also aligns with cutting-edge research and tools designed to measure and improve spatial justice outcomes. Through this collaborative effort, the handbook aims to empower practitioners, scholars, and policymakers with the knowledge and strategies needed to create more equitable, inclusive, and just urban environments, reflecting the shared commitment of the UP2030 Horizon project and its contributors to fostering Spatial Justice on a global scale.



## SPATIAL JUSTICE HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to be a comprehensive guide for understanding and applying spatial justice principles within the context of spatial planning and strategy. Its focus is on achieving a just urban sustainability transition, leaving no-one behind, with the ultimate goal of creating urban environments that are equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.

**KEYWORDS:** SPATIAL JUSTICE, URBAN TRANSITIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY, JUST TRANSITIONS, CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, GOVERNANCE, SPATIAL PLANNING & STRATEGY

### EDITED BY

ROBERTO ROCCO  
JULIANA GONÇALVES  
HUGO LOPEZ  
MARCIN DĄBROWSKI

PUBLISHED BY THE  
DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, THE NETHERLANDS

ISBN/EAN: 978-94-6518-162-2  
[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.5281/ZENODO.12598018](https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.12598018)

THIS MATERIAL IS PUBLISHED BY TU DELFT ON BEHALF OF THE AUTHORS UNDER A CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION–NONCOMMERCIAL–NODERIVATIVES 4.0 INTERNATIONAL (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) LICENCE. IT MAY BE COPIED AND REDISTRIBUTED IN ANY MEDIUM OR FORMAT FOR NON-COMMERCIAL PURPOSES ONLY, PROVIDED THAT APPROPRIATE CREDIT IS GIVEN TO THE AUTHORS AND THE SOURCE, A LINK TO THE LICENCE IS INCLUDED, AND THE CONTENT IS NOT MODIFIED, ADAPTED, OR BUILT UPON. PLEASE REMEMBER TO CITE THE SOURCE WHEN REPRODUCING OR REFERRING TO THIS ARTICLE.

THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS BOOK IS AVAILABLE AT  
[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.5281/ZENODO.12598018](https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.12598018)

DESIGNED BY ROBERTO ROCCO

Every attempt has been made to ensure the correct source of images and other potentially copyrighted material was ascertained, and that all materials included in this book have been attributed and used according to their license. If you believe that a portion of the material infringes someone else's copyright, please contact roberto rocco at [r.c.rocco@tudelft.nl](mailto:r.c.rocco@tudelft.nl)



UP2030



# CONTENTS

## PREFACE 5

WHY INTEGRATE JUSTICE INTO URBAN PLANNING &  
POLICY MAKING 6  
APPLICATION & ORGANISATION OF THIS MANUAL 12

## FOUNDATIONS OF SPATIAL JUSTICE 14

1. WHY SPATIAL JUSTICE 16
2. BRIEF REVIEW OF KEY THEORISTS &  
PHILOSOPHIES 22
3. DIMENSIONS OF SPATIAL JUSTICE 32
4. SPATIAL JUSTICE & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY 43

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING SPATIAL JUSTICE 49

5. INCLUSIVE URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN 51
6. TU DELFT STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE 66
7. PLANNING PERSPECTIVES FOR  
SPATIAL JUSTICE 78
8. ECONOMIC & SOCIAL URBAN POLICIES FOR  
SPATIAL JUSTICE 98
9. TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING & MONITORING  
SPATIAL JUSTICE 110

## CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS 134

10. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO  
SPATIAL JUSTICE 138
11. INNOVATIONS & EMERGING IDEAS 152
12. TOWARDS A JUST CITY: REFLECTIONS AND A  
MANIFESTO 162

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 171

AUTHORS 173

THE CENTRE FOR THE JUST CITY 174

UP2030 176

SUMMARY 180

**RECOGNITION**

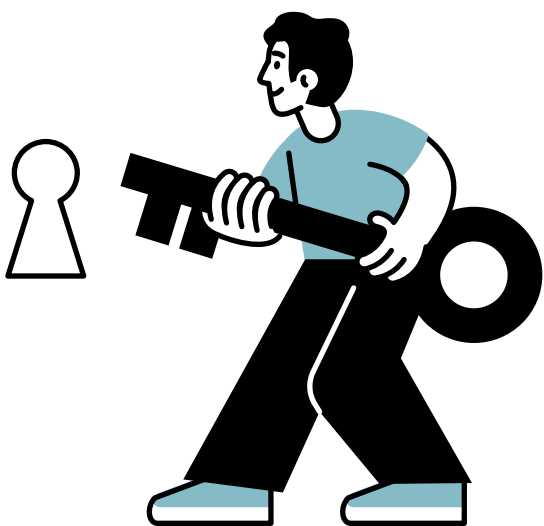
**SPATIAL  
JUSTICE**

**DISTRIBUTIVE**

**PROCEDURAL**



# PREFACE



# **WHY INTEGRATE SPATIAL JUSTICE INTO URBAN PLANNING AND POLICY MAKING?**

INTEGRATING JUSTICE INTO URBAN PLANNING AND POLICYMAKING IS CRUCIAL FOR CREATING EQUITABLE, SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE, AND RESILIENT CITIES THAT CATER TO THE NEEDS OF ALL CITIZENS, THEREBY ACHIEVING TRUE SUSTAINABILITY. BY 'TRUE SUSTAINABILITY', WE MEAN THE SIMULTANEOUS OCCURRENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY'S THREE CRUCIAL DIMENSIONS (SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC), WHICH ARE MUTUALLY DEPENDENT AND MUTUALLY REINFORCING.

Justice is a human institution. It serves as both a moral and legal framework that seeks to balance individual rights with the common good, ensuring that all members of a society have the opportunity to lead fulfilling and prosperous lives. Central to this conception of justice is the notion of fairness, where each person receives what they are due, whether in terms of resources, opportunities, or protection.

At the heart of the idea of justice lies a profound question: How can we live together? And how can we coexist harmoniously with our planet, ensuring that every being leads a flourishing life while maintaining the Earth's natural balance? In light of our current unsustainable practices, we are also compelled to ask: How can we revolutionise our interactions with our cities, our planet, and one another, to nurture a world where both human and ecological well-being are realised?

In this manual, we explore the idea of **Spatial Justice**, which examines the spatial ontology of social processes and their outcomes. Everything happens somewhere. Space plays a definitive role (albeit not a deterministic one) in shaping social processes. It is not only about the distribution of burdens and benefits in our life together (the outcomes), but also about recognising the diverse needs and

trajectories of those affected, as well as the decision-making processes that shape our spaces (the processes).

Spatial justice seeks to address inequalities that lead to disparities in how groups experience their environment, advocating for a more equitable distribution of spaces and resources that foster community well-being and inclusivity. It also supports more democratic and inclusive processes to achieve this.

Spatial Justice encompasses three fundamental, co-constitutive dimensions: distributive, procedural, and recognition justice, which we briefly describe here and expand upon later in this manual.

Distributive Justice concerns the equitable distribution of resources, benefits, and burdens of our lives in society across different geographical areas or communities. It strives to ensure that no group or locality is systematically disadvantaged in accessing essential services, amenities, or economic opportunities. Distributive justice addresses issues such as the fair allocation of public goods, infrastructure, and environmental quality to prevent spatial inequalities.

Procedural Justice focuses on the fairness of decision-making processes related to urban development and planning. It emphasises inclusive governance, participation, transparency and accountability. In this dimension, a wide range of stakeholders should have a voice in shaping policies, regulations, and development plans, ensuring that decision-making procedures are open, accountable, and considerate of diverse perspectives, with particular attention to the pleas of disadvantaged or historically oppressed communities.

In Recognition Justice, we acknowledge the importance of cultural identity, historical trajectories, and the specific needs and aspirations of various social groups. Recognition justice emphasises respecting the rights and values of marginalised or

minority communities, acknowledging their unique experiences, and addressing historical injustices. It also addresses past injustices and trajectories of oppression. Recognition justice seeks to create inclusive urban environments that validate and support the diverse identities, needs and aspirations of citizens. In a way, it is impossible to have procedural justice without recognitional justice.

These three dimensions are integral and essential to Spatial Justice. What we mean by this is that although those dimensions can be understood separately, they are mutually reinforcing and necessary for true and sustainable Spatial Justice to exist. Recognition that does not lead to parity of participation (Fraser, 1999) and fairness in the material distribution of the burdens and benefits of life in society is but a symbolic exercise.

In the evolving discourse about how to steer our cities and communities towards a fair and sustainable future, the concept of spatial justice emerges as both a 'meaning-giver' and a 'sense-maker' for urban development policy and projects. It does so by providing a critical lens through which the spatial dimensions of justice and equity can be understood and addressed. Urban space is not neutral; it reflects and reproduces social inequalities and power dynamics. By applying spatial justice principles, urban planners and policymakers can recognise and analyse the ways in which urban spaces either perpetuate inequality or contribute to more equitable outcomes.

Giving meaning refers to the act of assigning significance or value to something. It involves imbuing a person, object, or situation with a deeper, often subjective, interpretation that resonates on a personal or collective level. Spatial justice, as a 'meaning-giver,' helps us collectively reflect, discuss, identify, and articulate the underlying values and goals that should guide urban development. Spatial justice provides a more profound framework for understanding the complex interactions

between space, society, and the environment. It helps us reflect on how urban policies and projects impact different communities and individuals, particularly those who are marginalised or disadvantaged. This perspective gives meaning to collective, public action, fostering a holistic approach to urban development, one that considers the spatial implications of policy decisions and seeks to create environments that are socially inclusive, empowering and regenerative.

Making sense pertains to making something comprehensible or logical. It involves explaining or arranging information in a way that makes it clear and understandable to others. When you give sense to a statement or an idea, you are clarifying it, making it reasonable or understandable in the context it is presented. As a "sense-maker", spatial justice encourages a systematic value-based rethinking of urban development based on a clear three-dimensional framework that addresses multiple aspects simultaneously, namely the distribution of burdens and benefits of urban development, who has access to urban resources and goods and how urban planning and design can either exacerbate or mitigate social disparities. Doing so gives sense to urban policy and projects, ensuring they are aligned with the broader goals of equity and inclusion.

Spatial justice, of course, is merely a concept, and it is challenging to implement. However, it is also a powerful idea that helps us give meaning to and make sense of our activities as planners, designers, activists, decision makers, and may animate others to join us in the struggle for better cities. While these ideas may seem desperately naïve in the face of the harsh realities of city administration, with multiple challenges and political obstacles, we argue that meaning-giving and sense-making are by no means trivial pursuits. In fact, capturing the imagination of our fellow citizens is crucial for effective collective action to combat complex societal challenges.



All in all, concepts such as Justice and the Market are not 'natural'; they are human creations that allow us to live with each other. The imperative to embed justice into these processes' stems from a profound understanding that cities are not just physical spaces but also social environments where inequities can be perpetuated or dismantled.

Urban areas are mosaics of diverse communities with unique needs, aspirations, and challenges. Without a justice-oriented approach, urban planning and policy-making risk exacerbating social inequalities, allowing environmental degradation and economic disparities, and ultimately undermining the urban social fabric of cities.

The integration of justice dimensions into urban planning and policymaking is not only a moral imperative but also a practical necessity for addressing complex urban challenges that require collective imagination and collective action. Cities are at the forefront of confronting climate change, migration, economic shifts, and technological advancements. Justice-oriented planning ensures that the benefits and burdens of urban development are shared equitably, increasing social sustainability and making cities more resilient to shocks and stresses. Furthermore, a justice-based approach can drive innovation and sustainability by fostering environments where diverse ideas and solutions are welcomed and where social equity is seen as integral to economic prosperity and environmental stewardship.

Publishing a handbook on spatial justice carries the risk of trivialising the profound meanings of the concept. In the run-of-the-mill toiling of planners, justice may lose some of its appeal as a utopian concept. Yet, it is time we take justice off its scholarly and judicial pedestals and integrate it into spatial planning more vigorously. It is imperative to undertake this endeavour to render the concept accessible and practical. By translating complex theoretical frameworks into practical applications,

such a handbook can serve as a critical tool for policymakers, planners, and practitioners. This effort not only democratises the knowledge but also ensures that spatial justice transcends academic discourse, facilitating tangible interventions and fostering equitable spatial outcomes. Thus, the potential risk is outweighed by the significant benefit of operationalising spatial justice to address real-world inequalities.

In the words of the great Indian economist and philosopher of justice, Amartya Sen, there is no perfect justice, nor is a perfectly just world achievable. Sen argues that the pursuit of a perfectly just society is not only unattainable but also potentially misguided. Instead, he emphasises the importance of addressing and reducing existing injustices incrementally, suggesting that we should focus on making societies more just over time through practical measures and continuous improvement (Sen, 2009). This approach aligns with the idea that justice should be pursued as a comparative and incremental improvement, rather than as an absolute ideal.

What we should aspire to is making cities a little more just tomorrow than they were yesterday. However, the work needs to be done today.

In conclusion, integrating justice into urban planning and policymaking is crucial for building cities that are not only physically well-designed but also socially sustainable. This approach requires a commitment to understanding and addressing the multidimensional and mutually reinforcing aspects of justice—distributive, procedural, and recognition-al—to ensure that urban development promotes the well-being of all, humans and non-humans. By doing so, cities can become places of care, resilience, and solidarity, capable of meeting current and future challenges.

## REFERENCES

- Fraser, N. (1999). Social justice in the age of identity politics: redistribution, recognition, and participation. In L. Ray & A. Sayer (Eds.), *Culture and Economy after the Cultural Turn* (pp. 25-52). SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446218112.n2>
- Sen, A. (2009). *The Idea of Justice*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.



# APPLICATION & ORGANISATION OF THIS MANUAL

The Spatial Justice Manual is designed for urban planners, policymakers, activists, community leaders, academics, and students interested in integrating principles of justice into spatial planning and urban development. It is a comprehensive guide for those seeking to understand and apply spatial justice concepts to create equitable and inclusive urban spaces.

The manual is particularly valuable for practitioners and scholars working at the intersection of urban planning, social justice, environmental sustainability, and participatory governance. It offers them tools, strategies, and insights to address distribution, process and recognition in spatial planning.

The suggested application of this manual includes its use in academic settings for instruction and research, by urban planners and designers in the field as a reference for equitable planning practices, and by policymakers as a guideline for creating and implementing policies that foster inclusivity and justice. Additionally, its integration with the Spatial Justice Benchmarking Tool allows for a robust evaluation of urban planning initiatives, ensuring that efforts are not only theoretically sound but also effectively measured and aligned with the broader goals of the UP2030 Horizon project.

Through this dual application, the manual contributes significantly to the global endeavor of creating more just, sustainable, and resilient urban areas.

The manual is organised into five sections. It begins with introducing the concepts of spatial, distributive, procedural, and recognitional justice, laying the theoretical groundwork.

The second part addresses strategies for implementing spatial justice. There's a focus on participatory planning methods, strategies for equitable resource distribution, and approaches to enhancing inclusivity and diversity in urban spaces.

Part three delves into tools and techniques for monitoring and benchmarking spatial justice. Part four tackles the challenges and future directions in the spatial justice discussion. Part five takes a step back and reflects on the ethical dimensions of spatial justice, the role of planners and the moral imperative of leaving no one behind. The manual ends with a call to action.

This organisation ensures that readers gain a holistic understanding of spatial justice, equipped with both the theoretical insights and practical tools needed to enact meaningful change.



**FOUNDATIONS  
OF  
SPATIAL  
JUSTICE**



# 1. WHY SPATIAL JUSTICE?





# 1.1. UNDERSTANDING SPATIAL JUSTICE

Spatial justice is a crucial framework for understanding and addressing the complex ways in which space and social justice intertwine. The necessity for spatial justice arises from the acknowledgement that space is not a neutral backdrop to human activity but is actively produced, shaped, and contested by social processes, power dynamics, and institutional practices. Inequities in how resources, opportunities, and services are distributed across space can lead to profound disparities in health, well-being, and economic prosperity among different communities. Spatial justice seeks to rectify these disparities by ensuring equitable access to urban and rural spaces and the benefits they confer.

The need for spatial justice is underscored by the growing recognition that many social injustices, such as poverty, environmental degradation, and discrimination, have a spatial dimension. The 'spatial turn' in the social sciences represents a paradigm shift towards recognising the significance of space in shaping social relations, processes, and outcomes. This perspective emphasises that space is not merely a passive backdrop but an active element influencing and being influenced by social dynamics. It encourages scholars to consider how geographical and physical spaces affect social interactions, inequalities, power structures, and cultural practices. By integrating spatial analysis, this approach offers more profound insights into the complexities of society, challenging traditional notions of space and place and highlighting the role of geography in constructing social realities and life stories.

Poor urban planning and policymaking can exacerbate existing inequalities, concentrating disadvantage in certain areas while privileging others. This can manifest in various ways, from food deserts in underserved neighbourhoods and inadequate pub-

lic transportation to the siting of hazardous waste facilities or polluting industries in low-income or black communities, disproportionately exposing them to health risks.

Spatial Justice demands a re-evaluation of these planning and policy decisions to ensure that all communities, especially the most vulnerable, have equal access to public goods and the necessities for a dignified life, including clean air, water, green spaces, and safe, affordable housing.

Moreover, spatial justice is integral to the pursuit of environmental justice and the fight against climate change.

Environmental Justice focuses explicitly on the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, such as clean air, water, access to green spaces, and exposure to pollutants and environmental hazards. It emerged as a response to the observation that marginalised and low-income communities often bear a disproportionate share of environmental risks and hazards without equal access to environmental goods. The unequal effects of environmental degradation and climate impacts often fall hardest on those least responsible for them. Environmental justice seeks to address these disparities, advocating for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The connection between spatial justice and environmental justice lies in their shared recognition that inequities are often spatially distributed. Environmental injustices manifest through spatial arrangements: where people live, work, and play affects their exposure to environmental harms, access to natural resources and healthy environments.

Spatial justice provides a broader lens through which to understand the contexts and spatial dimensions of these environmental injustices, emphasising the importance of inclusive spatial

planning and policymaking in mitigating environmental disparities. It underlines that achieving environmental justice is a critical component of broader efforts to create fair, healthy, and sustainable spaces for all communities, emphasising the idea of the Right to the City (Harvey, 2008, 2012; Lefèbvre, 1968; Purcell, 2002, 2014).

The Right to the City advocates for the democratisation of urban space, asserting that all citizens should have equitable access to and control over the benefits of urban life and its common resources, thereby fostering inclusive, sustainable, and just urban environments.

By adopting a spatial justice lens, planners and policymakers can better understand and address the geographical patterns of environmental injustice, ensuring that efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change are equitably distributed and do not leave marginalised communities behind.

Spatial justice also encompasses the right to participate in the making of spaces themselves. This procedural aspect of justice emphasises the importance of democratic governance and the inclusion of diverse voices in urban planning and decision-making processes. Ensuring that all community members, particularly those historically excluded or marginalised, have meaningful opportunities to shape the spaces in which they live is a fundamental principle of spatial justice. This participatory approach may not only lead to more equitable outcomes but also strengthen the social fabric by fostering a sense of belonging and ownership among residents.

Finally, the pursuit of spatial justice is about recognising and valuing the diversity of experiences and identities that inhabit urban and rural spaces. It challenges us to consider how spaces can be designed and governed to celebrate cultural diversity, promote social cohesion, and accommodate different ways of living. In doing so, spatial justice aims to create inclusive environments that reflect and respect society's multiplicity, allowing everyone to thrive.

In sum, spatial justice is essential for building fairer, more resilient communities and cities. By addressing the spatial dimensions of inequality and ensuring equitable access to resources, opportunities, and participation in spatial decision-making, spatial justice offers a path toward a more inclusive and sustainable future. It calls on us to reimagine and reconstruct the spaces we inhabit in ways that prioritise equity, respect for diversity, and the collective well-being of all community members.

## 1.2. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SPATIAL INEQUALITY AND JUSTICE

The emergence of spatial justice as a conceptual and political framework is rooted in broader historical struggles over rights, equity, and the material conditions of urban life. While spatial inequality has long been a feature of human settlement, the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a growing awareness of how space itself functions as a mechanism of exclusion and domination. This awareness crystallised in the 1960s and 1970s, as radical urban movements, civil rights campaigns, and anti-colonial struggles converged to challenge the normative and spatial logics of capitalist urban development.

In Western Europe and North America, the post-war decades saw a wave of large-scale state-led urban renewal projects that promised modernisation and efficiency but often resulted in the displacement of working-class and racialised communities. The so-called 'slum clearance' programmes in cities such as London, Paris, and New York were emblematic of this trend, privileging infrastructural development over social cohesion and reinforcing patterns of spatial exclusion (Harvey, 1973; Marcuse, 1986). These transformations prompted

widespread resistance, particularly from communities affected by the erasure of local identities and the commodification of land.

It was during this period that Henri Lefebvre formulated his influential concept of the *right to the city*, a radical demand for collective control over urbanisation processes and the reappropriation of space for use value rather than exchange value (Lefebvre, 1968). Lefebvre's work marked a critical departure from technocratic understandings of space as neutral or fixed, framing space instead as socially produced and political. His ideas were foundational to a broader intellectual turn, what Edward Soja (2010) later called the 'spatial turn', that reoriented urban theory toward a deeper engagement with the spatial dimensions of power, inequality, and justice.

In the Global South, spatial inequality was intensified by the legacies of colonial urbanism, which imposed racial and economic segregation through planning instruments and infrastructure. Post-independence states often inherited and reproduced these spatial regimes under the guise of developmentalism, relying on modernist planning paradigms that privileged elite enclaves while marginalising informal settlements and peripheralised populations (Roy, 2009; Watson, 2009). The resulting urban forms, fragmented, exclusionary, and uneven, became sites of both injustice and resistance, where grassroots movements mobilised to claim land, services, and recognition.

The 1980s and 1990s saw a shift in the political economy of urban planning with the rise of neo-liberal governance, marked by the withdrawal of the welfare state, the rise of public-private partnerships, and the marketisation of urban land and services. This era further entrenched spatial disparities through gentrification, housing financialisation, and the privatisation of public goods (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). As critical scholars such as Peter Marcuse (2009) and Susan Fainstein (2010) have argued, spatial injustice under neoliberalism is not an unintended side effect but a structural outcome of planning

systems designed to facilitate capital accumulation.

At the same time, new forms of resistance emerged, building on the legacy of Lefebvre and drawing from feminist, decolonial, and Southern epistemologies. Faranak Miraftab (2004) introduced the distinction between 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of participation to analyse how marginalised communities claim political agency beyond institutional channels. These concepts re-framed spatial justice as a relational and procedural struggle, concerned not only with redistribution but with recognition, participation, and epistemic legitimacy.

This genealogy of spatial justice demonstrates that the struggle for just spaces has always been historically situated, shaped by broader political-economic shifts and grassroots contestation. The field has moved from focusing solely on material distribution to incorporating procedural and recognitional dimensions of justice, following the influential work of Nancy Fraser (Fraser, 2000, 2010). Her model of *participatory parity*, the idea that justice entails social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers, has become a normative touchstone for assessing spatial policies and planning processes.

In short, spatial justice has evolved through a dialectic between institutional planning regimes and the insurgent practices of those excluded from dominant spatial orders. This historical perspective reveals that injustice is not merely the product of poor planning or technical failure, but the outcome of deliberate political choices and structural conditions. Understanding these genealogies is essential for contemporary planners and scholars seeking to transform space not just through design or policy, but through a commitment to democratic, equitable, and plural urban futures.

## REFERENCES

- Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2002). *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*. Blackwell.
- Fainstein, S. (2010). *The Just City*. Cornell University Press.
- Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review*, 3, 107-120. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii3/articles/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition>
- Fraser, N. (2010). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.
- Harvey, D. (1973). *Social Justice and the City*. University of Georgia Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46nm9v>
- Harvey, D. (2008). The Right to the City. *New Left Review*, Sept/Oct(53), 23-40. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii53/articles/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities : from the right to the city to the urban revolution*. Verso.
- Lefèbvre, H. (1968). *Le Droit à la ville*. Anthropos.
- Marcuse, P. (1986). Abandonment, gentrification, and displacement: the linkages in New York City. In N. Smith & P. Williams (Eds.), *Gentrification of the City*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315889092>
- Marcuse, P. (2009). From critical urban theory to the right to the city. *City*, 13(2-3), 185-197.
- Miraftab, F. (2004). Invited and Invented Spaces of Participation: Neoliberal Citizenship and Feminists' Expanded Notion of Politics. *Wagadu*, 1(1-7), 89-101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X04267173>
- Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode*, 34(3), 380-404. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00247>
- Purcell, M. (2002). Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant. *GeoJournal*, 58(1), 99-108. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:GE-JO.0000010829.62237.8f>
- Purcell, M. (2014). Possible Worlds: Henri Lefebvre and the Right to the City. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 36, 141-154.
- Roy, A. (2009). Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 76-87. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26165886>
- Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking Spatial Justice*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Watson, V. (2009). Seeing from the South: Refocusing Urban Planning on the Globe's Central Urban Issues. *Urban Studies*, 46(11), 2259-2275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009342598>



# 2. BRIEF REVIEW OF KEY THEORISTS AND PHILOSOPHIES



## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

At the heart of the conceptualisation of spatial justice is the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences. This intellectual movement began in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, emphasising the significance of space, place, and geography in understanding social phenomena (Bachmann-Medick, 2016). Scholars across various disciplines, led by Henri Lefebvre, later joined by names such as Peter Marcuse, Edward Soja, David Harvey and Susan Fainstein, recognised that spatial dimensions are active elements that shape social relationships, power dynamics, and cultural practices. This movement shifted focus from temporal and political analyses to considering how spatial arrangements influence political, economic, and social structures. It underscored the importance of 'space' as a critical factor in the production and reproduction of societal processes, leading to new insights into topics like globalisation, the connection between capital and urbanisation, and environmental issues.

Henri Lefebvre is perhaps the intellectual 'founder' of this spatial turn. Lefebvre's *'Le Droit à la Ville'* ('The Right to the City'), first published in 1968 (Lefebvre, 1968), significantly influenced the spatial turn in the social sciences and later discussions on spatial justice. The book argues for the centrality of urban space in the lives of individuals and communities, advocating for a transformative approach to urbanisation that prioritises human needs and participation in urban life. Lefebvre's ideas challenged the then-prevailing functionalist and technocratic approaches to urban planning and development, foregrounding the importance of space in the production and reproduction of social relations.

Lefebvre's work was pivotal in the spatial turn for several reasons. 'The Right to the City' introduced a critical perspective on how urban space is produced and managed, emphasising that space is an active force in shaping social life. This critique

influenced subsequent spatial analyses across disciplines, encouraging scholars to consider the spatial dimensions of social phenomena.

Lefebvre's work transcended disciplinary boundaries, drawing on philosophy, sociology, geography, and urban studies to articulate his vision of urban space. This interdisciplinary approach contributed to the spatial turn by demonstrating the relevance of spatial analysis across the social sciences. His advocacy for the active participation of urban residents in the creation and transformation of their spaces was crucial to later urban social movements. This idea influenced participatory planning and design practices, emphasising the role of citizens in shaping their environments.

In 'The Right to the City', Lefebvre famously stated, *'Le droit à la ville est un cri et une demande'* ('The right to the city is both a cry and a demand'). This powerful statement encapsulates the essence of Lefebvre's argument for a radical reimagining of urban life and planning, where citizens are central to the processes of creating and shaping their living environments. Lefebvre's assertion frames the right to the city as an active demand for greater participation and influence in the urban development process. It emphasises the need for residents to have not only access to urban spaces but also a decisive role in how these spaces are designed, used, and managed. By characterising the right to the city as a 'cry,' Lefebvre highlights the insurgent nature of the Right to the City and the urgent need to address the exclusion and marginalisation experienced by many urban residents. It underscores the disparities in how urban spaces are allocated and who benefits from urban development, advocating for a more equitable distribution of urban resources. The notion of the right to the city as a 'demand' asserts the agency of urban dwellers. It challenges top-down approaches to urban planning, proposing instead that cities should be shaped by the collective desires, needs, and creativity of their inhabitants.



## 2.2. THE JUSTICE OF SPACE

In sum, Lefebvre was responsible for a shift in the social sciences that caters for the 'ontological spatiality of all being' (Iveson, 2011, p. 253), the fundamental idea that spatial dimensions are inherent to the existence and experience of all entities and phenomena. However, Lefebvre never used the term 'spatial justice', even though justice in the city was his guiding concept.

The term 'spatial justice' itself started to appear more frequently in academic writings in the early 21st century. Edward Soja, for example, prominently used the term in his 2010 book *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Soja, 2010), where he directly links social justice to spatial planning and urban geography, making the case that justice has a geography and that the equitable distribution of resources, services, and accessibilities is a critical aspect of social justice.

Thus, while the concept has roots that go back further, the explicit use of the term 'spatial justice' and its establishment as a key concept in urban studies and critical geography largely developed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Edward Soja is maybe the leading proponent of the term 'spatial justice' (Soja, 2008, 2010). His work on spatial justice directly engages with and expands upon the ideas presented by scholars like Lefebvre and Harvey (Harvey, 2003, 2012), particularly in the context of urban space and the socio-spatial dialectic. Soja builds on the critical geography tradition by exploring how spatial arrangements impact social justice and how social processes shape the spatiality of human life. Soja emphasises that space is not only a medium and outcome of capitalist accumulation but also a means of social control, resistance, and change.

Soja's concept of spatial justice puts forward the argument that justice has a geography and that the

equitable distribution of resources, services, and access is an essential component of any socially just policy or program. He contends that the fight for social justice must be grounded in the struggle for spatial justice, suggesting that social injustices have a spatial dimension that must be acknowledged and addressed.

While Lefebvre laid the groundwork for understanding the complex nature of space, Soja's adaptation and elaboration of the spatial dialectic emphasise the dynamic and contested nature of space as a field of action. Soja both applies and extends Lefebvre's dialectic, advocating for a broader, more inclusive approach to spatial analysis that captures the complexity of human life in space.

Soja also points to the spatial dimensions of social life that Harvey underscores, including the role of urban space in capitalist dynamics and the importance of territoriality in the social reproduction of inequality. By focusing on the spatial as an equally important dimension as the social and the economic, Soja argues for a more comprehensive approach to understanding and achieving justice in urban contexts. He calls for a conscious and critical spatial perspective in addressing issues of equity, one that recognises the role of space in perpetuating inequalities and the potential of space to contribute to greater justice and emancipation.

Soja (2010) states that Spatial Justice:

*'(...) seeks to promote more progressive and participatory forms of democratic politics and social activism and to provide new ideas about how to mobilise and maintain cohesive collations and regional confederations of grassroots social activists. (...)*

Spatial justice as such is not a substitute or alternative to social, economic, or other forms of justice but rather a way of looking at justice from a critical spatial perspective' (Soja, 2010, p. 60). In this perspective,

*'the spatiality of (in)justice [...] affects society and social life just as much as social processes*



*shape the spatiality or specific geography of (in) justice* (Soja, 2010, p. 5).

Peter Marcuse, a prominent figure in critical urban studies and planning, uses the concept of spatial justice to critique and analyse urban inequalities, focusing on how spatial arrangements within cities can reflect and exacerbate social injustices. Marcuse's work examines the ways in which urban space is allocated and controlled and how these spatial practices affect different populations, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised.

Marcuse has extensively critiqued the dynamics of housing markets and policies, illustrating how they often lead to displacement, gentrification, and homelessness. For Marcuse, spatial justice requires addressing these issues by ensuring affordable, adequate housing for all, challenging the forces that prioritise profit over people's right to the city. Marcuse also addresses the role of public space in urban life, arguing for the importance of accessible, inclusive public spaces that serve the needs of diverse urban populations rather than commercial interests. His work highlights how the privatisation and commercialisation of public spaces can restrict access and diminish the quality of urban life for many, thus contravening principles of spatial justice. Marcuse advocates for an approach to urban planning and policy that is explicitly oriented toward achieving social and spatial justice (Brenner et al., 2012; Marcuse, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Marcuse & Kempen, 2002). This includes challenging conventional planning paradigms that often overlook equity issues and advocating for planning processes that are participatory, inclusive, and attuned to the needs of marginalised communities.

Much of Marcuse's work serves as a critique of neoliberal governance in urban development, which he sees as a key driver of spatial injustice (Marcuse & van Kempen, 2000). He analyses how neoliberal policies, emphasising market-driven development and deregulation, contribute to spatial disparities and social exclusion within cities.

## 2.3.SPATIAL JUSTICE AS CAUSAL OR DERIVATIVE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Despite their many convergences, Soja and Marcuse diverge in important ways, notably in the primacy they give to space as causal or derivative to social justice (Marcuse, 2009c). Marcuse emphasises that spatial injustices, such as segregation and resource distribution, stem from broader social injustices caused by capitalism. He argues that while spatial issues are integral to addressing urban injustice, they are part of a larger spectrum of economic, social, and political challenges. In contrast, Soja asserts the centrality of spatial justice, advocating for an explicit focus on spatiality to uncover and address the causes and manifestations of urban injustice. Soja's framework prioritises the spatial dimension as both a field of action and a theoretical lens to advance urban justice movements. For Soja, spatial justice is an opportunity to engage space in critical theory.

Kurt Iveson's analysis in 'Social or Spatial Justice? Marcuse and Soja on the Right to the City' (Iveson, 2011) presents a nuanced examination of how Peter Marcuse and Edward Soja engage with the concept of justice, specifically through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's 'right to the city.' Marcuse articulates a view where spatial injustices are considered derivative of broader social injustices. He emphasises that while spatial injustices, such as segregation and unequal resource allocation, have spatial remedies, these are necessary but insufficient. For Marcuse, the root causes of spatial injustices lie in the economic, social, and political realms, thus requiring interventions beyond the spatial to fully address social injustices. Edward Soja, equally, underscores the importance of explicitly acknowledging the spatial dimension of justice. He argues for a critical spatial perspec-

tive, emphasising that justice and injustice are deeply embedded in spatiality at all scales, from local to global. Soja advocates for the concept of 'spatial justice' to highlight that spatial dimensions are not merely outcomes of social processes but are actively involved in producing and reproducing injustices. He posits that understanding and addressing the spatiality of justice can open up new avenues for social and political action and is crucial for theory building, empirical analysis, and spatially informed social and political action.

Iveson points out that both scholars, despite their differences, see the right to the city as a rallying point for urban justice movements, suggesting that both spatial and social dimensions of injustice must be tackled to realize this right. Marcuse focuses on the rejection of profit motives in favour of solidarity and collectivity, whereas Soja places spatial consciousness at the forefront of the struggle for justice. Despite their distinct approaches, Iveson suggests there is a convergence in their thought, particularly in their mutual insistence on addressing the broader processes and relations that generate urban injustice, thereby highlighting the complexity of operationalising the right to the city in pursuit of both social and spatial justice.

Both scholars have a deep commitment to operationalising the 'right to the city' but through different routes. Marcuse focuses on combating profit as the motor of urban development. Soja champions a spatially explicit approach to justice that allows for situated political action.

Despite their differences, Iveson suggests there's potential for common ground in their commitment to addressing the multifaceted nature of urban injustice. The discussions surrounding spatial versus social justice highlight the complexity of achieving the 'right to the city,' underscoring the need for integrated approaches that consider both the spatial manifestations and the underlying social processes of urban inequality.

## 2.4. SUSAN FAINSTEIN AND THE JUST CITY

Susan Fainstein's concept of the Just City represents a significant contribution to urban theory (Fainstein, 2006, 2010; Fainstein & Campbell, 2012). It engages with the ideas of Lefebvre, Harvey, Castells, and Soja while focusing on the pragmatic realisation of spatial justice in urban planning and policymaking. Her work emphasises equity, democracy, and diversity as core criteria for achieving a Just City, reflecting a deep engagement with the broader discourse on urban justice and the spatial production of cities.

Fainstein's Just City concept resonates with Lefebvre's idea of the right to the city, emphasising the need for urban spaces to be inclusive and democratically accessible to all citizens. While Lefebvre theorises the city as a space of social struggle and potential emancipation, Fainstein provides a more pragmatic approach focused on policy implications, seeking to operationalise the ideals of equity and inclusivity in urban governance. Harvey's analysis of capitalism and its impact on urban space, particularly his focus on social justice, informs Fainstein's critique of urban development projects that prioritise economic growth over equity. Fainstein's Just City framework advocates for balancing economic considerations with the need for fairness and social welfare, mirroring Harvey's call for cities that serve the needs of their people over capital.

Soja's emphasis on spatial justice and the **trialectics of space**, a concept adapted from Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad of **perceived**, **conceived**, and **lived** space, aligns with Fainstein's Just City in advocating for an explicit consideration of spatial dimensions in achieving urban justice. In this framework, **perceived space** refers to the physical and material environment of everyday life; **conceived space** encompasses the abstract representations of space generated by planners, developers, and technocrats; and **lived space**

denotes the experiential, symbolic, and emotional attachments that communities develop in relation to space (Lefèbvre, 1974). Soja (1996, 2010) uses this triadic structure to challenge the dominance of abstract, top-down spatial logics in planning and argues for a more situated, justice-oriented spatial praxis. His interpretation of the spatial triad highlights the importance of recognising how spatial injustices emerge not only through physical exclusion or material deprivation, but also through the erasure of lived experiences and the imposition of dominant spatial representations.

Fainstein's conditions for the Just City (**equity, democracy, and diversity**) (Fainstein, 2010) directly engage with the concept of spatial justice by advocating for urban environments that ensure fair access to housing, services, and opportunities (equity). This aligns with spatial justice principles by addressing the distribution of urban resources and amenities, aiming to reduce inequalities. In Fainstein's conception of the Just City, democracy enhances participatory governance and guarantees the involvement of diverse communities in decision-making processes. This democratic engagement ensures that urban planning and policies reflect the needs and desires of all citizens, not just the powerful or privileged. The third condition, diversity, includes cultural, social, and economic diversity. By valuing diversity, Fainstein's Just City contributes to creating inclusive spaces that respect and celebrate differences, which is a core aspect of spatial justice.

Fainstein conceptualises justice in the city as 'emerging through, and being challenged by, the interplay of democratic practices, recognition of diversity, and equity' (Staeheli, 2013, p. 756). Democracy, equity and diversity are simultaneously the conditions for justice to emerge, and challenges for justice to exist, by which the 'achievement of justice is a circular process, whereby the pre-existence of equity begets sentiments in its favour, democratic habits produce popular participation, and diversity increases tolerance' (Fainstein, 2006, p. 23).

These conditions point to an expansion of a collective project of fair redistribution of the burdens and benefits of development through an interplay between social movements and public policy-making that recognises (and makes use of) democratic decision-making, redistribution strategies and diversity of interests.

Democracy, as a category in Fainstein's just city, is connected to communicative rationality and deliberative democracy theory, which regards planning not as 'quasi science' but as an argumentative practice in which processes are socially constructed, and their resolution is the result of the interaction of parties involved. 'Within a democratic community, each party should have its say, and no privileged hierarchy, whether based on power or technical expertise, should exist. (...) Its weakness is in its failure to deal with social hierarchy and political power in existing circumstances.' (Fainstein, 2013, pp. 7-8). In this sense, democracy is crucial for social movements, grassroots, and citizens to advance their pleas and for distributive, open, transparent, and accountable policymaking to take place.

Diversity for Fainstein's just city is connected to identity.

*'Liberal democratic theory, by treating individuals atomistically, ignores the rootedness of people in class, gender, cultural, and familial relationships. In doing so and by placing liberty at the top of its pantheon of values, it fails to recognise the ties of obligation that necessarily bind people to each other and also the structurally based antagonisms that separate them.'* (Fainstein, 2013, p. 9).

Fainstein states:

*'Group differentiation is both an inevitable and a desirable aspect of modern social processes. Social justice ... requires not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression'. Young considers that a social group is defined by a sense of shared iden-*

*tity and that a liberal contract model of social relations only conceives of associations based on common interests and fails to take account of groups arising from shared identity (Young, 1990, p. 44). Under this conception, the argument for justice shifts from a fair distribution to 'social differentiation without exclusion' (Young, 1990, p. 238)' (Fainstein, 2013, p. 9).*

In Fainstein's conception of a just city, diversity is the ability of different groups to find common ground and live peacefully in the city, without their identity being diluted and trampled by market interests. It is not possible, we believe, to separate Fainstein's diversity from the premises of communicative rationality in which argumentative practices must include a multiplicity of perspectives to generate outcomes that reflect different interests and conceptions of the world. Fainstein's conception of equity for the just city appeals to Soja's (2010) concept of uneven development in his investigation of spatial justice.

*Like Iris Marion Young and David Harvey, he [Soja] begins with a depiction of injustice and considers that geography is 'a significant causal force in explaining [inequitable] social relations and societal development' (Fainstein, 2010, p. 63). He argues that the pursuit of justice requires gaining control over the processes producing unjust urban geographies. He does not identify specific programmes to reduce spatial injustice but rather looks to coalitions of groups demanding the right to the city as the vehicles for achieving both greater material equity and also greater respect for marginalised populations (Fainstein, 2013, p. 12)'.*

Fainstein argues that the values of equity, diversity, and democracy may be in conflict, but equity takes primacy, as she argues that policy should give priority to action that benefits the less privileged, a matter of distributive justice.

Susan Fainstein's pragmatic approach provides a bridge between theoretical discussions of urban space and the real-world challenges of creating equitable, democratic, and diverse cities. Her condi-

tions for a just city address spatial justice at multiple levels and correspond to the three constitutive dimensions of spatial justice: equity corresponds to distributive justice, democracy to procedural justice, and diversity to recognitional justice.

**Distributive spatial justice** involves the fair distribution of the burdens and benefits of urban development and societal living across all communities. This concept extends to ensuring fair access to resources, public goods and amenities like parks, healthcare, and education, as well as an equitable sharing of the negative impacts, such as pollution, industrial facilities, and waste disposal sites. By incorporating elements of environmental justice, distributive spatial justice acknowledges that a fair urban environment also means protecting all communities from environmental harm and providing equal opportunities to participate in environmental decision-making processes. It challenges practices that disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities and advocates for policies that strive for equitable treatment and involvement of all people, regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income, with respect to the development and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

**Procedural Justice** involves fair and inclusive processes for decision-making that allow for meaningful participation from all stakeholders, including marginalised and underrepresented communities. This dimension emphasises the importance of transparency, accountability, and democratic engagement in urban planning and policymaking.

**Recognitional Justice** relates to the social and experiential aspects of spatial arrangements, including the right to use and occupy spaces, freedom from discrimination and stigmatisation within spaces, and the ability to form and maintain cultural and social ties. It recognises the importance of diverse communities' ability to access and shape public spaces in ways that reflect their identities and values.

Together, these dimensions form a comprehensive understanding of spatial justice, guiding efforts to

create more just, inclusive, and equitable spatial environments.

## 2.5. NANCY FRASER AND THE PRINCIPLE OF PARTICIPATORY PARITY

While the spatial turn brought attention to the role of geography in shaping social relations, Nancy Fraser's work introduced a powerful framework for understanding justice in its multidimensional form. Fraser (Fraser, 2000, 2010a, 2010b) articulated a status model of justice that goes beyond economic redistribution to include the politics of recognition and representation, all grounded in the normative principle of participatory parity: the idea that justice requires social arrangements that allow all members of society to participate as peers in social life.

In the context of spatial justice, Fraser's contribution is especially valuable for making explicit that injustice cannot be understood solely in terms of material maldistribution. Rather, she insists that cultural misrecognition, where individuals or groups are devalued through institutionalised patterns of interpretation and communication, must also be addressed. Misrecognition is not a matter of individual disrespect but a structural condition that denies social actors the status of full partners in interaction. In urban contexts, this manifests in planning regimes that ignore or stereotype marginalised communities, rendering them invisible or illegitimate in spatial decision-making processes (Fraser, 2000).

Participatory parity serves as a conceptual bridge between the distributive, procedural, and recognitional dimensions of spatial justice. For Fraser, these dimensions are not additive but co-constitutive: economic redistribution without cultural recognition will not produce just outcomes, nor will inclusion in participatory processes suffice if

participants' identities are devalued or structurally silenced. In this way, her theory provides a powerful tool to analyse institutional arrangements, including spatial ones, and to identify where and how they produce or prevent justice.

Fraser also distinguishes between affirmative remedies (which address the outcomes of injustice) and transformative remedies (which address the root causes). In spatial terms, this means that improving access to housing or public transport may alleviate some effects of injustice, but unless the underlying structures of exclusion and misrecognition are transformed, such as land regimes, zoning policies, or epistemic hierarchies, spatial justice remains incomplete (Fraser, 2010b).

Fraser's relevance to spatial justice has been further elaborated by urban scholars such as Marcuse and Fainstein, who link her notion of participatory parity to planning practices that empower marginalised voices, challenge technocratic dominance, and institutionalise deliberative, inclusive governance. Moreover, her attention to institutionalised status hierarchies complements Lefebvre's and Soja's insights by showing how spatial configurations do not merely reflect social injustice but actively reproduce it.

In sum, Nancy Fraser offers a normative and analytical framework that strengthens the theoretical foundations of spatial justice. Her insistence on parity of participation foregrounds the need to evaluate not only who gets what and where, but who gets to decide, who is heard, and whose identities and knowledges are legitimised in the making of urban space. Spatial justice, through Fraser's lens, is inseparable from the institutional conditions that enable or constrain equal participation in shaping the spaces we inhabit.



## REFERENCES

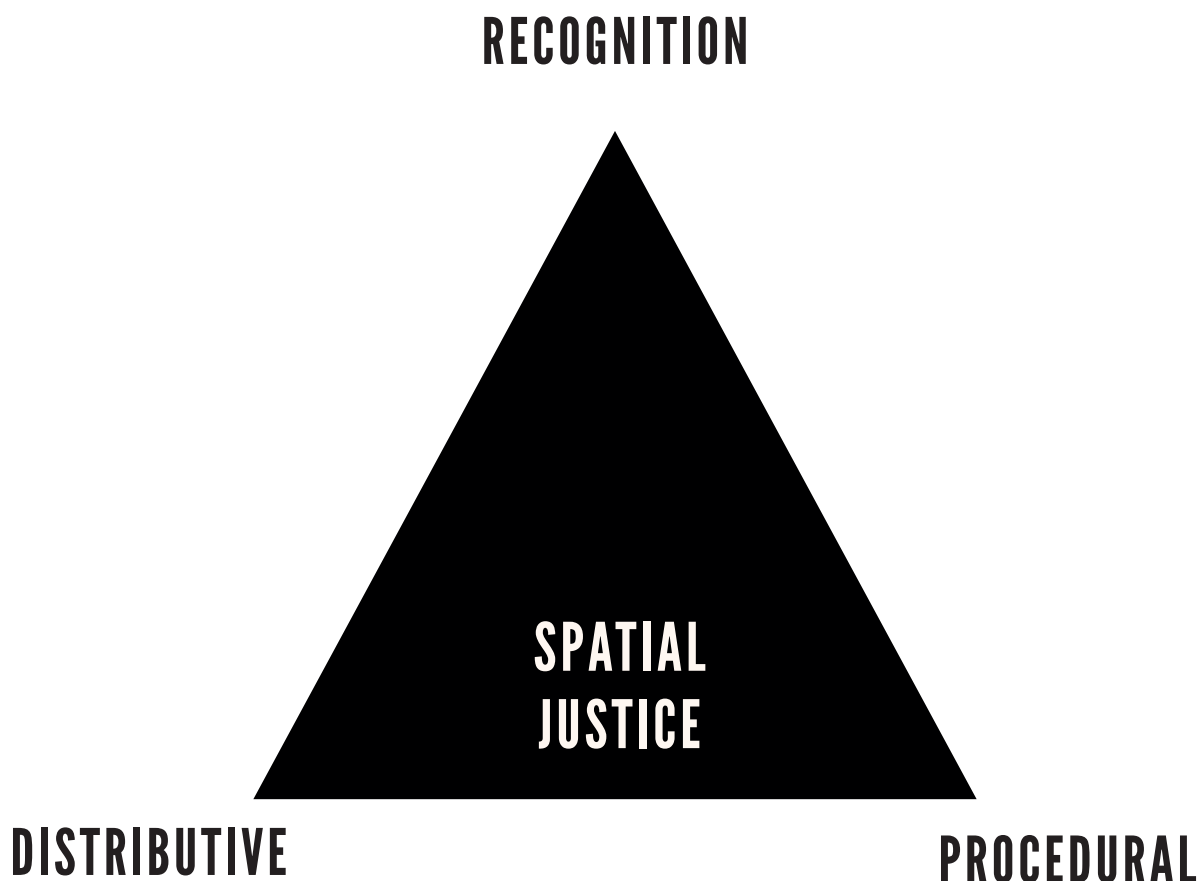
- Bachmann-Medick, D. (2016). *The Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Brenner, N., Marcuse, P., & Mayer, M. (2012). *Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City*. Routledge.
- Fainstein, S. (2006). Planning and the Just City. Conference on Searching for the Just City, New York.
- Fainstein, S. (2010). *The Just City*. Cornell University Press.
- Fainstein, S. (2013). The Just City. *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 18(1), 1-18.
- Fainstein, S., & Campbell, S. (2012). *Readings in planning theory* (3rd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review*, 3, 107-120. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii3/articles/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition>
- Fraser, N. (2010a). Injustice at Intersecting Scales: On 'Social Exclusion' and the 'Global Poor'. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 13(3), 363-371. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431010371758>
- Fraser, N. (2010b). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2003). The Right to the City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), 939-941.
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities : from the right to the city to the urban revolution*. Verso.
- Iveson, K. (2011). Social or Spatial Justice? Marcuse and Soja on the right to the city. *City*, 15(2), 250-259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2011.568723>
- Lefèbvre, H. (1968). *Le Droit à la ville*. Anthropos.
- Lefèbvre, H. (1974). La production de l'espace. *L'Homme et la société. Sociologie de la connaissance marxisme et anthropologie.*, 31-32, 15-32.
- Marcuse, P. (2009a). From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City. *City*, 13(2-3), 185-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902982177>
- Marcuse, P. (2009b). *Searching for the just city debates in urban theory and practice*. Routledge., <http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio7793612.001>
- Marcuse, P. (2009c). Spatial Justice: Derivative but Causal of Social Injustice. *Espace et justice/Space and Justice*, 1(Sept 2009).
- Marcuse, P., & Kempen, R. v. (2002). *Of States and Cities: The Partitioning of Urban Space* Oxford University Press.
- Marcuse, P., & van Kempen, R. (2000). *Globalising Cities: a New Spatial Order?* Blackwell.
- Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Blackwell.
- Soja, E. (2008, 12-14 March 2008). The city and spatial justice. Spatial Justice, Nanterre.
- Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking Spatial Justice*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Staeheli, L. A. (2013). The Just City, Susan S. Fainstein. *Urban Geography*, 32(5), 756-757. <https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.32.5.756>
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvcm4g4q>



# 3. DIMENSIONS OF SPATIAL JUSTICE







### **3.1. RECOGNITIONAL PROCEDURAL & DISTRIBUTIVE DIMENSIONS OF SPATIAL JUSTICE**

The three dimensions of spatial justice (recognitional, procedural, and distributive) are mutually reinforcing and complementary and can rarely, if ever, occur in isolation. That's because they each address interconnected aspects of justice that together form a comprehensive approach to equitable urban development.

For instance, without recognitional justice, urban planning processes may overlook or undervalue

the specific needs and contributions of certain groups. Similarly, procedural justice without distributive justice may allow for equitable participation in decision-making processes but still result in outcomes that do not equitably distribute resources or opportunities. Conversely, attempts at distributive justice without inclusive, participatory processes (procedural justice) or without recognition of the diverse needs and rights of all urban inhabitants may not effectively achieve fair or sustainable outcomes.

Therefore, these dimensions work in concert to ensure that urban development not only distributes resources fairly but also recognises the diverse needs of urban populations and actively involves them in the decision-making processes.



## 3.2. RECOGNITION

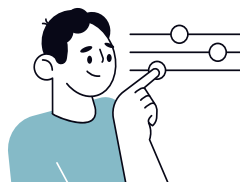
### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSE

#### TRAJECTORIES, HISTORIES, IDENTITIES AND CULTURES IN SPATIAL PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

The crucial step towards achieving fair outcomes in city development lies in the thorough recognition of the diverse trajectories, histories, needs, and aspirations of different social groups, with a particular emphasis on amplifying the voices of disadvantaged or oppressed communities. This approach requires an explicit acknowledgement of the importance of intersectionality, that is, the understanding that individuals experience discrimination and privilege through the interweaving of various social identities such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and more. Recognitional justice, in this context, demands an appreciation of how these intersecting identities shape people's interactions with urban spaces and access to urban resources. It compels planners and policymakers to move beyond one-size-fits-all solutions and towards strategies that are informed by the complex realities of individuals' lives. This includes recognising the unique challenges faced by marginalised communities and ensuring that urban planning and policy interventions are designed in a way that actively seeks to dismantle systemic oppression. By embedding an intersectional lens into the fabric of urban development, we can begin to address the root causes of spatial injustice, creating cities that are not only physically accessible but also socially inclusive and responsive to the richness of human diversity.

Nancy Fraser's (2000) intervention reorients the concept of recognition from a cultural or psychological concern to a structural condition of justice.

She critiques what she terms 'misrecognition' not as a matter of wounded identity, but as a status injury that systematically denies some groups the social standing necessary for parity of participation. This framing is particularly relevant in spatial planning, where institutionalised norms and bureaucratic practices often devalue the knowledge, needs, and ways of life of marginalised communities. Fraser's theory insists that recognitional justice is not a symbolic gesture or an add-on to redistribution, but a coequal and interdependent dimension of justice that underpins the ability of individuals and groups to act as peers in spatial decision-making. For planning to be just, it must not only redistribute resources or open participatory channels but also transform the social and spatial arrangements that institutionalise cultural domination and epistemic subordination. In this sense, recognitional justice demands a restructuring of planning systems to affirm plural identities, legitimise situated knowledges, and dismantle patterns of devaluation that exclude historically oppressed groups from shaping urban futures.



## 3.3. PROCEDURAL

### PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Procedural justice focuses on the fairness and inclusivity of the processes by which decisions are made, advocating for participatory mechanisms that enable all stakeholders, especially marginalised groups, to have a say in the planning and development affecting their lives. The fairness in planning procedures is central to this endeavour. Fairness, in this case, involves recognition, fair distribution of planning resources (see distributive justice below), accountability, transparency and democracy. Procedural justice is, therefore, much more than participation. While citizen engagement and stakeholder participation are central to dem-

ocratic city-making, participation alone is far from being a panacea for spatial justice and good governance. Democratic city-making currently involves a host of tools and practices that increase inclusivity, such as Participatory Budgeting, Community Advisory Boards, Inclusive Public Consultation, Co-Design Workshops, Digital Engagement Platforms, Accessibility and Social Impact Audits, Land Use Workshops, Serious Gaming and more.

Citizen Participation and Citizen Engagement are two different practices. Citizen participation and citizen engagement, while often used interchangeably, refer to distinct practices within the context of urban planning and governance. Citizen participation typically involves individuals taking part in decision-making processes, such as voting, attending town hall meetings, or participating in public consultations. It focuses on the mechanisms for public input into specific decisions or policies. Citizen engagement, on the other hand, encompasses a broader, more continuous interaction between citizens and government. It includes not only participation in decision-making but also efforts to inform, educate, and communicate with citizens in a two-way dialogue, fostering a more profound, ongoing relationship and collaboration between the community and government entities.

Citizen engagement must be understood in the broader context of good governance and broader stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement entails actively involving a diverse array of actors, ranging from citizens, community groups, businesses, non-profit organisations, to governmental agencies, in the decision-making processes that shape urban environments. This inclusive approach recognises that urban governance is complex and multifaceted, requiring input and collaboration from all sectors of society to address the challenges and opportunities cities face. By fostering open dialogue, transparency, and collaboration, stakeholder engagement aims to ensure that urban policies and projects are not only more democratic and equitable but also more effective and sustainable, reflecting the needs, aspirations, and expertise of the entire urban community.

These ideas are deeply rooted in the concept of polycentric governance, as developed by Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom. Ostrom's work challenged the conventional wisdom that centralised authority is the most effective way to manage resources and govern communities. Instead, she proposed a polycentric approach, where multiple centres of decision-making operate independently, yet cooperatively, across different scales and sectors.

Polycentric governance emphasises the importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the governance process, recognising that diverse groups have unique knowledge, skills, and perspectives that can contribute to more effective and resilient solutions to collective problems. This approach aligns with the principles of stakeholder engagement in urban governance, which seeks to involve a broad spectrum of urban actors in shaping the city's development and policies.

By advocating for decentralised decision-making and the inclusion of local knowledge and perspectives, Ostrom's concept of polycentric governance provides a theoretical foundation for practices that prioritise citizen and stakeholder engagement. It suggests that urban governance can be more adaptive, innovative, and responsive to community needs when it is characterised by multiple overlapping centres of authority that collaborate with and learn from each other. This model fosters a sense of shared ownership and responsibility among stakeholders, encouraging collective action and cooperation in addressing urban challenges.

## METAGOVERNANCE

While polycentric governance highlights the benefits of decentralised, overlapping centres of authority that foster local autonomy, mutual learning, and collective responsibility, it also raises a critical question: **how can these diverse nodes of governance be effectively coordinated without reverting to centralised control?** This is where the concept of **metagovernance** becomes essential (Meuleman, 2020). If polycentric systems offer a

pluralistic architecture of decision-making, metagovernance provides the tools for **navigating and orchestrating** this complexity. Rather than replacing polycentricity, metagovernance builds upon it by emphasising the strategic alignment of multiple governance modes, hierarchical, networked, and market-based, to respond to the layered challenges of contemporary urban governance, including those posed by sustainability transitions, social fragmentation, and spatial inequality.

Metagovernance refers to the governance of governance. It is a conceptual approach that emphasises the orchestration, coordination, and integration of various governance styles and mechanisms (hierarchical, network-based, and market-oriented) to address complex policy challenges effectively.

Metagovernance acknowledges that no single governance style is sufficient on its own to tackle the multifaceted issues faced by contemporary societies, including the transition to sustainability we must embark on. Instead, it advocates for a flexible, adaptive framework where different approaches are strategically combined and managed to complement each other, enhancing the capacity of governments and stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes and navigate the complexities of modern governance.

Metagovernance and Multilevel governance share similarities in recognising the complexity of modern governance and the inadequacy of centralised, top-down approaches. However, multilevel governance refers explicitly to the dispersion of authority across multiple levels of government (local, regional, national, and international), highlighting how decisions are made within and across these layers. Metagovernance, in contrast, focuses on the strategies used to coordinate and integrate various governance styles and mechanisms at any given level. While multilevel governance maps the architecture of decision-making across different tiers, metagovernance is about the art of steering and blending different governance approaches within this multilayered structure to address policy challenges effectively.

Networked governance is perhaps the governance style that speaks more closely to procedural justice, as it presupposes that decision-making processes are inherently collaborative and inclusive, involving a wide array of stakeholders across different sectors and levels. It operates on the principle that effective and equitable solutions to complex challenges emerge from the collective intelligence and collaborative effort of interconnected actors, ensuring that governance is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the broader community it serves. However, procedural justice is relevant to all styles of governance, including hierarchic and market governance. This is because, regardless of the governance model, the legitimacy, and effectiveness of decision-making processes depend on their ability to uphold principles of fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. In hierarchical governance, procedural justice ensures that authority is exercised in a manner that respects the rights and voices of those affected by decisions, promoting accountability and trust in leadership. In market governance, it underlines the need for fair competition and equal opportunities, guarding against exploitation and ensuring that economic transactions contribute to the welfare of all participants and the health of the planet. Across all governance styles, the principles of procedural justice serve as a foundational ethic that enhances the quality of governance by ensuring that processes are not only efficient and practical but also equitable and respectful of the diverse needs and contributions of all stakeholders.

Through meta-governance, the process of managing and blending different governance approaches, be it hierarchical, market-based, or network-oriented, must adhere to the principles of procedural justice to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in the governance process. This includes creating mechanisms for participation, ensuring transparency in decision-making, and fostering inclusivity by recognising and accommodating diverse interests and perspectives. By applying procedural justice principles, metagovernance can achieve its goal of addressing complex policy challenges in a manner

that is not only efficient and adaptive but also fair and equitable. In this way, procedural justice serves as a critical ethical and practical guideline for the metagovernance process, ensuring that the governance of governance itself respects the rights and needs of all involved parties, enhancing trust, legitimacy, and ultimately, the effectiveness of governance outcomes.

Critiques of the notion of 'good governance' often revolve around its alignment with neoliberal principles and the ways it can obscure or reinforce power imbalances. Critics argue that the concept, while ostensibly promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in governance, frequently operates within a framework that prioritises market-led development, privatisation, and the reduction of the state's role in economic management. This, critics contend, can lead to the marginalisation of vulnerable communities and the entrenchment of inequalities, as 'good governance' initiatives may prioritise the interests of international financial institutions and global capitalism over those of local populations.

Critics also highlight how the emphasis on efficiency and market-friendly policies like public budget cuts and austerity, often paired with the notion of 'good governance' can undermine social welfare programs and environmental protections, contending that what is deemed 'good' usually aligns with what is beneficial for capital rather than for broader societal well-being. Additionally, these thinkers criticise the depoliticisation inherent in the good governance discourse, arguing that it frames governance issues in technical rather than political terms, thus sidestepping fundamental debates about resource distribution, rights, and justice. By focusing on procedural improvements within existing systems of governance, the critique goes, the good governance agenda may neglect or actively suppress more radical calls for structural change, social justice, and the redistribution of power and resources.

We contend that if taken in its full political dimensions, emphasising citizen empowerment and

public sector accountability and transparency, the notion of good governance can actually speak to the right to the city and to spatial justice. The relationship between procedural justice and governance can be summarised as inherently symbiotic, where procedural justice serves as both a foundation and an essential outcome of good governance practices.

Procedural justice, with its emphasis on fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in decision-making processes, ensures that governance is conducted in a manner that builds upon the participation of all stakeholders, particularly marginalised communities. This alignment with procedural justice principles enhances the legitimacy, accountability, and effectiveness of governance arrangements, fostering trust between the government and different societal groups. In turn, good governance, characterised by ethical standards, responsiveness, and equitable resource distribution, provides the necessary conditions for procedural justice to flourish, creating a virtuous cycle that promotes social cohesion, stability, and sustainable development.

## INSURGENT PLANNING AND PARADIGM CHANGE

Yet while the principles of good governance (transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making) are vital for fostering procedural justice, they remain constrained by the institutional frameworks and normative assumptions of existing power structures. In many contexts, especially where democratic institutions are weak or captured by elite interests, these frameworks prove insufficient for realising the transformative aspirations of spatial justice. To fully address the structural and epistemic exclusions embedded in urban governance, procedural justice must reach beyond sanctioned participatory mechanisms and engage with practices that challenge the status quo from below. This is where insurgent planning emerges as a critical response, not as a rejection of governance altogether, but as a radical reconfig-

ration of who governs, how, and for whom. Insurgent practices expose the limits of technocratic and market-oriented planning models and open space for grassroots-led, justice-driven alternatives (Miraftab, 2009, 2018; Rocco & Silvestre, 2023).

Through fostering alternative forms of civic engagement and challenging the exclusionary mechanisms of neoliberal governance, extractive capitalism, racism and patriarchy, insurgent planning reclaims urban spaces for the public good, advocating for a reconstitution of the public sphere that is rooted in equity, diversity, and democratic values. This insurgent approach, whose main proponent is Professor Faranak Miraftab, not only seeks to address spatial injustices but also aims to reshape the very processes by which cities are planned and developed, ensuring that they reflect a collective vision for a more just and inclusive urban future. In doing so, insurgent planning practices offer a compelling model for reimagining urban governance and planning as vehicles for advancing spatial justice and democratising the right to the city based on collective imagination and collective action.

The intersection between spatial justice and insurgent planning practices illuminates a transformative pathway towards democratising urban development and fostering inclusive civic engagement. Insurgent planning, as an approach that challenges the prevailing technocratic and neoliberal paradigms of city-making, inherently advocates for a planning practice that recognises the diverse needs, rights, and aspirations of all urban inhabitants, particularly those marginalised by conventional planning processes. This alignment with spatial justice is manifested in insurgent planners' commitment to participatory, inclusive, and trans-sectional methodologies that prioritise the voices and experiences of disadvantaged or oppressed communities.

Insurgent planning represents a paradigm shift from technocratic planning by fundamentally reimagining the role of urban planning and 'planners', be they professional planners or citizen planners,

who actively work to achieve their right to the city and change access, recognition and distribution. Paradigm shifts refer to fundamental shifts in the underlying assumptions, methods, and frameworks that define a particular field of knowledge or practice. These transformative changes result in new ways of understanding, interpreting, and engaging with the world, often replacing or significantly altering previous paradigms that no longer suffice in explaining current realities or solving emerging challenges.

Technocratic planning, as commonly institutionalised in professional practice and pedagogy, relies on a top-down logic in which experts make decisions grounded in ostensibly neutral technical criteria, often sidelining social contestation and political agency. This model privileges efficiency and economic rationality but has been widely critiqued for reinforcing dominant power structures and marginalising alternative knowledges and community priorities.

Insurgent planning, in contrast, challenges neoliberal governance models, adopts a bottom-up perspective, emphasising the importance of participatory processes, community engagement, and the acknowledgement of diverse experiences and identities in urban development. It also challenges the authority and exclusivity of technocratic decision-making by advocating for a more democratic and inclusive planning process that values local knowledge, fosters community empowerment, and aims to address social injustices. Insurgent planners work not just as technical experts but as facilitators of community dialogue and action, striving to integrate social values and human rights, such as the right to the city, into the fabric of urban planning.

Alternative forms of insurgent planning may stimulate governance that includes issues of decoloniality, feminism, queerness, anti-racism and more. These approaches are at the root of significant practices that are changing what 'good governance' is, including for example, the idea of rights of nature, indigenous land rights and stewardship,



feminist urbanism, queer urbanism, black urbanism, and more.

This shift towards insurgent planning signals a broader recognition that effective urban development requires more than technical solutions or neo-liberal 'good governance'; it demands a reconfiguration of power relations, the promotion of social justice, and the active participation of all segments of society in shaping their urban environments. It calls for a more holistic, equitable, and democratic approach to planning that responds to the complexities and challenges of contemporary urban life.

## 3.4. DISTRIBUTIVE



### EQUITY AND FAIRNESS IN OUTCOMES

Distributive justice concerns the equitable allocation of resources, services, and opportunities across different areas

and populations within a city, aiming to correct spatial disparities and inequalities. It is much more than the distribution of public or private goods and services, but emphasises the distribution of resources that actively enable citizens to flourish and actively participate in city planning and design, encompassing a variety of tangible and intangible assets. These resources are critical for ensuring that individuals have the means and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to shaping their urban environments. Here are examples of such resources:

**A. Access to Information:** Availability of clear, accessible information about urban planning processes, development projects, and how to get involved is crucial. This includes resources for understanding the impacts of proposed changes and the channels through which public feedback can be provided.

**B. Education and Capacity Building:** Workshops, seminars, and training programs designed to

enhance the public's understanding of urban planning, architecture, and sustainable development principles empower citizens to engage more effectively in planning discussions.

**C. Technological Tools:** Digital platforms and tools that facilitate public participation in urban planning, such as interactive maps, apps for submitting feedback or ideas, and online forums for discussion, help bridge the gap between city planners and the community.

**D. Financial Resources:** Funding or grants aimed explicitly at community-led projects or initiatives allow local ideas and solutions to be developed and implemented, giving residents a direct hand in shaping their neighbourhoods.

**E. Legal Support and Advocacy:** Access to legal assistance and advocacy groups can help communities understand their rights and navigate the complexities of planning regulations and policies. This support is particularly important for marginalised groups or those facing displacement.

**F. Public Spaces for Engagement:** Physical venues for community meetings, workshops, and public hearings are essential for face-to-face dialogue and collaboration between residents, planners, and policymakers.

**G. Social and Cultural Capital:** Recognising and valuing the diverse cultural backgrounds and social networks within communities can lead to more inclusive planning processes. Engaging local leaders, community organisations, and cultural groups in dialogue helps ensure that planning reflects the community's identity and needs.

**H. Language and Interpretation Services:** Offering multilingual resources and interpretation services during public meetings and in planning documents ensures that non-native speakers and people with different language proficiencies can participate fully and equitably.

**I. Accessibility:** Ensuring that all resources, meetings, and platforms are accessible to people with disabilities is crucial for inclusive participation.

This can include physical accessibility to meeting venues, as well as the availability of materials in formats accessible to those with visual or hearing impairments.

By equitably distributing these resources, urban planners and policymakers can facilitate a more democratic and participatory planning process. This approach not only empowers citizens to contribute their perspectives and ideas but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the urban environment. Ultimately, it leads to cities that are not only more just and equitable but also more resilient and adaptive to the needs of their diverse populations.

## REFERENCES

- Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review*, 3, 107-120. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii3/articles/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition>
- Meuleman, L. (2020). *Metagovernance for Sustainability: A Framework for Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*. Routledge.
- Miraftab, F. (2009). Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 32-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099297>
- Miraftab, F. (2018). Insurgent Practices and Decolonization of Future(s). In M. Gunder, A. Madanipour, & V. Watson (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Planning Theory*. Routledge.
- Rocco, R., & Silvestre, G. (2023). *Insurgent Planning Practice*. Agenda.







# **4. SPATIAL JUSTICE AND URBAN SUSTAINABILITY**

# 4.1.SPATIAL JUSTICE AS A PILLAR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The intersection between spatial justice and social sustainability is a critical nexus where equitable access to urban spaces and resources meets the long-term viability of communities. Spatial justice emphasises the fair distribution of burdens and benefits via the recognition of diverse trajectories and fair procedure. All these issues contribute to social sustainability.

Social sustainability refers to a community's ability to develop processes and structures that not only meet the needs of its current members but also support future generations' ability to live healthy and prosperous lives (Dillard et al., 2009; Dujon et al., 2013; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). A key aspect of social sustainability is the ability to set up institutions that can steer and govern the socio-economic and environmental development of a community. In that sense, it is not possible to have environmental or economic sustainability without social sustainability (Dillard et al., 2009).

This concept emphasises the importance of creating inclusive, equitable systems that ensure all individuals have access to essential services, opportunities for social participation, and a fair share of societal benefits. Social sustainability aims to build and maintain communities that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive while promoting well-being, justice, and economic opportunity for all members. It underscores the interconnectedness of environmental, economic, and social health, advocating for policies and practices that foster a balance between these dimensions to achieve long-term sustainability and resilience.

Social sustainability focuses on creating resilient and inclusive communities that can thrive over time, addressing issues like social equity, community cohesion, and cultural identity. At their intersection lies the understanding that for human institutions to be sustainable, they must also be just. This means that urban planning and policies must not only aim to protect the environment and promote economic viability but also ensure that the benefits of urban development are shared equitably among all residents. By focusing on both spatial justice and social sustainability, urban initiatives can foster communities that are not only environmentally and economically sustainable but also characterised by social cohesion, equal opportunity, and a strong sense of belonging and inclusion for all inhabitants.

Integrating spatial justice with social sustainability is essential for good policy design because it ensures that policies are holistic, equitable, and effective over the long term. By acknowledging and addressing the interconnectedness of spatial equity and social sustainability, policies can better respond to the complex realities of urban environments and the diverse needs of their inhabitants. Policies rooted in both spatial justice and social sustainability enhance community resilience by building social cohesion and ensuring that all community members, especially the most vulnerable, have access to the resources and support networks they need to withstand and recover from shocks and stresses. Integrating these principles leads to policies that are not only just in the short term but also sustainable in the long run.

Justice buttresses social sustainability, because as John Rawls reminds us in his monumental book *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971):

'Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. (p.3)'

Social sustainability is the bedrock on which en-

environmental sustainability can be grounded and is founded on well-functioning political, institutional and legal systems that deliver just outcomes regarding the distribution of environmental, economic and social burdens and benefits of development and growth. These burdens and benefits are often spatially bound or embedded in spatial structures and infrastructures, and their distribution and accessibility in space. The issue of accessibility is central to this discussion and to the idea of increased life chances, concepts widely explored in transport geography and planning (Bristow, 2009; Farrington, 2004; Farrington, 2007).

By addressing social inequalities and fostering inclusive communities, such policies lay the groundwork for enduring social cohesion and stability. Moreover, by considering both spatial and social dimensions, policymakers can develop more comprehensive solutions that address the root causes of urban challenges rather than just their symptoms. This leads to more innovative and effective policies that enhance the quality of life for all urban residents.

Policies that embrace spatial justice and social sustainability are more adaptable to changing urban dynamics and challenges. They foster an environment of innovation where diverse perspectives and ideas can contribute to the continuous improvement of urban spaces.

## 4.2. JUST SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Just sustainability transitions encompass the holistic transformation of socio-technical systems towards more sustainable and equitable futures, ensuring that no one is left behind in the process.

Socio-technical transitions to sustainability refer to the profound, systemic changes in the ways societies organise their energy production, consumption patterns, transportation, and other fundamental systems to move towards more sustainable models. These transitions recognise that technological innovations alone are not sufficient to achieve sustainability. Instead, they must be accompanied by changes in social practices, cultural norms, regulatory frameworks, and economic structures. Socio-technical transitions involve shifting away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy sources, promoting sustainable agriculture, developing efficient and accessible public transportation systems, and encouraging sustainable consumption behaviours among individuals and communities.

The concept of a 'just transition' integrates social justice with environmental sustainability, emphasising that efforts to address climate change and environmental degradation must also tackle social inequalities. The notion underscores the importance of inclusive, equitable approaches that consider the needs, voices, and rights of all communities, particularly those historically marginalised or adversely affected by environmental and social policies.

In their foundational paper, Newell and Mulvaney (2013) argue that a just transition seeks to ensure that the burdens and benefits of transitions to a low-carbon economy are distributed equitably,

and that responses to climate change must take seriously questions of equity, justice and rights, particularly for those most affected by the shift. They stress that the **just transition** framework integrates social justice concerns into environmental governance, especially in contexts where structural inequalities are reproduced through decarbonisation policies.

The spatial justice dimension of just sustainability transitions focuses on the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens across different spaces and communities. It addresses the need for all individuals to access clean air, water, green spaces, and safe, healthy environments, regardless of their geographic location, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity. Spatial justice also involves ensuring that all communities have a say in the environmental decisions that affect them, preventing the displacement of vulnerable populations due to gentrification or conservation efforts.

This approach aims to rectify historical and ongoing spatial inequalities, such as those seen in the siting of hazardous waste facilities in low-income or minority neighbourhoods, by advocating for policies and practices that distribute environmental goods fairly and provide all communities with access to sustainable infrastructure and resources.

Integrating the concept of just sustainability transitions with socio-technical transitions involves ensuring that these systemic changes are implemented in ways that are socially inclusive and equitable. It requires active engagement with diverse communities to understand their specific needs and vulnerabilities and to ensure that the benefits of transitions, such as new technologies, jobs, and improved environmental conditions, are accessible to all. It also involves addressing potential social and

economic disruptions caused by these transitions, such as job losses in specific sectors, through policies that support retraining, education, and social protection measures. Ultimately, just sustainability transitions aim to create resilient, sustainable societies where environmental stewardship goes hand in hand with social equity and justice, ensuring a better future for all.

## 4.3. RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION AS COMPONENTS OF SPATIAL JUSTICE

Resilience and adaptation are critical components of spatial justice, reflecting the capacity of communities, particularly those that are marginalised or vulnerable, to withstand, recover from, and adapt to environmental, economic, and social shocks and stresses in a manner that ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities across all spatial dimensions (Matin et al., 2018). These components are integral to achieving spatial justice because they address the disparities in how different communities experience and respond to challenges, emphasising the need for equitable distribution of adaptive capacities and resilience-building resources. Wenta et al., for instance, argue that climate adaptation laws can and should promote both socio-ecological resilience *and* justice, offering principles such as distributive effects, participatory inclusion, and multi-scale approaches (Wenta et al., 2018).

## RESILIENCE

Resilience in the context of spatial justice involves the ability of communities to maintain their core functions and integrity in the face of external pressures and shocks, such as natural disasters, climate change impacts, economic downturns, or social upheavals. Spatial justice seeks to ensure that resilience-building efforts are distributed equitably, recognising that marginalised communities often bear the brunt of adverse events without adequate resources or support to recover. By focusing on resilience through a spatial justice lens, policies and practices can be developed to strengthen the social fabric, infrastructure, and environmental assets of all communities, particularly those historically underserved or exposed to greater risks.

## ADAPTATION

Adaptation refers to the adjustments in practices, processes, or structures of communities to better cope with, manage, or adjust to changing conditions or risks. In terms of spatial justice, adaptation efforts must consider the unequal impacts of environmental and social changes on different communities and strive to implement strategies that not only mitigate existing inequalities but also promote fairness and equity. This includes designing adaptive measures that are inclusive, community-led, and sensitive to the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of various groups, ensuring that all members of society have the means and opportunities to adjust to changes and continue to thrive.

## INTEGRATING RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION WITH SPATIAL JUSTICE

Integrating resilience and adaptation with spatial justice means acknowledging that the ability to bounce back from and adapt to challenges is not just a matter of physical infrastructure or environmental management but also of addressing systemic inequalities that make specific communities more susceptible to harm. It involves creating adaptive strategies that are rooted in the principles of equity and inclusivity, ensuring that investments in resilience do not leave any community behind but instead contribute to more just and equitable outcomes for everyone, regardless of their geographic, economic, or social position. This approach underscores the importance of participatory governance, where decision-making on resilience and adaptation is democratised, and community voices, especially those of marginalised groups, are central in shaping responses to emerging challenges.



## REFERENCES

- Bristow, G., Farrington, J., Shaw, J., & Richardson, T. . (2009). Developing an evaluation framework for crosscutting policy goals: The Accessibility Policy Assessment Too. *Environment and Planning A*, 41(1), 48-62.
- Dillard, J. F., Dujon, V., & King, M. C. (2009). *Understanding the social dimension of sustainability*. Routledge.
- Dujon, V., Dillard, J. F., & Brennan, E. M. (2013). *Social sustainability : a multilevel approach to social inclusion*. Routledge.
- Farrington, J. (2004). Settlements, services and access: the development of policies to promote accessibility in rural areas in Great Britain: final report.
- Farrington, J. (2007). The new narrative of accessibility: its potential contribution to discourses in (transport) geography. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 15(5), 319-330.
- Matin, N., Forrester, J., & Ensor, J. (2018). What is equitable resilience? *World Development*, 109, 197-205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.04.020>
- Newell, P., & Mulvaney, D. (2013). The political economy of the 'just transition'. *The Geographical Journal*, 179(2), 132-140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12008>
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Wenta, J., McDonald, J., & McGee, J. S. (2018). Enhancing Resilience and Justice in Climate Adaptation Laws. *Transnational Environmental Law*, 8(1), 89-118. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2047102518000286>
- World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future, From One Earth to One World*. United Nations. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>





**STRATEGIES  
FOR  
IMPLEMENTING  
SPATIAL  
JUSTICE**

# 5. INCLUSIVE URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING



## 5.1 DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIC PLANNING



Democratic participatory strategic planning is an approach to urban development that emphasises the active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the decision-making process

(Forester, 1999; Healey, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Innes, 1995; Innes & Booher, 2018). This perspective seeks to democratise planning by ensuring that the voices of all community members, including underrepresented groups, are heard and considered in the formulation of policies, plans, and designs. The goal is to create more equitable, sustainable, and resilient urban environments through collective visioning, co-design, and co-planning.

### INTEGRATION OF POLICY, PLANNING, AND DESIGN WITH COLLECTIVE VISIONING, CO-DESIGN, AND CO-PLANNING

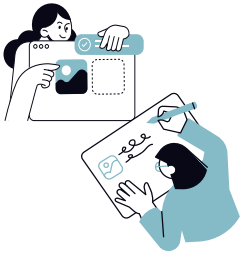


Democratic participatory strategic planning integrates **policy**, **planning**, and **design** by embedding collective visioning, (co)design, and (co)planning as iterative and interdependent processes. Rather

than treating policy formulation, spatial planning, and design implementation as separate technical domains, this approach conceives of them as **mutually constitutive practices** that must be shaped by inclusive and deliberative engagement. Collective visioning enables communities to articulate shared goals and values, anchoring policy frameworks in locally meaningful aspirations (Innes & Booher, 2018). Co-design extends this process

into the realm of spatial form, where the physical environment becomes a medium through which collective intentions are materially expressed (Friedmann, 2011). Co-planning, in turn, operationalises these visions by aligning legal instruments, institutional arrangements, and spatial strategies in ways that are procedurally just and contextually responsive (Forester, 1999).

This integrated model challenges traditional technocratic paradigms by **redistributing epistemic authority**, legitimising experiential, place-based, and often marginalised forms of knowledge in the production of space (Sandercock, 2003; Watson, 2006). It also foregrounds **relational agency**, recognising that spatial outcomes emerge not only from plans or policies but from the dynamic interactions between institutions, communities, and spatial imaginaries (Healey, 1997). Planning thus becomes a form of **institutional learning**, where co-production is not a one-off exercise in consultation but a sustained commitment to negotiating diverse interests and ways of knowing (Swyngedouw, 2005). The integration of policy, planning, and design through participatory means is not only a methodological concern but an ethical one, as it directly responds to the normative imperative of **planning with** rather than **for** communities. As Faranak Miraftab (2009) argues, justice-oriented planning must embrace both **invited** and **invented** spaces of participation, recognising that transformative agency often emerges from outside formal institutional structures. In this light, democratic participatory strategic planning is not simply an inclusive procedure, but a **political project** aimed at reconfiguring power relations in the production of urban space.



## POLICY INTEGRATION

Policy integration refers to the deliberate alignment of planning objectives, regulatory instruments, and development strategies with the needs, values, and aspirations articulated through participatory processes. In contrast to siloed sectoral policymaking, integrated policy frameworks aim to coordinate across domains, such as housing, mobility, environment, and economic development, to ensure that spatial interventions reflect holistic and inclusive urban agendas (Dorado-Rubín et al., 2025; Nadin et al., 2019). This requires not merely technical coordination but a normative commitment to embedding equity and justice as organising principles across the policy spectrum. Policies must do more than respond to existing conditions; they must be generative frameworks that translate collectively envisioned futures into actionable instruments of spatial transformation (Healey, 2006).

Effective policy integration depends on both institutional capacity and political will to transcend jurisdictional fragmentation and overcome the inertia of entrenched bureaucratic routines (Jordan & Lenschow, 2010). Participatory planning provides critical inputs to this process, not as token consultation, but as a means of ensuring that policies are shaped by plural epistemologies and situated knowledges. When co-produced insights are embedded early in the policy cycle, they enable anticipatory governance, which is better equipped to address complexity, uncertainty, and social diversity (Vigar, 2007). Furthermore, policy integration demands reflexivity—ongoing assessment and recalibration of policy impacts through inclusive feedback mechanisms that maintain accountability to affected communities (Sabel & Zeitlin, 2012).

As such, integrated policy is a political strategy for institutionalising the claims of spatial justice. It enacts a procedural ethic in which diverse voices shape not only the design of urban interventions but also the rules, norms, and priorities that gov-

ern them. In this way, policy integration serves as a bridge between participatory processes and tangible outcomes, ensuring that equity is not an afterthought but a structuring logic in urban governance.

## PLANNING



Planning, within a democratic participatory strategic framework, is not merely the technical act of preparing spatial policy (policy instruments that organise, regulate, and shape the use,

development, and governance of space) but a collective, iterative, and contested process of co-defining futures. It involves engaging stakeholders, including residents, civil society organisations, planners, and policymakers, in the articulation of long-term goals and the spatial and political strategies necessary to achieve them. Rather than treating plans as expert-led blueprints, this approach understands planning as a relational practice shaped by diverse knowledges, conflicting interests, and negotiated values, following what Healey sees as communicative planning (Healey, 1997). Strategic planning thus becomes a space of deliberation, where priorities are not pre-given but co-produced through dialogue, dissent, and compromise (Forester, 1999; Innes & Booher, 2018).

Importantly, strategic planning under this model is not confined to producing spatial plans alone, but is adaptive and open-ended, capable of responding to shifting socio-political conditions and emerging community needs. It addresses the production of space as a dynamic, contested, and socially embedded process shaped by power, identity, and collective action. This requires robust institutional mechanisms for ongoing engagement, monitoring, and revision, ensuring that plans remain accountable to those they affect (Friedmann, 1987; Legacy, 2017). As such,

planning becomes a dynamic interface between vision and action, institutional design and grass-roots agency, mediating between spatial aspirations and the legal, financial, and political systems that condition their realisation. Framed in this way, planning is reimagined not as an act of prediction or control, but as a collective political project grounded in justice, plurality, and care.

## PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESSES



Participatory planning processes, as framed within the communicative turn in planning advocated by theorists like Patsy Healey, Judith Innes, and John Forester, emphasise the central role of dialogue, collaboration, and consensus-building in urban planning and development.

This approach challenges traditional, top-down planning models by advocating for a more inclusive and democratic process, where diverse stakeholders, including community members, experts, and policymakers, actively engage in shaping planning outcomes. Healey (Healey, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 2003), Innes (Innes, 1995, 1998; Innes & Booher, 1999; Innes & Booher, 2018), and Forester (Forester, 1978, 1989, 1999), among others, argue that effective planning cannot be achieved solely through technical expertise or bureaucratic procedures. Instead, it requires the creation of communicative spaces where the values, needs, and knowledge of all participants are recognised and integrated into the planning process.

This shift toward communicative planning aligns with the theories of polycentric governance advocated by Elinor Ostrom, which we discuss further in this text. It seeks to foster mutual understanding and agreement among stakeholders through continuous dialogue, negotiation, and reflection, making the planning process more transparent, adaptive, and responsive to the complexities of social life. By prioritising the voices and experiences

of those often marginalised in planning processes, participatory planning within this communicative framework aims to achieve spatial justice and more equitable, sustainable urban environments. This approach aligns with the broader goals of social sustainability, as it not only seeks to address immediate urban challenges but also to empower communities and build social capital for long-term resilience and well-being.

## DESIGN



Design, within the framework of inclusive and democratic urbanism, is a material expression of political values, cultural identities, and social relations. It involves shaping the physical form of urban environments, like

public spaces, streetscapes, housing, and infrastructure, in ways that are functional, inclusive, and reflective of diverse lived experiences. Participatory design processes challenge the traditional view of the designer as a solitary expert and instead position design as a collaborative practice co-produced with communities, particularly those historically marginalised or excluded from shaping the built environment (Sanoff, 1999). This shift reframes the design of urban space not simply as a technical problem of form-making, but as a site of negotiation over access, identity, and visibility (Awan et al., 2011).

Incorporating public input into urban design extends beyond consultation to include co-design methodologies, where users are involved throughout the design process, from ideation to implementation. Such approaches enhance spatial justice by embedding recognitional justice into the material fabric of cities, ensuring that spaces resonate with the social and cultural specificities of the people who inhabit them (Miessen, 2011). Participatory design also advances universal design and design justice principles, addressing barriers related to mobility, gender, age, and sensory abili-

ty, and fostering environments that are accessible, safe, and affirming for all (Costanza-Chock, 2020; Imrie & Hall, 2001).

Critically, design must also grapple with the aesthetic politics of urban form. Decisions about scale, materiality, and visual language are never apolitical; they communicate who belongs, what is valued, and how power is distributed spatially (Rendell, 2006). Participatory and justice-oriented design thus seeks to resist exclusionary or homogenising aesthetics—often associated with neo-liberal urban branding, by amplifying plural spatial narratives and supporting place-making practices rooted in local cultures and collective memory (Hou, 2010). In this light, design becomes not only a tool for spatial intervention but a medium of democratic expression, reinforcing the right to the city through the everyday experience of the built form.

## COLLECTIVE VISIONING



Collective visioning is a foundational stage in democratic participatory strategic planning, offering a deliberative space for diverse actors to co-articulate long-term as-

pirations for their city. Far from being a symbolic or preliminary exercise, collective visioning plays a substantive role in shaping urban futures by aligning planning efforts with shared values, social needs, and locally grounded imaginaries (Forester, 1999; Healey, 1997). It brings together stakeholders, like residents, civil society organisations, planners, experts, and government officials as co-authors of urban transformation. Through facilitated dialogue, storytelling, and spatial mapping, collective visioning surfaces community knowledge and fosters a shared narrative about what constitutes a just, inclusive, and desirable urban future (Friedmann, 2011; Sandercock & Lyssiotis, 2003).

The strength of collective visioning lies in its creative and affective dimensions: it invites par-

ticipants to imagine possibilities beyond current constraints, thereby opening space for counter-hegemonic narratives and utopian thinking (Friedmann, 2000; Koning & Dijk, 2021). This makes it particularly relevant in contexts of historical injustice, where excluded communities can articulate demands that challenge dominant development logics. Visioning, when conducted inclusively, also strengthens procedural justice by cultivating trust, mutual understanding, and political agency among participants (Innes & Booher, 1999). However, scholars warn that visioning exercises risk becoming depoliticised rituals unless embedded within institutional processes that translate collective aspirations into real-world policy and design outcomes (Legacy, 2017).

To be meaningful, collective visioning must therefore be iterative, open-ended, and institutionally supported, allowing visions to evolve in response to changing circumstances and new voices. It must also be sensitive to power dynamics, ensuring that dominant groups do not co-opt the process, and that marginalised communities are empowered to define what matters in their own terms and using their own language. In this sense, collective visioning is not only about imagining the future; it is a political act of reclaiming the right to define the city, laying the normative groundwork for planning practices rooted in equity, recognition, and spatial justice.

## PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND POLYCENTRIC GOVERNANCE



Participatory planning intersects with notions of polycentric governance through its emphasis on inclusivity, diversity of voices, and the decentralisation of decision-making authority. Polycentric governance, a concept popularised by Elinor

Ostrom (1990, 2005), refers to the organisation of governance across multiple centres of authority that operate independently yet interdependently. This model values the contributions of various



stakeholders at different scales and jurisdictions, from neighbourhood associations and municipal councils to regional bodies and transnational institutions, recognising that complex challenges such as spatial inequality, climate adaptation, and infrastructure governance cannot be addressed effectively by a single governing entity.

In the context of spatial justice, the intersection between participatory planning and polycentric governance becomes particularly salient. Participatory planning brings normative commitments to procedural justice, ensuring that affected communities have voice and influence in decisions that shape their spatial environments. Polycentric governance provides the institutional architecture through which those voices can be exercised meaningfully, by dispersing authority and enabling deliberation across multiple sites of governance (Ostrom, 2010a, 2010b; Swyngedouw, 2005). This not only enhances the legitimacy and responsiveness of planning processes but also supports the principle of subsidiarity, whereby decisions are made at the most immediate or local level consistent with their resolution.

Moreover, when designed with attention to power asymmetries, polycentric governance can foster institutional arrangements that are adaptive and reflexive, capable of integrating diverse forms of knowledge, including local and Indigenous epistemologies, into spatial decision-making (Pahl-Wostl & Knieper, 2014). In this way, the interplay between participatory planning and polycentric governance offers a compelling framework for democratising spatial production, enabling citizens and communities to shape not only outcomes but also the institutional rules through which those outcomes are determined.



## INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND POLYCENTRIC GOVERNANCE

**1. Decentralisation and Empowerment:** Both participatory planning and polycentric governance advocate for decentralising decision-making authority, empowering local communities and smaller units of governance to have a say in the processes that affect them. This decentralisation ensures that governance is more responsive to the specific needs and conditions of diverse communities.

**2. Diversity and Inclusivity:** Participatory planning's emphasis on including a wide range of stakeholders in the planning process mirrors polycentric governance's recognition of the importance of multiple governing authorities. Both approaches value the diversity of perspectives and expertise that different stakeholders bring to the table, facilitating more comprehensive and inclusive solutions to urban and environmental challenges.

**3. Collaboration and Coordination:** In a polycentric governance system, different centres of decision-making need to coordinate and collaborate to address complex issues effectively. Participatory planning fosters a similar spirit of collaboration by bringing together various stakeholders, including government entities, community groups, and individuals, to co-create urban planning solutions.

**4. Adaptability and Learning:** Both approaches emphasise adaptability and learning from diverse experiences and experiments. Participatory planning allows for flexibility in addressing urban challenges, as it incorporates feedback and insights from community members and stakeholders. Similarly, polycentric governance encourages experimentation and learning from different governance practices across various centres, leading to more resilient and adaptable management strategies.



**5. Addressing Complexity:** The complex nature of urban and environmental challenges necessitates governance approaches that are not confined to rigid, hierarchical structures. Participatory planning and polycentric governance both offer frameworks for managing complexity through distributed authority, multi-level engagement, and the integration of various knowledge systems and values.

By intersecting participatory planning with polycentric governance, urban governance can harness the strengths of both approaches: the ground-up engagement and inclusivity of participatory planning, combined with the flexibility, diversity, and collaborative potential of polycentric governance systems. This intersection offers a robust framework for achieving more democratic, effective, and just urban governance that is capable of addressing the multifaceted challenges of contemporary urbanisation and sustainability.

## THE CHALLENGES TO PARTICIPATORY PLANNING



While the communicative turn in planning, with its emphasis on participatory processes, is widely celebrated for its potential to democratise urban plan-

ning, it has also faced several critiques.

Critics argue that the ideal of participatory planning is often difficult to implement in practice due to institutional constraints, lack of resources, and entrenched power dynamics. As Miraftab (2009) and Purcell (2009) point out, while participatory rhetoric is widespread, genuine inclusion is frequently undermined by technocratic planning and neoliberal governance logics that reduce participation to a formality. Bureaucratic inertia, rigid institutional frameworks, and limited public engagement budgets further restrict planners' capacity to sustain deep and ongoing citizen involvement (Booth, 2015; Legacy, 2017). Moreover, as Innes

& Booher (1999) and Fainstein (2010) emphasise, facilitating truly inclusive dialogue is complex, especially when marginalised groups face structural barriers to participation, such as time constraints, lack of technical knowledge, or distrust in public institutions. These dynamics often reproduce existing inequalities, turning participatory processes into tokenistic exercises that legitimise predetermined outcomes rather than transforming them.

Despite intentions to be inclusive, participatory processes can inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities. Critics point out that not all community members have equal capacity or opportunity to engage in participatory planning due to factors like time, knowledge, language barriers, and socioeconomic status. This can lead to the domination of the discourse by more articulate, resource-rich, or politically connected groups, marginalising the voices of those the process intends to empower.

Critics question the effectiveness of participatory planning in leading to tangible changes or improvements in urban policies and spaces (Flyvbjerg, 1998). They argue that without a clear mechanism to translate community input into action, participatory planning can become a tokenistic exercise that raises expectations but fails to deliver meaningful outcomes.

The emphasis on consensus within communicative planning is critiqued for potentially glossing over deep-seated conflicts and power imbalances within communities (Mouffe, 2013). Critics argue that striving for consensus can silence dissenting voices or minority viewpoints, overlooking the reality that some urban planning issues involve irreconcilable conflicts that cannot be easily resolved through dialogue alone. Chantal Mouffe challenges the Habermasian ideal of rational consensus by proposing an agonistic model of democracy, in which political contestation is not a failure of dialogue but a vital expression of pluralism and democratic vitality. In her view, conflict is constitutive of the political and cannot be fully eliminated; what matters is how conflict is channelled into legitimate, structured forms of disagreement rather than sup-

pressed in the name of harmony (Mouffe, 2005).

Applied to planning, Mouffe's agonistic perspective calls for a rethinking of participation not as the pursuit of consensus, but as the creation of spaces where divergent interests, identities, and worldviews can confront one another openly and respectfully. Such a reframing acknowledges that urban conflicts, such as conflicts over land, resources, identity, or historical memory, are often rooted in structural inequalities and competing normative visions of the good city. In this light, planning becomes a terrain of democratic struggle, where the aim is not to erase antagonism but to institutionalise it in ways that are inclusive, transparent, and accountable. This approach aligns closely with the demands of recognitional and procedural justice, offering a more politically honest and socially grounded foundation for participatory urbanism.

The communicative turn may depoliticise planning by framing it as a neutral, technical process of dialogue and consensus rather than acknowledging the inherently political nature of urban development decisions and the ensuing conflicts (Miraftab, 2004). This can divert attention from the structural inequalities and power relations that shape urban spaces, potentially detracting from more radical approaches to spatial justice.

While citizen participation is often championed as a cornerstone of democratic planning, recent empirical and theoretical work reveals frequent **gaps between aspiration and effect**. Several recurring challenges help explain why participatory initiatives sometimes underwhelm or breed scepticism.

Many participatory processes suffer from **low turnout or selective attendance**, meaning that only a small (and often unrepresentative) subset of the population engages. This pattern skews deliberation toward more vocal, resourced, or politically aware citizens, reinforcing existing inequalities (Tóbiás & Boros, 2025). When citizen panels or workshops attract few participants, their legitimacy and influence are undermined (Munarini, 2025).

Some participatory practices are structured in ways that give the **appearance** of inclusion, but with little real authority or influence. The review of climate adaptation participation by Parsons et al. (2025) finds that many participatory processes reproduce existing power imbalances by relegating marginalised voices to consultation roles while keeping final decision-making in the hands of technocrats (Parsons et al., 2025). Similarly, Slaev et al. (2019) warn that without structural reinvention, participatory schemes risk being ceremonial rather than transformational.

Participatory ambitions must contend with entrenched institutional routines, bureaucratic inertia, and jurisdictional fragmentation. These structures often resist substantive change, making it difficult for citizen input to translate into plan adjustments or resource allocation. In local governance studies, Holum (2022) shows that the institutional design of municipal participation schemes (e.g. rigid procedural rules) constrains the translation of citizen input into action.

Participation demands time, financial resources, facilitation, and logistical support. Planners often underestimate the costs of meaningful engagement or lack the staff capacity to sustain long-term processes. Tóbiás & Boros (2025) document how lack of resources and insufficient motivation pose significant barriers to robust participation. Moreover, digital participation tools promise scale but face constraints in access, digital literacy, and representativeness (Luo et al., 2025).

Repeated experiences where citizen input fails to influence outcomes lead to disillusionment. Citizens come to see participatory efforts as **feedback voids**, where their contributions vanish into bureaucratic systems without visible returns (Hughes et al., 2025). Over time, these impressions dampen the willingness to participate in future efforts.

Complex urban challenges such as land use conflicts, climate adaptation, and infrastructure investment often involve trade-offs among multiple interests, technical constraints, and sectoral priorities. Participation does not guarantee resolution

of deep conflicts. In many participatory settings, planners must balance citizen demands with legal, financial, or political constraints, which may limit what can be acted upon (Choo et al., 2022).

Despite these challenges, we continue to advocate for participatory planning as a critical avenue for achieving more democratic, equitable, and just urban environments. We recognise the need to address these limitations through ongoing innovation and reflexivity in planning practices. Participatory processes must be designed not only with deliberative openness but also with structural attentiveness. They require institutional support, iterative feedback mechanisms, and transparent decision-making pathways to ensure that citizen input leads to tangible outcomes. In this light, procedural justice is fragile and contingent, and participation alone is insufficient without accompanying reforms in governance, redistribution, and recognition. To avoid participation becoming a procedural façade, planners must engage critically with power relations, patterns of exclusion, and the institutional path dependencies that often shape whose voices are heard and whose are silenced. Thus, participation must not only be inclusive in form but also transformative in effect, paired with broader commitments to spatial justice that extend beyond consultation to the reconfiguration of how cities are imagined, governed, and produced.

## PARTICIPATORY DESIGN AND CO-DESIGN



Participatory design and co-design have emerged as critical methodologies that extend the democratic ethos of participatory planning and polycentric governance into the domain of design practice. These

approaches seek to redistribute design agency by actively involving a wide range of stakeholders, not only professional designers or institutional actors, but also end-users and historically marginalised groups, in the process of shaping urban spaces,

services, and products (Manzini, 2015; Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

These practices resonate strongly with the polycentric governance paradigm (Ostrom, 2010a), which advocates for decision-making authority distributed across multiple, overlapping centres of power. Just as polycentric governance values epistemic plurality and localised knowledge, participatory and co-design processes challenge the expert-driven, hierarchical model of design by decentralising authorship and enabling co-creation (Fischer, 2009). Through inclusive processes of dialogue, iteration, and mutual learning, design becomes not only a technical task but a political and relational act, one that recognises everyday users as legitimate co-producers of knowledge and form (Bannon & Ehn, 2012).

Moreover, participatory design is inherently iterative and adaptive, embracing a ‘learning by doing’ ethic that mirrors the experimental and reflexive logic of participatory planning (Innes & Booher, 2004). It allows for continuous feedback loops in which provisional solutions are tested, evaluated, and refined collectively, thus embedding responsiveness and adaptability into the design process. This methodological openness fosters not only better design outcomes but also enhanced social ownership, civic capacity, and institutional trust (Bannon & Ehn, 2012).

Ultimately, participatory and co-design do more than mirror governance structures. They materialise democratic values in spatial and procedural form. In this way, they contribute to the broader project of spatial justice by operationalising inclusivity, recognition, and co-authorship at the level of design practice.

## CO-DESIGN AND CO-PLANNING



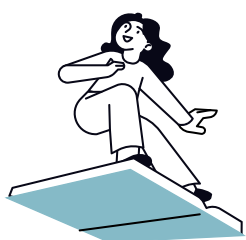
Co-design and co-planning are interrelated yet distinct dimensions of collaborative urbanism that reconfigure the roles of citizens, professionals, and institutions in shaping the built

environment. Co-design refers to the collaborative production of spatial and architectural solutions in which stakeholders, particularly those historically excluded from planning processes—participate as active agents throughout the design lifecycle. Rather than merely reacting to pre-defined proposals, participants in co-design engage in problem definition, concept development, and iterative feedback, ensuring that outcomes reflect local knowledge, cultural values, and everyday spatial practices (Manzini & Rizzo, 2011; Sanoff, 1999). This approach challenges the expert monopoly over spatial form and embraces design as a socially embedded and negotiated practice, enabling the emergence of spaces that are not only technically robust but socially meaningful and contextually grounded (Till, 2013).

Co-planning builds upon this by extending collaborative engagement into the strategic and operational dimensions of urban development. It entails stakeholder participation in the formulation of priorities, the allocation of resources, and the phasing and implementation of projects. Here, citizens are not simply consulted, but are engaged in co-producing policy agendas, regulatory mechanisms, and investment strategies (Healey, 1997; Watson, 2006). Co-planning disrupts the technocratic and managerialist ethos that often dominates planning practice, shifting toward a model that foregrounds deliberation, mutual learning, and collective decision-making. When structured equitably, co-planning can address power asymmetries by redistributing voice and agency, allowing marginalised groups to shape not only the design of interventions but the institutional conditions under which those interventions are conceived and delivered (Legacy, 2017; Miraftab, 2009).

Crucially, co-design and co-planning must be recognised as contested and political practices, not merely technical exercises in inclusion. Both are susceptible to co-option or superficial implementation if they are not supported by strong institutional commitments to transparency, accountability, and long-term engagement (Fischer, 2012; Frediani & Boano, 2012). For these practices to support spatial justice, they must be situated within governance frameworks that value epistemic diversity, support counter-hegemonic narratives, and remain attentive to procedural equity. In this sense, co-design and co-planning are more than participatory tools; they are central to a transformative planning ethic that reimagines cities as collectively shaped, democratically governed, and socially just spaces.

## 5.2. CONCLUSION: DESIGNING FOR DIVERSITY AND JUSTICE



Designing for diversity and spatial justice means creating urban environments, infrastructures, and systems that embody fairness and collective well-being. This approach recognises that cities are lived by

many publics whose experiences differ according to gender, class, race, ability, and culture. Designing for justice therefore begins with acknowledging these differences and using them as a foundation for inclusive and equitable design. Rather than treating participation as an optional stage, it redefines design itself as a democratic and ethical practice.

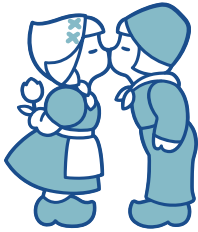
Inclusive design must move beyond consultation to genuine co-production. Co-design and co-planning, as discussed earlier, aim to rebalance power in urban decision-making by redistributing voice and agency. When institutionalised and protected from tokenism, they enable communities, particularly those historically excluded, to shape both the process and the outcomes of urban transformation. This shifts the focus of planning from technical efficiency to relational engagement, where dialogue, trust, and collective learning are as vital as physical form.

Spatial quality is central to this approach. It is not merely a question of beauty or function but of justice and dignity. High-quality environments support the diverse ways people inhabit and experience the city. They provide safety, accessibility, and comfort while also nurturing belonging, meaning, and shared identity. A justice-oriented understanding of spatial quality demands attention to both material and symbolic dimensions: who the city represents, who feels welcome, and whose stories are embedded in its fabric.

Designing for spatial justice therefore involves reimagining urban space as a platform for coexistence and recognition. Public spaces, infrastructure, and everyday amenities must be conceived to dismantle barriers that marginalise, enabling encounters across difference and sustaining the right to the city for all. This requires governance frameworks that embed participation, accountability, and cultural sensitivity, ensuring that design is not reduced to surface aesthetics but becomes a medium for inclusion and empowerment.

Finally, designing for diversity and justice calls for designers, planners, and institutions to act as facilitators of collective agency. They must bridge disciplines, combine technical skill with social empathy, and understand design as an act of care. Only when spatial practices are grounded in equity, recognition, and solidarity can urban environments truly promote the flourishing of diverse communities and strengthen the democratic life of the city.

## PRACTICE & EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS



This approach is anchored in the Dutch planning history and practice. In the Netherlands, democratic participatory strategic planning is anchored in a planning culture that values consensus-building and negotiated

collaboration. Dutch planning institutions have historically integrated participatory mechanisms, inviting citizens, businesses, and advocacy groups into decision processes, while situating those within statutory frameworks and spatial plans (Faludi & Valk, 2010; Hommes et al., 2009; JCHS, 2023; OECD, 2017; Tisma & Meijer, 2018; Uittenbroek et al., 2019). Still, the collaborative ideal is mediated by power dynamics, procedural constraints, and institutional path dependencies, meaning that participatory aspirations sometimes fall short in practice (Buuren & Edelenbos, 2004; Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000; Hettinga, 2018).

At TU Delft, this approach is taught and researched extensively, particularly in the management of sustainability transitions. The university focuses on educating students about the importance of integrating technical, social, and policy aspects in planning. Courses and projects often involve real-world scenarios where students engage with communities and stakeholders to co-design and co-plan urban interventions. This educational focus is complemented by research initiatives that explore innovative participatory methods and tools for sustainable urban development.

TU Delft also emphasises the role of new technologies and methodologies in enhancing participatory processes. For example, digital tools for geographic information systems (GIS), virtual reality (VR), and various online platforms are integrated into the planning process to facilitate more effective and inclusive engagement.

Overall, democratic participatory strategic plan-

ning as practised in the Netherlands and taught at TU Delft embodies a comprehensive approach that merges technical expertise with deep community engagement to create urban environments that are reflective of and responsive to the needs of all their inhabitants.

This approach gave rise to a planning model adopted by UP2030 as a generic planning cycle, to which actions and tools can be attached.



## REFERENCES

- Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. Routledge.
- Bannon, L. J., & Ehn, P. (2012). Design: Design Matters in Participatory Design. In J. Simonsen & T. Robertson (Eds.), *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203108543>
- Booth, P. (2015). What can we learn from France? Some reflections on the methodologies of cross national research. In E. A. Silva, P. Healey, N. Harris, & P. v. d. Broeck (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Research Methods* (pp. 84-96). Routledge.
- Buuren, M. W. v., & Edelenbos, J. (2004). Conflicting knowledge: Why is joint knowledge production such a problem? *Science and Public Policy*, 31(4), 289-299. <http://hdl.handle.net/1765/1651>
- Choo, M., Choi, Y. W., Yoon, H., Bae, S. B., & Yoon, D. K. (2022). Citizen Engagement in Smart City Planning: The Case of Living Labs in South Korea. *Urban Planning*, 8(2), 32-43. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v8i2.6416>
- Costanza-Chock, S. (2020). *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need*. The MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/12255.001.0001>
- Dorado-Rubín, M. J., Guerrero-Mayo, M. J., & Navarro-Yáñez, C. J. (2025). Policy integration in urban policies as multi-level policy mixes. *Policy Sciences*, 58, 45-67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-024-09562-5>
- Fainstein, S. (2010). *The Just City*. Cornell University Press.
- Faludi, A., & Valk, A. v. d. (2010). Rule and Order Dutch Planning Doctrine in the Twentieth Century. Springer.
- Fischer, F. (2009). *Democracy and Expertise: Reorienting Policy Inquiry*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199282838.001.0001>
- Fischer, F. (2012). Participatory Governance: From Theory to Practice. In D. Levi-Faur (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Governance* (pp. 457-471). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxford-hb/9780199560530.013.0032>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). *Rationality and power: Democracy in practice*. University of Chicago Press.
- Forester, J. (1978). *Questioning and Shaping Attention as Planning Strategy: Toward a Critical Theory of Planning Practice*. Dept. of City and Regional Planning/ Program in Urban and Regional Studies, Cornell University.
- Forester, J. (1989). *Planning in the Face of Power*. University of California Press.
- Forester, J. (1999). The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes. MIT Press.
- Frediani, A. A., & Boano, C. (2012). Processes for Just Products: The Capability Space of Participatory Design. In I. Oosterlaken & J. Hoven (Eds.), *The Capability Approach, Technology and Design* (pp. 203-222). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3879-9\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3879-9_12)
- Friedmann, J. (1987). *Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action*. Princeton University Press.
- Friedmann, J. (2000). The Good City: In Defense of Utopian Thinking. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24(2), 460-472. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.00258>
- Friedmann, J. (2011). *Insurgencies: Essays in Planning Theory*. Routledge.
- Hajer, M., & Zonneveld, W. (2000). Spatial Planning in the Network Society-Rethinking the Principles of Planning in the Netherlands. *European Planning Studies*, 8(3), 337-355. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713666411>
- Healey, P. (1996a). The Communicative Turn in Planning Theory and Its Implications for Spatial Strategy Formation. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 23(1), 217-234.
- Healey, P. (1996b). Consensus-building across Difficult Divisions: New approaches to collaborative strategy making. *Planning Practice & Research*, 11(2), 207-216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459650036350>
- Healey, P. (1997). *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. Springer.
- Healey, P. (2003). Collaborative Planning in Perspective. *Planning Theory*, 2(2), 101-123. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/14730952030022002>
- Healey, P. (2006). *Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies: Towards a Relational Planning for Our Times*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203099414>
- Hettinga, M. (2018). *The design of participatory process on a municipality level* KTH Royal Institute of Technology, School of Architecture and the Built Environment]. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2%3A1264608/FULLTEXT02>
- Holum, M. (2022). Citizen Participation: Linking Government Efforts, Actual Participation, and Trust in Local Politicians. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 46(13), 915-925. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2022.2048667>
- Hommes, S., Vinke-de Kruijf, J., Otter, H. S., & Bouma, G. (2009). Knowledge and Perceptions in Participatory Policy Processes: Lessons from the Delta-Region in the Netherlands. *Water Resources Management*, 23(8), 1641-1663. <https://doi.org/Doi.10.1007/S11269-008->

- Hou, J. (2010). *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*. Taylor & Francis.
- Hughes, M., Overney, C., Kamra, A., Tepale, J., Hamby, E., Jasim, M., & Roy, D. (2025). Voice to Vision: Enhancing Civic Decision-Making through Co-Designed Data Infrastructure. *Human-Computer Interaction*, arXiv:2505.14853. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2505.14853>
- Imrie, R., & Hall, P. (2001). *Inclusive Design: Designing and Developing Accessible Environments*. Routledge.
- Innes, J. E. (1995). Planning Theory's Emerging Paradigm: Communicative Action and Interactive Practice. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 14(3), 183-190. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X9501400307>
- Innes, J. E. (1998). Information in communicative planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 64(1), 52-63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369808975956>
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (1999). Consensus Building as Role Playing and Bricolage: Toward a Theory of Collaborative Planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 65(1), 9-26.
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(4), 419-436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464935042000293170>
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2018). *Planning with Complexity: An Introduction to Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315147949>
- JCHS. (2023). The People's Housing: Woningcorporaties and the Dutch Social Housing System. *Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University*. <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/research-areas/working-papers/peoples-housing-woningcorporaties-and-dutch-social-housing-system#>
- Jordan, A., & Lenschow, A. (2010). Environmental policy integration: a state of the art review. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 20(3), 147-158. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.539>
- Koning, J., & Dijk, T. v. (2021). Rehabilitating utopias: the importance of imagination to confronting our spatial challenges. *Planning Practice & Research*, 39(1), 136-155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2021.1954750>
- Legacy, C. (2017). Is there a crisis of participatory planning? *Planning Theory*, 16(4), 425-442. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26408371>
- Manzini, E. (2015). *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*. MIT Press. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262028608/design-when-everybody-designs/>
- Manzini, E., & Rizzo, F. (2011). Small projects/large changes: Participatory design as an open participated process. *CoDesign*, 7(3-4), 199-215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2011.630472>
- Miessen, M. (2011). *The Nightmare of Participation (Cross-bench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality)*. Sterberg Press.
- Miraftab, F. (2004). Invited and Invented Spaces of Participation: Neoliberal Citizenship and Feminists' Expanded Notion of Politics. *Wagadu*, 1(1-7), 89-101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X04267173>
- Miraftab, F. (2009). Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 32-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099297>
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the Political*. Routledge.
- Mouffe, C. (2013). *Agonistics: Thinking The World Politically*. Verso.
- Munarini, M. (2025, 9-13 June). *When no one shows up (at first): Navigating the uncertainties of participatory workshops in interdisciplinary research* HHA125: The 4th International Conference Series on Hybrid Human-Artificial Intelligence, workshop Mind the AI-GAP 2025: Co-Designing Socio-Technical Systems., Pisa, Italy.
- Nadin, V., Stead, D., Dabrowski, M., & Fernandez-Maldonado, A. M. (2019). Integrated, adaptive and participatory spatial planning: trends across Europe. *Regional Studies*, 55(5), 791-803. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1817363>
- OECD. (2017). *The Governance of Land Use in the Netherlands: The Case of Amsterdam*.
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2005). *Understanding Institutional Diversity*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7s7wm>
- Ostrom, E. (2010a). Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems†. *American Economic Review*, 100(June), 641-672. <https://doi.org/http://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/aer.100.3.641>
- Ostrom, E. (2010b). Polycentric systems for coping with collective action and global environmental change. *Global Environmental Change*, 20(4), 500-557. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.07.004>
- Pahl-Wostl, C., & Knieper, C. (2014). The capacity of water governance to deal with the climate change adapta-



tion challenge: Using fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis to distinguish between polycentric, fragmented and centralized regimes. *Global Environmental Change*, 29(November), 139-154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.09.003>

- Parsons, M., Godden, N. J., Henrique, K. P., Tschakert, P., Gonda, N., Atkins, E., Steen, K., & Crease, R. P. (2025). Participatory approaches to climate adaptation, resilience, and mitigation: A systematic review. *Ambio, Online*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-025-02202-z>
- Purcell, M. (2009). Resisting Neoliberalization: Communicative Planning or Counter-Hegemonic Movements? *Planning Theory*, 8(2), 140-165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095209102232>
- Rendell, J. (2006). *Art and Architecture: a Place Between*. Bloomsbury.
- Sabel, C. F., & Zeitlin, J. (2012). Experimentalist Governance. In D. Levi-Faur (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford University Press.
- Sandercock, L., & Lyssiotis, P. (2003). *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Sanders, E. B. N., & Stappers, P. J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 4(1), 5-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15710880701875068>
- Sanoff, H. (1999). *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*. Wiley.
- Slaev, A. D., Kovachev, A., Nozharova, B., Daskalova, D., Nikolov, P., & Petrov, P. (2019). Overcoming the failures of citizen participation. *Planning Theory*, 18(4), 448-469. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26838373>
- Swyngedouw, E. (2005). Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 1991-2006. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43197219>
- Till, J. (2013). *Architecture Depends*. MIT Press.
- Tisma, A., & Meijer, J. (2018). *Lessons Learned From Spatial Planning In The Netherlands*. [https://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/downloads/PBL\\_-\\_Lessons\\_learned\\_from\\_spatial\\_planning\\_in\\_NL\\_-\\_20181108\\_-\\_3279.pdf](https://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/downloads/PBL_-_Lessons_learned_from_spatial_planning_in_NL_-_20181108_-_3279.pdf)
- Tóbiás, K., & Boros, L. (2025). Participatory Planning and Gamification: Insights from Hungary. *Land* 14(3), 573. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land140305732025>
- Uittenbroek, C. J., Mees, H. L. P., Hegger, D. L. T., & Driesen, P. P. J. (2019). The design of public participation: who participates, when and how? Insights in climate adaptation planning from the Netherlands. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 62(14), 2529-2547. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2019.1569>

503

- Vigar, G. (2007). Towards an Integrated Spatial Planning? *European Planning Studies*, 17(11), 1571-1590. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654310903226499>
- Watson, V. (2006). Deep Difference: Diversity, Planning and Ethics. *Planning Theory*, 5(1), 31-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095206061020>

# **6. UP2030 STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE**



The UP2030 Planning Cycle is a structured framework designed to integrate tools, methodologies, and frameworks systematically into urban planning processes, with a strong focus on participatory methods to ensure that the needs and priorities of all stakeholders are considered. This cycle supports the evaluation of city-wide implementation and the transferability of strategies across different urban contexts. In the next pages, you will find a detailed look at each step of the cycle.

## TO IDENTIFY NEEDS



This initial phase involves a participatory approach to identifying the specific needs and priorities of the community. By involving residents and other stakeholders early on, the process ensures that the resulting urban planning initiatives are closely aligned with the actual requirements and aspirations of the city's inhabitants.

## TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS



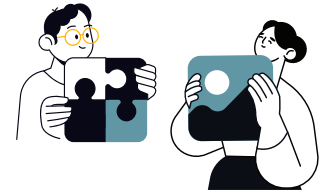
Following the identification of needs, this step involves detailed stakeholder mapping and analysis to understand the roles, influences, and interests of various groups and individuals. Effective engagement strategies are then employed to involve these stakeholders actively in the planning process, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered.

## TO ENVISION TOGETHER



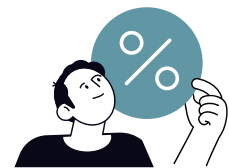
This participatory step encourages all stakeholders to collectively envision possible and desirable futures for the urban environment. It's a creative process that fosters shared visions and builds consensus on long-term goals for the city, laying a foundation for strategic planning and development.

## TO CO-DESIGN STRATEGIES



Building on the shared vision, this phase involves stakeholders in the co-design of detailed, step-by-step strategies for achieving the envisioned future. This includes the development of specific policies and interventions tailored to address the identified needs and priorities.

## TO EVALUATE FEASIBILITY & IMPACT



Here, the feasibility of the proposed strategies is critically assessed, including financial, technical, and capacity considerations. Additionally, the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of these strategies are evaluated to ensure they are sustainable and beneficial in the long term.

## TO CO-DESIGN POLICY



This involves the participatory design of policies that will enable the implementation of strategies. It's about creating policy frameworks that are not only effective but also equitable and inclusive, reflecting the collective input and consensus of all stakeholders.

## TO CO-DESIGN INTERVENTIONS



Similar to policy design, this phase focuses on the participatory design of specific interventions or projects that will bring the strategies to life. This includes detailed planning of the actions needed to achieve the strategic objectives.

## TO IMPLEMENT & TEST PROTOTYPES



Before full-scale implementation, strategies and interventions are prototyped and tested. This iterative process allows for real-world testing of concepts, enabling adjustments and improvements based on practical feedback and performance.

## TO EVALUATE



Once prototypes have been tested, this stage involves a thorough evaluation to gather insights and feedback from all stakeholders. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions and provides a critical feedback loop for continuous improvement.

## TO UPSCALE



The final step involves assessing the scalability of successful strategies and interventions. This includes evaluating their potential for city-wide implementation and their transferability to other urban areas, ensuring broader impact and applicability.

## LIMITATIONS & CHALLENGES

While the Strategic Planning Cycle is a robust framework designed to enhance urban sustainability and inclusivity, it requires adaptation to local conditions. Different cities and communities have unique social, economic, and cultural dynamics that can influence the outcomes of planning initiatives. For instance, the level of stakeholder engagement and the effectiveness of participatory tools may vary greatly due to differences in local governance structures, cultural attitudes towards public participation, and available resources.

Moreover, the cycle's reliance on broad stakeholder involvement and advanced participatory methods may not be fully realisable in regions with limited civic infrastructure or where public trust in governmental processes is low. Additionally, the technological assumptions embedded in the cycle may exceed local capacities for implementation without significant investments in training and infrastructure.

# 6.1. UP2030 AND THE 5-UP APPROACH

The **5-UP Approach** within the **UP2030** project is an innovative framework designed to activate and empower cities and stakeholders through five interlinked phases. Each phase is integral to driving the socio-technical transitions necessary for achieving climate neutrality and enhancing spatial justice.

**UP2030** aims to support cities in driving the socio-technical transitions required to meet their climate neutrality targets by leveraging urban planning and design. Within the project city stakeholders and local authorities will be supported and guided to put neutrality on the map of their communities in day-to-day actions and strategic decisions. An innovative methodology (**5UP-approach**) will be developed and applied through the co-development and implementation of science-based - yet practical - tools, and methods.

Inclusive participation is key throughout the project's full cycle of activities so that real needs of communities are reflected in the city-specific visions, and co-designed interventions maximise delivery of co-benefits. As such, **UP2030** will have a measured positive impact on spatial justice in the pilots, and give the opportunity to citizens to participate in the transition by becoming agents of change themselves through their sustainable behavioural shifts.

**UP2030** looks at mainstreaming the climate neutrality agenda using urban planning and design as a vehicle for also enhancing the liveability of urban communities. The emphasis on liveability will connect the urban planning and design approaches to the provision of multiple socio-environmental benefits, foremost

at a neighbourhood scale. Prototyping is strategically focused on neighbourhoods, as they offer a critical scale for problem-solving, reinvestment, and climate innovation in cities. Testing at this scale will provide valuable lessons for city-wide upscale.

To drive city-wide impact, cities will need to go well beyond technical designs and piloting; **UP2030** will empower local authorities to shape their innovation-enabling city environment through: a relevant policy framework, deliberate inclusive participation, shifts to sustainable behaviours, capacity building in city departments, new governance arrangements and financial facilitation. To this end, **UP2030** will guide cities (stakeholders and local authorities) to deliver across the values of equity, resilience, neutrality, and sustainability.

To accelerate the implementation pace in many cities, upscale solutions and respond to the climate emergency, **UP2030** proposes the **5UP-approach** for activating cities and stakeholders through 5 interlinked phases. While there is an obvious sequential order in the five components, their outcomes are reinforced by feedbacks between them. As such, the method differentiates itself from more conventional methodological approaches which focus on testing a particular innovation (e.g. a digital solution) to bring about incremental change. Contrary, the 5UP approach puts the city at its centre rather than a proposed solution, offering an integrated strategy for multilevel action on identified leverage points. The 5UP approach permeates the project design and structure of the working packages so that all case studies converge towards fostering Urban

Prosperity – thus not treating resilience nor justice as separate tasks.

The 5-UP Approach comprises five distinct phases: UPDATE, UPSKILL, UPGRADE, UPSCALE, UPTAKE.



## 1. UPDATE

**Action:** Reviewing and revising planning and design approaches, standards, codes, and policies to better align with contemporary urban transformation goals, particularly those related to climate neutrality.

**Connection to Spatial Justice:** By updating these fundamental frameworks, cities can ensure that their development strategies include the three dimensions of spatial justice (recognitional, procedural and distributive). This step aims to embed justice into the very DNA of urban planning processes, ensuring all subsequent actions contribute to equitable outcomes.



## 2. UPSKILL

**Action:** Strengthening the capabilities of city stakeholders through training and collaborative exercises to co-develop planning and design strategies that enable transformation and address current socio-environmental challenges.

**Connection to Spatial Justice:** Upskilling enables diverse community stakeholders to actively engage in the planning process, enhancing their ability to contribute to and shape just urban environments. This democratisation of skills ensures a wider representation in decision-making, directly impacting spatial justice outcomes.



## 3. UPGRADE

**Action:** Implementing built and natural environment prototypes, as well as supportive models and tools, to enhance our neighborhoods. This involves tangible interventions in urban spaces that serve as examples of sustainable and just development.

**Connection to Spatial Justice:** Upgrading

neighborhoods with a focus on resilience and inclusivity demonstrates a commitment to improving the lived experiences of all community members. It rectifies spatial disparities by providing high-quality, sustainable environments, directly addressing the principles of spatial justice.



## 4. UPSCALE

**Action:** Establishing and refining governance arrangements, financial mechanisms, policy development, and decision-making processes to foster city-wide impacts and align urban planning efforts with broader sustainability and justice goals.

**Connection to Spatial Justice:** Upscaling involves taking successful prototypes and governance models and applying them across the city to ensure all communities benefit. This systematic scaling is crucial for achieving city-wide spatial justice, ensuring that successful interventions are not isolated but become the norm.



## 5. UPTAKE

**Action:** Conducting activities to raise awareness and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences across European cities and beyond, creating a ripple effect of the UP2030's vision and approach.

**Connection to Spatial Justice:** Uptake ensures the lessons learned and successes achieved are shared widely, allowing other cities to replicate and adapt strategies that promote spatial justice. This dissemination of knowledge helps create a shared momentum towards equitable urban development across different contexts.

The 5-UP Approach fosters an integrated strategy for urban prosperity, intertwining resilience and justice into the core of urban development. By placing the city at the center of transformation, rather than individual innovations, this approach offers a holistic pathway to multilevel action. It ensures that spatial justice is not treated as an afterthought but is integral to the planning and design processes that shape urban futures.

# 6.2. INTEGRATION OF THE UP2030 5 UP APPROACH & THE STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE

Running parallel to the UP2030 Planning Cycle is the 5UP approach, which encompasses UPDATE, UPSKILL, UPGRADE, UPSCALE, and UPTAKE. This approach focuses on continuously updating knowledge and skills, upgrading technologies and processes, scaling successful initiatives, and ensuring broad adoption and integration of innovative practices.



## UPDATE (integration point)

Start the planning cycle by identifying the community's needs and priorities, which leads into the UPDATE phase where existing planning and design processes are reviewed and revised. This ensures that the strategic planning begins with a clear understanding of current frameworks and their alignment with contemporary goals.

## UPSKILL

Use stakeholder engagement phases to not only gather diverse perspectives but also to implement the UPSKILL phase by training stakeholders in new sustainable planning practices and technologies. This enhances capacity to actively participate in and contribute to planning processes.

## UPGRADE

During the envisioning sessions, incorporate the UPGRADE phase by planning and designing tangible interventions in the urban fabric that demonstrate the community's future aspirations. This allows for the physical manifestation of the co-created visions, providing prototypes that can be assessed and refined.

## UPSCALE

Link the co-design of policies and interventions in the TU Delft Cycle with the UPSCALE phase, focusing on refining governance arrangements and financial mechanisms to support broader implementation of successful strategies across the city.

## UPTAKE

As prototypes are implemented and tested, use the UPTAKE phase to raise awareness, share knowledge, and facilitate the transfer of successful practices beyond the immediate urban context. This ensures that lessons learned are disseminated widely, influencing broader urban policy and practice.

## COMPLEMENTARY MODEL OVERVIEW

This is complementary model that leverages the strengths of both the 5-UP Approach from the UP2030 Horizon Project and the TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle. This complementary model recognises the unique contributions of each framework and utilises them to address different aspects of urban development, ensuring a more holistic approach.

### UPDATE: INTEGRATION POINT

Start the planning cycle by identifying the community's needs and priorities, which naturally leads into the UPDATE phase where existing planning and design standards are reviewed and revised. This ensures that the strategic planning begins with a clear understanding of current frameworks and their alignment with contemporary goals.

### UPSKILL: ENGAGEMENT AND UPSKILLING

(TU Delft Cycle + UPSKILL from 5-UP)

Complementary Action: Use stakeholder engagement phases to not only gather diverse perspectives but also to implement the UPSKILL phase by training stakeholders in new sustainable practices and technologies. This enhances community capacity to actively participate in and contribute to planning processes.

### UPGRADE: VISIONING AND UPGRADING

(TU Delft Cycle + UPGRADE from 5-UP)

Complementary Action: During the envisioning sessions, incorporate the UPGRADE phase by planning and designing tangible interventions in the urban fabric that demonstrate the community's future

aspirations. This allows for the physical manifestation of the co-created visions, providing prototypes that can be assessed and refined.

### UPSCALE: CO-DESIGN AND EVALUATION WITH UPSCALE

(5-UP Approach)

Complementary Action: Link the co-design of policies and interventions in the TU Delft Cycle with the UPSCALE phase, focusing on refining governance arrangements and financial mechanisms to support broader implementation of successful strategies across the city.

### UPTAKE: IMPLEMENTATION AND UPTAKE

(TU Delft Cycle + 5-UP Approach)

Complementary Action: As prototypes are implemented and tested, use the UPTAKE phase to raise awareness, share knowledge, and facilitate the transfer of successful practices beyond the immediate urban context. This ensures that lessons learned are disseminated widely, influencing broader urban policy and practice.

### FEEDBACK AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

(TU Delft Cycle)

Complementary Action: The evaluation stages of the TU Delft Cycle provide critical feedback that informs continuous improvements in both the 5-UP Approach and broader strategic planning processes. This feedback loop is essential for adaptive management of urban development projects, ensuring they remain responsive to evolving urban dynamics and stakeholder needs.

## CONCLUSION OF THE COMPLEMENTARY MODEL

This complementary model leverages the structured, participatory focus of the TU Delft Strategic Planning Cycle to ground the dynamic and innovative actions of the 5-UP Approach in practical, community-centered urban planning. By aligning phases and actions from both frameworks, urban planners and stakeholders can achieve a balanced approach that not only addresses immediate urban challenges but also fosters long-term sustainability, resilience, and justice. This model promotes a cyclical, adaptive process where learning and development are continuous, ensuring urban environments are well-equipped to meet future challenges.

## INTERSECTIONS OF THE 5UP APPROACH WITH SPATIAL JUSTICE

Understanding how the UP2030 5UP approach intersects with the three dimensions of spatial justice—distributive, procedural, and recognitional—helps to frame how urban planning and development can be directed to promote equitable and just cities.

### 1. UPDATE

- **Distributive Justice:** In this phase, the focus is on revising urban planning and design approaches, standards, codes, and policies to better align with contemporary goals such as climate neutrality. This addresses distributive justice by ensuring that resources, benefits, and services are distributed across the city in a way that reduces inequalities and meets the needs of underserved communities.

- **Procedural Justice:** Updating frameworks also

involves inclusive planning processes that engage diverse community members, ensuring that all voices are heard and have influence over planning outcomes. This democratizes the planning process, allowing for a broader range of inputs and fostering transparency.

- **Recognitional Justice:** By revising outdated or unjust standards and codes, this phase helps to recognise and rectify historical and systemic injustices embedded in urban planning practices. It also acknowledges diverse community identities and their right to the city, ensuring that planning practices are sensitive to the unique trajectories of different groups.

### 2. UPSKILL

- **Distributive Justice:** Upskilling city stakeholders and community members equips them with the knowledge and tools necessary to actively participate in the development and governance of their environments with the tools present in the UP2030 project. This helps distribute the intellectual and practical capabilities needed to engage with and benefit from urban development processes.

- **Procedural Justice:** Enhancing the capabilities of stakeholders through education and training ensures that they can effectively contribute to and engage with planning processes. This enhances the fairness and inclusivity of these processes by leveling the playing field.

- **Recognitional Justice:** Upskilling acknowledges the importance of diverse perspectives in shaping urban spaces. It empowers traditionally marginalised groups, validating their experiences and insights as essential to the creation of just and sustainable urban environments.

### 3. UPGRADE

- **Distributive Justice:** Upgrading urban infrastructures and environments specifically in underserved areas directly tackles distributive injustices by improving the quality of living conditions and access to amenities. This phase focuses on making tangible changes that enhance the physical space of neighbourhoods.

- **Procedural Justice:** The participatory nature of planning and implementing upgrades ensures that the process is transparent and inclusive. Community members are involved in deciding what upgrades are necessary and how they should be implemented.

- **Recognitional Justice:** Upgrading efforts that are responsive to the specific needs and cultural aspects of communities recognize and respect their unique identities and values. This helps to affirm and reinforce the community's sense of place and belonging.

### 4. UPSCALE

- **Distributive Justice:** Scaling up successful initiatives ensures that the benefits of innovative urban projects are not confined to pilot areas but are extended throughout the city. This addresses spatial disparities by distributing new technologies and improved infrastructural benefits widely.

- **Procedural Justice:** Upscaling involves refining governance arrangements and policy frameworks to support city-wide impacts. This phase ensures that procedural mechanisms are in place to facilitate equitable development across the entire city.

- **Recognitional Justice:** As policies and projects are scaled up, it's crucial that they adapt to respect and integrate the diverse cultural, social, and economic contexts of different urban areas, thereby recognizing and valuing this diversity in city planning.

### 5. UPTAKE

- **Distributive Justice:** Uptake focuses on disseminating knowledge and sharing successful practices across different cities and contexts, promoting a more equitable distribution of innovative solutions and successful models of urban development.

- **Procedural Justice:** Facilitating the exchange of knowledge ensures that various cities and communities can learn from each other's experiences, enhancing the transparency and collaborative aspect of urban planning processes.

- **Recognitional Justice:** By sharing diverse experiences and successes, the Uptake phase fosters a greater understanding and appreciation of different urban challenges and solutions, recognizing the validity and value of varied urban experiences and practices.

By aligning the 5UP approach with the dimensions of spatial justice, urban planning initiatives can effectively address the complex layers of justice required to foster equitable, participatory, and inclusive urban environments.





# **7. PLANNING PERSPECTIVES FOR SPATIAL JUSTICE**

## 7.1. EMPHASIS ON THE CREATION OF PUBLIC GOODS

Public goods, in the context of economic theory and public policy, are defined by two main characteristics: **non-excludability and non-rivalry**.

Non-excludability means that once a public good is provided, it is not feasible to exclude individuals from enjoying its benefits, regardless of whether they have contributed to its provision. Non-rivalry indicates that the consumption of the good by one individual does not diminish the amount of the good available for consumption by others.

This definition underpins the challenges public goods pose for traditional market mechanisms. Markets tend to underprovide public goods because they cannot effectively charge individuals for their use, leading to what is known as the ‘free rider problem,’ where individuals benefit from the good without contributing to its provision. This problem justifies government intervention or collective action to ensure the adequate provision and maintenance of public goods.

Examples of public goods in an urban context include street lighting, national defence, public parks, clean air, and the maintenance of peace and order. These goods and services are essential for the functioning of societies and economies, underscoring the need for well-designed public policies and institutions to manage their provision in a way that promotes social welfare and spatial justice.

In the discourse on spatial justice, the concept of public goods extends beyond mere economic efficiency to encompass broader social and environmental dimensions.

Scholars argue for a more inclusive approach to public goods that considers access and equity, particularly in how public goods can contribute to or mitigate spatial inequalities within and across

urban spaces. This perspective aligns with the principles of spatial justice, which seek to ensure that all individuals have equitable access to the benefits provided by public goods, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life and sustainability of communities.

### RELEVANCE OF PUBLIC GOODS TO SPATIAL JUSTICE

Public goods are essential for ensuring that all city inhabitants, especially marginalised and underserved communities, have access to essential services and a good quality of life. Their universal accessibility is fundamental to reducing inequalities within urban areas, making them a cornerstone of distributive spatial justice.

Shared access to public goods promotes social interactions among diverse groups, fostering a sense of community and belonging. This can enhance social cohesion and inclusivity, contributing to the development of more harmonious and resilient urban spaces.

Many public goods, such as parks and clean air, are directly linked to environmental health. Prioritising these within policy frameworks contributes to sustainable urban development, ensuring cities can mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change while protecting natural resources for future generations.

Investing in public goods can yield substantial economic benefits, from improving public health outcomes (thus reducing healthcare costs) to enhancing productivity and attracting businesses. Efficient provision of public goods can stimulate equitable economic growth and development.

Finally, the emphasis on public goods reinforces democratic values by recognising urban spaces and services as common assets that should be governed and enjoyed by all. This perspective supports participatory governance models and encourages citizens’ engagement in urban planning processes.

## 7.2. NEW MODELS OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND OWNERSHIP

Exploring new models of community governance and ownership is pivotal for advancing spatial justice. These models aim to empower communities, ensuring that they have significant control and stakes in the development and management of their local environments. By fostering more democratic, inclusive, and equitable forms of governance and ownership, communities can better address local needs, manage resources sustainably, and counteract spatial inequalities. Here are some examples of models that stand out for their potential to enhance community governance and ownership:

### COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS (CLTS)

Community Land Trusts are non-profit, community-based organisations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs acquire land and lease it to individuals for residential, commercial, or agricultural use, removing it from the speculative market and ensuring it serves community interests. This model prevents displacement caused by gentrification and promotes affordable housing, enabling long-term community resilience and sustainability.

### COOPERATIVE OWNERSHIP MODELS

Cooperative ownership involves collective ownership and management of assets or services by those who use them. This can apply to housing cooperatives, where residents own and manage their living spaces, or to cooperative businesses

that provide essential goods and services. These models distribute economic benefits more equitably among members and allow for democratic decision-making processes, aligning with spatial justice goals.

### PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Participatory budgeting is a democratic process in which community members decide how to allocate part of a public budget. This model gives citizens a direct voice in determining spending priorities for local projects and services, enhancing transparency, accountability, and civic engagement. It ensures that resource distribution reflects the community's needs and preferences, contributing to more just and equitable urban development.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CDCS)

CDCs are community-controlled entities that support economic development, affordable housing, and community planning initiatives. They work to balance development pressures by prioritising the needs of low- and moderate-income residents. CDCs can be powerful vehicles for community empowerment, leveraging investments to serve community interests and enhance local quality of life.

### DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The rise of digital technology offers new avenues for community governance and ownership. Digital platforms can facilitate more extensive and inclusive community engagement in urban planning and decision-making processes. These tools can help collect community insights, preferences, and feedback, ensuring that urban development projects are responsive to local needs.



## URBAN COMMONS FRAMEWORKS

The urban commons approach reimagines city spaces and resources as shared assets that should be managed collectively by the community. This framework emphasises collaborative stewardship of resources such as parks, gardens, and community centres, promoting shared use and management that benefits all community members.

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MODELS

Social enterprises blend the financial goals of businesses with social objectives. They reinvest profits into local communities, addressing social issues such as unemployment, education, and health. By prioritising social value over profit maximisation, social enterprises contribute to more equitable economic development and empowerment.

These new models of community governance and ownership represent innovative approaches to rethinking how urban spaces are created, used, and managed. They offer pathways for communities to actively shape their environments, ensuring that development processes are inclusive, equitable, and aligned with the principles of spatial justice. Integrating these models into urban planning and governance structures is crucial for building just, resilient, and sustainable cities.

## 7.3. URBAN COMMONING

Urban commoning refers to the practice and philosophy of managing urban resources and spaces as commons, rather than as private or state-owned assets. This approach is rooted in the belief that certain resources, particularly those essential for a community's well-being, should be accessible to all community members and managed in a collective, participatory manner. Urban commoning is underpinned by principles of cooperation, solidarity, and shared stewardship, challenging traditional notions of ownership and governance in urban environments.

Urban commons are different from urban public goods. Urban commons are collectively managed by communities, emphasising participatory governance and shared stewardship. In contrast, public goods are generally (albeit not always) state-provided and universally accessible goods, characterised by non-excludability and non-rivalry. Commons involve active community engagement in management decisions, while public goods rely on state mechanisms for provision and maintenance, reflecting different governance and ownership models.

The concept of the commons historically refers to shared resources like land, water, and forests, collectively managed by a community under common law. Originating in medieval Europe, it allowed communal access and use, contrasting with private ownership. This tradition underscored cooperation and sustainable resource management, pivotal in contemporary debates on common goods and urban commoning.

The concept of urban commoning extends the theory of the commons, famously explored by Elinor Ostrom (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom et al., 1999) among others, into the urban context. Ostrom's work partially debunked the 'tragedy of the commons' narrative made famous by Garrett Hardin (1968), which claimed that individuals, acting in rational self-interest, would inevitably overexploit

and deplete shared resources in the absence of centralised control or privatisation. In contrast, Ostrom demonstrated, through extensive empirical studies of irrigation systems, fisheries, and forest management, that communities are often capable of **self-organising to govern shared resources sustainably**, provided that certain institutional conditions, such as clearly defined boundaries, collective rule-making, monitoring, graduated sanctions, and conflict-resolution mechanisms, are in place.

Urban commoning literature describes how ‘city as commons’ arguments scale up the notion beyond sites to networks of social infrastructure and collective management across neighbourhoods. In *The City as a Commons*, Foster & Iaione (2016), argue for a transformative approach to urban governance by conceptualising the city itself, not just discrete resources, as a commons. Moving beyond traditional resource-based understandings of commoning (à la Ostrom), they propose that urban space, services, infrastructure, and knowledge can be co-managed through collaborative governance structures. They critique the limitations of state-market binaries and advocate for polycentric, participatory, and inclusive governance models that empower citizens as co-producers of the city.

Central to their argument is the notion of co-governance, where public authorities, civil society, knowledge institutions, and private actors form partnerships to manage urban commons through shared rules and mutual obligations. Drawing on examples from Bologna, Naples, and other cities experimenting with collaborative governance, they outline a **‘co-city’ framework**, grounded in five principles: collective governance, enabling state action, social and economic pooling, experimentalism, and tech justice. This model supports the creation of adaptive and resilient urban ecosystems that respond to local needs while addressing systemic inequities. Ultimately, the article positions the city-as-a-commons as both a theoretical rethinking of urbanism and a pragmatic call for institutional innovation that promotes **equity, sustainability, and democratic engagement** in city-making.

## EXAMPLES OF URBAN COMMONING

### COMMUNITY GARDENS / URBAN AGRICULTURE

- Community gardens in Austin, Texas, have been examined as commons under a ‘Diverse Economies’ framework, showing how garden plots serve as shared resources and social spaces (Ponstingel, 2023)
- Urban community gardens in the Netherlands and Germany have been analysed for their governance structures and phases (formation, maintenance, scaling). Fox-Kämper et al. (2018) evaluate governance challenges in these settings.
- The journal *Frontiers* ‘Urban Commoning Under Adverse Conditions’ discusses how urban commoning may include cooperative housing, social centres, and community gardens, interpreting them as emergent commons in contested urban spaces (Zielke et al., 2021).
- The review ‘Diversity and Challenges of the Urban Commons’ discusses how urban commons initiatives often centre on shared green, gardening, and land uses in cities (Feinberg et al., 2021).

### HOUSING COOPERATIVES AND COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING / COMMONING HOUSING

- Arbell (2023) in ‘The Circle of Commoning’ article uses community-led housing as a case of urban commoning, showing how residents collectively manage housing as a commons.
- The ‘Theorising the Urban Commons’ essay (Huron, 2017) treats urban housing and land access arrangements as instances where commoning logics reshape spatial production.
- Zielke et al. (2021) mentioned above also include

cooperative housing and social centres as forms of urban commons.

### **SOCIAL CENTRES, COMMUNITY SPACES, AND COLLECTIVE AMENITIES**

- Pikner (2020), 'Urban Commoning as a Vehicle Between Government and Civil Society', discusses bottom-up social centres, community-run spaces, and cooperative neighbourhood uses as instances of commoning juxtaposed to municipal frameworks.

### **OPEN / DIGITAL COMMONS AND PARTICIPATORY PLATFORMS**

- While less abundant, there is emerging work on digital platforms as urban commons (e.g. participatory GIS, civic data platforms). The Diversity and Challenges review points to 'knowledge commons' or 'peer production' as part of the urban commons typology.
- Participatory mapping, counter-mapping, or community-informed sensor networks may serve as infrastructural or epistemic commons (for instance, the 'Quantified Community' in Red Hook, combining sensor networks and citizen science), though that example is more hybrid than pure commoning.

## **RELEVANCE OF URBAN COMMONING TO SPATIAL JUSTICE**

Urban commoning directly contributes to spatial justice by promoting equitable access to urban resources and spaces. It challenges the spatial inequalities perpetuated by privatisation and market-driven development, which often lead to the exclusion and marginalisation of low-income and vulnerable populations. By prioritising collective access and management, urban commoning practices seek to ensure that all community members have a stake in and benefit from urban development.

Moreover, urban commoning practices are inherently participatory, involving community members in decision-making processes. This participatory dimension ensures that urban development is responsive to the needs and desires of local communities rather than being dictated by external investors or planners. In this way, urban commoning can be seen as a tool for achieving more democratic and equitable urban governance, aligning closely with the goals of spatial justice.

Furthermore, urban commoning fosters a sense of community and belonging, which is essential for the social sustainability of urban areas. By encouraging cooperation and mutual support, commoning practices can help to build resilient communities that are capable of facing social, economic, and environmental challenges collectively.

In conclusion, urban commoning represents a critical strategy for advancing spatial justice in cities. Through practices that emphasise shared access, participatory governance, and collective stewardship of urban resources, commoning offers a path towards more equitable, sustainable, and just urban environments.

## 7.4. HOUSING FIRST AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGIES

### HOUSING FIRST POLICIES

Housing First has been a cornerstone of Finland's national homelessness strategy since 2008, led by the YFoundation in partnership with municipalities and NGOs (Housing First, 2025). Under this approach, individuals and families experiencing homelessness are directly provided permanent, unconditional housing, without preconditions such as sobriety or employment. Supportive services (e.g. health care, counselling, job assistance) follow rather than precede housing (Morales, 2024). Finland's adoption of Housing First coincided with substantial declines in reliance on shelters: between 2008 and 2017, hostel and boarding house use dropped sharply, and long-term homelessness fell by over 70 % (Housing First, 2025). The Finnish case illustrates how framing housing as a human right and embedding housing policy within a coordinated national programme can shift trajectories of homelessness.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGIES

Housing affordability strategies encompass regulatory and policy tools intended to ensure that housing remains within financial reach, especially for lower-income households. These can include inclusionary zoning, subsidies, rent regulation, and social housing mandates. In the Netherlands, for example, social housing 'woningcorporaties' play a central role: non-profit housing associations own nearly 30 % of the nation's rental units, operating with governance and financing models that support

off-market affordability (Deursen, 2023a, 2023b; Housing Europe, 2010). In new Dutch developments, there is likewise a practice of allocating a significant share of housing to affordable or social units; in IJburg, Amsterdam, for instance, a target of 30 % affordable rental units has been applied in housing programming (Global Site Plans, no date).

### RELEVANCE TO SPATIAL JUSTICE

Both Housing First policies and housing affordability strategies are deeply connected to the principles of spatial justice, which advocates for equitable access to space and resources in urban environments. By addressing homelessness and housing unaffordability, key issues at the intersection of spatial inequality, these approaches work towards redistributing spatial resources more equitably. Housing First policies embody the idea that access to stable, secure housing is a precondition for participation in urban life and a necessity for achieving social equity. Similarly, housing affordability strategies confront the systemic inequalities that restrict access to affordable housing, aiming to ensure that all city residents, regardless of income, can live in quality environments within their communities.

In practice, these approaches contribute to spatial justice by challenging and reshaping patterns of segregation, exclusion, and displacement that characterize many urban areas. They recognise housing not just as a commodity but as a fundamental right and a cornerstone of urban equity, supporting the creation of diverse, inclusive, and just cities. Through these policies, cities can move towards more balanced and fair urban development, where access to housing is seen as central to achieving broader social justice goals.

## 7.5. DECOLONIAL URBANISM

Decolonial urbanism is an approach to planning and design that seeks to acknowledge and dismantle the enduring spatial, epistemic, and institutional legacies of colonialism in contemporary cities, including those in Europe. Rooted in decolonial and postcolonial scholarship, this approach challenges dominant Eurocentric narratives, planning logics, and power structures embedded in urban processes, advocating for the recognition, validation, and integration of subaltern, Indigenous, and local knowledges in the production and governance of urban space. Decolonial urbanism foregrounds the need to confront colonial spatial legacies, such as segregation, dispossession, epistemic erasure, and environmental injustice—and reimagine more equitable and plural urban futures that reflect the histories, identities, and aspirations of marginalised communities (Ortiz, Tavlou, et al., 2025).

### ROOTS IN DECOLONIAL STUDIES

Decolonial studies provide a theoretical frame for interrogating how colonial power continues to shape knowledge systems, institutions, and spatial practices. Scholars in this tradition critique the so-called “coloniality of power, knowledge, and being” (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000), insisting that decolonisation must go beyond symbolic gestures or inclusion within existing frameworks. Decolonial urbanism appropriates this critique for the city, insisting that planning should not only diversify perspectives but transform the very ontologies and epistemologies through which urban space is conceived (Coelho et al., 2025). This approach invites a profound rethinking of who produces urban imaginaries, whose histories matter, and how urban governance can be decolonised in practice, resisting the reproduction of extractive, modernist, and colonial logics.

## EXAMPLES OF DECOLONIAL URBANISM

### RECLAIMING INDIGENOUS LAND AND PRACTICES

In Vancouver, a growing movement of Indigenous planners, in partnership with city governments and Indigenous Nations (Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh), is working to embed Indigenous spatial practices, naming rights, and territorial recognition into urban planning. This is evident in the city’s decision to establish a municipal task force on reconciliation and to adopt efforts towards ‘place keeping’ and re-naming public spaces in Indigenous languages. Scholars argue this trend is part of a broader shift from colonial planning toward settler-colonial reconciliation in cities, where urban space becomes a site for renegotiating Indigenous claims to the city (Ellis-Young, 2025). However, critics observe that such recognition does not automatically translate into decolonial practice: institutional inertia, power hierarchies, and tokenistic gestures often limit deep transformation (Vance, 2023).

### DECOLONISING URBAN CURRICULA

Academic institutions have begun to interrogate the colonial legacies in planning and architectural education. For example, in the literature on Indigenous planning, authors call for pedagogy that foregrounds Indigenous epistemologies, relational land ethics, and decolonial theory as fundamental, not supplemental, to urban training (Porter et al., 2017). UCL’s Bartlett School (via its Development Planning Unit) publishes work on participatory informal settlement upgrading, which is part of a broader shift to integrate justice, plurality, and critical reflection into planning education (Frediani et al., 2013). This curricular reorientation remains uneven and contested, as institutional constraints and entrenched disciplinary norms often resist radical change.



## 7.6. COMMUNITY-LED URBAN DESIGN / PARTICIPATORY SLUM UPGRADING

In Kenya, the Citizen-Led Slum Upgrading initiative in Nairobi's Mukuru Special Planning Area demonstrates decolonial urbanism: residents, slum-dwellers federations, local government, and NGOs co-produce planning solutions, data, and spatial interventions, rather than being passive recipients. Similarly, the Mukuru SPA process is praised for institutionalising the collaboration between urban poor associations and municipal planning, and for creating inclusive planning frameworks at scale (Slum Dwellers International, 2022). Another case is the Participatory Informal Settlement Upgrading in Kisumu, documented by the UCL Development Planning Unit, which prioritises residents' agency, local priorities, and incremental improvements over inherited top-down models (Frediani et al., 2013). However, participatory upgrading often faces constraints: external funding, bureaucratic controls, maintenance burdens, and power differentials may limit the transformative potential of design mode participation (as shown in critiques of UN-Habitat-led projects) (Czirják, 2019).

The central argument of Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2008) is that European thought, especially Enlightenment ideas about modernity, progress, and rationality, has been treated as universally valid, shaping how history, politics, and development are understood across the world. Chakrabarty challenges this universalisation of European categories, arguing that they are in fact provincial, emerging from a specific historical and cultural context, and should not be imposed as normative frameworks for interpreting non-European societies.

Decolonial urbanism in Europe involves critically confronting the colonial legacies embedded in urban space, planning institutions, and knowledge systems across European cities. It does not simply mean recognising past colonial histories but challenging the ongoing spatial, epistemic, and socio-political hierarchies that perpetuate marginalisation, particularly of racialised, migrant, and post-colonial communities. While colonialism is often externalised in European memory, seen as something that happened 'elsewhere', decolonial urbanism insists that European urbanism itself has been shaped by colonial structures of extraction, segregation, and erasure, which persist today through housing inequities, surveillance practices, symbolic exclusions, and planning paradigms grounded in Eurocentric modernity.

European planning has long privileged 'universal' technical-rational paradigms that marginalise other ways of knowing and being in the city. Decolonial urbanism challenges this by insisting on epistemic plurality, recognising Indigenous, diasporic, feminist, and racialised knowledges as central to rethinking urbanism. This draws from Mignolo's (2011) idea of epistemic disobedience, a refusal to submit to dominant Western knowledge regimes.

Across European cities, postcolonial and migrant communities are often confined to peripheries, subjected to discriminatory housing policies, gentrification, and disproportionate policing. Decolonial urbanism exposes how urban inequality in Europe is racialised, calling for redistributive policies (e.g. land reparations, social housing) that go beyond inclusion to tackle the structural roots of spatial injustice (Madden & Marcuse, 2016).

The decolonial critique of public memory involves dismantling monuments, street names, and urban iconographies that celebrate colonial violence. Initiatives like the removal of statues (e.g. Edward Colston in Bristol) or debates around Leopold II in Belgium highlight the struggle over who belongs in European space, and whose history is allowed to shape the city.

Decolonial urbanism promotes non-statist and non-market forms of spatial organisation, such as commoning, solidarity economies, and informal urban practices. These challenge neoliberal governance by asserting alternative forms of urban citizenship that are not defined by legal status but by rightful presence and contribution to urban life (Foster & Iaione, 2016; Purcell, 2002).

European universities and planning institutions are beginning to reckon with the colonial foundations of their disciplines. Decolonial urbanism calls for the unlearning of colonial spatial categories, such as informal/formal, centre/periphery, developed/developing, and for the transformation of pedagogy, methodology, and professional ethics in planning education (Angotti, 2020; Ortiz, Tavlou, et al., 2025).

## RELEVANCE TO SPATIAL JUSTICE

Decolonial urbanism is inherently connected to spatial justice, as it seeks to rectify the spatial inequalities and injustices that have been perpetuated by colonial legacies. By advocating for the inclusion of marginalised voices and perspectives in urban planning and recognising the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples and other historically marginalised groups, decolonial urbanism works towards creating urban spaces that are equitable, inclusive, and reflective of all communities' cultural and historical contexts.

Furthermore, decolonial urbanism challenges the extractive and exploitative economic models that have often characterised modern urban development, promoting instead practices that are sustainable, community-focused, and respectful of the land. This approach not only addresses the spatial injustices of the past but also paves the way for more just and equitable urban futures.

In sum, decolonial urbanism represents a critical and transformative approach to urban planning and design, rooted in the principles of decolonial studies and deeply aligned with the goals of spatial justice.

Through its commitment to challenging colonial legacies and advocating for inclusive, equitable urban spaces, decolonial urbanism contributes to the broader project of creating just cities for all.

## 7.7. INTERSECTIONALITY IN SPATIAL PLANNING

The concept of intersectionality deepens spatial justice by insisting that urban experience cannot be understood through single axes of inequality (such as class, race or gender) in isolation, but rather through the interwoven systems that condition how people inhabit, move through, and are excluded from space. Intersectionality in spatial planning thus requires recognising that power, identity, and place are co-constitutive: gender norms, racialisation, disability, migration status, age, and economic marginality simultaneously shape differential access to mobility, public space, housing, and services (Castán-Broto & Alves, 2018). In planning terms, this means moving beyond 'one size fits all' policies to situated interventions attentive to how intersecting vulnerabilities accumulate in particular spatial contexts. For example, Kim et al. (2024), demonstrate how access to urban parks in US cities is uneven not only by income or race alone, but by their intersection (race  $\times$  poverty  $\times$  residential segregation), yielding patterns of exclusion across space. Similarly, Ortiz, Calderon et al. (2025) propose a methodology of spatialising intersectionality in the design of public space in informal settlements, revealing how layered oppressions translate into spatial injustices in self-built neighbourhoods. Integrating intersectionality into planning thus compels us to redesign spatial diagnostics, policy instruments, and participatory frameworks so that they attend to complexity, avoid reinforcing dominant categories, and open space for plural forms of belonging.

## RELEVANCE TO SPATIAL JUSTICE

The connection between intersectionality and spatial justice lies in the imperative to recognise and address the complex, overlapping mechanisms through which spatial inequalities are produced and sustained. Spatial justice concerns not only the fair distribution of spatial resources, but also the procedural and recognitional dimensions that shape who is seen, heard, and legitimised in spatial decision-making (Fraser, 2010; Soja, 2010). Applying an intersectional lens enables planners and policymakers to attend to the specific configurations of disadvantage that emerge at the intersection of race, class, gender, disability, migration status, and other structural axes (Castán-Broto & Alves, 2018; Crenshaw, 1991). Rather than assuming a uniform experience of exclusion, intersectionality reveals how spatial injustices are layered and differentiated, and how universalistic policies may fail to reach those most affected. Integrating this perspective into spatial planning facilitates more context-sensitive, inclusive, and just interventions, advancing the broader goals of spatial justice across all three dimensions: distributive, procedural, and recognitional.

## EXAMPLES OF INTERSECTIONALITY IN PLANNING

### ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

An intersectional approach to public transport planning recognises that mobility is shaped by intersecting factors such as disability, age, income, and gender. Designing equitable transit systems therefore requires addressing physical accessibility, affordability, and spatial coverage. For example, ensuring that buses and metro systems are wheelchair-accessible, provide reliable service to peripheral or low-income neighbourhoods, and offer discounted fares for seniors or low-income residents enhances spatial access for structurally marginalised groups (Hidayati et al., 2021; Lucas, 2012).

### GENDER-SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN

Cities like Vienna have integrated gender-mainstreaming into urban planning by acknowledging that men, women, and gender-diverse individuals use urban space differently due to social roles, care responsibilities, and safety concerns (City of Vienna, 2025; Damyanovic, 2016; Greed, 2005). Measures such as improved lighting in public parks, secure pedestrian pathways, and equitable distribution of public toilets address not only gendered needs but also the intersection of gender with age, disability, and ethnicity.

### CULTURAL SPACES FOR MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Intersectional spatial planning recognises that racialised and ethnic minority communities often face cultural erasure and underrepresentation in the urban landscape. Providing spaces for community centres, public art, and cultural events fosters not only social cohesion but also symbolic recognition—a core element of recognitional justice (Sandercock, 2003; Young, 1990). Projects such as London's Black Cultural Archives (BCA, no date) or Berlin's House of World Cultures (Haus der Kulturen der Welt)(HKW, 2025) demonstrate how planning can support cultural visibility and spatial belonging for historically marginalised groups.



## 7.8. RESTORATIVE URBANISM AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Restorative Urbanism is a planning and design approach oriented not only toward mitigating harm but toward regenerating environmental, social, and spatial relations in cities. It draws on work in restorative environments and salutogenic design, an approach to health that focuses on the factors and resources that promote health and well-being, rather than on the pathogens that cause disease. This approach proposes that urban spaces themselves can be configured to promote healing, psychological recovery, ecological resilience, and social cohesion (Bornioli & Subiza-Pérez, 2022; Weber & Trojan, 2018). Restorative urban environments foreground the symbolic and physical qualities of place, such as light, vegetation, water, permeability, calm pathways, that support recovery from urban stress (Bornioli & Subiza-Pérez, 2022). Some scholars distinguish restorative from regenerative design: the former emphasises repairing existing damage, while the latter focuses on creating new capacities and emergent systems (He & Reith, 2022).

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) refer to interventions inspired by, supported by, or utilising nature that aim to address societal challenges while delivering biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits (European Commission, no date; Sowińska-Świerkosz & García, 2022). NBS integration in cities seeks to make nature an active agent in design, through green roofs, permeable surfaces, rain gardens, urban forests, wetlands, and connected green corridors (Bona et al., 2023). Because NBS are multifunctional, as they can mitigate flooding, reduce heat islands, enhance air quality, and foster recreational space, they align with restorative

urbanism's ambition to reconcile ecological health with social and spatial justice goals (Sari et al., 2023).

By combining restorative urbanism with NBS, planners can move beyond piecemeal greening toward strategies that repair ecological ruptures while simultaneously reinforcing justice in who has access to restorative spaces. In effect, this integrated approach reframes nature not as a passive backdrop of urban life, but as a co-agent in restoring the social and spatial well-being of cities.

### EXAMPLES OF RESTORATIVE URBANISM

#### LANDSCHAFTSPARK DUISBURG-NORD, GERMANY

This former industrial site (an abandoned steel-works) was transformed into a public park that explicitly honours the site's industrial past rather than erasing it (Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, 2025). Existing structures (blast furnaces, steel tanks, pipelines) are integrated into new programming and landscaped elements, allowing visitors to experience both decay and regeneration (the 'ambivalent reading of place'). The design fosters reflection on time, memory, and the ecological afterlives of industrial capitalism. The project is often cited as a paradigmatic case of "industrial heritage as restorative urban space," where the narrative of ruin is mobilised to produce ecological and cultural meaning.

#### PAYS DE TERRIL LANDSCAPE PARK, BELGIUM (WALKING ETHNOGRAPHY ON RESTORATIVE LANDSCAPES)

In a recent ethnographic study, walking through the deindustrialised slag-heaps of the Pays de Ter-til region was framed as a restorative environment, where landscape work, community engagement, and narrative interventions contributed to healing social and ecological wounds in post-mining landscapes. The research emphasises how everyday movement through regenerated terrain can be-

come a form of restorative urban practice (France & Braiden, 2024).

## **CHENGDU URBAN PARKS: AUDIO-VISUAL INTEGRATION AND THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL**

In Chengdu, China, research examined five urban parks with integrated water bodies and vegetation, focusing on audio-visual stimuli (birdsong, water, plant forms) and their capacity to reduce stress and improve restorative experiences among visitors (Yang et al., 2023). This example demonstrates how designing landscape elements with sensorial coherence supports psychological recovery and well-being in dense urban settings.

## **ADAPTIVE REUSE PROJECTS WITH RESTORATIVE INTENT**

In the U.S., portions of existing built structures, especially parking lots or underutilised paved zones, have been reimaged through design proposals that replace impermeable surfaces with green, communal, and porous interventions (repairing urban hydrology, restoring site ecology (Horton, 2022)).

# **NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS**

## **1. URBAN GREENING PROJECTS**

The High Line in New York City repurposes an abandoned elevated rail structure into a linear park that supports over 500 plant species, dramatically enhancing biodiversity and air quality within an intensely built context. The project recycles plant waste, integrates composting, and combines ecological and social aims. Scholars link it to biophilic design principles, emphasising how urban nature can reintroduce psychological restoration and ecological function into dense cities (Black & Richards, 2020; Reichl, 2016; The Landscape Architecture Foundation, 2017).

## **SPONGE CITIES / HYDRO-ECOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Shenzhen, China is one of the leading pilots of the 'Sponge City' programme, implementing permeable pavements, green roofs, constructed wetlands, and urban wetlands to manage stormwater naturally, reduce flooding, and recharge groundwater. Empirical evaluation shows that sponge city measures in Shenzhen have improved local water quality in downstream bays, reduced peak runoff, and enhanced ecological resilience (Jenkins, 2020). The broader theoretical framing emphasises how sponge city infrastructure acts as a nature-based solution with co-benefits: climate adaptation, biodiversity restoration, and community resilience (Yu, no date).

## **COMMUNITY FORESTS AND URBAN AGRICULTURE / GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Urban agriculture and community-managed greening initiatives have been studied as forms of restorative and multi-functional infrastructure. Ebissa & Desta (2022) review how urban agriculture contributes to resilience, stormwater absorption, local food supply, and social cohesion in varied cities. In the context of sponge cities, community green facilities (rain gardens, sunken lawns, wetland buffers) are explicitly named in pilot designs as integral to reducing runoff and enhancing ecological services (Qi et al., 2021).

# **RELEVANCE TO SPATIAL JUSTICE**

The integration of restorative urbanism and nature-based solutions (NBS) into urban planning contributes substantively to the pursuit of spatial justice by addressing both ecological degradation and socio-spatial inequality. These approaches recognise that environmental benefits, such as access to clean air, green space, and climate resilience infrastructure, are often unevenly distributed,

with marginalised communities disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards and deprived of restorative environments (Garcia-Lamarca et al., 2019; Wolch et al., 2014). By actively redistributing ecological functions and aesthetic qualities across the urban fabric, NBS and restorative strategies aim to repair not only physical landscapes but also the social injustices embedded within them.

These interventions foreground questions of access, recognition, and procedural inclusion. This aligns with Fraser's (2009) theory of justice as participatory parity, ensuring that all individuals and groups, particularly those historically excluded, can influence how urban nature is designed, governed, and experienced. Moreover, by embedding ecological repair into planning processes, restorative urbanism expands the meaning of environmental justice to include emotional, historical, and spatial forms of healing. It reframes urban space not simply as a site for mitigation, but as a terrain for dignity, memory, and reparation.

## 7.9. URBANISM OF CARE

The concept of an Urbanism of Care reorients urban theory and practice toward the ethical imperatives of interdependence, sustainability, and justice. Rooted in feminist political thought and care ethics (Bellacasa, 2017; Tronto, 1993), it calls for a fundamental shift away from instrumental, growth-driven models of urban development toward approaches that centre care, both for human and non-human life, as a foundational urban principle. Rather than treating care as a residual or private activity, Urbanism of Care reframes it as a collective, spatial, and infrastructural concern, demanding that cities be designed to support caregiving, mutual aid, ecological stewardship, and everyday well-being (Müller et al., 2025; Power & Mee, 2020).

This approach intersects with environmental and social justice by challenging extractive urban logics and recognising the embodied, situated, and relational needs of urban dwellers. It insists on infrastructure that sustains life: accessible mobility, community health, green commons, and safe public spaces, particularly for those historically excluded from dominant planning paradigms, such as women, migrants, older adults, and people with disabilities. At the same time, Urbanism of Care aligns with ecofeminist critiques of urbanisation, calling for the repair of ecological relations and the regeneration of natural systems as part of urban spatial justice (Moriggi et al., 2020; Nicoson, 2024; Shiva, 2005).

When integrated with restorative urbanism and nature-based solutions, the Urbanism of Care contributes to a broader paradigmatic rethinking of urbanisation as a practice of repair and responsibility. Together, these frameworks articulate an alternative urban future grounded in equity, ecological reciprocity, and collective flourishing. This orientation not only reinforces the normative aims of spatial justice but also situates urban development within an ethics of care that foregrounds vulnerability, dependency, and the ongoing work of maintaining life across spatial scales.

## 7.10. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

The fields of climate justice, environmental justice, and spatial justice have distinct genealogies, yet they increasingly converge in analyses of how power, space, and ecological harm intersect. In *Seeking Spatial Justice*, Edward Soja argues that justice must be understood as geographical, not solely social or economic, and that spatial arrangements are active participants in reproducing injustice (Soja, 2010). This spatial turn pushes political theorists and urbanists to consider how infrastructures, zoning, mobility, and land use produce differentiated access and exclusion. In a lesser-known contribution, Justin Williams elaborates this in *Toward a Theory of Spatial Justice*, showing how spatial ordering is constitutive of justice relations (Williams, 2013, 2018).

Environmental justice, climate justice, and spatial justice converge around a common normative concern: equity in how environmental, climatic, and spatial processes are distributed, governed, and contested. Each lens foregrounds different but overlapping dimensions of justice. Environmental justice addresses how environmental goods and burdens—clean air, water, waste sites, toxic exposure—are unequally distributed across society. Climate justice extends this concern temporally and globally, insisting that responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions and capacity to adapt are unevenly allocated. Spatial justice retains a broader remit: it interrogates how spatial orders, infrastructure, and territorial practices mediate social inequality, including but not limited to environmental inequalities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The environmental justice movement gained prominence in the U.S. in the 1980s, notably through resistance to toxic waste siting in predominantly Black and low-income communities. Early advocates challenged the idea that pollution is an unavoidable byproduct of development, instead framing environmental harms as distributional inequalities embedded in racial and socioeconomic hierarchies. In environmental justice, the work of Robert Bullard (Bullard, 1999, 2000), often considered foundational of this perspective, highlights how marginalised communities bear disproportionate burdens of pollution, waste facilities, and toxic exposure. In his classic *Dumping in Dixie* (Bullard, 2000), he documents how African American communities in the American South were systematically targeted for hazardous waste siting. Bullard demonstrates that these patterns are not random but reflect structural racism embedded in environmental policymaking, land use planning, and regulatory enforcement. His research was pivotal in shifting the discourse from a narrow focus on environmental degradation to an analysis of environmental racism and institutional discrimination, framing environmental justice as a civil rights issue and a matter of distributive and procedural fairness.

## CLIMATE JUSTICE

Climate justice emerged prominently in the wake of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), commonly known as the Rio Earth Summit (UN, 1992, no date), as a political and ethical response to the technocratic framing of climate change. Early critiques highlighted that dominant international climate frameworks, such as the Kyoto Protocol (UN Climate Change, no date), tended to universalise responsibility and capacity, downplaying historical emissions, colonial legacies, and structural inequalities (Roberts & Parks, 2006). From the outset, cli-

mate justice advocates have argued that those least responsible for anthropogenic climate change, often low-income countries, Indigenous populations, and marginalised groups in both the Global South and North, are disproportionately exposed to its impacts, including rising sea levels, climate-induced displacement, food insecurity, and extreme weather events (Pelling, 2011; Sultana, 2021).

Sultana (2021) extends this critique by emphasising the **scalar and spatial** dimensions of climate injustice, illustrating how risks and responsibilities are unevenly distributed across geographies, classes, and bodies. She argues that effective climate governance must move beyond abstract global targets to address place-based vulnerabilities and historically entrenched power asymmetries. This reframing problematises mainstream policy instruments, such as carbon pricing or adaptation financing, which presume equal institutional capacity, political stability, or access to climate finance. Instead, climate justice foregrounds differentiated obligations, participatory governance, and reparative frameworks that prioritise the needs and rights of those most affected but least culpable. It is thus not merely a redistributive claim, but a call for structural transformation in the ways climate solutions are designed, governed, and implemented.

## INTEGRATIVE FRAMING AND CHALLENGES

From the intersection of these traditions, a more comprehensive framework for justice emerges. Climate-ecological processes are spatialised, and spatial infrastructures condition who is vulnerable, who is resilient, and whose demands are legible. A recent article, *Principles for Spatial Justice in Urban Climate Action* (Gonçalves et al., 2025), demonstrates how climate policies must be sensitive to spatial injustices, particularly in urban contexts where adaptation infrastructure, exposure to heat, and access to services are unevenly distributed. But integration is fraught. Tensions arise over scale (local vs global), temporal responsibility, and epistemic authority.

Critical geographers argue that climate justice must incorporate critical physical geography, reflecting on how knowledge itself is constituted spatially and unequally (Raphael, 2022).

In sum, environmental justice grounds equity in exposure and resource distribution; climate justice demands recognition of uneven responsibility and capacity; spatial justice makes visible the spatial and infrastructural forms through which inequalities operate. Together, they encourage a justice politics that is grounded, temporal, positional, and spatial; one that cannot treat environment, climate, or space as external factors but as interwoven dimensions of social life and struggle.



# REFERENCES

- Angotti, T. (2020). *Transformative Planning: Radical Alternatives to Neoliberal Urbanism*. Black Rose Books.
- Arbell, Y. (2023). The Circle of Commoning: Conceptualising Commoning through the Case of Community-Led Housing. *International Journal of the Commons*, 17(1), 228-242. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1210>
- BCA. (no date ). *Black Cultural Archives*. BCA. Retrieved 28 September 2025 from <https://blackculturalarchives.org/>
- Bellacasa, M. P. d. I. (2017). *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Black, K. J., & Richards, M. (2020). Eco-gentrification and who benefits from urban green amenities: NYC's high Line. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 204(1), 103900. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2020.103900>
- Bona, S., Silva-Afonso, A., Gomes, R., Matos, R., & Rodrigues, F. (2023). Nature-Based Solutions in Urban Areas: A European Analysis. *Applied Sciences*, 13(1), 168. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app13010168>
- Bornioli, A., & Subiza-Pérez, M. (2022). Restorative urban environments for healthy cities: a theoretical model for the study of restorative experiences in urban built settings. *Landscape Research*, 48(1), 152-163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2022.2124962>
- Bullard, R. D. (1999). *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices From the Grassroots*. South End Press.
- Bullard, R. D. (2000). *Dumping In Dixie: Race, Class, And Environmental Quality*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429495274>
- Castán-Broto, V., & Alves, S. N. (2018). Intersectionality challenges for the coproduction of urban services: notes for a theoretical and methodological agenda. *Environment and Urbanisation*, 30(2), 367-386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247818790208>
- Chakrabarty, D. (2008). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press.
- City of Vienna. (2025). *Manual for Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development* (STEP Stadtentwicklungsplan, Issue. <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/urn:urn:nbn:at:AT-WBR-707537>
- Coelho, L. X. P., Melgaço, L., & Rajendran, L. P. (2025). Decolonizing Urban Planning Research in Global South: A Call for Shifting the Gaze. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, Online First*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X251325150>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Czirják, R. (2019). Community-Led Planning: The Key to Successful Slum Upgrading? *The Central European Journal of Regional Development and Tourism*, 11(1), 164-181. <https://doi.org/10.32725/det.2019.010>
- Damyanovic, D. (2016). Gender Mainstreaming as a Strategy for Sustainable Urban Planning. In I. S. d. Madariaga & M. Roberts (Eds.), *Fair Shared Cities: The Impact of Gender Planning in Europe* (pp. 177-192). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315581835>
- Deursen, H. v. (2023a). The People's Housing: Woningcorporaties and the Dutch Social Housing System, Part 2: The Mechanics, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University. [https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/research/files/harvard\\_jchs\\_the\\_peoples\\_housing\\_mechanics\\_van\\_deursen\\_2023.pdf](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/research/files/harvard_jchs_the_peoples_housing_mechanics_van_deursen_2023.pdf)
- Deursen, H. v. (2023b). What Can We Learn From the Dutch Social Housing System? *The Planning Report*, August. <https://www.planningreport.com/2023/08/17/what-can-we-learn-dutch-social-housing-system>
- Ebissa, G., & Desta, H. (2022). Review of urban agriculture as a strategy for building a water resilient city. *City and Environment Interactions*, 14(April), 100081. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cacint.2022.100081>
- Ellis-Young, M. (2025). Urban transformation and Indigenous-settler reconciliation: Discursive (dis)connections between municipal reconciliation strategies and area redevelopment plans in five Canadian cities. *Cities*, 167(December), 106350. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2025.106350>
- European Commission. (no date). *Nature-based Solutions*. European Commission. Retrieved 28 September 2025 from [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/nature-based-solutions\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/nature-based-solutions_en)
- Feinberg, A., Ghorbani, A., & Herder, P. (2021). Diversity and Challenges of the Urban Commons: A Comprehensive Review. *International Journal of the Commons*, 15(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1033>
- Foster, S., & Iaione, C. (2016). The City as a Commons. *Yale Law & Policy Review*, 34(2), 281-349. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43920369>
- Fox-Kämper, R., Wesener, A., Münderlein, D., Sondermann, M., McWilliam, W., & Kirk, N. (2018). Urban community gardens: An evaluation of governance approaches and related enablers and barriers at different development stages. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 170(February), 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2017.06.023>
- France, R., & Braiden, H. (2024). Landscape Phenomenology and the Transformation of Post-Industrial Spaces

- into Re-Naturalized Public Places. *Environment and Society*, 15(1), 234-251. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ares.2024.150112>
- Fraser, N. (2010). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.
- Frediani, A. A., Walker, J., & Butcher, S. (2013). *Participatory Informal Settlement Upgrading and Well-Being in Kisumu, Kenya*. [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/sites/bartlett/files/sdp\\_kisumu\\_report.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/sites/bartlett/files/sdp_kisumu_report.pdf)
- Garcia-Lamarca, M., Anguelovski, I., & Shokry, G. (2019). Urban green boosterism and city affordability: For whom is the 'branded' green city? *Urban Studies*, 58(1), 90-112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004209801988533>
- Global Site Plans. (no date). *The Challenges of a Dutch Inclusive Neighborhood*. Smart Cities Dive. Retrieved 27 September 2025 from <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/challenges-dutch-inclusive-neighborhood/202861/>
- Gonçalves, J. E., Narendra, N., & Verma, T. (2025). Everything about climate change is disproportionate: Principles for spatial justice in urban climate action. *Geo* 12(2), e70024. <https://doi.org/10.1002/geo2.70024>
- Greed, C. (2005). Overcoming the Factors Inhibiting the Mainstreaming of Gender into Spatial Planning Policy in the United Kingdom. *Urban Studies*, 42(4), 719-749. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43197283>
- Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162(3859), 1243-1248.
- He, Q., & Reith, A. (2022). (Re)Defining Restorative and Regenerative Urban Design and Their Relation to UN-SDGs—A Systematic Review. *Sustainability*, 14(24), 16715. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142416715>
- Hidayati, I., Tan, W., & Yamu, C. (2021). Conceptualising Mobility Inequality: Mobility and Accessibility for the Marginalised. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 36(4), 492-507. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088541222110128>
- HKW. (2025). *Haus der Kulturen der Welt: About Us*. HKW. Retrieved 28 September 2025 from <https://www.hkw.de/en/the-house/about/about>
- Horton, K. S. (2022). *Designing For Social Wellbeing: Creating A Restorative Urbanism Model For Interior Environments* [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro]. Greensboro. [https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Horton\\_uncg\\_0154M\\_13628.pdf](https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Horton_uncg_0154M_13628.pdf)
- Housing Europe. (2010). *Social Housing in Europe: The Netherlands*. <https://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-117/social-housing-in-europe>
- Housing First. (2025). *Housing First Finland*. Housing First. Retrieved 27 September 2025 from <https://housing-firsteurope.eu/country/finland/>
- Huron, A. (2017). Theorising the urban commons: New thoughts, tensions and paths forward. *Urban Studies*, 54(4), 1062-1069. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098016685528>
- Jenkins, M. (2020). *Sponge City: Shenzhen Explores the Benefits of Designing with Nature*. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Retrieved 28 September 2025 from <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/articles/sponge-city-shenzhen-explores-benefits-designing-with-nature/>
- Kim, J., Kim, C., Lee, S., & Jeong, J. Y. (2024). Race, poverty, and space: A spatial intersectional approach to equity of urban park access. *Cities*, 147(April), 104819. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.104819>
- Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord. (2025). *Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord: Entdecken Staunen Erleben*. Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord. Retrieved 28 September 2025 from <https://www.landschaftspark.de/en/>
- Lucas, K. (2012). Transport and social exclusion: Where are we now? *Transport Policy*, 20(March), 105-113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2012.01.013>
- Madden, D., & Marcuse, P. (2016). *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis*. Verso Books.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3), 449-514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162647>
- Mignolo, W. D. (2011). Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: A Manifesto. *Trans Modernity*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.5070/T412011807>
- Morales, L. M. R. (2024). *Finland's "Housing First" Policy successfully tackles long-term homelessness (2008-ongoing)*. Retrieved 27 September 2025 from <https://www.sdg16.plus/policies/housing-first-policy-finland/>
- Moriggi, A., Soini, K., Franklin, A., & Roep, D. (2020). A Care-Based Approach to Transformative Change: Ethical-Informed Practices, Relational Response-Ability & Emotional Awareness. *Ethics, Policy, and Environment*, 23(3), 281-298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21550085.2020.1848186>
- Müller, H., Huning, S., & Böcker, N. (2025). Caring Cities: Towards a Public Urban Culture of Care. *Urban Planning*, 10, 10016. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.10016>
- Nicoson, C. (2024). Climate transformation through feminist ethics of care. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 155(May), 103727. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2024.103727>
- Ortiz, C., Calderon, A. F., Franco, G. M., & Diaz, I. J. (2025). Spatialising intersectionality: An approach to public space design in self-built neighbourhoods in Cali, Colombia. *Urban Design International*, In press. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41289-024-00267-y>
- Ortiz, C., Tavlou, P., Siqueira, M., & Testori, G. (2025). Decolonising urban knowledge(s): An ordinary imperative in extraordinary times. *City*, 29(3-4), 485-501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162647>

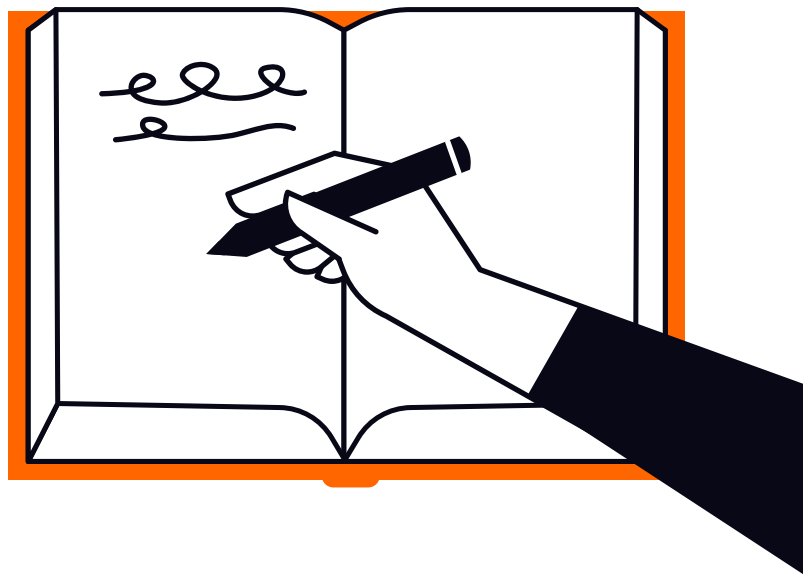
[doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2025.2470540](https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2025.2470540)

- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, E., Burger, J., Field, C. B., Norgaard, R. B., & Policansky, D. (1999). Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges. *Science*, 284(5412), 278-282.
- Pikner, T., Willman, K., & Jokinen, A. (2020). Urban Commoning as a Vehicle Between Government Institutions and Informality: Collective Gardening Practices in Tampere and Narva. *IJURR*, 44(4), 711-729. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12877>
- Ponstingel, D. (2023). Community gardens as commons through the lens of the diverse economies framework: A case study of Austin, TX. *Applied Geography*, 154, 102945. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2023.102945>
- Porter, L., Matunga, H., Viswanathan, L., Patrick, L., Walker, R., Sandercock, L., Thompson-Fawcett, M., Riddle, C., & Jojola, T. T. (2017). Indigenous Planning: from Principles to Practice/A Revolutionary Pedagogy of/ for Indigenous Planning/Settler-Indigenous Relationships as Liminal Spaces in Planning Education and Practice/Indigenist Planning/What is the Work of Non-Indigenous People in the Service of a Decolonizing Agenda?/Supporting Indigenous Planning in the City/Film as a Catalyst for Indigenous Community Development/Being Ourselves and Seeing Ourselves in the City: Enabling the Conceptual Space for Indigenous Urban Planning/Universities Can Empower the Next Generation of Architects, Planners, and Landscape Architects in Indigenous Design and Planning. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 18(4), 639-666. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2017.1380961>
- Power, E. R., & Mee, K. J. (2020). Housing: an infrastructure of care. *Housing Studies*, 35(3), 484-505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2019.1612038>
- Purcell, M. (2002). Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant. *GeoJournal*, 58(1), 99-108. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:GE-JO.0000010829.62237.8f>
- Qi, Y., Chan, F. K. S., O'Donnell, E. C., Feng, M., Sang, Y., Thorne, C. R., Griffiths, J., Liu, L., Liu, S., Zhang, C., Li, L., & Thadani, D. (2021). Exploring the Development of the Sponge City Program (SCP): The Case of Gui'an New District, Southwest China [Original Research]. *Frontiers in Water*, Volume 3 - 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frwa.2021.676965>
- Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), 215-232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002>
- Raphael, M. (2022). *Climate Justice Demands an Integrated Geography*. American Association of Geographers. Retrieved 30 September 2025 from <https://www.aag.org/climate-justice-demands-an-integrated-geography/>
- Reichl, A. J. (2016). The High Line and the ideal of democratic public space. *Urban Geography*, 37(6), 904-925. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2016.1152843>
- Roberts, J. T., & Parks, B. (2006). *A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy*. MIT Press.
- Sandercock, L. (2003). *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*. Continuum.
- Sari, R., Soytaş, U., Kanoglu-Oskan, D. G., & Sivrikaya, A. (2023). Improving the climate resilience of European cities via socially acceptable nature-based solutions. *npj Urban Sustainability*, 3(9). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42949-023-00090-4>
- Shiva, V. (2005). *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability and Peace*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Slum Dwellers International. (2022). *Case-Based Contribution to Chapter 9: Democratising GOLD VI Report on Pathways to urban and territorial equality*. [https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/ch9\\_democratizing\\_56.pdf](https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/ch9_democratizing_56.pdf)
- Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking Spatial Justice*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Sowińska-Świerkosz, B., & García, J. (2022). What are Nature-based solutions (NBS)? Setting core ideas for concept clarification. *Nature-Based Solutions*, 2, 100009. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nbsj.2022.100009>
- Sultana, F. (2021). Critical Climate Justice. *The Geographical Journal* 188(1), 118-124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12417>
- The Landscape Architecture Foundation. (2017). *Landscape Performance Series: High Line*. Retrieved 28 September 2025 from <https://www.landscapeperformance.org/case-study-briefs/high-line>
- Tronto, J. (1993). *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*. Taylor & Francis.
- UN. (1992). *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992), Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*. Retrieved 2021 from [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_CONF.151\\_26\\_Vol.I\\_Declaration.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.151_26_Vol.I_Declaration.pdf)
- UN. (no date). *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-14 June 1992*. UN Retrieved 30 September 2025 from <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/rio1992>
- UN Climate Change. (no date). *The Kyoto Protocol*. United



- Nations Climate Change. Retrieved 30 September 2025 from <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-kyoto-protocol>
- Vance, C. (2023). *City of reconciliation? Planning, settler colonialism, and Canadian exceptionalism in Vancouver* [Simon Fraser University]. Vancouver, BC. <https://summit.sfu.ca/item/36439>
- Weber, A. M., & Trojan, J. (2018). The Restorative Value of the Urban Environment: A Systematic Review of the Existing Literature. *Environmental Health Insights*, 26(12), 1178630218812805. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1178630218812805>
- Williams, J. (2013). *Toward a Theory of Spatial Justice* Annual Meeting of the Western Political Sciences Association, Los Angeles, CA. <https://www.wpsanet.org/papers/docs/Williams,%20Spatial%20Justice,%20WPSA%202013.pdf>
- Williams, J. (2018). *Spatial Justice as Analytic Framework* [University of Michigan at Ann Arbor]. Ann Arbor. [https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/143999/justwill\\_1.pdf?sequence=1&is-Allowed=y](https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/143999/justwill_1.pdf?sequence=1&is-Allowed=y)
- Wolch, J. R., Byrne, J., & Newell, J. P. (2014). Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough'. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 125(May), 234-244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2014.01.017>
- Yang, Z., Zhao, X., Zhu, L., Xia, Y., Ma, Y., Wu, J., Xiong, X., Yang, N., & Lu, M. (2023). Research on the Healing Potential of Urban Parks from the Perspective of Audio-Visual Integration: A Case Study of Five Urban Parks in Chengdu. *Land*, 12(7), 1317. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land12071317>
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvcm4g4q>
- Yu, K. (no date). 'Sponge City' Theory and Practice. Turenscape. Retrieved 28 September 2025 from
- Zielke, J., Hepburn, P., Thompson, M., & Southern, A. (2021). Urban Commoning Under Adverse Conditions: Lessons From a Failed Transdisciplinary Project. *Frontiers of Sustainable Cities*, 3(December). <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsc.2021.727331>

# **8. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL URBAN POLICIES FOR SPATIAL JUSTICE**



# 8.1 ADDRESSING ECONOMIC DISPARITIES THROUGH URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND SDG 11

Spatial justice cannot be achieved without confronting the deep-rooted economic and social disparities that shape urban life. These disparities are spatially inscribed through uneven access to housing, employment, infrastructure, and essential services, leading to patterns of segregation, displacement, and exclusion. Urban policy, therefore, is not merely a matter of technical coordination but a site of political struggle over how value, opportunity, and well-being are distributed in space (Fainstein, 2010; Marcuse, 2009).

In this chapter, we examine how economic and social urban policies can be reoriented to support spatial justice. Section 7.1 explores the potential and limitations of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (*Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*) in addressing urban inequalities. While SDG 11 offers an international framework for inclusive urbanisation, its implementation often reflects tensions between economic interests, climate action, domestic politics and the redistribution of spatial benefits.

Section 7.2 turns to **social infrastructure**, such as schools, libraries, and care facilities, and **social capital**, highlighting their importance in building community resilience and civic trust, particularly in underserved neighbourhoods. These non-market forms of value are often overlooked in conventional economic planning, yet they are central to lived experiences of justice and wellbeing (Latham & Layton, 2019).

Section 7.3 investigates **employment and local economic development (LED)**, rapidly assessing how labour markets, entrepreneurship, and informal

economies shape spatial inclusion or exclusion. It considers how LED policies can empower communities, but also how they risk reinforcing inequality when driven by competitiveness and land valorisation logics.

Section 7.4 critically examines the **contradictions between LED strategies and sustainability goals**, especially when short-term job creation is prioritised over ecological regeneration or long-term spatial equity. These tensions are particularly evident in urban regeneration projects that displace vulnerable groups under the guise of revitalisation.

Finally, Section 7.5 introduces **the Capability Approach** (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2004b) as a normative framework that reimagines development beyond GDP, proposing an alternative to growth-centric strategies. By focusing on what people are effectively able to do and be, the Capability Approach offers planners a tool for assessing the real freedoms and opportunities available to urban residents, especially the most disadvantaged.

Together, these sections argue for a planning praxis that centres equity, dignity, and collective flourishing over mere economic efficiency. They challenge the field to move beyond technocratic fixes and embrace redistributive and democratic approaches that address the structural conditions producing spatial injustice.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11 (SDG 11)

**SDG 11**, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015, aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.” (UN-DESA, 2019; UN-Habitat, 2019). It encompasses a wide range of targets that address the challenges of urbanisation, including:

- Ensuring access to safe and affordable housing
- Enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanisation,

- Providing access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems.
- Reducing the adverse environmental impact of cities.
- Providing universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces.

**SDG 11** recognises the central role of urban areas in achieving sustainable development, highlighting the need for cities to be designed and managed in ways that promote social inclusion, economic opportunity, and environmental sustainability.

The intersection of SDG 11 with Spatial Justice lies in the shared emphasis on creating urban environments that are equitable and accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status, gender, age, race, ethnicity, or any other factor. By addressing issues such as housing affordability, sustainable transport, and access to public spaces, SDG 11 directly contributes to advancing spatial justice within urban settings.

To address economic disparities through urban development and achieve the objectives of SDG 11, governments and urban planners can implement a range of economic and social policies, including inclusive housing policies, sustainable transport solutions, investment in public spaces, economic development initiatives, and participatory urban planning. By integrating these economic and social policies within urban development strategies, cities can make significant strides toward reducing economic disparities, enhancing the quality of life for all residents, and achieving the goals of SDG 11. This comprehensive approach underscores the importance of urban areas as platforms for sustainable development and social equity, aligning with the broader objectives of spatial justice.

## 8.2. SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social infrastructure refers to the material and institutional arrangements, such as schools, health services, community centres, libraries, parks, and recreational facilities, that enable the social life of communities. These infrastructures do more than deliver services: they provide the spatial conditions through which social relations are formed, sustained, and reproduced (Klinenberg, 2018; Latham & Layton, 2019). In this sense, they are central to the lived experience of urban justice, as their distribution and quality often determine whether residents can access opportunities for education, health, and social participation. Unequal provision of social infrastructure reinforces spatial divisions and entrenches disadvantage, while more equitable arrangements can support dignity, resilience, and inclusion.

Eric Klinenberg's *Palaces for the People* (2018) argues that social infrastructure (the institutions, spaces, and organisations that support everyday social life) is central to addressing inequality, polarisation, and civic decline. Drawing on examples such as libraries, community gardens, and day-cares, Klinenberg shows how these spaces foster connection, resilience, and social capital, echoing



Robert Putnam's concerns in *Bowling Alone* (2001). He frames such infrastructures as modern 'palaces for the people', borrowing Andrew Carnegie's phrase for public libraries.

Klinenberg emphasises the role of social infrastructure in enhancing physical health, safety, education, emotional well-being, and climate resilience. He also critiques the idea that social media can substitute for public infrastructure, warning against reliance on private, corporate platforms like Facebook for community building. Instead, he stresses the need for publicly accessible, well-designed spaces that nurture trust and civic life.

Social capital, by contrast, refers to the networks, norms, and reciprocal relationships that underpin cooperation and collective action (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2001). It develops through ongoing interactions in everyday settings and is expressed in trust, mutual support, and shared responsibility. While social capital is sometimes celebrated as an unqualified good, critical scholarship reminds us that it can reproduce exclusionary bonds as well as ties of solidarity, and that its value is contingent on the social and spatial contexts in which it operates (Fine, 2010; Portes, 1998).

The relationship between social infrastructure and social capital is reciprocal and uneven. Accessible and inclusive infrastructures provide the arenas where social capital can be cultivated, particularly across lines of difference. At the same time, communities with stronger associational life are often more effective in mobilising for, maintaining, and protecting social infrastructure. This interplay is not neutral: it reflects and reproduces broader structures of inequality. Neighbourhoods deprived of infrastructure face limited opportunities to generate social capital, resulting in cycles of marginalisation in which infrastructural scarcity and weakened collective capacity reinforce each other (Low, 2016). Conversely, targeted and participatory investment in social infrastructure can disrupt these dynamics by expanding the conditions under which trust, cooperation, and civic capacity can flourish.

Digital infrastructures increasingly complicate this picture. Platforms for communication, information sharing, and organising, from neighbourhood WhatsApp groups to civic apps and online petitioning tools, are now key sites for building and exercising social capital (Graham, 2020; Zuboff, 2019). They can strengthen community resilience by connecting residents to resources and support networks, but they also introduce new exclusions tied to digital divides, surveillance, and the commercial logics of platform capitalism. Thus, digital infrastructures extend the terrain of social infrastructure but raise critical questions about ownership, accessibility, and governance. From a spatial justice perspective, recognising these hybrid infrastructures, physical and digital, is essential to understanding how collective capacities are built and contested in contemporary urban life.

## EXAMPLES AND IMPLICATIONS

### **Equitable Access to Green Spaces.**

Urban parks and recreational areas provide environmental and health benefits such as cleaner air, opportunities for physical activity, and psychological well-being (Wolch et al., 2014). They also function as arenas of social interaction where diverse groups can encounter one another, fostering trust and civic life. Yet research highlights persistent inequities in park access, with disadvantaged communities often facing poorer quality facilities or exclusion through processes of gentrification (Anguelovski et al., 2018).

### **Community Centres as Hubs for Social Engagement.**

Community centres are crucial platforms for intergenerational programmes, skill development, and cultural activities that strengthen community bonds. They are also sites of political organising, particularly for marginalised groups who may lack access to formal participatory channels (Miraftab, 2009). Their presence can counterbalance social isolation and create capacities for collective action.

## Public Libraries as Nodes of Social and Cultural Capital.

Libraries are more than repositories of knowledge: they are inclusive, non-commercial public spaces that support social integration and resilience (Klinenberg, 2018). They provide access to digital technologies, literacy programmes, and community support networks, enabling both the accumulation of social capital (Putnam, 2001) and the nurturing of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). As 'palaces for the people,' libraries are central to bridging divides in fragmented urban societies.

In sum, social infrastructure functions as both a precondition and a generator of social capital. Its equitable distribution is vital for advancing spatial justice: not simply by providing services, but by enabling the networks, trust, and capacities that underpin collective resilience and democratic participation. Policies that prioritise social infrastructure in underserved areas can disrupt entrenched spatial inequalities, while neglect or uneven provision can exacerbate cycles of exclusion and vulnerability.



## 8.3. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Local Economic Development (LED) refers to strategies and processes through which local governments, communities, and other actors seek to stimulate economic activity, improve employment opportunities, and enhance the overall quality of life within a defined territory. Emerging prominently in the 1980s as a response to deindustrialisation, globalisation, and the retreat of central state intervention, LED has been promoted as a way to harness local assets and entrepreneurialism to attract investment and generate jobs (Helmsing, 2003; Pike et al., 2010). While LED is often framed as a pragmatic approach to place-based growth, it is also deeply political, reflecting choices about whose interests are prioritised, which sectors are supported, and how benefits are distributed across space and social groups. These dynamics make LED a critical arena for examining the intersections of economic development, sustainability, and spatial justice.

The relationship between Local Economic Development (LED) and sustainability is often marked by tensions that have direct implications for spatial justice. LED typically seeks to stimulate growth and improve livelihoods through investment attraction, competitiveness, and job creation (Helmsing, 2003; Rodríguez-Pose, 2013). Yet these objectives can conflict with sustainability principles that prioritise ecological integrity, social equity, and long-term resilience.

Many LED initiatives privilege immediate economic returns, such as tax revenue or employment gains, without fully accounting for environmental costs. This growth-first orientation has been shown to exacerbate ecological degradation, resource de-



pletion, and carbon emissions (Gibbs, 2006). In contrast, sustainability requires a balance between economic, social, and environmental objectives to safeguard intergenerational justice (Hopwood et al., 2005).

Traditional LED strategies have often centred on industrial expansion, infrastructure development, and urban growth. While such measures may generate prosperity, they also contribute to habitat loss, pollution, and heightened vulnerability to climate risks (Scott & Storper, 2014). Moreover, when success is measured narrowly through GDP growth, LED can reproduce spatial injustices by concentrating wealth in growth nodes and leaving marginalised communities exposed to externalities such as environmental hazards or displacement (Pike et al., 2010).

From a spatial justice perspective, these contradictions underscore the need to integrate social sustainability and spatial justice principles into LED strategies. This requires development models that account for the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and risks. Participatory approaches to LED are particularly important, as they involve citizens, especially those from vulnerable groups, in decision-making. This alignment of development with community needs and aspirations reduces the risk of exclusion and reinforces democratic legitimacy (Pickering et al., 2022).

Reconciling LED with sustainability is also a matter of resilience. Sustainable LED strategies can mitigate climate risks, reduce pollution, and strengthen local resource bases rather than depleting them. Examples include renewable energy projects that create employment while lowering emissions, or sustainable tourism that protects cultural and ecological assets while diversifying local economies (Gibbs, 2002).

Balancing LED and sustainability is therefore central to advancing spatial justice. It entails shifting from narrow growth-oriented metrics to holistic frameworks that embed equity, ecological stewardship, and long-term resilience into the very definition of development.

## 8.4. THE CAPABILITY APPROACH AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO GROWTH-BASED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The Capability Approach, first articulated by Amartya Sen (Sen, 1985, 2004a) and further developed by Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 2000, 2011) provides a normative framework that shifts the focus of development away from aggregate economic growth and towards the substantive freedoms individuals have to live lives they have reason to value. In contrast to growth-centric models that prioritise metrics such as GDP, the Capability Approach foregrounds the expansion of people's real opportunities and agency, thereby reframing development as a process concerned with dignity, justice, and empowerment rather than material output alone (Robeyns, 2005).

The framework is structured around three key elements: **functionings**, **capabilities (or opportunity freedom)**, and **conversion factors**.

**Functionings** are the 'beings and doings' that constitute a person's life, ranging from basic achievements such as being nourished and in good health to more complex states such as participating in community life, exercising political voice, or pursuing meaningful work (Sen, 2004b). Functionings are the realised outcomes of a person's choices.

**Capabilities**, or substantive freedoms, refer to the range of opportunities available to individuals, the real options they have to achieve different functionings. The Capability Approach stresses that well-being lies not only in actual achievements but



in the genuine ability to choose among different ways of living. This distinction highlights the role of freedom and choice as intrinsic to development (Sen, 2004a).

**Conversion factors** determine the extent to which resources can be transformed into capabilities and functionings (Robeyns, 2016). These factors can be grouped into three types:

*Personal conversion factors* such as age, gender, health, or physical condition.

*Social conversion factors*, including norms, institutions, public policies, and forms of discrimination or support that mediate opportunities.

*Environmental conversion factors* related to physical and ecological conditions, such as infrastructure, climate, or geography.

This conceptual triad illustrates that resources alone do not guarantee well-being. What matters is the ability to convert resources into real freedoms. The Capability Approach, therefore, challenges both growth-first strategies and resource-distribution models that ignore structural barriers, arguing instead for development strategies attentive to institutional, social, and spatial conditions that enable or constrain human flourishing.

## 8.5. URBAN ENVIRONMENTS AND CONVERSION FACTORS

Urban environments play a critical role in shaping conversion factors that enable or constrain people's capabilities. Because of their density, diversity, and concentration of resources, cities provide infrastructures and services that can expand substantive freedoms if they are equitably distributed. Yet the same urban features can also amplify inequalities, as conversion factors are unevenly mediated by socio-spatial arrangements, institutional practices, and environmental risks (Robeyns, 2005; Robeyns & Byskov, 2020).

**Accessibility to Services and Infrastructure.** Public transport, healthcare, education, and cultural amenities exemplify how urban infrastructure functions as a conversion factor. Their quality and accessibility directly determine whether individuals can transform resources, such as income, into functionings like mobility, knowledge, or cultural participation (Nussbaum, 2011). Spatial inequities in access to schools, hospitals, and transit systems can thus translate into capability deprivation for disadvantaged groups (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019).

**Social Inclusion and Participation.** Cities also shape social conversion factors, such as networks, norms, and opportunities for political voice. Cities can foster rich associational life and civic engagement, but exclusionary practices, whether through gentrification, segregation, or policing, limit participation and weaken social capital (Low, 2016). An urban capabilities perspective highlights that justice requires not only access to resources but also the institutional and spatial conditions for meaningful inclusion in collective life.

**Environmental Sustainability and Resilience.** Environmental conversion factors in cities affect how residents translate resources into sustainable

functionings. Green spaces, climate adaptation measures, and resilient housing reduce vulnerability and enhance long-term wellbeing (Anguelovski et al., 2018). Conversely, exposure to pollution, flooding, or heat stress disproportionately constrains the capabilities of low-income and marginalised residents (Bulkeley et al., 2014). Integrating environmental justice into urban planning, therefore, becomes central to safeguarding capabilities over time.

The Capability Approach underscores that well-being must be assessed not only by achieved outcomes but also by the *real freedoms* individuals enjoy. In urban contexts, conversion factors, either personal, social, or environmental, are particularly significant because they mediate how the city's material and institutional arrangements are experienced by different groups. Planning and policy informed by this framework call for redistributive interventions, participatory governance, and ecological design, creating cities that expand freedoms rather than reproduce inequities.

## 8.6. THE CAPABILITY APPROACH IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In urban development, the Capability Approach shifts attention from aggregate measures of material wealth to the conditions that enable all residents to lead lives they value. This perspective insists that development should encompass not only economic resources but also social goods such as education, healthcare, secure and affordable housing, environmental quality, and opportunities for civic participation and cultural expression (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2004b). By foregrounding these elements, the Capability Approach provides a framework for addressing the diverse needs and aspirations of urban populations, positioning cities as spaces that are not only economically productive but also socially just and environmentally sustainable (Robeyns, 2017).

**Connection to Spatial Justice.** The Capability Approach and spatial justice converge around principles of equity, inclusion, and the right to participate fully in urban life. Spatial justice concerns itself with the distribution of resources, services, and opportunities across the urban landscape (Soja, 2010), while the Capability Approach emphasises the substantive freedoms individuals require to convert these opportunities into functionings. Together, they highlight that just cities are those in which urban arrangements expand capabilities equitably and resist patterns of exclusion and marginalisation (Frediani, 2010).

**Contrasting with Growth-Based Strategies.** Conventional growth-oriented urban development strategies tend to evaluate success through aggregate economic output, often obscuring inequalities in the distribution of benefits and costs (Harvey, 2012). Such strategies may privilege central business districts, elite enclaves, or megaprojects while displacing low-income groups or burdening them

with environmental risks. In contrast, the Capability Approach suggests that development should be assessed by the extent to which individuals' real freedoms and opportunities expand, whether economic growth translates into meaningful improvements in wellbeing for all residents, rather than for a privileged few (Robeyns, 2005).

## EXAMPLES AND IMPLICATIONS.

**Accessible Public Spaces and Services.** Universal access to public spaces, healthcare, education, and cultural facilities expands the range of capabilities available to urban residents. Research shows that equitable access to such infrastructures fosters inclusion and resilience, while their absence entrenches disadvantage (Klinenberg, 2018; Latham & Layton, 2019).

**Inclusive Urban Planning.** Participatory planning processes that engage diverse communities can ensure that urban development reflects local needs and values. This aligns with the Capability Approach by embedding democratic voice and recognition into the design of urban space (Frediani, 2010).

**Affordable Housing Initiatives.** Housing is foundational to capabilities, because it provides the stable conditions that allow other freedoms to be realised. Without secure, adequate housing, people's ability to achieve basic functionings, such as health, safety, education, and participation in community life, is severely constrained. Poor housing or homelessness undermines physical security, privacy, and dignity, while well-located and affordable housing enables access to jobs, schools, services, and social networks (Nussbaum, 2011). In short, housing should not be just a commodity but a conversion factor that shapes whether individuals can transform resources into substantive freedoms. Yet housing scarcity in well-serviced urban areas reproduces inequalities. Policies ensuring affordable and accessible housing in integrated neighbourhoods enhance residents'

ability to live in conditions that support health, education, and social participation (UN-Habitat, 2020).

In summary, the Capability Approach offers a normative framework for rethinking urban development beyond growth. By centring wellbeing, agency, and the equitable expansion of freedoms, it provides a critical lens through which to align urban policies with spatial justice. Cities that adopt this perspective move closer to becoming spaces where all residents have genuine opportunities to pursue fulfilling lives and contribute to collective resilience and vibrancy.

## REFERENCES

- Anguelovski, I., Connolly, J., & Brand, A. L. (2018). From landscapes of utopia to the margins of the green urban life. *City*, 22(3), 417-436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2018.1473126>
- Banerjee, A. V., & Duflo, E. (2019). *Good Economics for Hard Times: Better Answers to Our Biggest Problems*. Penguin
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.
- Bulkeley, H., Edwards, G. A. S., & Fuller, S. (2014). Contesting climate justice in the city: Examining politics and practice in urban climate change experiments. *Global Environmental Change*, 25(March), 31-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.01.009>
- Fainstein, S. (2010). *The Just City*. Cornell University Press.
- Fine, B. (2010). *Theories of Social Capital: Researchers Behaving Badly*. Pluto Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183p-drp>
- Frediani, A. A. (2010). Sen's Capability Approach as a framework to the practice of development. *Development in Practice*, 20(2), 173-187. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27806685>
- Gibbs, D. (2002). *Local Economic Development and the Environment*. Routledge.
- Gibbs, D. (2006). Sustainability Entrepreneurs, Ecopreneurs and the Development of a Sustainable Economy. *Greener Management International*, 55(1), 63-78. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/greemanainte.55.63>
- Graham, M. (2020). Regulate, replicate, and resist – the conjunctural geographies of platform urbanism. *Urban Geography*, 41(3), 453-457. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1717028>
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities : from the right to the city to the urban revolution*. Verso.
- Helmsing, A. H. J. (2003). Local economic development: new generations of actors, policies and instruments for Africa. *Public Administration and Development*, 23(1), 67-76. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.260>
- Hopwood, B., Mellor, M., & O'Brien, G. (2005). Sustainable development: mapping different approaches. *Sustainable Development*, 13(1), 38-52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.244>
- Klinenberg, E. (2018). *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*. Crown.
- Latham, A., & Layton, J. (2019). Social infrastructure and the public life of cities: Studying urban sociality and public spaces. *Geography Compass*, 13(7), e1244. 10.1111/gec3.12444
- Low, S. (2016). *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place*. Taylor & Francis.
- Marcuse, P. (2009). From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City. *City*, 13(2-3), 185-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902982177>
- Mirafab, F. (2009). Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 32-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099297>
- Nussbaum, M. (2000). *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. Belknap Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2jbt31>
- Pickering, J., Hickmann, T., Bäckstrand, K., Kalfagianni, A., Bloomfield, M., Mert, A., Ransan-Cooper, H., & Lo, A. Y. (2022). Democratising sustainability transformations: Assessing the transformative potential of democratic practices in environmental governance. *Earth System Governance*, 11(January), 100131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esg.2021.100131>
- Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Tomaney, J. (2010). What Kind of Local and Regional Development and for Whom? *Regional Studies*, 41(9), 1253-1269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400701543355>
- Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24(August), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.1>
- Putnam, R. D. (2001). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.
- Robeyns, I. (2005). The Capability Approach: a theoretical survey. *Journal of Human Development*, 6(1), 93-117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/146498805200034266>
- Robeyns, I. (2016). *The Capability Approach*. Retrieved 10 July 2025 from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/capability-approach/>
- Robeyns, I. (2017). *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice: The Capability Approach Re-Examined*. Open Book
- Robeyns, I., & Byskov, M. F. (2020). *The Capability Approach*.

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved 1 March 2025 from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/capability-approach/>
- Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2013). Do Institutions Matter for Regional Development? *Regional Studies*, 47(7), 1034-1047. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2012.748978>
- Scott, A. J., & Storper, M. (2014). The Nature of Cities: The Scope and Limits of Urban Theory. *IJURR*, 39(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12134>
- Sen, A. (1985). *Commodities and Capabilities*. Oxford University Press India.
- Sen, A. (2004a). Capabilities, Lists, and Public Reason: Continuing the Conversation. *Feminist Economics*, 10(3), 77-80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354570042000315163>
- Sen, A. (2004b). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press.
- UN-DESA. (2019). *SDGs Report: SDG 11*. Retrieved 22 Jan from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-11/>
- UN-Habitat. (2019). *SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved 02 October from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-11/>
- UN-Habitat. (2020). *World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization*. UN-Habitat. Retrieved 10 March from <https://unhabitat.org/World%20Cities%20Report%202020>
- Wolch, J. R., Byrne, J., & Newell, J. P. (2014). Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough'. *Land-scape and Urban Planning*, 125(May), 234-244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2014.01.017>
- Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. Public Affairs.

# 9. TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING & MONITORING SPATIAL JUSTICE



# 9.1. INTRODUCTION TO TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING SPATIAL JUSTICE

If spatial justice is to move beyond normative aspiration and become an actionable agenda, it requires concrete tools, methods, and institutional practices capable of translating principles of equity, participation, and recognition into everyday planning processes. Procedural justice, in particular, foregrounds the *how* of planning: how decisions are made, by whom, and under what conditions. The legitimacy of spatial interventions depends not only on their distributive outcomes but also on the fairness, transparency, and inclusivity of the processes that produce them (Forester, 1989; Fraser, 2010; Young, 1990).

Planning tools that support procedural justice are essential to ensuring that marginalised voices are not only heard but structurally integrated into governance systems. They help to institutionalise participatory parity (Fraser, 2000), disrupt technocratic capture, and foster co-production, deliberation, and accountability. From participatory budgeting to legislative theatre, from accessibility audits to digital twins, the instruments explored in this section serve as mechanisms for embedding justice within the spatial planning cycle.

Importantly, these tools must not be seen as neutral or self-evident. Each is embedded in power relations and institutional contexts that shape its effectiveness and legitimacy. For example, participatory processes risk becoming tokenistic or extractive when detached from real decision-making power (Miraftab, 2004). Similarly, digital plat-

forms can either extend participation or entrench exclusion depending on their design, access, and governance.

This section presents a wide spectrum of tools, from conventional participatory methods to experimental, arts-based, and tech-enabled approaches. Together, they illustrate how planners, citizens, and institutions can operationalise spatial justice across diverse contexts. Some tools, such as co-design workshops and citizen assemblies, enhance participatory democracy. Others, such as bodystorming, moral imaginings, or the use of decentralised autonomous organisations (DAOs), challenge dominant modes of planning and open new pathways for imagining and governing space.

By deliberately integrating identification, implementation, benchmarking, and monitoring into planning cycles, practitioners move beyond abstract commitments and begin to operationalise justice in material terms.

Section 2 outlines how planners and policymakers can structure these cycles to address injustice. It starts with methods for recognising where disparities lie, continues with strategies for intervention, examines benchmarking tools that help evaluate progress, and ends with monitoring practices that sustain accountability. The aim is to show how spatial justice can become a practical orientation guiding urban decision-making, making cities more inclusive, resilient, and responsive to social change. This section introduces the Spatial Justice Benchmarking, an assessment framework developed by TU Delft, designed to integrate equity in city decision-making by connecting various tools and solutions to a hypothetical planning cycle. This framework aims to identify and address the three dimensions of spatial justice (distributive, procedural, and recognition) within crucial steps of urban planning and decision-making processes.

In section 3, we briefly introduce additional tools for identifying, implementing, benchmarking, and



monitoring spatial justice. These tools range from technical instruments such as spatial justice indices, GIS-based analysis, and real-time monitoring systems, to participatory platforms like community mapping, digital storytelling, and participatory budgeting, as well as evaluative mechanisms including equity impact assessments and public space audits. Together, they provide complementary ways of combining quantitative data with lived experiences, institutional accountability with community empowerment, and immediate feedback with long-term learning. By embedding these tools within planning practice, spatial justice moves from aspiration to operation, offering cities a means to continuously measure, negotiate, and advance fairness in the production and use of urban space.

Finally, we introduce tools for citizen engagement developed within the Horizon Project UP2030, which are designed to foster inclusive participation in urban transitions by enabling diverse communities to co-design solutions, share knowledge, and influence decision-making processes in ways that embed spatial justice at the core of sustainable city planning. These include Citizen Voice, Community Maps, Storytelling for Participation Exchange, Neutrality Story Maps, an Urban Design Manual for Child and Youth Friendly Cities and a Learning & Action Alliances Method.

Ultimately, implementing spatial justice requires a plural toolkit attuned to local conditions, cultural epistemologies, and institutional capacities. These tools must not only facilitate input but foster genuine co-creation, recognition, and shared responsibility for urban futures. This section invites critical reflection on how such tools are deployed, by whom, and to what ends—reminding us that just outcomes cannot emerge from unjust procedures.

## REFERENCES

- Forester, J. (1989). *Planning in the Face of Power*. University of California Press.
- Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review*, 3, 107-120. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii3/articles/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition>
- Fraser, N. (2010). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.
- Miraftab, F. (2004). Public-Private Partnerships: The Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Development? *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 24(1), 89-101.
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvcm4g4q>

## 9.2. PLANNING TOOLS FOR SPATIAL JUSTICE

Procedural justice in urban planning ensures that the processes leading to decisions are transparent, inclusive, and equitable, offering a genuine opportunity for all stakeholders, particularly marginalised groups, to participate in shaping their urban environments. Here are examples illustrating how fairness and inclusion can manifest in urban planning:

### PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING



Participatory budgeting allows residents to decide how to allocate a portion of the municipal or city budget. This process democratises budget decisions, giving community members direct input into funding priorities that affect their lives, from park improvements to community centres, ensuring that resources address the needs of diverse communities.

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARDS



Establishing community advisory boards for major development projects ensures that the voices of residents are heard and considered from the project's inception through to completion. These boards can include representatives from various community groups, ensuring a broad range of perspectives are considered, especially those from historically marginalised communities.

### INCLUSIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS



Inclusive public consultations involve using multiple formats and channels to engage with the community, such as town hall meetings, online forums, and focus groups in multiple languages. These efforts ensure that individuals with different backgrounds, abilities, and schedules have opportunities to contribute their views and feedback on urban development projects.

### CO-DESIGN WORKSHOPS



Co-design workshops invite community members to actively participate in the design process of new public spaces or facilities. By working alongside architects and planners, residents can influence the design to ensure it meets their needs and preferences, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the final outcome.

### DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS



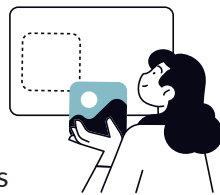
Leveraging digital platforms to gather input and feedback on urban planning initiatives can broaden participation, making it easier for people who cannot attend in-person meetings due to time, mobility, or other constraints. Ensuring these platforms are accessible and user-friendly is crucial for engaging a diverse cross-section of the community.

## ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS



Conducting accessibility audits in collaboration with people who have disabilities can identify barriers in public spaces and infrastructure. This proactive approach ensures urban environments are designed or modified to be inclusive, promoting mobility and access for everyone.

## LAND USE WORKSHOPS



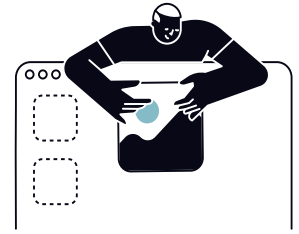
Engaging indigenous communities through dedicated workshops and consultations respects and incorporates their deep-rooted connection to the land. This can lead to urban development that respects indigenous rights, traditions, and stewardship practices, contributing to more equitable and culturally sensitive urban spaces. These examples demonstrate that fairness and inclusion in urban planning go beyond simply allowing for participation; they require actively facilitating and valuing diverse contributions to ensure that urban development truly reflects and serves the needs of all community members.

## SUPER FORECASTING



Super forecasting involves leveraging collective intelligence and advanced analytics to predict future trends and outcomes with high accuracy. In spatial planning, it can be used to anticipate urban development needs, environmental changes, and societal shifts, allowing for more informed and proactive decision-making that aligns with the principles of spatial justice.

## SERIOUS GAMES



Serious games use interactive, game-based approaches to simulate real-world issues and challenges, facilitating learning and problem-solving in a dynamic and engaging manner. In urban planning, they can help stakeholders understand complex spatial issues, explore different scenarios, and collaboratively develop solutions that promote spatial justice.

## LEGISLATIVE THEATRE



Legislative Theatre combines performance art with participatory democracy, enabling communities to explore social issues through theatre and directly propose legislative changes. This technique empowers citizens to creatively engage with spatial planning processes and advocate for policies that enhance spatial justice.

## CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES



Citizen assemblies bring together a representative group of citizens to deliberate on specific issues and make recommendations. In the context of spatial planning, they ensure that diverse voices are heard and that community-driven solutions are developed, promoting equitable and just urban environments.

## BODY STORMING



Bodystorming is an experiential design technique that involves physically acting out scenarios to generate insights and solutions. Applied to spatial planning, it can help participants empathize with different community members' experiences, leading to more inclusive and human-centred urban designs.

## MORAL IMAGININGS



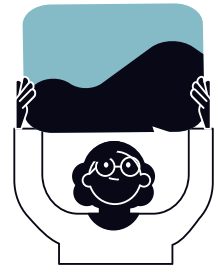
Moral imaginings involve using ethical frameworks and speculative thinking to envision future scenarios and the moral implications of planning decisions. This approach encourages planners and communities to consider the long-term impacts of urban development on social equity and spatial justice.

## DECENTRALISED AUTONOMOUS ORGANISATIONS (DAOs)



DAOs are blockchain-based organizations that operate without centralized control, allowing for transparent and democratic decision-making processes. In spatial planning, DAOs can facilitate community-led development projects, ensuring that decisions reflect the collective will and contribute to spatial justice.

## ART IN POLICY



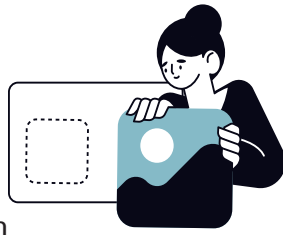
Integrating art into policy-making processes can open new avenues for public engagement and expression, enabling diverse communities to contribute creatively to urban planning discussions. This approach can make spatial planning more accessible and inclusive, fostering environments that reflect a wide range of cultural and social identities.

## DIGITAL TWINS



Digital twins are virtual replicas of physical environments that can simulate real-world scenarios. In spatial planning, digital twins offer a powerful tool for visualizing urban changes, assessing the impacts of different planning proposals, and engaging communities in co-creating equitable and sustainable urban futures.

## REGENERATIVE DESIGN



Regenerative design focuses on creating systems that restore and revitalise their own sources of energy and materials. Applied to urban planning, it aims to develop cities that contribute positively to their environment, promoting sustainability and spatial justice by enhancing the ecosystem and community well-being.

## ENGAGING THROUGH THE METAVERSE



Engaging through the metaverse involves using virtual reality platforms to involve community members in spatial planning processes. This innovative approach can democratise participation, allowing for immersive and interactive exploration of urban design proposals and fostering a more inclusive dialogue on spatial justice.

## 9.3. IDENTIFYING, IMPLEMENTING, BENCHMARKING & MONITORING SPATIAL JUSTICE IN PLANNING CYCLES



Spatial justice is integral to creating equitable, sustainable, and livable urban environments. In the realm of spatial planning, it requires a deliberate effort to identify, implement, benchmark, and monitor equitable practices throughout the planning cycle. This process ensures that urban spaces serve the needs of all community members, especially marginalised and underrepresented groups.

The first step in this cycle is identifying where disparities and injustices exist within urban environments. This involves gathering both quantitative data, such as the distribution of public amenities and accessibility to services, and qualitative insights from community narratives and experiences, such as personal stories and trajectories, and the history of groups. Once areas of improvement are identified, the next step is implementing strategies designed to address these injustices. These strategies may include redesigning public spaces to be more inclusive, adjusting zoning laws to better serve the needs of diverse populations, or enhancing public transportation systems

to ensure equitable access across the city.

Benchmarking tools are then employed to measure the effectiveness of these strategies. These tools help urban planners and policymakers assess the impact of their interventions and ensure that they are meeting their goals of spatial justice. Metrics might include the level of participation in planning processes, the equitable distribution of urban resources, or the accessibility and usability of public spaces.

Finally, ongoing monitoring is essential to sustain efforts towards spatial justice. It involves continuous engagement with the community to gather feedback, using both traditional surveys and innovative tools like digital storytelling and social media analysis. Monitoring helps to capture shifts in public sentiment and emerging issues, allowing for timely adjustments to strategies and plans.

Through a cyclical process of identifying, implementing, benchmarking, and monitoring, spatial justice becomes a dynamic component of urban planning. This continuous loop not only responds to existing needs but also proactively shapes urban spaces to foster inclusivity and equity, ultimately making cities more adaptable and resilient in the face of social changes.

## 9.4. TU DELFT SPATIAL JUSTICE BENCHMARKING



### OVERVIEW

Spatial Justice Benchmarking is an assessment framework developed by TU Delft, designed to integrate equity in city decision-making by connecting various tools and solutions to a hypothetical planning cycle. This framework aims to identify and address the three dimensions of spatial justice—distributive, procedural, and recognition—within crucial steps of urban planning and decision-making processes.



### FUNCTIONALITY

The framework provides a structured approach to evaluating and enhancing spatial justice in urban planning. It is not primarily digital but may include a digital interface to facilitate analysis and benchmarking.



### USER INTERACTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Policymakers use the tool to identify gaps in planning processes and opportunities for enhancing citizen and stakeholder engagement. It involves mapping stakeholders, evaluating spatial justice dimensions at various planning stages, and prescribing interventions.



### TRL

The tool is still under development and is expected to be fully functional within the UP2030 timeframe, akin to technology readiness levels in project development stages.



### KPIs

Key Performance Indicators for Spatial Justice Benchmarking include qualitative assessments of how well urban plans incorporate the

dimensions of spatial justice. Metrics might focus on the level of stakeholder engagement, the fairness of resource distribution, and the recognition of diverse community needs.



### EXAMPLES OF USAGE

While specific examples are not provided, the tool is intended for use by city planners and policymakers to refine and adjust urban planning processes to better address equity and justice concerns.



### EXPERTISE REQUIRED

Users of the tool should have a solid understanding of urban planning processes, particularly those related to achieving carbon neutrality and integrating social dimensions into resilience planning.



### TRAINING AND SUPPORT

As the tool is still in development, specific training programs and support mechanisms are yet to be detailed but will likely be necessary to ensure effective implementation.



### BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS

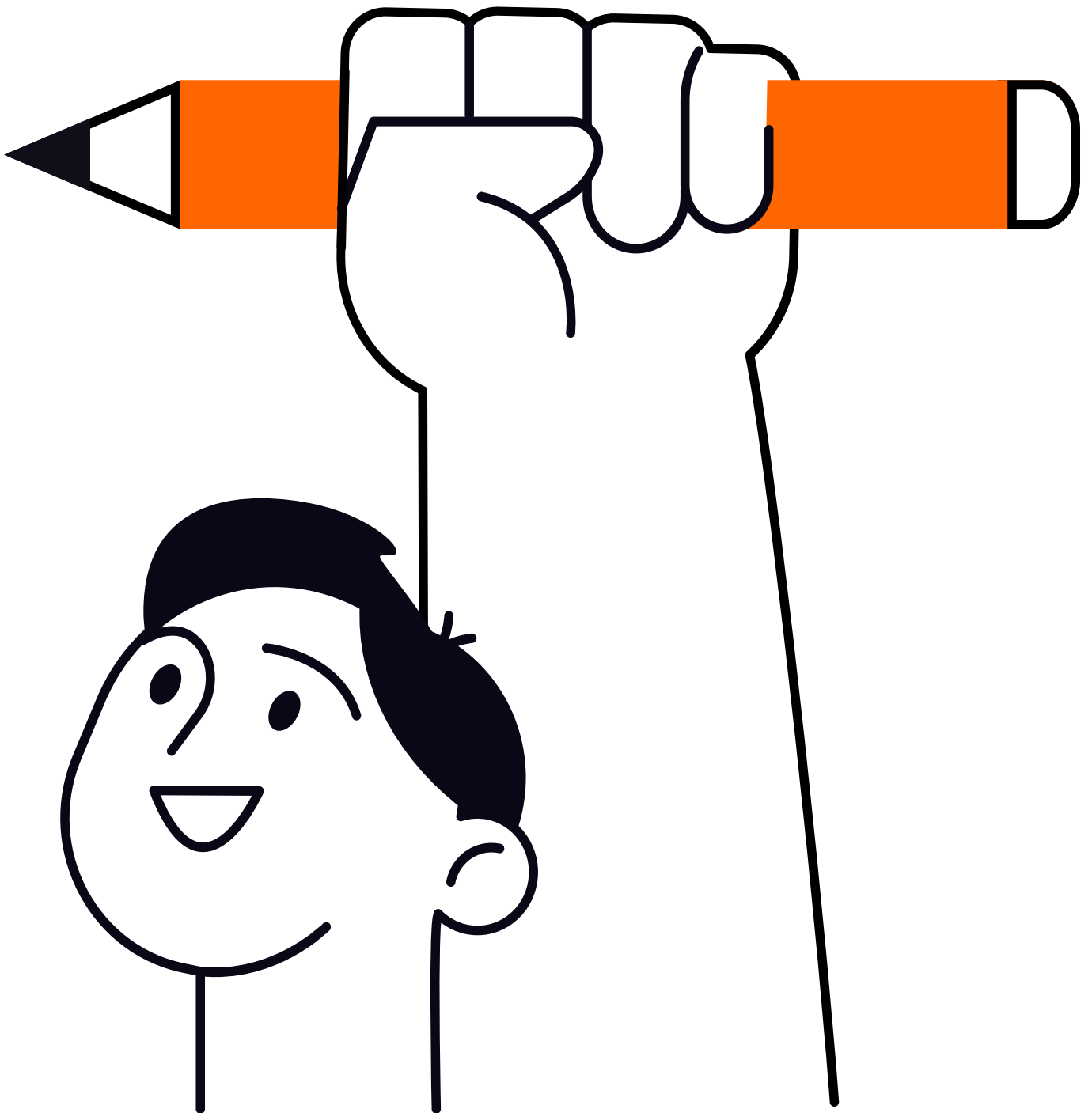
The main challenge is the potential complexity of integrating a new benchmarking process into established planning procedures. There may also be resistance to adopting new frameworks that significantly shift traditional planning paradigms.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional details on the development and application of the Spatial Justice Benchmarking tool will be available as the project progresses. For now, the tool remains in the conceptual and development phase within the UP2030 project framework.





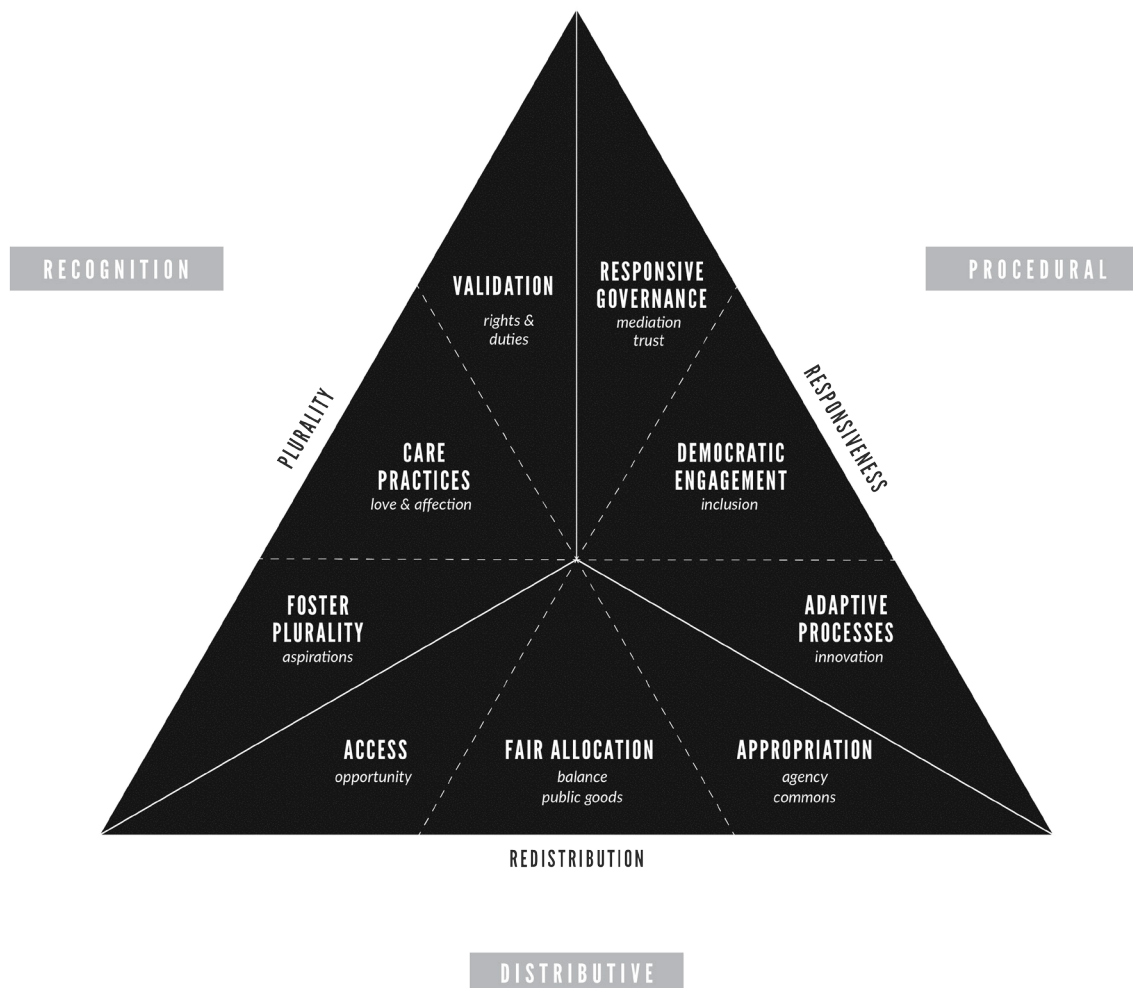
## THE SPATIAL JUSTICE BENCHMARKING TOOL (SJBT)

The Spatial Justice Benchmarking Tool is a qualitative evaluation framework designed at the Centre for the Just City at TU Delft to help planners, policymakers, and citizens reflect upon and assess justice dimensions in urban planning, policy, and governance. Developed as part of the UP2030 Horizon Europe project, the tool translates the abstract idea of spatial justice into operational criteria that can be discussed, compared, and monitored across cities and regions.

At its core, the SJBT builds directly upon the Spatial Justice Conceptual Model (SJCM), which unpacks justice into three interdependent dimensions (distributive, procedural, and recognition) and their respective components. Together, they provide a comprehensive analytical and reflective lens through which to assess fairness in urban sustainability transitions. The SJBT is not a ranking mechanism but a reflective dialogue instrument. It enables institutions and communities to gauge how justice is embedded in their actions, to identify blind spots, and to track progress from early awareness to systemic integration of justice principles.

## THE SPATIAL JUSTICE CONCEPTUAL MODEL (SJCM)

Unpacks Spatial Justice into applicable components for broader use.



The SJCM serves as the theoretical foundation of the benchmarking tool. It frames spatial justice as the outcome of fair distribution of resources and opportunities, inclusive decision-making processes, and the recognition of diverse needs and worldviews (Fraser 2009; Young 1990; Soja 2010). This structure allows planners and stakeholders to explore justice through a multi-dimensional and iterative perspective.

### **(a) The Distributive Dimension**

The distributive dimension focuses on how resources, benefits, and burdens are spatially allocated across a territory. It examines not only who gains and who loses but also how access and use are structured.

- Fair Allocation – Ensuring equitable provision of public goods, basic services, and opportunities for well-being.
- Access to Opportunities – Evaluating affordability, connectivity, and availability of essential services and spaces.
- Appropriation and Empowerment – Enabling individuals and groups to use, adapt, and transform spaces or resources, turning them into sites of collective care and belonging (Rocco 2023).

This dimension aligns with classical justice debates on distributive fairness (Rawls 1971; Harvey 1973), but expands them to spatial and environmental relations.

### **(b) The Procedural Dimension**

Procedural justice relates to how decisions are made, and whether governance systems uphold fairness, transparency, and participation. It assesses institutional capacity to adapt and engage.

- Democratic Engagement – Citizens' ability to co-shape visions, strategies, and decisions, from agenda-setting to implementation.
- Institutional Responsiveness – The fairness and

openness of institutions in addressing diverse claims, fostering trust and accountability.

- Internal Adaptiveness – The flexibility of organisations to learn, adjust, and integrate justice feedback loops into planning routines.

This dimension builds on the idea that just outcomes depend on just procedures, resonating with Habermas's (1996) discourse ethics and Young's (1990) democratic inclusion.

### **(c) The Recognitional Dimension**

Recognition extends justice beyond material and procedural concerns to include identity, dignity, and epistemic respect. It calls for acknowledging and empowering marginalised voices and knowledge systems.

- Legal Empowerment and Validation – Institutional recognition of rights and identities through legal or regulatory means.
- Support for Collective Care Practices – Sustaining solidarity networks, commons management, and everyday care practices in vulnerable communities.
- Fostering the Pluriverse – Promoting plurality and the coexistence of multiple worldviews, challenging the dominance of Western-centric or technocratic models (Escobar 2018).

This dimension reflects the shift toward postcolonial and decolonial approaches to justice that recognise cultural and epistemic diversity as integral to sustainability.

## HOW THE BENCHMARKING TOOL WORKS

The SJBT operationalises the conceptual model through a structured assessment table that enables reflection on how each of the nine components manifests in a given plan, policy, or project.

Each component can be rated along five levels of attainment:

**Low** No or minimal consideration of spatial justice aspects.

**Starting** Early awareness or generic mention of justice, but not actionable.

**Basic** Some specific actions or recognition of justice in one or more components.

**Growing** Justice principles are incorporated into planning and governance practices.

**Embedded** Justice is institutionalised, continuously monitored, and adapted.

Participants are encouraged to discuss and co-score each component collaboratively, using concrete evidence, examples, or narratives. The emphasis is on learning through deliberation, not on producing a numeric index.

The tool thus acts as a mirror for institutional and civic self-assessment, identifying where justice is absent, emerging, or embedded in practice (Rocco et al. 2024).

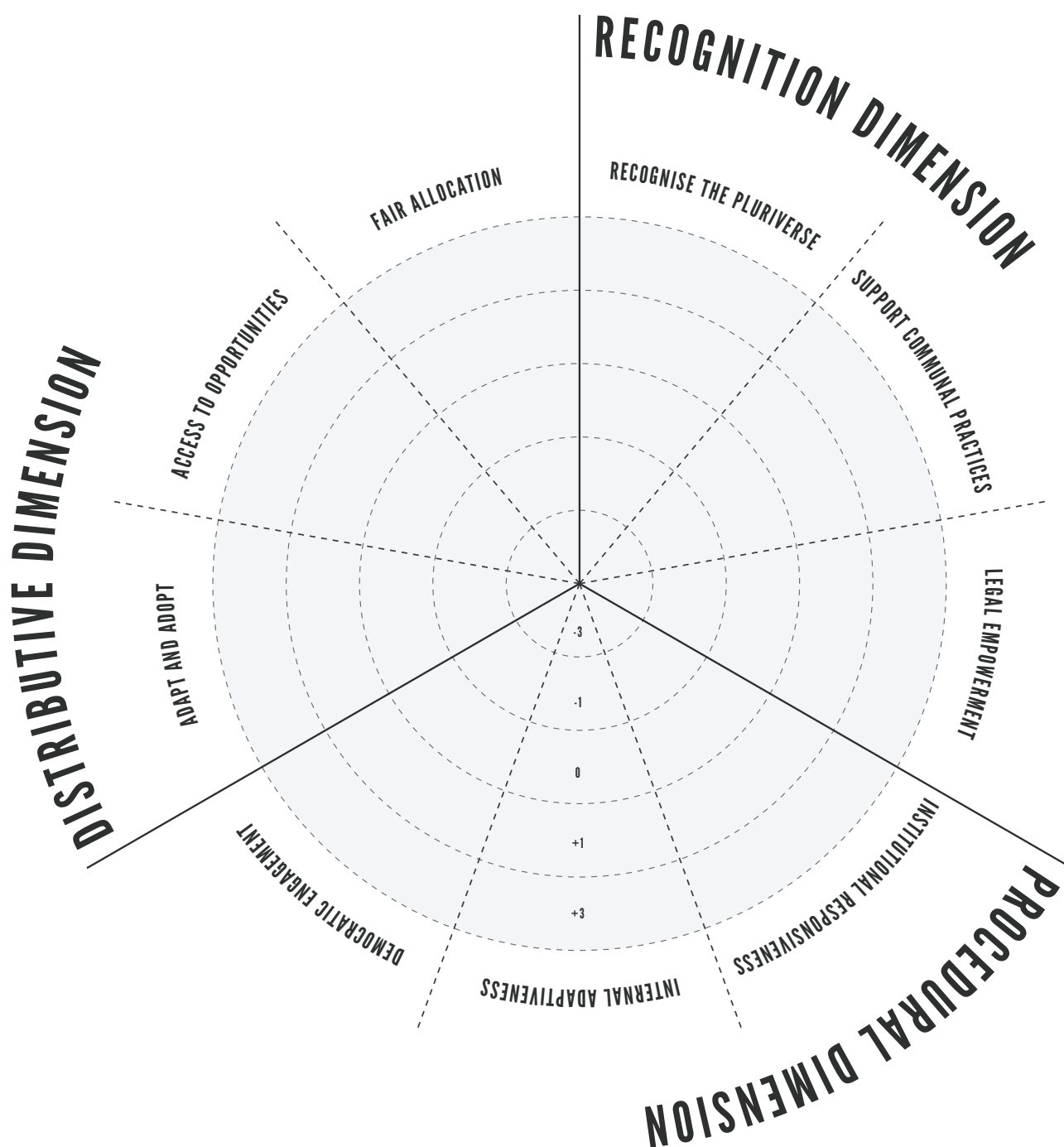
The Spatial Justice Benchmarking Tool (SJBT) dashboard (see figure) is a visual and interactive interface that translates the qualitative assessment

of justice dimensions into an accessible format for reflection and institutional learning.

The dashboard provides a graphical representation of how a policy, plan, or project performs across the nine components of the Spatial Justice Conceptual Model (SJCM), three for each justice dimension: distributive, procedural, and recognitional. Each component is assigned a level from Low to Embedded, based on participatory scoring during the benchmarking process. The dashboard then visualises these ratings in a matrix (figure 1) or radial chart (figure 2), allowing users to identify which justice aspects are well developed, which are emerging, and where gaps persist.

Rather than producing a ranking, this format acts as a conversation starter, helping planners and policymakers visualise their institutional and spatial ‘justice footprint.’

The results from the SJBT dashboard feed directly into the Justice Readiness Level (JRL) framework, another TU Delft tool that expresses how far justice principles are embedded in planning systems, using a ten-level scale from basic awareness (JRL 1) to institutionalisation and monitoring (JRL 10). A plan that scores ‘Basic’ or ‘Growing’ on the SJBT might correspond to JRL 3 or 4, indicating experimental application or partial integration of justice into planning practices. As organisations repeat the benchmarking exercise over time, they can track progress through the JRL scale, documenting shifts from conceptual engagement toward systemic embedding of justice principles.



COMPONENT 1	COMPONENT 2	COMPONENT 3	COMPONENT 1	COMPONENT 2	COMPONENT 3	COMPONENT 1	COMPONENT 2	COMPONENT 3
<b>FAIR ALLOCATION</b>	<b>IMPROVE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>EMPOWER PEOPLE TO ADAPT AND ADOPT</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>FOSTER INTERNAL ADAPTIVENESS</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS</b>	<b>LEGAL EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>SUPPORT FOR COLLECTIVE CARE PRACTICES</b>	<b>RECOGNISE AND FOSTER THE PLURIVERSE</b>
This component focuses on ensuring that resources are fairly distributed to address inequality. It concerns the material or service provision of public goods, basic services, cultural goods, economic opportunities, and healthy environments.	This component highlights efforts to enhance people's ability to reach and benefit from key opportunities. It concerns affordability, availability, connectivity, etc.	This component emphasizes empowering individuals and groups to actively shape and utilise available resources. It concerns the design, programming, and openness to people's agency.	This component focuses on the ongoing involvement of citizens in decision-making processes. The easiness of people to approach the institution.	This component focuses on the institution's internal flexibility and adaptability to evolving circumstances, incorporating feedback, and adjusting policies, practices, and programs to better reflect justice considerations.	This component focuses on how the institution address external stakeholders. It concerns ensuring that processes are fair, transparent, and sustainable, in views to uphold justice and that it legitimatises social sustainability.	This component emphasises the importance of legal frameworks in recognising and protecting the intrinsic value and dignity of individuals and groups as moral agents.	This component highlights actions to sustain and uplift collective efforts and everyday practices in disadvantaged communities, such as solidarity networks and the management of communal resources.	This component calls for a profound transformation of values to enable novel socioeconomic and institutional arrangements, advocating for considering the values, qualities, and unique socio-spatial dynamics of non-hegemonic cultures and communities.

	DISTRIBUTIVE DIMENSION			PROCEDURAL DI
EMBEDDED GROWING BASIC STARTING LOW	There are considerations regarding the allocation of benefits and burdens across the city. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered. This is evidenced in specification of what, how, and who is being considered.	There are considerations about access to benefits and burdens across the city. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered. This is evidenced in specification of what, how, and who is being considered.	There are considerations for the appropriation of benefits and burdens across the city. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered. This is evidenced in specification of what, how, and who is being considered.	There are considerations on how people are engaged in processes. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered. This is evidenced in the specification of what/where, how, and who is being considered.
	There are considerations regarding the allocation of benefits and burdens across the city. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered. This is evidenced in specifications of what/how is redistributed.	There are considerations about access to benefits and burdens across the city. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered. This is evidenced in specifications of what/how is made accessible.	There are considerations about the appropriation of benefits and burdens across the city. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered. This is evidenced in specifications of what/how is open.	There are considerations on how people are engaged in processes. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered. This is evidenced in specifications of how, and who or what/where is being considered.
	There are considerations about the allocation of benefits and burdens across the city. It specifies where service or material is being allocated.	There are considerations about the access to benefits and burdens across the city. It specifies where or what service or material is being addressed.	There are considerations about the appropriation of benefits and burdens across the city. It specifies where or what material and/or service is open to change.	There are considerations about how people are engaged in processes (policies, regulations, standards, etc). It specifies how or who is being engaged.
	There is a general concern about the allocation of benefits and burdens across the city.	There is a general concern about access to benefits and burdens across the city.	There is a general concern about the appropriation of benefits and burdens across the city, with initial efforts to acknowledge people's usage and programming.	There is a general concern about how people are engaged in processes (policy, planning, projects, etc).
	There is no consideration for how benefits and burdens are distributed across the city.	There is no consideration of the access to benefits and burdens across the city.	There is no consideration of the appropriation of benefits and burdens across the city.	There is no consideration for how people are engaged in processes (policy, planning, projects, etc).
	COMPONENT 1	COMPONENT 2	COMPONENT 3	COMPONENT 1
	<b>FAIR ALLOCATION</b> <p>This component focuses on ensuring that resources are fairly distributed to address inequality. It concerns the material or service provision of public goods, basic services, cultural goods, economic opportunities, and healthy environments.</p>	<b>IMPROVE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES</b> <p>This component highlights efforts to enhance people's ability to reach and benefit from key opportunities. It concerns affordability, availability, connectivity, etc.</p>	<b>EMPOWER PEOPLE TO ADAPT AND ADOPT</b> <p>This component emphasizes empowering individuals and groups to actively shape and utilise available resources. It concerns the design, programming, and openness to people's agency.</p>	<b>DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT</b> <p>This component focuses on the ongoing involvement of citizens in decision-making processes. The easeness of people to approach the institution.</p>

RECOGNITION DIMENSION		RECOGNITION DIMENSION		
<div> <p>There are considerations on how internal processes adapt towards justice. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered. This is evidenced in the specification of what/where, how, and who is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations on how internal processes adapt towards justice. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered. This is evidenced in specifications of how and who or what/where is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations on how internal processes adapt towards justice. It specifies how it is being addressed.</p> <p>There is general concern about how internal processes (procedures, values, standards, etc.) adapt to promote justice inside institutions.</p> <p>There is no consideration for how internal processes (procedures, values, standards, etc) adapt towards justice inside institutions.</p> </div> <div>COMPONENT 2</div> <div> <p><b>FOSTER INTERNAL ADAPTIVENESS</b></p> <p>This component focuses on the institution's internal flexibility and adaptability to evolving circumstances, incorporating feedback, and adjusting policies, practices, and programs to better reflect justice considerations.</p> </div>	<div> <p>There are considerations for aspects of Spatial Justice in the government's actions. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered. This is evidenced in the specification of what/where, how, and who is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations for aspects of Spatial Justice in the government's actions. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered. This is evidenced in the specifications of what/where, and who or how is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations for aspects of Spatial Justice in the government's actions. It specifies what, where, how or who is being addressed.</p> <p>There is a general concern for aspects of Spatial Justice in the government's actions.</p> <p>There is no consideration for aspects of Spatial Justice in the government's actions.</p> </div> <div>COMPONENT 3</div> <div> <p><b>INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS</b></p> <p>This component focuses on how the institution address external stakeholders. It concerns ensuring that processes are fair, transparent, and sustainable, in views to uphold justice and that it legitimatises social sustainability.</p> </div>	<div> <p>There are considerations for validating disadvantaged individuals and groups in laws and regulations. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered. This is evidenced in the specification of who, what/where, and how is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations for validating disadvantaged individuals and groups in laws and regulations. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered, evidenced in the specifications of who, and what/where or how is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations for validating disadvantaged individuals and groups in laws and regulations. It specifies who is being validated.</p> <p>There is a general concern for validating of disadvantaged individuals and groups in laws and regulations. There is an acknowledgment of disparities.</p> <p>There is no consideration for validating disadvantaged individuals and groups in laws and regulations.</p> </div> <div>COMPONENT 1</div> <div> <p><b>LEGAL EMPOWERMENT</b></p> <p>This component emphasises the importance of legal frameworks in recognising and protecting the intrinsic value and dignity of individuals and groups as moral agents.</p> </div>	<div> <p>There are considerations to recognise practices of marginalised or non-hegemonic collectives and groups. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered, evidenced in the specification of who, what/where, and how is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations to recognise practices of marginalised or non-hegemonic collectives and groups. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered, evidenced in the specifications of who, and what/where or how is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations to recognise practices of marginalised or non-hegemonic collectives and groups. It specifies who is being recognised.</p> <p>There is a general concern to recognise practices of marginalised or non-hegemonic collectives and groups.</p> <p>There is no consideration to recognise practices of marginalised or non-hegemonic collectives and groups.</p> </div> <div>COMPONENT 2</div> <div> <p><b>SUPPORT FOR COLLECTIVE CARE PRACTICES</b></p> <p>This component highlights actions to sustain and uplift collective efforts and everyday practices in disadvantaged communities, such as solidarity networks and the management of communal resources.</p> </div>	<div> <p>There are considerations for aspirations, values, or livelihood of marginalised or non-hegemonic communities or diverse lifestyles. All dimensions of Spatial Justice are considered, evidenced in the specification of who, what/where, and how is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations for aspirations, values, or livelihood of marginalised or non-hegemonic communities or diverse lifestyles. More than one dimension of Spatial Justice is considered, evidenced in the specifications of who, and what/where or how is being considered.</p> <p>There are considerations for aspirations, values, or livelihood of marginalised or non-hegemonic communities or diverse lifestyles. It specifies who is being addressed.</p> <p>There is a general concern for aspirations, values, or livelihood of marginalised or non-hegemonic communities or diverse lifestyles. There is an acknowledgment of their existence and relevance.</p> <p>There is no consideration for aspirations, values, or livelihood of marginalised or non-hegemonic communities or diverse lifestyles.</p> </div> <div>COMPONENT 3</div> <div> <p><b>RECOGNISE AND FOSTER THE PLURIVERSE</b></p> <p>This component calls for a profound transformation of values to enable novel socioeconomic and institutional arrangements, advocating for considering the values, qualities, and unique socio-spatial dynamics of non-hegemonic cultures and communities.</p> </div>



## APPLICATION AND METHODOLOGY

In practical terms, the SJBT can be used in workshops, governance meetings, or participatory planning sessions. It typically follows these stages:

1. Clarify the Object of Assessment – Define whether the analysis focuses on a project, strategy, policy, or broader vision.
2. Map the Components – Use the nine elements of the SJCM as an interpretive grid.
3. Discuss and Score – Assign qualitative ratings from Low to Embedded for each component.
4. Document Insights – Record reflections, examples, and recommendations for improvement.
5. Reflect on Systemic Patterns – Identify which justice dimensions are well-developed and which require further attention.

In the UP2030 project, the SJBT has been applied to all participating cities sustainability transition plans (Belfast, Budapest, Granollers, Istanbul, Lisbon, München, Rio de Janeiro, Rotterdam, Zagreb), using the Values–Strategies–Objectives–Actions (VSOA) method to extract and code evidence of justice considerations within policy documents.

The Values–Strategies–Objectives–Actions (VSOA) method is a structured analytical framework used to unpack and evaluate the logic and content of urban strategic planning documents. It is particularly effective for assessing how cities articulate normative values, translate them into actionable strategies, and operationalise them through concrete objectives and interventions. Originally developed within the field of urban strategic planning promoted by UN-Habitat, the method distinguishes between values (the guiding ethical or political principles underpinning planning), strategies (broad approaches designed to realise those values), objectives (specific, measurable goals aligned with the strategies), and actions (the tangible

projects or policy measures through which objectives are implemented) (UN-Habitat 2009). In the context of spatial justice evaluation, the VSOA method enables systematic coding of policy and planning documents to trace where—and to what extent—justice principles are embedded in planning discourses and practices. It reveals imbalances, such as an overemphasis on strategic or technical actions with insufficient articulation of ethical or distributive foundations, thus linking normative commitments to institutional performance in urban transitions (Rocco, Gonçalves & López 2024).

Each statement or sentence was coded according to its dimension and component, and scored from –3 (no justice consideration) to +3 (integrated and monitored justice). This allowed a nuanced, comparative view of how justice is operationalised in planning discourse.

### 4. Analytical and Normative Purpose

The SJBT performs dual functions:

- Analytical, by making visible where justice is considered or omitted in planning systems;
- Normative, by encouraging the continuous embedding of justice values into urban governance and design.

By linking theory and practice, the tool embodies what Fraser (2009) calls participatory parity: the condition in which all individuals and groups can interact as peers in social and political life. It also aligns with the capabilities approach of Sen (2009), by focusing on what people are effectively able to do and be through spatial and institutional arrangements.

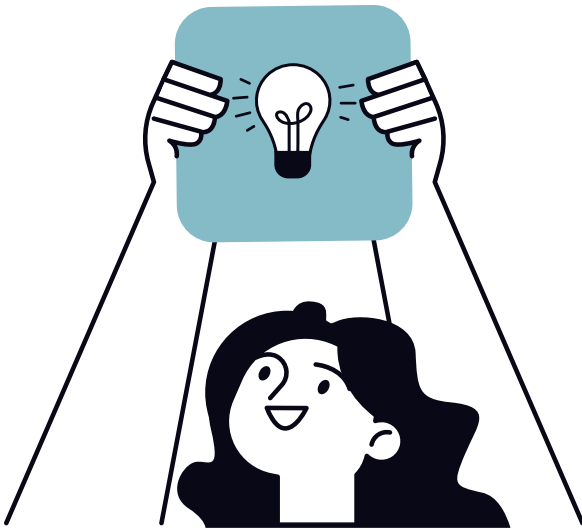
As a reflection-based instrument, the SJBT is complementary to other tools in the TU Delft Spatial Justice Package, such as the Justice Readiness Level, Citizen Voice, and the Strategic Planning Cycle. Together, these tools help cities transition from abstract justice awareness to institutional learning and transformative planning.

## 5. Integration within the Spatial Planning Cycle

Both the SJBT and JRL are operationalised within the TU Delft Spatial Planning Cycle, a participatory model outlining ten iterative stages of planning, from identifying needs and engaging stakeholders to co-designing strategies, implementing prototypes, and evaluating impacts (see page X). The SJBT is typically applied during the evaluation and co-design phases, where it helps assess distributive, procedural, and recognitional fairness in proposed interventions. The JRL then situates these findings within the broader planning cycle, providing continuity between reflection, action, and institutional learning. Together, these tools support a reflexive and adaptive planning process, where justice is not a one-off assessment but a continuous criterion guiding transitions toward more equitable and sustainable urban futures.

## 9.5. UP2030 TOOLS FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

### CITIZEN VOICE (TU DELFT)



#### OVERVIEW

Citizen Voice is a digital tool developed by TU Delft for engaging citizens in the collection of spatial information. This bottom-up initiative leverages digital surveys to gather insights directly from the public, enhancing the inclusivity and representativeness of urban planning processes.



#### FUNCTIONALITY

The tool allows survey designers—researchers or urban planners—to create and distribute surveys via an online platform. Citizens participate by responding to these surveys, and the collected data are then downloaded and analyzed by the survey designers.



#### USER INTERACTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Citizens respond to surveys, with the data then collected, analysed, and downloadable by the survey designer for further analysis.



#### TRL

Citizen Voice is currently at a TRL of 5, indicating that the technology is in the validation phase in a relevant environment. This phase involves further development of prototypes and testing with a broader user base to address usability and functionality concerns.



#### KPIS

- Number of respondents
- Spatial distribution of respondents
- Socio-demographic representativeness of respondents
- Engagement rate of the surveys.



#### EXAMPLES OF USAGE

While specific project examples are not listed, Citizen Voice is positioned to support various urban planning initiatives.



#### EXPERTISE REQUIRED

Users should have experience in citizen engagement and data analytics.



#### TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Guidelines for responsible research and digital tool usage are provided to ensure ethical and effective use.



## BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS

- **Digital Literacy:** The requirement for digital literacy among users can limit access among certain groups.
- **Privacy Concerns:** Handling sensitive data necessitates strict adherence to privacy laws and ethical guidelines.
- **Interface Usability:** Designing user-friendly interfaces that can accommodate a wide range of users.
- **Data Representativeness:** Ensuring that the data collected are representative of the entire community, including vulnerable groups.



## FURTHER INFORMATION AND TUTORIAL

Details on how to use Citizen Voice and ongoing developments are available on the CU@SP project page: CU@SP.



- Visualize and share complex spatial information.
- Elicit and incorporate local knowledge into planning.
- Maintain transparent communication between stakeholders.
- Inspire collective action on both local and global scales.



## USER INTERACTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

The platform supports the co-creation and visualization of data, with a strong emphasis on participatory action. Users can generate content and discuss it within and across communities. The information is stored in a GDPR-compliant database (Geokey - Geokey), and can be exported for analysis. Users can also customize access levels to the maps, from public viewing to private access for specific individuals.

## 9.6. COMMUNITY MAPS (MAPPING FOR CHANGE CIC'S PARTICIPATORY MAPPING TOOL)



### OVERVIEW

Community Maps is an innovative online mapping platform developed by Mapping for Change CIC. It was initially created in 2007 as part of a research project aimed at engaging communities and stakeholders in planning and development processes. This tool provides access to public spatial datasets and enables the collection of community perceptions to inform development plans.



### FUNCTIONALITY

Community Maps is a mobile-friendly web application designed to facilitate public engagement. It allows users to:

- Bring together various groups for collaborative projects.



### TRL

The tool is fully developed and ready for deployment in various scales and settings.



### KPIS

- Number of user contributions
- Number of contributions commented on
- Map visitation frequency



## EXAMPLES OF USAGE

Community Maps has been used for visualizing air quality data, consulting on road layouts, and identifying locations for new homes. Notable projects include visualizations for Southwark and Bingley Rural (Southwark Community Maps, Bingley Rural Green Travel Map).



## EXPERTISE REQUIRED

The platform is designed to be user-friendly with minimal training required.



## TRAINING AND SUPPORT

A brief training session (approximately 2 hours) is provided to enable partners to effectively edit and moderate content.



## BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS

The main limitation is the accessibility challenge for users with visual impairments, which is planned to be addressed in future development.



## FURTHER INFORMATION AND TUTORIAL

Comprehensive tutorials and additional support can be found at the Community Maps Help site: [Community Maps Help](#).



## 9.7. STORYTELLING FOR PARTICIPATORY EXCHANGE - ISOCARP INSTITUTE

### OVERVIEW

Storytelling for Participatory Exchange is an engagement tool developed by the ISOCARP Institute to facilitate knowledge sharing and co-creative decision-making in urban planning. This tool utilizes storytelling as a fundamental mechanism to bridge gaps between diverse stakeholders, enabling them to step away from purely cognitive exchanges and engage more emotionally and effectively. By creating neutral spaces where stories and experiences are shared, the methodology helps bypass conflicts and fosters intersectional co-learning and capacity building among participants, including local decision-makers and community organizations.

### FUNCTIONALITY

The methodology underpins the development of storytelling workshops and events designed to draw multiple stakeholders into productive conversations. It provides a structured approach to narrative construction, ensuring that storytelling is used strategically to achieve impactful communication and shared understanding.

### USER INTERACTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Participants engage through storytelling sessions where they narrate their experiences and perspectives. These narratives are then used to inform and enhance collaborative decision-making processes, helping integrate diverse viewpoints into urban planning strategies.

### TRL

The tool is fully developed but requires contextual adaptation to be effectively applied in different environments.

### KPIS

Key performance indicators include event attendance, diversity of societal groups and sectors represented, engagement level during the event, and the extent to which storytelling influences policy-making and stakeholder commitments.

### EXAMPLES OF USAGE

Storytelling for Participatory Exchange has been utilized in projects such as +CityxChange and JUSTNature, and is currently being applied in Amsterdam with local partners to facilitate inclusive urban planning processes.

### EXPERTISE REQUIRED

No specific prior expertise in storytelling is necessary as the methodology is designed to be accessible to all participants.





## TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Training on storytelling methodologies is provided, focusing on how to construct narratives, host events, and integrate storytelling into decision-making processes.



## BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS

While the tool is designed to be low-resource and accessible, challenges include organizing and hosting events, requiring minimal financial resources, time for preparation, and marketing efforts to ensure broad participation.



## FURTHER INFORMATION AND TUTORIAL

Currently, detailed tutorials or further online information specific to the tool are not available as the tool is still in the process of elaboration.



## 9.8. NEUTRALITY STORY MAPS - VUB (SMIT) & CERTH

### OVERVIEW

Neutrality Story Maps is a participatory tool developed by VUB (SMIT) and CERTH to capture citizens' lived experiences regarding climate change and sustainability transitions at an urban level. Utilizing digital storytelling and cultural probes, this tool empowers citizens to express and share their personal concerns, hopes, and needs related to climate and sustainability from a first-person perspective. It emphasizes creativity and personal insight, offering a unique approach to storytelling that provides valuable qualitative data for policy and decision-making.

### FUNCTIONALITY

The tool is designed in two phases: an initial analogue phase with physical and analogue artefacts for story creation, followed by a digital phase with a web-browser-based interface for easy story creation and distribution.

### USER INTERACTION & DATA MANAGEMENT

In the analogue phase, citizens use provided tools such as polaroid cameras and notebooks to craft and share their stories. In the digital phase, the interface allows for direct story creation and distribution online. Stories collected are rich in qualitative data, offering deep insights into the community's perceptions and experiences.

### TRL

Currently, Neutrality Story Maps is in the development phase, with an analogue version to be tested in pilot cities as part of the UP2030 project, and a digital version planned for future deployment.

### KPIS

Key performance indicators for this tool focus on the novelty, detail, and depth of insights derived from the stories, gauging the impact and effectiveness of the storytelling in capturing complex personal experiences.

### EXAMPLES OF USAGE

The tool will first be used in pilot cities under the UP2030 project, where it will gather stories to inform local climate and sustainability initiatives.

### EXPERTISE REQUIRED

While the tool is designed to be accessible to all citizens, some training might be required for the analysis of the stories to fully capture and utilize the richness of the data provided.

### TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Training will be provided for using the analogue artefacts and for analyzing the stories. The digital version is designed to be intuitive and easy to use for a broad audience, including children and the elderly.



## **BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS**

Challenges include the need for initial training to handle the analogue tools and the necessity of funding to assemble the toolkits and develop the digital platform. Accessibility and ease of use in diverse demographic contexts are also focus areas.



## **FURTHER INFORMATION & TUTORIAL**

Neutrality Story Maps is still under development, with detailed information and progress updates to be provided as the project evolves within the UP2030 framework.



## 9.9. URBAN DESIGN MANUAL FOR CHILD AND YOUTH FRIENDLY CITIES - DESIGN CLIPS

### OVERVIEW

The Urban Design Manual for Child and Youth Friendly Cities is a specialized tool developed by Design Clips aimed at enhancing the quality of urban spaces, with a specific focus on the needs and aspirations of children and young people. It facilitates small-scale interventions in public spaces, empowering young residents to actively participate in urban planning and take meaningful climate action.

### FUNCTIONALITY

The manual provides guidelines and processes for designing urban spaces that are responsive to the needs of children and youth. It focuses on participatory planning, allowing young people to express their perspectives and contribute to urban regeneration projects such as mobility planning and the design of public spaces.

### USER INTERACTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

This tool involves direct engagement with children and youth through coordinated workshops. The input collected from these sessions is then processed and integrated into the final urban design plans, ensuring that the young participants' voices are reflected in the outcomes.

### TRL

The tool is fully developed but requires adaptation to local contexts and specific project needs to ensure its effectiveness across different urban environments.

### KPIS

While specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are not yet established, the tool tracks participation metrics such as the number and age of participants to evaluate inclusiveness. It also assesses how well the participatory outputs are integrated into final urban regeneration plans.

### EXAMPLES OF USAGE

The Municipality of Thessaloniki has used this manual to develop a pilot Safe Routes to School Scheme and to inform an urban regeneration plan around a school area, demonstrating its practical application in real-world settings.

### EXPERTISE REQUIRED

Users of the manual should have a basic understanding of planning and design processes. Coordination with children may require the involvement of an external expert or a dedicated liaison partner to facilitate activities effectively.



## TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Training may be necessary for local authorities or other facilitators to effectively manage the participatory activities outlined in the manual.



## BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS

The main challenge is the need for capacity building within local authorities to conduct child-focused participatory activities. Additionally, human resources may be stretched thin, necessitating support from external experts.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

The Urban Design Manual for Child and Youth Friendly Cities provides a comprehensive approach to creating more inclusive urban environments tailored to the younger population. For more details or to access the manual, contact Maria Sitzoglou at [maria@design-clips.com](mailto:maria@design-clips.com).



## 9.10. LEARNING AND ACTION ALLIANCES (LAA) METHOD - ICATALIST

### OVERVIEW

The Learning and Action Alliances (LAA) method is a collaborative approach used by ICATALIST to address complex social, environmental, and organizational challenges. It involves diverse stakeholders working together to learn, problem-solve, and implement actions that foster sustainable solutions. This method emphasizes participation, knowledge exchange, and collective action to effectively tackle multifaceted issues.

### FUNCTIONALITY

LAA is designed to facilitate stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and strategic planning. It applies to various fields such as community development, environmental conservation, and public policy, aiming to create meaningful solutions through inclusive and collaborative processes.

### USER INTERACTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

The method consists of several steps, including problem diagnosis, stakeholder engagement, collaborative learning, action planning, implementation, and monitoring, followed by reflection and learning. Each step requires specific data and skills to ensure effective participation and outcome generation.

### TRL

The tool is fully developed but necessitates contextual adaptation to align with specific project or local needs, ensuring its relevance and efficacy in diverse settings.

### KPIS

Potential KPIs include the number of stakeholders engaged, the diversity of stakeholders represented, the level of shared understanding among participants, the number of action plans developed, and the impact of implemented actions.

### EXAMPLES OF USAGE

LAA has been successfully implemented in various projects, including EU INTERREG IVb MARE project, PRIMA LENSES project, and Horizon 2020 REXUS Project. These implementations highlight its versatility and effectiveness in fostering collaborative solutions.

### EXPERTISE REQUIRED

Facilitators of the LAA process need to have strong skills in stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, facilitation, and project management. They should be capable of handling diverse groups and fostering an environment conducive to open dialogue and cooperation.

## **TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

Facilitators and local authorities may require training in collaborative leadership and conflict resolution to effectively manage the LAA process. Capacity building is essential to equip stakeholders with the necessary skills for participation and decision-making.

## **BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS**

Challenges may include resistance from traditional decision-making bodies, difficulties in engaging diverse stakeholders, and resource constraints. Legal and regulatory constraints may also pose barriers to the collaborative process.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The LAA method is continuously being refined, with guidelines currently under development as part of deliverable 4.3 to adapt a roadmap for each city case study. For more information or to get involved, contact Manuel Bea ([mbea@icatalist.eu](mailto:mbea@icatalist.eu)) and Sara Ros ([sros@icatalist.eu](mailto:sros@icatalist.eu)).





## 9.11. ADDITIONAL TOOLS FOR IDENTIFYING, IMPLEMENTING, BENCHMARKING, AND MONITORING SPATIAL JUSTICE

### SPATIAL JUSTICE INDEX



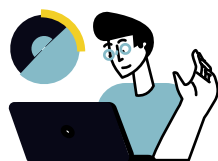
This comprehensive tool measures spatial equity by analyzing the distribution of resources, services, and opportunities across different urban areas. It uses indicators such as accessibility to public services, economic opportunities, and environmental quality to highlight areas where disparities exist and where interventions are needed.

### COMMUNITY MAPPING PLATFORMS



These interactive digital platforms engage citizens in the mapping process, allowing them to contribute data on local issues such as accessibility, safety, and public amenities. This participatory approach ensures that planning processes incorporate the lived experiences and insights of the community, leading to more tailored and effective interventions.

### EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS



Modeled after environmental impact assessments, these assessments evaluate proposed urban

projects and policies through the lens of social equity. They help identify potential adverse impacts on marginalized communities and develop strategies to mitigate these effects, ensuring that new developments promote inclusivity.

### PUBLIC SPACE AUDITS



These audits systematically evaluate public spaces to assess their accessibility, safety, and inclusivity. Audits can reveal how different groups experience urban environments and guide improvements to make these spaces welcoming and usable for everyone, thus enhancing public life and community interactions.

### PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PLATFORMS



By involving citizens directly in the decision-making process regarding public spending, these platforms democratize budget allocations and ensure that funds are used to address the community's most pressing needs. This fosters a more equitable distribution of urban resources and empowers residents by giving them a voice in local governance.

### DIGITAL STORYTELLING TOOLS



Utilising narratives from community members, especially those from underrepresented groups, these tools gather qualitative insights into the personal impacts of urban planning decisions. Digital

storytelling helps bring these individual stories to the forefront, influencing more empathetic and socially aware planning.

## GIS-BASED ANALYSIS TOOLS



Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are crucial for analyzing spatial data related to demographics, land use, and infrastructure. They help identify and visualize spatial inequalities and are essential in planning interventions aimed at rectifying disparities and enhancing spatial justice.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS FOR PUBLIC SENTIMENT



This tool leverages data from social media platforms to gauge public opinion and sentiment on urban development issues. It provides real-time insights into community needs and perceptions, helping to identify areas where spatial justice may be lacking.

## REAL-TIME DATA MONITORING SYSTEMS



Employing sensors and IoT devices, these systems provide ongoing monitoring of environmental conditions and public space usage. This technology enables continuous assessment of how urban spaces are used and the effectiveness of implemented interventions, ensuring that planning remains adaptive and responsive to community needs.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS



Regularly scheduled workshops that bring together diverse groups of stakeholders — from government officials to community activists — ensure ongoing dialogue and collaboration. These workshops are crucial for maintaining an open channel for feedback and for co-developing solutions to spatial injustices identified through other tools.

# **CHALLENGES & FUTURE DIRECTIONS**



# 10. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO SPATIAL JUSTICE



# 10.1. STRUCTURAL DEEP CHANGE

Structural deep change names transformations at the level of institutions, political economy, and socio-ecological relations, rather than incremental programme tweaks. It draws on critical theory's concern with power and domination in everyday life and governance (Habermas, 1996; Marcuse, 2013) and on decolonial and feminist planning scholarship that exposes how colonial and patriarchal legacies are sedimented in spatial institutions and norms (Porter, 2012). The agenda is not value-neutral. It orients planning toward participatory parity (Fraser, 2000) and material redistribution, while recognising plural knowledges and claims to space. In practice, this means acting on the systems that reproduce spatial inequalities:

**Redistribution and housing.** Progressive fiscal measures and social investment are necessary but insufficient without tenure models that decommodify land and stabilise households. Community land trusts show evidence of reducing displacement risk by removing land from speculative markets and retaining affordability over time (Moore & McKee, 2012).

**Political reform.** Mechanisms such as participatory budgeting can widen inclusion and reorient local spending, although effects depend on design and power relations; weak designs are prone to elite capture or symbolic participation (Wampler & Hartz-karp, 2012).

**Social transformation.** Anti-racist and gender-equity commitments must be operationalised through rules, metrics, and accountability in planning organisations, not only in rhetoric.

**Environmental sustainability with justice.** Green infrastructure and urban greening can deliver health and climate benefits, yet without anti-displacement safeguards, may trigger “green gentrification,” relocating rather than reducing vulnerability (Wolch et al., 2014).

Illustrative pathways include **land reform and community land trusts** to secure collective or public control of land for housing and community use (Moore & McKee, 2012); **universal basic services** that treat essentials like health, education, care, transport, and digital access as social rights rather than market commodities, supported by pooled public provisioning and progressive taxation (Coote & Percy, 2020); and **decolonising urban space**, which requires recognising Indigenous jurisdiction and integrating Indigenous planning principles and ecological knowledge into statutory systems, beyond consultation alone (Porter, 2012). Ambitious climate-economy packages such as a **Green New Deal** exemplify how decarbonisation, job creation, and inequality reduction can be articulated as a single mission, though they face political feasibility and distributional design challenges that must be openly addressed (Galvin & Healy, 2020; Mazzucato, 2021).

A sceptical view warns that ‘deep change’ language can obscure implementation politics. Redistribution collides with entrenched property regimes; participation can be performative; and ecological upgrades can recentre investment in already privileged areas. These risks strengthen rather than weaken the case for structural approaches, because they highlight the need for institutional redesign, enforceable safeguards, and iterative evaluation. The practical test is whether reforms shift decision rights, resource flows, and exposure to harm for those most disadvantaged. Structural deep change should therefore be framed as a multi-level programme: alter ownership and financing of land and infrastructure, embed inclusive decision-making with real authority, align climate policy with social guarantees, and monitor distributive and recognitional outcomes over time. Without these systemic levers, spatial justice remains an aspiration rather than a governing practice.

# EXAMPLES OF STRUCTURAL DEEP CHANGE

## LAND REFORM AND COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Redistributive land policies and alternative ownership models are central to structural change because they directly address the concentration of property rights that underpin spatial inequality. Community land trusts (CLTs), which remove land from speculative markets, have been shown to stabilise communities, preserve affordability, and support collective governance of housing (DeFilippis et al., 2018; Moore & McKee, 2012). Yet CLTs also face challenges of scale and dependence on state support, reminding us that structural change requires embedding such initiatives in wider legal and fiscal regimes rather than treating them as isolated experiments.

## UNIVERSAL BASIC SERVICES

Shifting the guarantee of essential goods from market provision to publicly funded services is another avenue of deep change. Advocates argue that universal basic services (UBS) should be treated as social rights, encompassing health, education, care, housing, transport, and digital access, thereby reducing inequality and strengthening social resilience (Coote & Percy, 2020). Unlike the universal basic income, which risks reinforcing market dependency, UBS reorients economies toward collective provisioning. Its feasibility, however, depends on political commitments to progressive taxation and institutional redesign at multiple levels.

## DECOLONISING URBAN SPACES

Structural change also requires confronting the colonial logics embedded in planning and property regimes. Decolonial planning scholarship calls for recognising Indigenous sovereignty,

integrating Indigenous ecological knowledge, and challenging the dispossession on which many urban systems were built (Porter, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Practices range from land restitution to Indigenous-led planning frameworks that assert jurisdictional authority. While often marginalised in statutory systems, such approaches point to the necessity of pluralising urban governance if spatial justice is to move beyond Western liberal frameworks.

## THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Proposals such as the Green New Deal exemplify attempts to align ecological transition with redistribution, framing climate action as inseparable from social justice. Scholars emphasise its potential to link decarbonisation with job creation, affordable housing, and public investment in infrastructure (Galvin & Healy, 2020; Mazzucato, 2021). Yet critics caution that without safeguards, such programmes risk reproducing inequalities by privileging capital-intensive projects or neglecting community-level needs. Its strength lies in treating environmental and economic crises as interconnected structural problems, demanding integrated solutions.

Structural deep change, therefore, requires interventions that simultaneously shift property regimes, public provisioning, epistemic authority, and economic-environmental relations. These examples illustrate both the promise and the tension of structural approaches: they open possibilities for more inclusive and sustainable urban futures, but they also confront entrenched interests that benefit from existing arrangements. Progress depends not only on adopting such tools but on transforming the institutions, laws, and social norms that determine their durability.



## DEEP OR RADICAL DEMOCRACY

Deep Democracy is a concept that extends beyond the formal procedures of democratic governance (e.g., voting, elections) to encompass broader dimensions of participation, inclusion, and empowerment in all areas of social life. It emphasises the importance of integrating diverse voices, especially those of marginalised and traditionally excluded groups, into decision-making processes at all levels. Deep democracy is concerned with the quality and depth of democratic engagement, advocating for a society where every individual has the opportunity to participate meaningfully in shaping the policies and practices that affect their lives.

The intellectual roots of deep democracy can be traced through several strands of political theory and philosophy, including deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, and radical democracy. The concept draws inspiration from the work of scholars such as Jürgen Habermas, who emphasised the importance of communicative action and rational discourse in the public sphere, and Carol Pateman, who advocated for participatory approaches in democratic governance. Additionally, the ideas of Cornelius Castoriadis on the project of autonomy and democracy as a form of social instituting also contribute to the underpinnings of deep democracy.

## JOHN DEWEY'S MODEL OF DEMOCRACY

John Dewey's model of democracy, articulated most notably in *The Public and Its Problems* (Dewey 1927), presents democracy not only as a political system but as an 'ethical way of life' rooted in everyday interactions and collective problem-solving. Rather than confining democracy to voting or formal procedures, Dewey envisioned it as a continuous, participatory, and deliberative process, where citizens engage in public discourse, cultivate habits of mutual respect, and cooperate in shaping their communities. Education, in this model, is

essential because it equips citizens with the critical thinking and communicative capacities necessary for democratic life (Biesta & Burbules 2003).

Dewey's model rests on three interrelated dimensions: **discussion, diversity, and dynamism**.

**Discussion.** Dewey considered communication and dialogue to be the cornerstone of democracy. Through deliberation, communities can learn collectively, negotiate differences, and develop informed responses to social challenges (Dewey 1927). This anticipates later deliberative democratic theory, which stresses the role of inclusive dialogue in legitimising political decisions (Habermas 1996).

**Diversity.** For Dewey, diversity was not a burden to democratic life but its greatest strength. The inclusion of varied experiences, perspectives, and epistemologies enriches collective intelligence and expands the range of possible solutions. This emphasis resonates with contemporary arguments about epistemic justice and the need to value multiple ways of knowing (Fricker 2007; Young 2000).

**Dynamism.** Dewey's democracy is dynamic and fallibilist, grounded in the belief that policies, institutions, and norms must remain open to revision in light of new experiences and evidence. Mechanisms such as elections, protest, free media, and civic association are necessary to ensure responsiveness and accountability. This dimension reflects Dewey's pragmatist conviction that democracy, like knowledge itself, is always provisional and adaptive.

Taken together, these dimensions form a conception of democracy as a living, evolving process embedded in social relations rather than reducible to institutional design. Dewey's insistence on democracy as a way of life challenges technocratic and minimalist models of democracy that privilege efficiency or elite expertise.

## Intersections with Deep Democracy

The concept of **Deep Democracy** aligns closely with Dewey's vision. Both stress democracy as an experiential practice rather than a set of formal institutions. Points of intersection include:

**Democracy as an ethical process.** Dewey saw democracy as lived experience, echoing deep democracy's call for decision-making to permeate all areas of social life, not only electoral politics (Dewey, 1946; Pateman, 1999).

**Centrality of communication.** Dewey's emphasis on open dialogue parallels deep democracy's insistence that marginalised voices must be heard and valued, extending the scope of deliberation beyond dominant groups (Mouffe, 2000; Young, 2002).

**Education and empowerment.** Dewey argued that education is the foundation of democracy because it fosters critical thinking and responsible citizenship. This resonates with deep democracy's commitment to empowering individuals and groups to participate meaningfully in shaping decisions (Biesta & Burbules, 2003).

**Addressing inequality.** While Dewey did not frame democracy explicitly in terms of dismantling power structures, his emphasis on inclusivity anticipates later concerns with social justice. Deep democracy extends this by directly confronting systemic exclusions rooted in race, gender, and class (Miraftab, 2009).

**Adaptive and evolving systems.** Both perspectives view democracy as an ongoing, adaptive process. This contrasts with static or proceduralist understandings that reduce democracy to electoral routines.

Critically, scholars have noted limits in Dewey's model. While he recognised diversity and deliberation, he underestimated the persistence of structural inequalities and the role of conflict in democratic life. Radical democratic theorists such as Mouffe (2000) argue that agonism, the recognition of inevitable conflict, is central, not peripheral, to

democracy. Thus, integrating Dewey with deep democracy requires acknowledging the need for both deliberative dialogue and contestatory practices that challenge entrenched power.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND EXAMPLES

Translating Dewey's and deep democracy's principles into practice requires designing institutions that embed participation, recognise diversity, and remain responsive. Examples include:

**Participatory budgeting**, pioneered in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where citizens decide on portions of municipal budgets, reshaping priorities toward social needs (Wampler, 2007).

**Community advisory boards** in urban development, which institutionalise local input into planning decisions and mitigate top-down imposition, manipulation and tokenism (Arnstein, 1969; Fung, 2006).

**Consensus decision-making** in cooperatives and social movements ensures that all members have a voice and responsibility in shaping collective outcomes.

**Indigenous governance models**, such as Māori co-governance arrangements in Aotearoa/New Zealand, which integrate Indigenous sovereignty and knowledge into statutory decision-making (Matunga, 2013).

Such practices illustrate how Deweyan principles of discussion, diversity, and dynamism can be operationalised while aligning with deep democracy's emphasis on inclusivity and power-sharing.

## CONNECTIONS TO SPATIAL JUSTICE

Deep democracy links directly to spatial justice through its insistence on inclusivity, equity, and participation in the production of urban space. Spatial justice requires not only distributive fairness in access to land, services, and infrastructure, but also procedural and recognitional justice,

ensuring that diverse voices and identities are acknowledged and given a voice in decision-making (Fraser, 2010). Deep democracy challenges exclusionary planning practices by creating spaces where marginalised groups can shape visions of their environments and assert claims over urban futures. By embedding participatory decision-making into planning, it reconfigures power relations and strengthens collective capacity to achieve more equitable outcomes (Healey, 1997).





## 10.2. VISIONING AND COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION

Processes of visioning and collective imagination are essential to embedding deep democracy within spatial planning. They enable communities to move beyond present constraints and articulate shared aspirations, thereby grounding planning in the lived realities and creative capacities of citizens. Such practices resonate with Dewey's model of democracy as a 'way of life,' centred on dialogue, collaboration, and the collective pursuit of common goals (Biesta & Burbules, 2003; Dewey, 1946). Visioning not only facilitates deliberation but also nurtures the affective and symbolic dimensions of democratic life, where imagination becomes a political act of contesting existing inequalities and envisioning alternatives.

Collective imagination has been taken up in urban theory as a tool for generating counter-hegemonic futures. Scholars such as Sandercock (2003) emphasise storytelling and imagination as means of amplifying marginalised voices, while Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* (1986), initially published in 1959, illustrates how envisioning the 'not-yet' can sustain social movements and inspire transformative planning. Similarly, hope as a political practice has been framed as a resource for resilience and mobilisation in contexts of systemic oppression (hooks, 2003; Zournazi, 2003). When linked to

spatial justice, hope and imagination provide both the cognitive space to envision equitable futures and the emotional sustenance to pursue them.

At the same time, visioning processes must be approached critically. Without safeguards, they risk reproducing exclusions by being co-opted into technocratic planning exercises that neutralise dissent (Purcell, 2009). A genuinely democratic collective imagination must therefore attend to conflict, negotiate competing claims, and explicitly foreground structural inequalities. In this sense, collective imagination is not a utopian exercise detached from politics but a contested and situated practice of co-producing futures.

### FREIRE'S PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED AND COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION

Collective imagination resonates strongly with Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2018) initially published in 1970, which emphasises the transformative potential of critical consciousness (*conscientização*) and collective praxis in overcoming structures of domination. Freire argued that education should move beyond the 'banking model' of knowledge transfer, where learners are treated as passive recipients, to become a dialogical and participatory process where individuals recognise, question, and transform the conditions of their oppression. This process of reflection and action, or *praxis*, provides the foundation for emancipatory politics. Within this framework, collective imagination functions as a tool that allows communities to envision alternatives to the status quo, interrogate the limits of existing structures, and cultivate shared aspirations for just futures (Freire, 2018; Giroux, 2010).

Applied to spatial planning, this alignment is significant. Just as Freire insisted that pedagogy must liberate learners by rooting knowledge in lived experience, collective imagination in planning demands that communities co-create visions of their

environment based on their needs, desires, and histories. It challenges technocratic or top-down planning by foregrounding everyday knowledge and dialogical processes (Sandercock & Lyssiotis, 2003). In this way, collective imagination can be read as a form of ‘emancipatory planning pedagogy’ that transforms not only urban space but also the civic capacities of those engaged in shaping it.

## VISIONING EXERCISES IN SPATIAL PLANNING

Visioning exercises are structured participatory processes designed to articulate a community’s shared aspirations, values, and goals for the future. They typically involve workshops, collaborative design sessions, and creative facilitation techniques that make space for multiple forms of knowledge and expression. The aim is not only to generate consensus but also to surface divergent perspectives and negotiate them transparently (Innes & Booher, 2018). Effective visioning builds long-term strategic direction while grounding planning in the lived experiences of stakeholders. Yet visioning is not politically neutral: its outcomes reflect power relations, facilitation choices, and whose voices are enabled or silenced (Purcell, 2009). Critical facilitation and reflexivity are therefore crucial to avoid co-optation or superficial consensus-building.

## COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION AS A TOOL FOR DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIVE SPATIAL PLANNING



Collective imagination extends visioning by explicitly mobilising creativity and critical reflection as democratic resources. It contributes to spatial justice in several ways:

**Encouraging broad participation.** By deliberately including marginalised groups, collective imagination exercises counteract the exclusionary dynamics of conventional planning and democratise whose knowledge counts (Young, 2002).

**Breaking down barriers.** Creative and dialogical methods enable participants to build empathy across differences and foster coalitional thinking, which is essential for diverse urban contexts (Sandercock & Lyssiotis, 2003).

**Innovating beyond constraints.** Collective imagination invites communities to articulate futures unconstrained by immediate political or economic limitations, fostering innovation while anchoring proposals in community values.

**Empowering communities.** Through visioning and imagination, residents gain ownership over planning processes, which increases legitimacy, fosters accountability, and enhances the likelihood of sustained implementation (Forester, 1999).

## EXAMPLES

**Community design charrettes.** Intensive, collaborative workshops bringing together residents and professionals to generate spatial solutions have proven effective in democratising design, though their outcomes depend heavily on power dynamics and facilitation (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2014).

**Digital participatory mapping.** Platforms that allow communities to map aspirations and concerns broaden participation beyond traditional meetings,

offering inclusion for those unable to attend in person (Perkins, 2007).

**Future scenarios workshops.** Scenario planning encourages communities to explore alternative futures, making visible the trade-offs and potential consequences of different planning decisions (Wangel, 2011).

Freire's pedagogy emphasises the emancipatory potential of envisioning and collective imagination by situating them as acts of dialogue, reflection, and action that empower communities to transform their environments. When embedded in spatial planning, these processes move beyond consultation toward practices that challenge structural inequalities, cultivate civic agency, and enable communities to co-produce just, inclusive, and sustainable futures. However, as critical urban scholars warn, their transformative capacity depends on addressing entrenched power relations and ensuring that 'participation' does not become tokenistic or technocratic.

## PREFIGURATIVE PRACTICES

Prefigurative practices, or *prefigurative politics*, describe efforts to embody the values and social relations of a desired future within present-day actions, institutions, and spatial arrangements. Rather than waiting for systemic change, they enact alternative models in the here and now, making them both practical strategies and symbolic critiques of dominant structures. In urban planning, these practices provide tangible demonstrations of equity, inclusion, and sustainability, offering prototypes for how urban environments might be organised differently (Breines, 1989; Yates, 2015).

The idea of prefiguration has roots in anarchist thought and New Left movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Wini Breines (1989) used the term 'prefigurative politics' to describe the New Left's efforts to live its ideals of participatory democracy, egalitarianism, and decentralisation within the organisational forms of its activism. Activists argued

that the *means* of political struggle should reflect the *ends* sought, embedding principles of direct democracy, mutual aid, and non-hierarchy in everyday practices. This perspective gained renewed visibility in movements such as Occupy Wall Street, which experimented with consensus-based assemblies and encampments as both protest and enactment of a more democratic society (Graeber, 2013).

In urban contexts, prefigurative practices often take the form of community land trusts, housing cooperatives, eco-villages, and transition towns, where residents experiment with collective ownership, sustainable resource use, and democratic decision-making. Worker cooperatives also exemplify prefiguration by instituting forms of economic democracy in the present (Restakis, 2010). Digital platforms for decentralised decision-making, including blockchain-based experiments, extend these logics into new technological domains, though they face criticisms for scalability and exclusion (Hassan & Filippi, 2021).

Perhaps the most iconic urban example of a prefigurative experiment is **Freetown Christiania** in Copenhagen, founded in 1971 by squatters occupying former military barracks. Christiania operates under principles of consensus democracy, collective ownership, car-free urban design, and ecological innovation. Scholars highlight it as both a site of resistance to capitalist urbanism and a contested space, facing pressures from state regulation, tourism, and commodification (Thörn et al., 2011). While Christiania demonstrates the possibilities of communal governance and sustainable living, it also reveals the fragility of prefigurative projects when confronted with broader structural forces.

Prefigurative practices thus function on two levels: they address immediate community needs while also modelling alternative urbanisms. Their power lies in providing 'living laboratories' that contest dominant planning logics, but their limitations remind us that structural deep change requires connecting these experiments to larger institutional and political transformations (Maeckelbergh, 2011).



## HOPE AS A POLITICAL PRACTICE

Hope is not merely a private emotion but can function as a collective, strategic force in politics. Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* (Bloch, 1986), published in 1959, conceptualises hope as a 'not-yet-conscious' (*Noch-Nicht-Bewusstes*), orientation towards future possibilities, a critical resource for imagining alternatives and mobilising action. Hope, for Bloch, is not a mere affective disposition but a mode of cognition and praxis; a way of perceiving the world as unfinished and open to transformation. This anticipatory consciousness points toward the 'not-yet-become' (*Noch-Nicht-Gewordenes*). Those elements of the future that are immanent within the present and can be actualised through human agency. Hope thus bridges subjective desire and objective potential, linking imagination with praxis. It is not a retreat into utopian fantasy but an active engagement with reality's incompleteness.

Bloch situates this understanding within a Marxist dialectic that refuses both resignation and dogmatic teleology. Hope here operates as a 'militant optimism,' a refusal to accept the given as final. It resists fatalism by recognising that history is an open process shaped by collective will. This 'anticipatory consciousness' gives substance to political imagination, allowing oppressed groups to identify cracks in the present through which alternative futures can emerge.

Hope's political force lies in its capacity to transform knowledge and action: it is a praxis of expectation grounded in the conviction that what is does not exhaust what can be. As Bloch asserts,

*'This was the plan of the abstract utopias, but not in fact their only one: the intention towards the better world itself is by no means discharged, it and it alone is a major invariable in history. Without such anticipation in general there is no undisappointability, no belief in the goal, no distributable abundance of belief'* (Bloch, 1986, p. 582).

The principle of hope thus reframes utopia as a critical and material project, one that operates within history, rather than outside it. In this sense, hope becomes an organising principle for politics oriented toward justice, solidarity, and the collective production of a better world.

Cornel West (2005) similarly frames hope as indispensable to struggles for justice, distinguishing it from optimism: optimism assumes inevitability, whereas hope sustains engagement in the face of adversity.

In the context of neoliberal governance, characterised by privatisation, marketisation, and the shrinking of welfare states, hope becomes a political counterweight to despair, alienation, and the populist backlash these conditions often fuel (Brown, 2015). Hope as a political practice inspires collective mobilisation, nurtures resilience, and sustains long-term activism by affirming the possibility of transformation even under hostile conditions.

Urban scholars have begun to theorise hope as a dimension of resistance. Faranak Miraftab (Miraftab, 2018) highlights *translocality*, the ways grassroots struggles in one place resonate with and connect to others globally, as an inherently hopeful practice. For Miraftab, hope is not naïve optimism but a grounded, collective force that links local struggles against neoliberal urbanism to global solidarities, revealing common structures of exploitation and enabling shared repertoires of resistance.

In this sense, hope functions both analytically and politically: it illuminates how communities envision alternative futures and sustains the emotional and organisational energy required to pursue them. It also complicates conventional planning by situating imagination, affect, and solidarity as central to political agency. Yet scholars caution that hope must remain critical and grounded, lest it become detached from material struggles or co-opted by hegemonic discourses of 'resilience' that individualise responsibility (Anderson, 2006).



## HOPE AGAINST NEOLIBERAL GOVERNANCE

Under neoliberal governance, marked by marketisation, privatisation, and austerity, hope operates not as a private emotion but as a political practice that challenges the sense of inevitability such systems cultivate (Brown, 2015; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Neoliberalism narrows collective imagination by presenting market logic as the only rational framework for organising society. Hope resists this closure. It reopens the field of political possibility by enabling communities to envision futures beyond austerity and disinvestment. In cities shaped by neoliberal restructuring, this political hope emerges through collective visioning and coalition-building, where shared aspirations for justice and sustainability sustain grassroots resistance and wider social movements (West, 2005; Zournazi, 2003).

Hope also redefines resilience as collective rather than individual. Against the neoliberal framing of resilience as self-reliant adaptation, hopeful poli-

tics roots endurance in solidarity, mutual aid, and care. These social relations build communal capacity to withstand economic or ecological shocks while gesturing toward alternative, more equitable systems (Davoudi et al., 2012). Networks of co-operation, such as community kitchens, solidarity economies, or neighbourhood support groups, embody this ethos, transforming survival into collective empowerment.

A further dimension of hope lies in the **reclamation of the public sphere**. Neoliberal governance erodes public goods, privatises collective assets, and confines democratic debate within technocratic institutions. Hope counteracts this hollowing out by fuelling struggles to reinvest in shared infrastructures and reassert the value of the commons. Campaigns for housing rights, public transport, and universal basic services illustrate how hope can anchor concrete policy agendas aimed at rebuilding democratic and equitable urban governance (Coote & Percy, 2020).

Finally, hope fosters an **ethics of care and interdependence** that directly opposes neoliberal individualism. It reframes social life around reciprocity and mutual responsibility, principles embodied in everyday practices of caregiving, food-sharing, and cooperative economies (Tronto, 2013). These gestures are not peripheral acts of compassion but foundational political practices that sustain long-term struggles for justice. Hope's forward-looking quality also counteracts neoliberal short-termism: it situates economic and ecological sustainability as inseparable aims and insists that economic systems can, and must, be organised around human and planetary well-being rather than profit (Mazzucato, 2021).

In this way, hope becomes both a **present practice and a strategic orientation**. It links imagination to action, nurtures collective agency, and provides a moral horizon for transformative politics. Far from naïve optimism, hope functions as a critical resource for democratic renewal and for reasserting the possibility of a more just, sustainable urban future.

## INTERSECTION OF INSURGENT PLANNING AND HOPE

Hope and insurgent planning intersect in their shared commitment to envisioning and enacting alternatives to dominant governance. Insurgent planning, defined by grassroots, community-led practices that challenge state-centred and technocratic paradigms, creates tangible spaces where hope is materialised (Holston, 2008; Miraftab, 2009). It gives form to hope by demonstrating that communities, even under conditions of marginalisation, can exercise agency in shaping their environments.

**Empowerment through action.** Insurgent planning embodies hope by proving that change is possible in situ. Examples such as self-built housing in Latin American informal settlements or community land trusts in North America exemplify how marginalised groups mobilise to secure space, resist displacement, and assert rights (Holston, 2008; Moore & McKee, 2012). These actions challenge despair by producing small but significant victories, each reinforcing collective belief in spatial justice.

**Imagining alternative futures.** Both insurgent planning and hope depend on the capacity to imagine urbanism otherwise. By envisioning what communities could become, insurgent planning projects are inherently hopeful, challenging neoliberal hegemony by grounding alternatives in lived practice (Sandercock, 2003).

**Collective mobilisation.** Hope galvanises broad-based coalitions across diverse groups, enabling insurgent planning to draw strength from solidarity. This reflects Miraftab's (2016) emphasis on *translocality*, where struggles connect across geographies, amplifying resistance against global neoliberalism while sustaining hope through shared repertoires of action.

**Reimagining governance.** Insurgent planning challenges hierarchical models of state-led planning by practising forms of direct democracy, participatory

budgeting, and community assemblies. These practices represent acts of hopeful reimagining, rooted in the belief that more inclusive and equitable governance structures are possible (Purcell, 2009).

**Symbolic and physical spaces of hope.** Insurgent practices often result in the creation of spaces, such as social centres, squats, and community gardens, that not only meet immediate needs but also symbolise alternative urban futures. They become beacons of hope, both materially and culturally, showing that different urban worlds are possible.

In this way, hope and insurgent planning are mutually reinforcing. Hope sustains insurgent practices against adversity, while insurgent practices give substance and credibility to hope by enacting it in space and time. Their convergence is critical to advancing spatial justice because together they challenge neoliberal logics and cultivate the political imagination necessary for systemic transformation.





## 10.3. STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR INCORPORATING HOPE IN URBAN GOVERNANCE

Embedding hope in urban governance is not about cultivating passive optimism but about designing frameworks, practices, and institutions that enable communities to imagine, articulate, and realise just and sustainable futures. As Ernst Bloch (1986) argued, hope must be ‘concretised’ in practice; it becomes politically meaningful only when linked to material conditions and collective agency. In this sense, hope functions as both an orientation toward the ‘not-yet’ and a set of governance practices that empower communities to act (Zournazi, 2003). Below are strategies and tools that illustrate how hope can be institutionalised in urban governance while avoiding the risk of co-optation into depoliticised forms of ‘resilience’ (Brown, 2015; Davoudi et al., 2012).

### 1. Visionary and Inclusive Urban Planning

*Future visioning workshops.* Facilitated exercises in which residents, planners, and policymakers co-create scenarios for their city’s future can democratise strategic planning and generate shared direction (Innes (Innes & Booher, 2004). The risk is that poorly designed workshops reproduce elite voices or devolve into symbolic exercises; meaningful facilitation and follow-through are essential.

### 2. Inclusive planning processes.

Embedding participation across all stages of planning ensures marginalised groups have a substantive role, echoing Arnstein’s (1969) call to move beyond tokenism to citizen power.

### 3. Community Engagement and Empowerment

*Empowerment through education.* Urban literacy programmes strengthen community agency by making planning processes and rights intelligible, aligning with Freire’s (2018) pedagogy of critical consciousness developed in the 1970s.

*Community-led development initiatives.* Supporting initiatives such as cooperative housing or neighbourhood planning demonstrates hope in practice, as they allow residents to embody alternative governance models (Moore & McKee, 2012).

#### 4. Policy Frameworks Promoting Equity and Sustainability

*Equitable urban policies.* Explicit redistributive policies, such as affordable housing quotas, land value capture, or universal basic services, translate hope into structural reforms (Coote & Percy, 2020).

*Sustainability standards.* Integrating climate and ecological commitments into planning codes institutionalises long-term hopeful visions of sustainable cities (Mazzucato, 2021).

#### 5. Resilience and Adaptation Planning

*Climate resilience initiatives.* Proactive measures such as green infrastructure and nature-based solutions embody ‘just resilience’ by ensuring vulnerable groups benefit most from adaptation (Meerow et al., 2016).

*Economic and social resilience strategies.* Embedding social safety nets and community care systems prevents resilience from being framed as individual responsibility, instead rooting it in solidarity and public investment (Tronto, 2013).

#### 6. Innovative Governance Models

*Co-governance models.* Shared governance arrangements, such as participatory budgeting or citizen assemblies, materialise hope by redistributing authority and affirming collective agency (Fung, 2006; Wampler, 2007).

*Digital participation platforms.* When accessible and transparent, digital platforms can expand

participation, though care must be taken to avoid reinforcing digital divides (Perkins, 2007).

#### 7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback Mechanisms

*Progress indicators for hope.* Indicators should track not only economic growth but equity, sustainability, and well-being (Sen, 2009, 2014; UN-Habitat, 2020). Designing such measures requires a participatory definition of what ‘progress’ means to communities.

*Feedback loops.* Continuous evaluation and community input ensure planning remains adaptive and aligned with evolving collective visions, echoing Dewey’s pragmatist view of democracy as iterative and experimental (Dewey, 1946).

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. (2006). Becoming and being hopeful: Towards a theory of affect. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24(5), 733-752. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d393t>
- Arnstein, S. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35(4), 216-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225>
- Biesta, G. J. J., & Burbules, N. C. (2003). *Pragmatism and Educational Research*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bloch, E. (1986). *The Principle of Hope*. MIT Press.
- Breines, W. (1989). *Community and Organization: The New Left and Michels' "Iron Law"*. Rutgers University Press.
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. Zone Books.
- Coote, A., & Percy, A. (2020). *The Case for Universal Basic Services*. Polity.
- Davoudi, S., Shaw, K., Haider, L. J., Quinlan, A. E., Peterson, G. D., Wilkinson, C., Fünfgeld, H., McEvoy, D., & Porter, L. (2012). Resilience: A Bridging Concept or a Dead End? "Reframing" Resilience: Challenges for Planning Theory and Practice. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 13(2), 299-333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2012.677124>
- DeFilippis, J., Stromberg, B., & Williams, O. R. (2018). W(h)ither the community in community land trusts? *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 40(6), 755-769. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2017.1361302>
- Dewey, J. (1946). *The Public and its Problems: An Essay in Political Enquiry*. Gateway.
- Forester, J. (1999). *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*. MIT Press.
- Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review*, 3, 107-120. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii3/articles/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition>
- Fraser, N. (2010). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.
- Freire, P. (2018). *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury.
- Fung, A. (2006). Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance. *Public Administration Review*, 66(Special Issue: Collaborative Public Management), 66-75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4096571>
- Galvin, R., & Healy, N. (2020). The Green New Deal in the United States: What it is and how to pay for it. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 67(September), 101529. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2020.101529>
- Giroux, H. A. (2010). Rethinking Education as the Practice of Freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(6), 715-721. <https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2010.8.6.715>
- Graeber, D. (2013). *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*. Penguin.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Polity Press.
- Hassan, S., & Filippi, P. D. (2021). Decentralized Autonomous Organization. *Internet Policy Review*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.14763/2021.2.1556>
- Healey, P. (1997). *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. Springer.
- Holston, J. (2008). *Insurgent citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton University Press.
- hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. Routledge.
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(4), 419-436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464935042000293170>
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2018). *Planning with Complexity: An Introduction to Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315147949>
- Lennertz, B., & Lutzenhiser, A. (2014). *The Charrette Handbook*. Routledge.
- Maeckelbergh, M. (2011). Doing is Believing: Prefiguration as Strategic Practice in the Alterglobalization Movement. *Social Movement Studies*, 10(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2011.545223>
- Marcuse, H. (2013). *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Taylor & Francis.
- Matunga, H. (2013). Theorizing Indigenous Planning. In R. Walker, T. Jojola, & D. Natcher (Eds.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Planning* (pp. 3-32). McGill-Queen's University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780773589933-004>
- Mazzucato, M. (2021). *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism*. Penguin Books.
- Meerow, S., Newell, J. P., & Stults, M. (2016). Defining urban resilience: A review. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 147, 38-49.
- Miraftab, F. (2009). Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 32-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099297>
- Miraftab, F. (2016). Insurgency, Planning and the Prospect of a Humane Urbanism. In W. C. o. P. Schools (Ed.), (Keynote delivered at the opening the World Congress of Planning Schools. "Global Crisis, Planning and Challenges to Spatial Justice." July 3-7, 2016, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. ed.). Rio de Janeiro.
- Miraftab, F. (2018). Insurgent Practices and Decolonization of Future(s). In M. Gunder, A. Madanipour, & V. Watson (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Planning Theory*. Routledge.

- Moore, T., & McKee, K. (2012). Empowering Local Communities? An International Review of Community Land Trusts. *Housing Studies*, 27(2), 280-290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2012.647306>
- Mouffe, C. (2000). *The Democratic Paradox*. Verso.
- Pateman, C. (1999). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode*, 34(3), 380-404. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00247>
- Perkins, C. (2007). Community Mapping. *The Cartographic Journal*, 44(2), 127-137. <https://doi.org/10.1179/000870407X213440>
- Porter, L. (2012). *Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning*. Ashgate.
- Purcell, M. (2009). Resisting Neoliberalization: Communicative Planning or Counter-Hegemonic Movements? *Planning Theory*, 8(2), 140-165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095209102232>
- Restakis, J. (2010). *Humanizing the Economy: Co-Operatives in the Age of Capital*. New Society.
- Sandercock, L. (2003). *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*. Continuum.
- Sandercock, L., & Lyssiotis, P. (2003). *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Sen, A. (2014). Social Choice and Social Welfare. *Project Syndicate*, 26 November. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/kenneth-arrow-impossibility-theorem-social-welfare-by-amartya-sen-2014-11>
- Thörn, H., Wasshede, C., & Nilson, T. (2011). *Space for Urban Alternatives? Christiania 1971-2011*. Gidlunds Förlag.
- Tronto, J. C. (2013). *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*. New York University Press.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a Metaphor. *Decolonisation: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:143164941>
- UN-Habitat. (2020). *World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization*. UN-Habitat. Retrieved 10 March from <https://unhabitat.org/World%20Cities%20Report%202020>
- Wampler, B. (2007). *Participatory Budgeting in Brazil: Contestation, Cooperation, and Accountability*. Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Wampler, B., & Hartz-karp, J. (2012). Participatory Budgeting: Diffusion and Outcomes across the World. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.137>
- Wangel, J. (2011). Change by whom? Four ways of adding actors and governance in backcasting studies. *Futures*, 43(8), 880-889. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2011.06.012>
- West, C. (2005). *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism*. Penguin.
- Wolch, J. R., Byrne, J., & Newell, J. P. (2014). Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough'. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 125(May), 234-244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2014.01.017>
- Yates, L. (2015). Rethinking Prefiguration: Alternatives, Micropolitics and Goals in Social Movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 14(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014742837.2013.870883>
- Young, I. M. (2002). *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198297556.001.0001>
- Zournazi, M. (2003). *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*. Routledge.





# 11. INNOVATIONS & EMERGING IDEAS





## 11.1. MORE-THAN-HUMAN JUSTICE

'More-than-human justice' extends spatial justice beyond human interests to include ecosystems and non-human beings as entities whose flourishing matters and should have an impact on how we plan and govern space. This reframing draws on more-than-human geography, multispecies ethics, and political ecology, which challenge anthropocentric planning and argue that urban life is co-produced by humans, infrastructures, and other species (Bennett, 2010; Haraway, 2016; Whatmore, 2002). In this view, urban design and regulation should recognise ecological interdependencies, reduce harm to more-than-human worlds, and cultivate conditions for multispecies cohabitation and resilience (Houston et al., 2017; Wolch et al., 2014).

There are important cautions. First, 'nature' can be instrumentalised and green amenities, if not fairly planned and distributed, may produce displacement under 'eco-gentrification' (Anguelovski et al., 2018; Checker, 2011). Second, importing more-than-human frames without engaging Indigenous legal orders risks erasing the very ontologies that inspired them (Todd, 2016) 'More-than-human' approaches become another branding exercise, rather than substantive change. Third, balancing democratic accountability with representation for non-humans remains a live governance problem, despite the advances in many countries (Latour, 2004; O'Donnel & Talbot-Jones, 2018). These critiques push planners to design institutions that take ecological claims seriously while protecting social equity.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Practical moves include habitat-sensitive standards, multispecies corridors, nature-based solutions for climate adaptation, and governance arrangements that assign duties of care to specific bodies, with transparent monitoring (Bulkeley et al., 2014; Mosisa et al., 2025). The test is not ornamental greenery, but measurable ecological integrity alongside social inclusion (Wolch et al., 2014).

## THE RIGHTS OF NATURE

The Rights of Nature (RoN) movement gives legal standing to ecosystems, sometimes also legal personhood, so their interests can be represented in court. This turn is visible in constitutional, statutory, and judicial innovations: Ecuador constitutionalised nature's rights in 2008 (Government of Ecuador, 2008); Colombia's Constitutional Court recognised the Atrato River as a rights-bearing subject in 2016 (Government of Colombia, 2016); Aotearoa New Zealand recognised Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River) as a legal person in 2017 (Government of New Zealand, 2017); Spain granted legal personality to the Mar Menor lagoon in 2022 (Government of Spain, 2022). Academic assessments argue that RoN can reshape environmental governance by shifting the burden from damage-after-the-fact to duties of care and restoration (Boyd, 2017; Chapron et al., 2019; O'Donnel & Talbot-Jones, 2018).

Evidence is mixed. RoN may strengthen guardianship and restoration funding where institutions are well designed and Indigenous co-governance is substantive (O'Donnel & Talbot-Jones, 2018; Ruru, 2018). Elsewhere, capacity gaps, political resistance, or conflicting development priorities can blunt effectiveness (Kauffman & Martin,

2021). Courts in India briefly recognised rights for the Ganga and Yamuna, but higher courts stayed implementation over liability and feasibility concerns, illustrating the fragility of RoN without administrative scaffolding (BBC, 2017; O'Donnel & Talbot-Jones, 2018). Media and policy reporting on Whanganui and Mar Menor show how public debate and local mobilisation matter for durability (Álvarez, 2022; Roy, 2017).

## PLANNING RELEVANCE

For spatial planning, RoN instruments can: require ecological impact tests akin to human-rights due diligence; appoint guardians with statutory powers; hard-wire restoration targets; and embed Indigenous authority where relevant (Kotzé & French, 2018; O'Donnel & Talbot-Jones, 2018). The normative payoff is aligning land use, infrastructure, and urban development with duties to living systems, while the equity test is ensuring these tools do not externalise costs onto already disadvantaged communities.

# 11.2 STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING MORE-THAN-HUMAN SPATIAL JUSTICE

## ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

**Comprehensive environmental reviews.** The use of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) tools and, crucially for plans and programmes, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are instrumental to evaluate the effects of spatial interventions on species, habitats, ecosystem functions, and cumulative impacts, placing biodiversity and ecological integrity at the centre of decisions (Partidário, 2007; Therivel, 2013). Jurisdictions can align with robust legal baselines such as the EU EIA/SEA Directives (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU; Directive 2001/42/EC)(European Union, 2001, 2011, 2014). Biodiversity-specific appraisal should reference CBD Aichi/Global Biodiversity Framework targets where applicable (CBD, 2024).

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND URBAN ECOLOGY

**Biophilic design** integrates nature-contact and multisensory ecological cues into buildings and neighbourhoods to support human and non-human wellbeing (Beatley, 2011; Kellert et al., 2011).

**Urban biodiversity strategies** plan at landscape scale using green/blue infrastructure networks, ecological connectivity, and habitat patches, guid-

ed by landscape ecology principles and species movement needs (Benedict et al., 2012; Forman, 1995). In this framework, city strategies establish measurable targets for native species richness, structural diversity, and connectivity, drawing on assessments such as the *Cities and Biodiversity Outlook* (Elmqvist & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2013).

## PARTICIPATORY PLANNING WITH ECOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION

**Inclusive stakeholder engagement** formalises roles for ecologists, conservation NGOs, and Indigenous peoples and local communities as knowledge-holders in co-management and planning, with attention to Free, Prior and Informed Consent where relevant (Berkes, 2009; IPBES, 2019).

**Community science initiatives** support citizen/community science for biodiversity monitoring and stewardship; these programmes demonstrably build ecological data and civic capacity when well-designed (Bonney et al., 2009; Bonney et al., 2015; Haklay, 2012).

## REGENERATIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**Sustainable material use frameworks** employ life-cycle assessment and circular design to minimise toxicity, embodied carbon, and habitat damage across supply chains (European Commission, no date; Kirchherr et al., 2017; Weidema, 2014).

**Regenerative design practices** move beyond 'do less harm' to designs that restore ecosystem functions, soil health, and hydrological cycles, and that create conditions for multispecies flourishing (European Commission, 2025; Mang & Haagard, 2016; Mosisa et al., 2025).

## LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

**Rights of Nature legislation** explore RoN instruments that create guardianship and legal standing for ecosystems, while assessing institutional capacity and equity implications (Chapron et al., 2019; O'Donnel & Talbot-Jones, 2018; Ruru, 2018). This is amply illustrated by cases in Ecuador, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Colombia,

**Urban planning policies.** Embed more-than-human principles through statutory green infrastructure policies, nature-based solutions standards, ecological impact thresholds, and restoration duties tied to permits and plans (European Commission, 2020).

## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

**Public awareness campaigns** pair urban biodiversity initiatives with communication and stewardship programmes shown to enhance adoption and long-term care (Elmqvist & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2013).

**Professional development measures** integrate ecological design, biodiversity net gain, and justice frameworks into planning and architecture CPD, consistent with global guidance on sustainable and inclusive urbanisation (IPBES, 2019; UN-Habitat, 2020).

## TWO CAUTIONS TO PRESERVE JUSTICE WHILE GREENING

**Avoid eco-gentrification.** Green amenities can raise land values and displace vulnerable residents; anti-displacement and tenure protections should be coupled to green investments (Anguelovski et al., 2018; Checker, 2011).

**Measure what matters.** Track ecological integrity and social equity together, e.g., species indicators plus distributional access and affordability, so 'green' does not mask exclusion (Wolch et al., 2014).

## 11.3. THE PLURIVERSE AND SPATIAL JUSTICE

In the context of spatial planning, Arturo Escobar's notion of the **pluriverse** offers a radical rethinking of how space, knowledge, and design are conceptualised. Developed most fully in *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (Escobar, 2018), the concept is grounded in the principle that '**many worlds fit**', a direct critique of the universalising tendencies of modernity, capitalism, and Western development paradigms. Rather than one world with many perspectives, the pluriverse recognises **a world of many worlds**, each with its own ontologies, epistemologies, and modes of co-existence (Escobar (Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Escobar, 2020).

This concept challenges the epistemic dominance of Western technocratic planning and invites a more plural, relational, and situated understanding of spatial justice. It foregrounds ontological diversity: the coexistence of multiple ways of being and knowing that are entangled with specific territories, ecosystems, and cosmologies (Blaser, 2013; Porto-Gonçalves & Leff, 2015). In this light, spatial planning becomes a practice of negotiating among these diverse worlds rather than imposing a single, modernist vision of progress.

### IMPLEMENTING THE PLURIVERSE IN SPATIAL PLANNING

Implementing the pluriverse within spatial planning requires **decolonising planning practices**, questioning Eurocentric epistemologies and creating space for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local knowledge systems. This means moving away from standardised, growth-oriented models towards practices that nurture **territorial auton-**

omy and recognise communities' right to define their own development pathways (Miraftab, 2009; Watson, 2014).

**Participatory and Inclusive Planning.** The pluriversal approach positions participatory planning as central to justice. It views participation not merely as consultation but as **co-production of knowledge**, where local communities articulate their spatial imaginaries and priorities. This resonates with traditions of insurgent and radical planning (Friedmann, 1987; Miraftab, 2009; Sandercock, 2003).

**Ecological Sustainability and Relationality.** The pluriverse extends spatial justice to the more-than-human realm, insisting on ecological interdependence as the basis of coexistence. Planning must therefore incorporate the relational ethics of Indigenous cosmologies, recognising rivers, forests, and animals as active participants in territorial life (Escobar, 2018; Kothari et al., 2019). This perspective overlaps with *more-than-human justice* and *Rights of Nature* debates (Haraway, 2016; O'Donnell & Talbot-Jones, 2018).

**Cultural Plurality and Spatial Expression.** Designing for the pluriverse entails creating spaces that support multiple cultural identities and practices—such as multicultural centres, community gardens, or urban commons—thus embedding diversity materially into the urban fabric (Fainstein, 2010; Sandercock, 2003).

**Economic Alternatives.** Escobar's critique of 'extractive capitalism' underlines the need for solidarity economies and forms of production that prioritise collective wellbeing, reciprocity, and care over profit (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Kothari et al., 2019). Pluriversal planning thus links spatial justice to economic transformation, supporting local and cooperative initiatives that sustain community autonomy.

## INTERSECTION WITH SPATIAL JUSTICE

The intersection between the **pluriverse** and **spatial justice** lies in their shared commitment to **equity, recognition, and participation**. Spatial justice aims to ensure fair access to resources and decision-making, while the pluriverse deepens this by insisting that justice must also be **ontological**, acknowledging multiple realities and relationships to land. Together they challenge the homogenising effects of globalisation, neoliberal urbanism, and technocratic planning (Roy, 2009; Soja, 2010). Planning for the pluriverse means not only redistributing resources but also redistributing epistemic and political authority over how spaces are imagined and governed.

## EXAMPLES AND APPLICATIONS

**Community-led urban design.** Initiatives such as participatory upgrading in favelas and informal settlements can, when well-executed, illustrate pluriversal design by aligning interventions with local cultural and ecological knowledge. The Favela-Bairro (Neighbourhood Favela) programme, implemented from the mid-1990s through the 2000s by the Rio de Janeiro municipal government with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), sought to integrate informal settlements into the formal city through participatory upgrading rather than displacement. What makes Favela-Bairro relevant from a pluriversal perspective is not merely its participatory structure, but its attempt, albeit inconsistently realised, to work with local spatial logics and socio-ecological practices rather than overwrite them with technocratic standards (Brakarz & Aduan, 2004; Libertun & Osorio, 2020; Riley et al., 2001). Critiques note its partial co-optation by neoliberal city branding (Fernandes, 2011). Despite its drawbacks, Favela-Bairro

demonstrates how community-led urban design can embody pluriversal principles: recognising the favela as a legitimate world within the city, valuing its ecological and social intelligence, and co-producing space through hybrid knowledge systems.

**Territorial rights and Indigenous planning.** Experiences from Latin America, such as Colombia's *Planes de Vida* and Bolivia's plurinational constitutional model demonstrate how Indigenous cosmologies can inform regional planning and governance (Perreault, 2015; Porto-Gonçalves & Leff, 2015).

**Cultural and ecological corridors** Urban biodiversity and cultural corridors that integrate ecological restoration with spaces for cultural expression exemplify planning that is both ecological and pluriversal (Anguelovski et al., 2018).

Integrating the pluriverse into spatial planning and justice frameworks thus reorients practice from managing space to **co-creating worlds**. It asks planners to operate as facilitators of coexistence, negotiating between diverse ontologies, fostering ecological and cultural interdependence, and nurturing autonomy. In doing so, the pluriverse provides a pathway toward cities and territories that are more inclusive, decolonial, and ecologically grounded.



# REFERENCES

- Álvarez, C. (2022). El mar Menor se convierte en el primer ecosistema de Europa con derechos propios: juristas analizan este hito. *El País*. <https://elpais.com/clima-y-medio-ambiente/2022-09-21/el-mar-menor-se-convierte-en-el-primer-ecosistema-de-europa-con-derechos-proprios-juristas-analizan-este-hito.html>
- Anguelovski, I., Connolly, J., & Brand, A. L. (2018). From landscapes of utopia to the margins of the green urban life. *City*, 22(3), 417-436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2018.1473126>
- BBC. (2017). *India's Ganges and Yamuna rivers are 'not living entities'*. BBC. Retrieved 5 October 2025 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-40537701>
- Beatley, T. (2011). *Biophilic Cities: Integrating Nature Into Urban Design and Planning*. Island Press.
- Benedict, M. A., McMahon, E. T., & The Conservation Fund. (2012). *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes and Communities*. Island Press.
- Bennett, J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.
- Berkes, F. (2009). Evolution of co-management: Role of knowledge generation, bridging organizations and social learning. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 90(5), 1692-1702. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2008.12.001>
- Blaser, M. (2013). Notes towards a political ontology of 'environmental' conflicts. In L. Green (Ed.), *Contested Ecologies: Nature and Knowledge* (pp. 134-127). HSRC Press.
- Bonney, R., Cooper, C. B., Dickinson, J., Kelling, S., Phillips, T., Rosenberg, K. V., & Shirk, J. (2009). Citizen Science: A Developing Tool for Expanding Science Knowledge and Scientific Literacy. *Bio Science*, 59(11), 977-984. <https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2009.59.11.9>
- Bonney, R., Phillips, T. B., Ballard, H. L., & Enck, J. W. (2015). Can citizen science enhance public understanding of science? *Public Understanding of Science*, 25(1), 2-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662515607406>
- Boyd, D. R. (2017). *The Rights of Nature: A Legal Revolution That Could Save the World*. Ecw Press.
- Brakarz, J., & Aduan, W. E. (2004). Favela-Bairro: Scaled-up Urban Development in Brazil. Reducing Poverty, Sustaining Growth: What Works, What Doesn't, and Why A Global Exchange for Scaling Up Success. *Inter-American Development Bank*, 30804. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/zh/456671468742485572/pdf/308040BR0Favela-1Bairro01see0also0307591.pdf>
- Bulkeley, H., Edwards, G. A. S., & Fuller, S. (2014). Contesting climate justice in the city: Examining politics and practice in urban climate change experiments. *Global Environmental Change*, 25(March), 31-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.01.009>
- Cadena, M. d. I., & Blaser, M. (2018). *A World of Many Worlds*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv125jpzq>
- CBD. (2024). *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Environmental Programme. Retrieved 06 October 2025 from <https://www.cbd.int/gbf>
- Chapron, G., Epstein, Y., & López-Bao, J. V. (2019). A rights revolution for nature: Introduction of legal rights for nature could protect natural systems from destruction. *Science*, 363(6434), 1392-1393. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aav5601>
- Checker, M. (2011). Wiped Out by the "Greenwave": Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability. *City & Society*, 23(2), 210-229. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2011.01063.x>
- Elmqvist, T., & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (2013). *Cities and Biodiversity Outlook: Action and Policy. A Global Assessment of the Links between Urbanisation, Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Services*. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/health/cbo-action-policy-en.pdf>
- Escobar, A. (2018). *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822371816>
- Escobar, A. (2020). *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible*. Duke University Press.
- European Commission. (2020). *Nature-based Solutions: State of the Art in EU-funded Projects*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8bb07125-4518-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1>
- European Commission. (2025). *City Blues: Adapting Urban Life with Nature-Based Solutions*. EC. Retrieved 06 October 2025 from [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/nature-based-solutions-increase-nature-and-human-wellbeing-2025-05-21\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/nature-based-solutions-increase-nature-and-human-wellbeing-2025-05-21_en)
- European Commission. (no date). *Life Cycle Assessment & the EF methods: Comprehensive coverage of impacts*. EU. Retrieved 06 October 2025 from <https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/green-business/envi->



[ronmental-footprint-methods/life-cycle-assessment-ef-methods\\_en](#)

- European Union. (2001). *Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*. EU. Retrieved 06 October 2025 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32001L0042>
- European Union. (2011). *Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification) Text with EEA relevance*. EU. Retrieved 06 October 2025 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/92/oj/eng>
- European Union. (2014). *Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment Text with EEA relevance*. EU. Retrieved 06 October 2025 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/52/oj/eng>
- Fainstein, S. (2010). *The Just City*. Cornell University Press.
- Fernandes, E. (2011). *Regularization of Informal Settlements in Latin America* (Policy Focus Report, Issue. [https://www.lincolnst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/pub-files/regularization-informal-settlements-latin-america-full\\_0.pdf](https://www.lincolnst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/pub-files/regularization-informal-settlements-latin-america-full_0.pdf)
- Forman, R. T. T. (1995). *Land Mosaics: The Ecology of Landscapes and Regions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Friedmann, J. (1987). *Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action*. Princeton University Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A Postcapitalist Politics*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.cttttt07>
- Principio de Precaución Ambiental y su Aplicación para Proteger el derecho a la Salud de las Personas, (2016). <https://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/relatoria/2016/t-622-16.htm>
- Constitución de la Republica del Ecuador, (2008). [https://www.defensa.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2021/02/Constitucion-de-la-Republica-del-Ecuador\\_act\\_ene-2021.pdf](https://www.defensa.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2021/02/Constitucion-de-la-Republica-del-Ecuador_act_ene-2021.pdf)
- Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017, (2017). <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2017/0007/latest/whole.html>
- Ley 19/2022, de 30 de septiembre, para el reconocimiento de personalidad jurídica a la laguna del Mar Menor y su cuenca, (2022). <https://ecojurisprudence.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Spain-Rights-of-Mar-Menor-Law.pdf>
- Haklay, M. (2012). Citizen Science and Volunteered Geographic Information: Overview and Typology of Participation. In D. Sui, S. Elwood, & M. Goodchild (Eds.), *Crowdsourcing Geographic Knowledge* (pp. 105-122). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4587-2\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4587-2_7)
- Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373780>
- Houston, D., Hillier, J., & Byrne, J. (2017). Make kin, not cities! Multispecies entanglements and 'becoming-world' in planning theory. *Planning Theory*, 17(2), 190-212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147309521668804>
- IPBES. (2019). *Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. IPBE. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>
- Kauffman, G. M., & Martin, P. L. (2021). *The Politics of Rights of Nature: Strategies for Building a More Sustainable Future*. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mit-press/13855.001.0001>
- Kellert, S. R., Heerwagen, J., & Mador, M. (2011). *Biophilic Design: The Theory, Science and Practice of Bringing Buildings to Life*. Wiley.
- Kirchherr, J., Reike, D., & Hekkert, M. (2017). Conceptualizing the circular economy: An analysis of 114 definitions. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 127(December), 221-232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2017.09.005>
- Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F., & Acosta, A. (2019). *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary*. Tulika Books. <https://radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Pluriverse-full-printable-version-July-2019.pdf>
- Kotzé, L. J., & French, D. (2018). A critique of the Global Pact for the environment: a stillborn initiative or the foundation for Lex Anthropocenae. *International Environmental Agreements*, 18, 811-838. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-018-9417-x>
- Latour, B. (2004). *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences Into Democracy*. Harvard University Press.
- Libertun, N., & Osorio, R. (2020). Favela-Bairro Upgrading Program: Assessing results 10 years later. *IDB, Ciudades Sostenibles*. <https://blogs.iadb.org/ciudades-sostenibles/en/favela-bairro-upgrading-program-assessing-results-10-years-later/>
- Mang, P., & Haagard, B. (2016). *Regenerative Development and Design: A Framework for Evolving Sustainability*. Wiley.
- Mirafteb, F. (2009). *Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical*

- Planning in the Global South. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 32-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099297>
- Mosisa, G. B., Bedadi, B., Dalle, G., & Tassie, N. (2025). Nature-based solutions for urban climate resilience: implementation, contribution, and effectiveness. *Nature-Based Solutions*, 8(December), 100245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nbsj.2025.100245>
- O'Donnel, E. L., & Talbot-Jones, J. (2018). Creating legal rights for rivers: lessons from Australia, New Zealand, and India. *Ecology and Society*, 23(1), 7. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26799037>
- Partidário, M. d. R. (2007). *Strategic Environmental Assessment Better Practice Guide-Methodological Guidance for Strategic Thinking in SEA*. [https://apambiente.pt/sites/default/files/\\_SNIAMB\\_Avaliacao\\_Gestao\\_Ambiental/AAE/SEA\\_Guidance\\_GoodPractices.pdf](https://apambiente.pt/sites/default/files/_SNIAMB_Avaliacao_Gestao_Ambiental/AAE/SEA_Guidance_GoodPractices.pdf)
- Perreault, T. (2015). Performing Participation: Mining, Power, and the Limits of Public Consultation in Bolivia. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 20(3), 433-451. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jlca.12185>
- Porto-Gonçalves, C. W., & Leff, E. (2015). Political Ecology in Latin America: the Social Re-Appropriation of Nature, the Reinvention of Territories and the Construction of an Environmental Rationality. *DMA*, 25(December), 65-88. <https://doi.org/10.5380/dma.v35i0.43543>
- Riley, E., Fiori, J., & Ramirez, R. (2001). Favela Bairro and a new generation of housing programmes for the urban poor. *Geoforum*, 32, 521-531.
- Roy, A. (2009). The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory. *Regional Studies*, 43(6), 819-830. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400701809665>
- Roy, E. A. (2017). New Zealand river granted same legal rights as human being. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/16/new-zealand-river-granted-same-legal-rights-as-human-being>
- Ruru, J. (2018). Listening to Papatūānuku: a call to reform water law. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 48(2-3), 215-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2018.1442358>
- Sandercock, L. (2003). *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*. Continuum.
- Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking Spatial Justice*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Therivel, R. (2013). *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Action*. Earthscan.
- Todd, Z. (2016). An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism. *Historical Sociology*, 29(1), 4-22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12124>
- UN-Habitat. (2020). *World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization*. UN-Habitat. Retrieved 10 March from <https://unhabitat.org/World%20Cities%20Report%202020>
- Watson, V. (2014). Co-production and collaboration in planning – The difference. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 15(1), 62-76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2013.866266>
- Weidema, B. (2014). Has ISO 14040/44 Failed Its Role as a Standard for Life Cycle Assessment? *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 18(3), 324-326. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jiec.12139>
- Whatmore, S. (2002). *Hybrid Geographies: Natures Cultures Spaces*. SAGE.
- Wolch, J. R., Byrne, J., & Newell, J. P. (2014). Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough'. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 125(May), 234-244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2014.01.017>

# 12. TOWARDS A JUST CITY: REFLECTIONS AND A MANIFESTO



# TOWARDS A JUST CITY: REFLECTIONS AND A MANIFESTO

In the quest for Spatial Justice, the convergence of new governance styles that foster hope as a political action and embrace insurgent forms of planning that challenge neo-liberal forms of governance brings a transformative path towards creating just cities. This approach means a departure from conventional, technocratic, top-down urban planning paradigms, advocating instead for participatory, inclusive, and responsive governance that empowers communities and values grassroots initiatives.

Hope and collective imagination, as dynamic societal forces, drive this shift, motivating citizens to envision and work towards equitable urban futures. They fuel the belief that, through collective action and innovative governance, it is possible to overcome spatial injustices that marginalise and disenfranchise citizens.

As we reflect on the journey towards spatial justice, it is clear that the integration of hope and alternative forms of planning within new governance models is not merely desirable but essential. This approach redefines the relationship between urban spaces and their inhabitants, fostering environments where equity, sustainability, and community thrive through practices of care and restoration of the planet and our relationships with one another.

The call to action is clear: to build just cities, we must collectively commit to these principles, fostering an urban governance that is as adaptive, resilient, and diverse as the communities it serves. Through this commitment, the vision of just and inclusive cities becomes not just a hopeful aspiration but an achievable reality.

# REFLECTING ON THE NEW ROLE OF PLANNERS AND POLICYMAKERS

Within the transformative framework aimed at fostering hope and embracing alternative planning practices towards spatial justice, the roles of planners and policymakers evolve significantly. This new paradigm necessitates a shift to more collaborative, flexible, and community-centred roles. Planners and designers become facilitators of change, connectors, and co-creators rather than sole authors of urban futures.

## FACILITATORS OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Planners and policymakers must prioritise empowering communities to lead the charge in shaping their environments. This involves creating platforms for genuine participation and ensuring that all voices, especially those from marginalised groups, are heard and valued. It's about facilitating processes where community insights and aspirations directly influence planning decisions, thereby democratising urban development.

## CONNECTORS BRIDGING DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS

In their new role, planners and designers act as connectors, bridging gaps between various stakeholders, including government entities, private sectors, non-profits, and community groups. By fostering partnerships and facilitating dialogue, they can create synergies that leverage the strengths and resources of different sectors towards common goals of spatial justice and sustainable urban development.

## CO-CREATORS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Adopting a co-creative approach, planners and designers work alongside communities and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of urban projects. This collaborative process ensures that development initiatives are grounded in local contexts and needs, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes. Co-creation fosters a sense of ownership among all participants, enhancing the resilience and adaptability of urban spaces.

uncertainties of the future and ensuring that urban development remains responsive to the needs of all inhabitants.

The shift towards hope and alternative planning practices in urban development calls for planners and designers to embrace these new roles, embodying flexibility, collaboration, and a deep commitment to justice and sustainability. By doing so, they can contribute to creating urban environments that not only meet the needs of the present but are also resilient and equitable spaces for future generations.

## ADVOCATES FOR EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Planners and designers must also advocate for equity, sustainability, and justice within urban governance frameworks. This involves challenging entrenched power dynamics and advocating for policies and practices that prioritise the well-being of both human and non-human inhabitants. It requires a commitment to questioning and reimagining existing systems to pave the way for more just and sustainable urban environments.

## LIFELONG LEARNERS AND INNOVATORS

Finally, in this evolving landscape, planners and designers need to be lifelong learners, open to innovation and adaptation. The complexities of modern urban challenges necessitate a willingness to explore new ideas, learn from both successes and failures and continuously adapt strategies in response to changing conditions and insights. This learning mindset is crucial for navigating the



## BUILDING COALITIONS FOR CHANGE

Building coalitions for change within the framework of hope and alternative planning practices towards spatial justice requires strategic, inclusive, and empathetic approaches. These coalitions must bring together diverse stakeholders, including community groups, non-profits, academics, policymakers, and the private sector, united by the common goal of creating fair, sustainable, and just urban spaces. Key strategies to effectively build and sustain such coalitions include:

### 1. IDENTIFY COMMON GOALS

Start by identifying shared goals and visions among potential coalition members. Even groups with diverse interests can find common ground in broader objectives like sustainability, equity, or community empowerment. Clear, shared goals provide a foundation for collaboration and action.

### 2. FOSTER INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT

Ensure the coalition-building process is inclusive, actively reaching out to and involving a wide range of stakeholders, especially those from marginalized or underrepresented communities. Use participatory methods to engage community members, ensuring everyone has a voice in shaping the coalition's direction and priorities.

### 3. BUILD ON EXISTING NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Leverage existing networks and relationships to foster trust and collaboration among potential coalition members. Building on the foundations of trust can accelerate the formation of effective coalitions and enhance their resilience.

### 4. EMPHASISE INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

Encourage collaboration across sectors by highlighting the interdependent nature of urban challenges and the benefits of diverse perspectives and resources. Intersectoral collaboration can lead to innovative solutions that no single sector could achieve alone.

### 5. DEVELOP CLEAR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Establish clear and open channels of communication among coalition members to facilitate effective coordination, share information, and address conflicts constructively. Regular meetings, shared online platforms, and transparent decision-making processes can support this.

### 6. CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Develop a clear framework for collective action that outlines roles, responsibilities, and strategies for achieving shared goals. This framework should be flexible enough to accommodate the dynamics

of coalition work while providing enough structure to guide concerted efforts.

## **7. CAPITALISE ON DIVERSE STRENGTHS**

Recognise and capitalise on the diverse strengths, resources, and expertise that each member brings to the coalition. This may include community knowledge, academic research, policy influence, or financial resources, among other factors.

## **8. CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEARN FROM SETBACKS**

Regularly acknowledge and celebrate the coalition's achievements to maintain motivation and momentum. Equally important is the willingness to learn from setbacks, using them as opportunities to adapt strategies and strengthen the coalition's resilience.

## **9. SUSTAIN ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SHARED VALUES**

Keep the coalition engaged and motivated over time by emphasizing shared values and the ethical imperative of working towards spatial justice. Shared values can help sustain commitment even when faced with challenges or slow progress.

## **10. ADVOCATE FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

Use the coalition's collective voice to advocate for systemic changes in policies, practices, and societal norms that perpetuate spatial injustices. Effective advocacy can leverage the coalition's diverse membership to speak powerfully on issues of common concern.

Building coalitions for change in the context of spatial justice requires a commitment to collaboration, diversity, and action. By uniting around shared goals and leveraging the strengths of a broad range of stakeholders, these coalitions can drive significant transformations in urban planning and governance, moving us closer to achieving fair, sustainable, and just cities.





# A MANIFESTO FOR A JUSTICE-ORIENTED PLANNING PRACTICE

## **1. The Right to the City is the right to co-plan and co-design.**

Spatial planners must learn to co-plan, co-design, and co-learn with citizens and stakeholders. Every citizen should have the capacity to help shape their city, and planners must understand how to facilitate this process with humility and respect.

## **2. The city belongs to all who contribute to its life.**

Planning professionals must recognise the rights, needs, and aspirations of all citizens, regardless of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or ability.

## **3. A city designed for the most vulnerable is a city that serves everyone.**

Planning professionals must learn to cultivate empathy and recognise the interdependencies that bind society. Rather than celebrate competition or economic efficiency, planning and design should aim to strengthen collaboration and care. A city that protects its most vulnerable residents becomes a good city for all.

## **4. The city is inclusive of all genders and sexual orientations.**

Planning professionals must learn to design with and for women, LGBTQ+ people, and all those who wish to live safely and freely in the city. All citizens have the right to participate in planning, design, and governance.

## **5. The city belongs to all races and ethnicities, but justice requires recognition and repair.**

Planning practice, education and research must confront the spatial legacies of racism and colonialism by empowering Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other marginalised communities to plan and design inclusive, welcoming cities.

## **6. Adequate housing is a human right.**

No one should be homeless because housing is unaffordable. Planning professionals must embrace innovative, community-based housing design and management. Housing affordability must be understood not only as cost but as access to a network of opportunities, services, and amenities that enable human flourishing.

## **7. Environmental justice is essential for human and planetary health.**

Planning and design practice must place environmental and spatial justice, and the health of our planet, at the core of their actions. Clean air, safe water, renewable energy, and green spaces are public goods vital to public health and resilience.

## **8. The city is shared with other forms of life.**

Recognising that humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems coexist within one living system, planning practice must embrace the ethics of more-than-human justice and the principles of nature-based solutions.

## **9. The city is a commons.**

Planning practice must highlight how urban spaces can provide shared resources, public goods, and services accessible to all. The city should be understood as a collective endeavour and as a site of stewardship rather than extraction.

## **10. Planning and design must engage with diverse knowledge systems.**

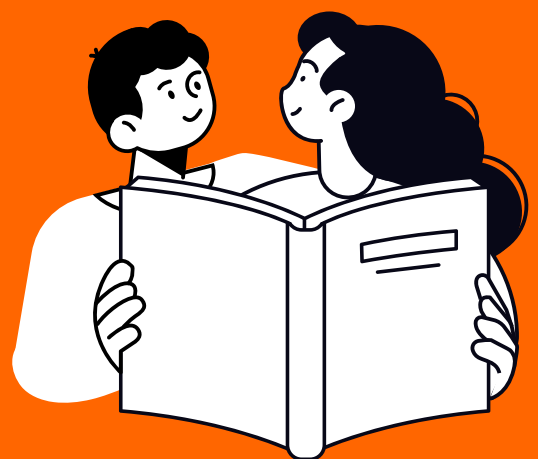
Planning practice and education must move beyond North-centric paradigms to engage with knowledge traditions from the Global South and from groups historically excluded from formal expertise (women, the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and minorities). Their tacit or explicit knowledge is part of a place's cultural heritage.

## **11. The just city is a democratic city.**

Planning and design are political acts. Planning practice must make its political nature explicit, showing how participatory planning strengthens democracy. Planners, architects, and urban designers must learn to create spaces of encounter, dialogue, and mutual understanding through co-design and active citizen engagement.

*Together, we are building the foundation for cities that not only meet the needs of their current inhabitants but also anticipate and adapt to the needs of future generations. Our collective journey towards spatial justice continues, and we look forward to the innovative solutions and collaborations that will emerge as we strive to make our urban spaces fairer for all.*

*<https://just-city.org>*



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Spatial Justice Manual represents the collective effort of numerous individuals and organisations committed to advancing the principles of Spatial Justice in urban planning and design. As we present this work, we extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed their knowledge, expertise, and passion to this project.

Special thanks are due to the European Commission, whose financial support through the research project "UP2030 Spatial Planning and Design Ready for 2030" has been indispensable. Their commitment to fostering innovative and sustainable approaches to spatial planning and design is deeply appreciated and has been a guiding light for our work.

We are particularly grateful to the Centre for the Just City and our colleague, Caroline Newton, whose insights, dedication, and unwavering support have significantly enriched the content and vision of this manual. Caroline's expertise and commitment to spatial justice have been invaluable in shaping the direction and outcomes of our work.

We must acknowledge the intellectual contribution of Professor Vincent Nadin to this manual, especially his expertise on spatial planning processes and comparative planning studies. Vincent is always an inspiration and an intellectual guide for us at TU Delft.

Our heartfelt appreciation also goes to the coordination team of the UP2030 project—Trinidad, Catalina, Leon, and Nilo. Their leadership, coordination, and diligent efforts have been central to the success of this project. Their ability to bring together diverse perspectives and expertise has not only facilitated the smooth progression of the project but has also ensured that our collective endeavours remain aligned with our core mission of promoting spatial justice.

Furthermore, we wish to acknowledge the contributions of all researchers, practitioners, and community members who have engaged with us throughout this project. Your experiences, challenges, and victories have been instrumental in shaping the practical and theoretical foundations of this manual.

Lastly, we extend our thanks to the readers and future users of this manual. Your commitment to applying the principles of spatial justice in your work and communities is crucial for creating more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive urban environments. We hope that this manual serves as a valuable resource in your endeavours and inspires continued efforts towards achieving spatial justice worldwide.

Together, we are building the foundation for cities that not only meet the needs of their current inhabitants but also anticipate and adapt to the needs of future generations. Our collective journey towards spatial justice continues, and we look forward to the innovative solutions and collaborations that will emerge as we strive to make our urban spaces fairer for all.



# UP2030

THIS MANUAL WAS  
CONCEIVED IN THE  
FRAMEWORK OF THE  
HORIZON PROJECT  
UP 2030 SPATIAL  
PLANNING AND DESIGN  
READY FOR 2030.

# UP<sup>↑</sup>2030

[HTTPS://UP2030-HE.EU](https://up2030-he.eu)



Funded by  
the European Union

## THE AUTHORS

### ROBERTO ROCCO

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF  
SPATIAL PLANNING & STRATEGY AT THE  
DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

R.C.ROCCO@TUDELFT.NL



### JULIANA GONÇALVES

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF  
SPATIAL PLANNING & STRATEGY AT THE  
DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

J.E.GONCALVES@TUDELFT.NL



### HUGO LOPEZ

RESEARCH FELLOW UP2030 AT THE  
DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

H. LOPEZ@TUDELFT.NL



### MARCIN DĄBROWSKI

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF  
SPATIAL PLANNING & STRATEGY AT THE  
DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

M.M.DABROWSKI@TUDELFT.NL





Centre  
for the  
Just City

the  
city



## THE CENTRE FOR THE JUST CITY

The Centre for the Just City was founded at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at the Delft University of Technology in response to the pressing challenges of rampant social inequalities affecting urban spaces' cohesion and sustainability.

Recognising the vital need to address these issues, the Centre emerged as a platform for research, education, and outreach activities to create just cities.

Since its inception, the Centre has been at the forefront of bridging theory and practice, fostering collaborations, and influencing policies and actions that contribute to making cities equitable, sustainable, and inclusive.

Our values are Equity, Respect, Excellence and Diversity

We believe in fostering cities and communities where opportunities and resources are distributed fairly and every individual's rights and dignity are upheld.

We are committed to cultivating a culture of mutual respect, recognising and valuing the diversity of perspectives, and encouraging dialogue and understanding.

Our commitment to excellence drives our research, education, and outreach efforts, ensuring rigour, innovation, and impact.

Embracing diversity in all its forms, we value the plurality of experiences, cultures, and ideas as essential components of creating inclusive and just urban environments.

**[HTTPS://JUST-CITY.ORG](https://just-city.org)**

# UP203

## Spatial Planning Design R

### for 2030

# UP2030 Planning & Ready

## UP2030

The UP2030 supports cities in driving the socio-technical transitions required to meet their climate neutrality targets by leveraging urban planning and design. Within the project city stakeholders and local authorities are supported and guided to put neutrality on the map of their communities in day-to-day actions and strategic decisions. An innovative methodology (5UP-approach) was developed and applied through the implementation of science-based - yet practical - tools, and methods.

Inclusive participation is key throughout the project's full cycle of activities so that real needs of communities are reflected in the city-specific visions, and co-designed interventions maximise delivery of co-benefits. As such, UP2030 has a measured positive impact on spatial justice in the pilots, and gives the opportunity to citizens to participate in the transition by becoming agents of change themselves through their sustainable behavioural shifts.

**[HTTPS://UP2030-HE.EU](https://up2030-he.eu)**





# SUMMARY



## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO CO- CREATE EQUITABLE, SUSTAINABLE, AND INCLUSIVE URBAN FUTURES.

The Spatial Justice Handbook, developed by the Centre for the Just City at TU Delft, is a flagship output of the UP2030 Spatial Planning and Design Ready for 2030 project, funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe programme. Produced within Work Package 3, it complements the TU Delft Spatial Justice Benchmarking Tool, forming a coherent framework for embedding justice in urban development and guiding European cities towards fair, inclusive, and climate-neutral futures.

The handbook recognises that sustainability transitions cannot be achieved without social and spatial justice. It responds to one of the key challenges of the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus: ensuring that urban transformations are not only sustainable and innovative but also equitable and democratic. It



offers policymakers, planners, researchers, and citizens a practical and conceptual resource to integrate justice into urban design, governance, and spatial decision-making.

Drawing on the latest interdisciplinary research and collaborative practice across Europe, the handbook bridges theory and implementation. It translates complex ethical and philosophical ideas into actionable strategies and tools that support participatory and inclusive urban governance. The publication is grounded in the conviction that spatial justice extends beyond access to services or equitable distribution of resources. It also concerns recognition, representation, and participation in shaping the spaces people inhabit. This aligns with the work of critical theorist Nancy Fraser and forms the foundation of the handbook's tripartite structure.

The handbook engages with key frameworks that have transformed planning thought, including Arturo Escobar's concept of the pluriverse, which encourages context-sensitive and culturally diverse approaches to urban transitions, and Patsy Healey's theory of communicative planning, which emphasises deliberation, dialogue, and collective learning. These ideas are enriched by perspectives from critical urbanism, feminist theory, decolonial thought, and the expanding field of infrastructure justice.

Building on these theoretical foundations, the Spatial Justice Handbook provides a diverse set of practical tools and methodologies for operationalising justice in urban contexts. These include participatory mapping and co-design approaches, distributive equity assessment frameworks,

digital platforms for citizen engagement, and experimental applications of new technologies such as digital twins and the metaverse to foster collaborative visioning and scenario planning. The emphasis is always on empowering local communities and institutions to co-create equitable spatial solutions.

The handbook advocates for urban space as a key arena for achieving social cohesion, environmental resilience, and democratic renewal. It argues that equitable transitions depend on recognising the interdependence between social justice and environmental sustainability. In this sense, spatial justice becomes both a guiding principle and a practical approach for achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals—especially SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities—and the EU's mission for climate-neutral and smart cities.

Through its clear structure, interdisciplinary approach, and forward-looking vision, the Spatial Justice Handbook equips a wide range of stakeholders with the concepts, methods, and examples needed to implement just urban transformations. It stands as both a pedagogical and policy-relevant contribution, inviting planners, policymakers, and citizens to work collaboratively towards cities that are inclusive, resilient, and reflective of Europe's democratic values.

By bridging theory and practice, the handbook advances the idea that spatial justice is not an abstract goal but a practical pathway towards more equitable, sustainable, and participatory urban futures across Europe and beyond.



# SPATIAL JUSTICE HANDBOOK

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to understanding and applying spatial justice principles in spatial planning processes, aiming to create equitable, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments.

**The transformation of society presupposes a collective ownership and management of space founded on the permanent participation of the “interested parties,” with their multiple, varied, and even contradictory interests. It thus also presupposes confrontation [...].**

Lefebvre, H., (1991). The Production of Space, Blackwell.

