

ECOPOLITICS PODCAST: Additional Pedagogical Resources (Episode 14)

Episode 14: Global Cities, Environmental Politics, and Low Carbon Transition

Overview: Just over a decade ago, the world's urban population surpassed its rural population in a trend of urbanization that is expected to continue for decades to come. This trend has raised some interesting questions with respect to how cities can participate in global sustainability efforts and how they might have a say in the governance of environmental politics. In this episode, we dive into these questions with Dr. Harriet Bulkeley, Professor in the Department of Geography at Durham University and at the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University.

Key Takeaways

- “Most of us will either be living in an urban context or will spend time with friends and family visiting cities. And in a sense, that means that urban sustainability is for all of us.” (Dr. Bulkeley, 00:00-00:48).
- Urban spaces are not isolated from their regional, national, and global contexts; their boundaries stretch beyond the city limits and are directly connected to global political relations.
- Low carbon transitions within urban spaces are actively being explored by different communities. At the same time, there are political institutions at the regional, national, and global levels that offer political obstacles to low carbon transition in urban areas.
- As with all areas of ecopolitics, the urban space is contested and undergirded by deep structures of racism, colonialism, and patriarchy that benefit some people over others.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe your own relationship to urban space? Can cities be shared with nature/naturalized, or is urban space the antithesis of nature?
2. What kind of opportunities do you think exist for communities in urban spaces to contribute to climate solutions? Do you see potential for urban areas to become exemplars of “environmental sustainability”?
3. What do you think are some of the key political challenges for sustainable urban development? How do we make sure everyone benefits fairly from sustainable urbanism?

Learn more about our Guest

Dr. Harriet Bulkeley

- <https://www.dur.ac.uk/directory/profile/?id=929>

Select articles, books and videos

- **Bulkeley, H. (2021).** “Climate Changed Urban Futures: Environmental Politics in the Anthropocene City.” *Environmental Politics* 30(1-2): 266-284.
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- **Bulkeley, H. and Stripple, J. (2020).** “Climate Smart City: New Cultural Political Economies in the Making in Malmö, Sweden.” *New Political Economy*.

Explore resources and scholars mentioned in this episode:

- Agrimag. “Communal Fruit Trees to be available in Copenhagen’s Public Spaces.” January 13 2020. Web.
<https://www.agriculture.com.ph/2020/01/13/communal-fruit-trees-to-be-available-in-copenhagens-public-spaces/>
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- Church of England. “Coming Home: Tackling the Housing Crisis Together.” February 2021. PDF.
<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sites/abc/files/2021-02/COE%204794%20%E2%80%93%20A0HCC%20Full%20Report%20%E2%80%93%20V6.pdf>
- Cities with Nature <https://www.citieswithnature.org/>
- Convention on Biological Diversity <https://www.cbd.int/>
- Cronon, William. *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company. 1991.
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation
www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/our-work/activities/circular-economy-in-cities
- International Energy Agency <https://www.iea.org/>
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<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/>

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Learn more about Carbon Transition, Climate Change, and Urban Design

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- Johnson, Craig, Noah Toly, and Heike Schroeder. *The Urban Climate Challenge: Rethinking the Role of Cities in the Global Climate Regime*. New York, New York ;: Routledge, 2015.
- Montgomery, Charles. *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives through Urban Design*. First edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.
- Rauland, Vanessa., and Peter. Newman. *Decarbonising Cities Mainstreaming Low Carbon Urban Development*. 1st ed. 2015. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015.
- Siegel, Frederic R. *Adaptations of Coastal Cities to Global Warming, Sea Level Rise, Climate Change and Endemic Hazards*. 1st ed. 2020. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020.