Toward a 'Just' Sustainability

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Three questions:

How is sustainability currently constructed and understood?

What is environmental justice?

Is there a 'just' sustainability and if so, what might it look like?

How is sustainability currently constructed and understood?

Current sustainability: The 'New Environmental Paradigm'

Current sustainability thinking comes from the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) of Catton and Dunlap (1978);

Focus on *environmental stewardship* which currently influences the work of most environmental and sustainability organizations in the US and globally;

More interested in *bio*diversity than *cultural* diversity;

Good on *inter-generational* equity, but poor on *intra-generational* equity or social justice *NOW;*

The *inseparability* of environmental quality and human equality globally…

"In recent years it has become increasingly apparent that the issue of environmental quality is inextricably linked to that of human equality. Wherever in the world environmental despoilation and degradation is happening, it is almost always linked to questions of social justice, equity, rights and people's quality of life in its widest sense".

(Agyeman, Bullard and Evans 2003)

Silo-based policy:The apparent *separateness* of environmental quality and human equality in the USA

"more than 40 percent of the largest cities (33 of 77) in the United States had sustainability projects on the web, but only five of these dealt with environmental justice on their web pages."

(*Warner 2002*)

"most cities that have sustainability indicators do not explicitly use social or environmental equity".

(*Portney 2003*)

Sustainability has….won?

"In the battle of big public ideas, sustainability has won: the task of the coming years is simply to work out the details, and to narrow the gap between its theory and practice".

(Campbell 1996)

Ecology or politics?

"**The emerging sustainability ethic may be more interesting for what it implies about politics than for what it promises about ecology**".

(*Hempel 1999*)

Citizens, not engineers?

"Sustainability will be achieved, if at all, not by engineers, agronomists, economists and bio-technicians but by citizens".

(*Prugh, Costanza and Daly 2000*)

Despite the current, predominantly *environmental* orientation of the NEP:

"Sustainability is, at its very heart, a political construct rather than a technical or scientifically objective notion. The policy goal of sustainability can be usefully understood as what might be termed an 'over-arching societal value'. In this sense, it is more akin to notions like 'freedom', 'justice' or 'democracy' than to a specific policy commitment".

(Agyeman and Evans 1995)
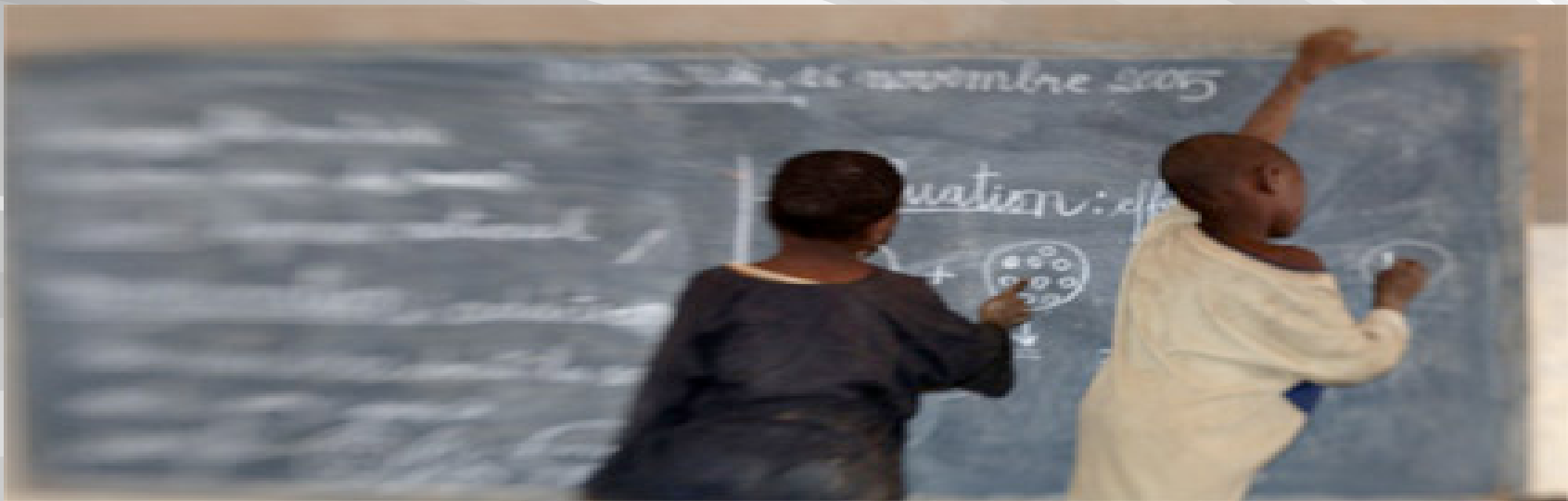
Sustainability is:

"The need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, while living within the limits of supporting ecosystems".

(Agyeman, Bullard and Evans 2003)

What is environmental justice?

The 'Environmental Justice Paradigm':

The current environmental justice project is underpinned by the Environmental Justice Paradigm (EJP) of Taylor (2000)

It is a framework for integrating *class, race, gender, environment and social justice* concerns.

With the 'Principles of Environmental Justice', it represents the theoretical underpinning of the environmental justice project and activism.

The dimensions of environmental justice:

"Environmental Justice may be viewed as having two distinct

but interrelated dimensions.

It is, predominantly at the local and activist level, a vocabulary for political opportunity, mobilization and action.

At the same time, at the government level, it is a policy principle, that no public action will disproportionately disadvantage any particular social group".
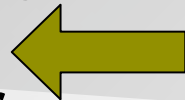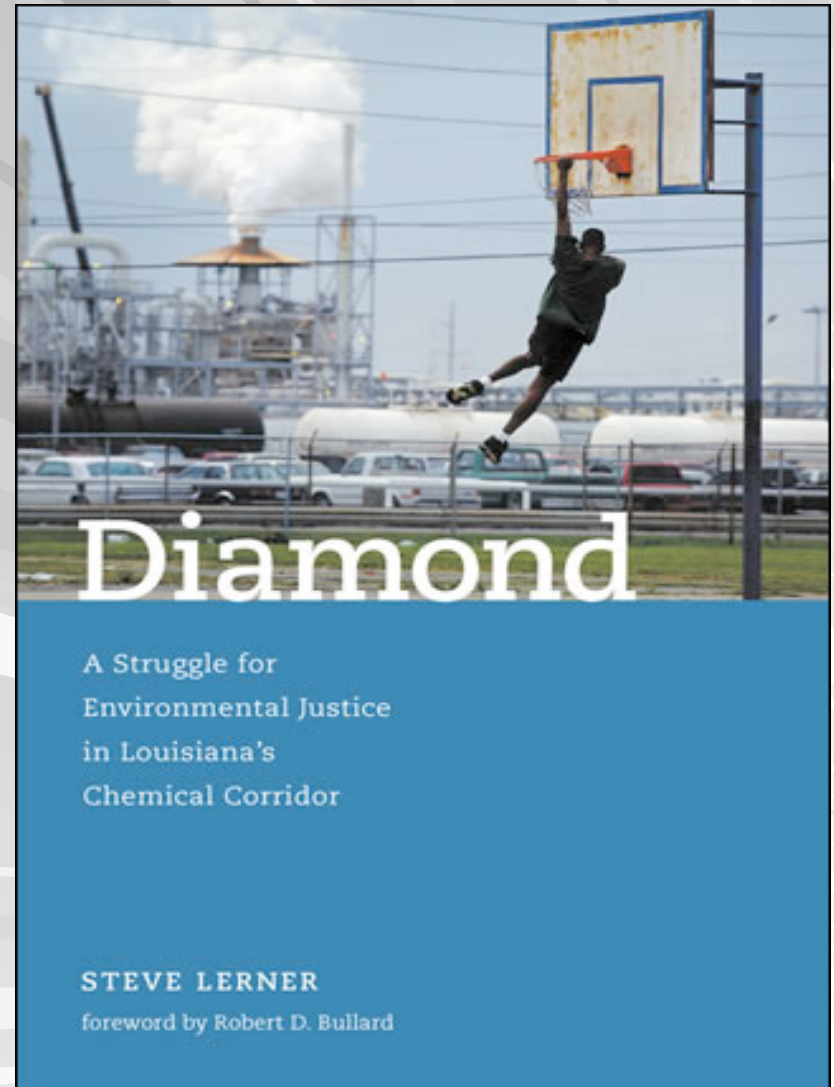

(*Agyeman and Evans 2004*)

Environmental justice defined…….

"[it] is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits".

(*Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2002*)

Diamond

A Struggle for
Environmental Justice
in Louisiana's
Chemical Corridor

STEVE LERNER
foreword by Robert D. Bullard

Why the gap between the US environmental justice and sustainability movements?

'The essence of pleasure is spontaneity.'
Germaine Greer

My research in Boston shows:

two movements from different places, resulting in different approaches, tactical repertoires and languages/vocabularies;

history of mistrust between the EJ movement and the sustainability movement;

class, social location, demographic issues cannot be ignored;

reluctance to engage in a white, middle class discourse.

Movement dynamics: Lichterman (1995)

Sustainability groups are a "personalized form of movement community [that] creates an interdependence of *empowered individuals*"

Community *environmental justice groups are* a "communitarian form of movement community [that] creates an interdependence that *weights the group as a whole more*, and individuals less"

Coalitions, or "movement fusion?"

"Clean Buses for Boston" was an EJ/sustainability groups coalition that delivered 350 CNG buses.

"Movement fusion is a necessary ingredient for the long term success of the environmental justice movement because, put simply, environmental justice advocates do not have a large enough power base to win the larger struggle for justice on their own".

(Cole and Foster 2001)

Is there a 'just' sustainability and if so, what might it look like?

The 'Just' Sustainability Paradigm

Represents nexus between environmental justice and sustainability theories and practices;

Links to both the EJP and NEP;

Effectively *reframes* EJ highlighting the pivotal role that justice and equity could and should play within contemporary sustainability policy and planning discourses;

BUT *does not* negate real EJ struggles.

JUST sustainabilities

Development in an Unequal World

Edited by **Julian Agyeman, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans**
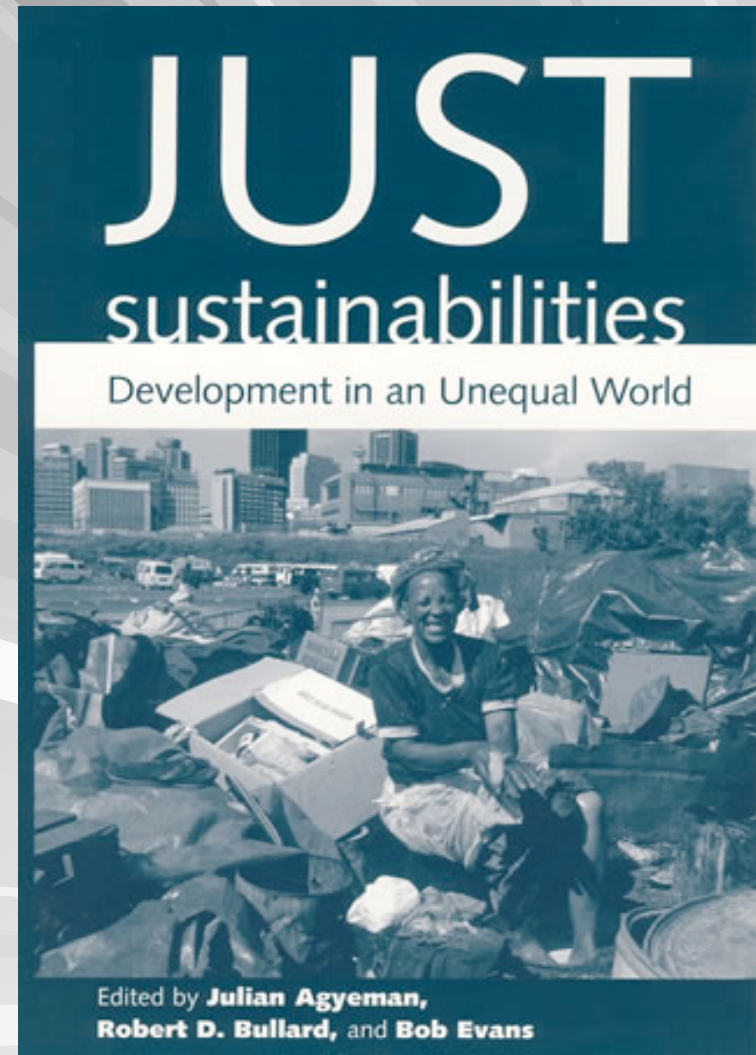
Urban Ecology, Oakland, CA: A case study in 'just' sustainability.

"Urban Ecology has not focused on the traditional environmental priorities of preserving land, air and water. Neither have we had a traditional community development focus aimed at, for example, generating affordable housing. Rather, our work has integrated elements of these disciplines and others, with *healthy human habitats* as the common denominator".
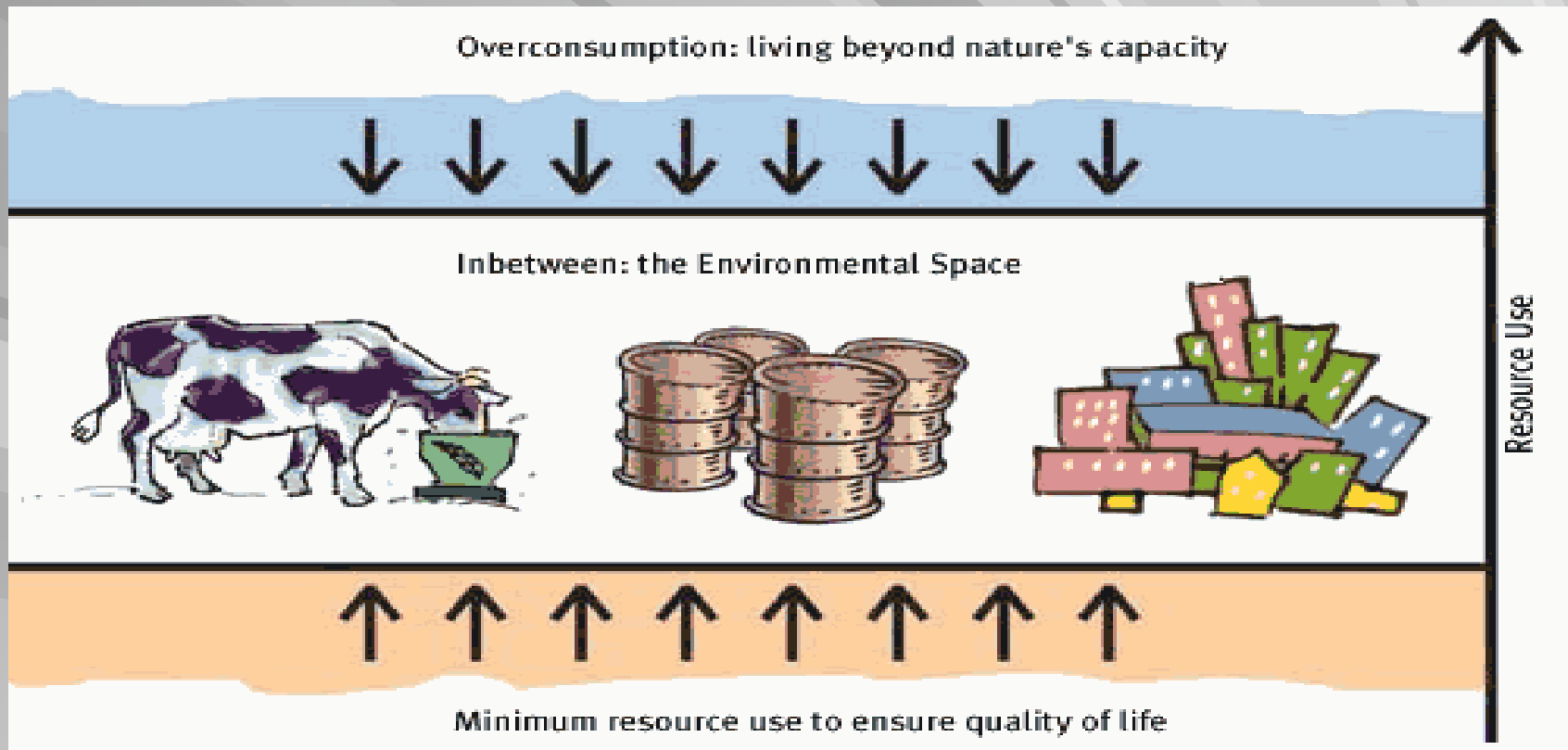
Community Design Program -

Planning and Design services to low income communities.

Sustainable Cities Program -

Approaches municipal governments to promote more just and sustainable development patterns.

Towards just sustainability I: Global per capita resource allocation

Overconsumption: living beyond nature's capacity

Inbetween: the Environmental Space

Resource Use

Minimum resource use to ensure quality of life

Fair use of environmental space lies between the minimum resource use needed to ensure quality of life (*the 'dignity' floor*) and the maximum use of the Earth's capacity feasible without depleting ecological stocks (*the 'profligacy' ceiling*). It is an example of a 'per capita resource allocation' strategy.

European environmental space targets
(there are none for the US!)

Resource	Present use per cap.p.a	Env. Space per cap p.a.	Change needed (%)	Target 2010 per cap.p.a.	Target 2010 (%)
Energy					
CO2 emissions	7.3 t	1.7 t	-77	5.4 t	-26
Primary energy use	123 GJ	60 GJ	-50	97.2 GJ	-21
Fossil Fuels (a)	100 GJ	25 GJ	-75	78.0 GJ	-22
Nuclear	16 GJ	0 GJ	-100	0 GJ	-100
Renewables (b)	7 GJ	35 GJ	+400	12.2 GJ	+74
Non-renewable raw materials					
Cement	536 kg	80 kg	-85	423 kg	-21
Pig iron	273 kg	36 kg	-87	213 kg	-22
Aluminium	12 kg	1.2 kg	-90	9.2 kg	-23
Chlorine	23 kg	0 kg	-100	17.2 kg	-25
Land use pattern					
Built-up land	0.053 ha	0.051 ha	-3.2	0.051 ha	-3.2
Inland waters	0.009 ha	as now	0	0.009 ha	0
Protected Sites	0.003 ha	0.061 ha	+1933	0.061 ha	ca. +2000
Woodland	0.164 ha	0.138 ha	-16	0.138 ha	-16
Arable land (c)	0.237 ha	0.100 ha	-56	0.150 ha	-37
Other					
Wood -FOE	0.66 m3	0.56 m3	-15%	0.10 m3	-15
Water	regional and national estimates needed, European targets not adequate				

Towards just sustainability II:Community well-being

In 1995, Cobb, Halstead and Rowe, writing in The Atlantic Monthly asked the question "If the GDP is up, why should America be down?"
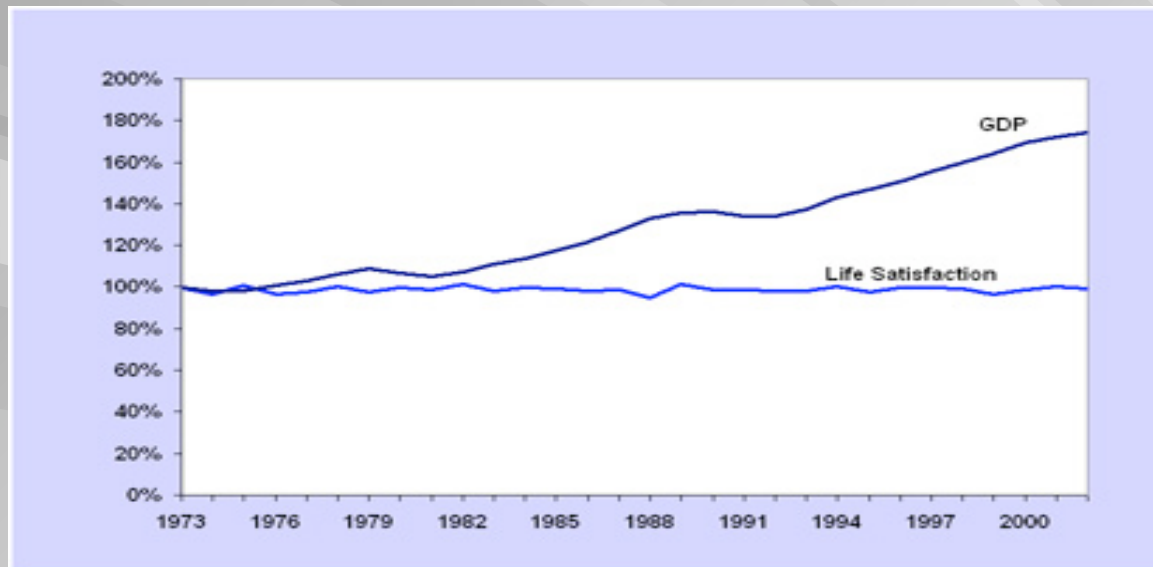
In the UK, the New Economics Foundation come at the same point another way: '*what would policy and planning look like if it were seeking to promote well-being or life satisfaction*?

Policy and planning for well-being: What can government do?

1 *Measure what matters*: produce a set of national well-being accounts;

2. *Create a well-being economy*: employment, meaningful work and environmental taxation;

3. *Reclaim our time* through improving our work-life balance;

4. *Create an education system to promote flourishing*;

5. *Refocus health services* to promote complete health;

6. *Invest in early years and parenting*;

7. *Discourage materialism* and promote authentic advertising;

8. *Strengthen civil society*, social well-being and active citizenship.

(NEF 2005)

Towards just sustainability III: Spatial justice

"Just as *social justice* requires that life chances are not distributed along class lines, *spatial justice* requires that they are not distributed geographically". (*David Lammy M.P. 2004*)

Spatial justice A: Emphasis on access and accessibility: Urban spaces

"In this new century, we are facing a different kind of threat to public space-not one of disuse, but of patterns of design and management that exclude some people and reduce social and cultural diversity"

(*Low, Taplin and Scheld 2005*)

"*contact theory* posits that….interracial interactions that occur in leisure settings have the potential to be more genuine and sincere compared with the more obligatory interactions that take place in formal settings".

(*Shinew, Glover and Parry 2004*)

Setha Low, Dana Taplin, and Suzanne Scheld

Rethinking Urban Parks
PUBLIC SPACE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY
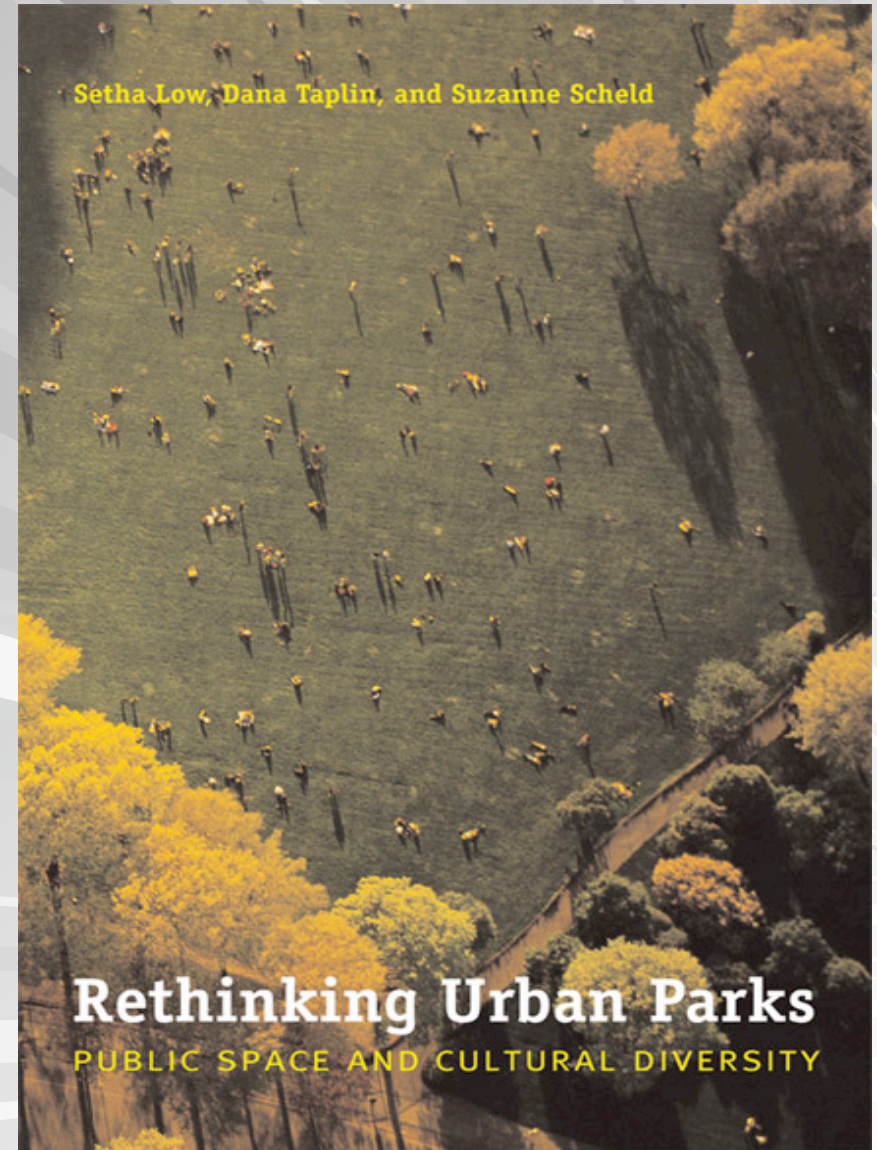
Spatial justice B: Freedom of movement and citizen's rights.

"The right to the city is like a cry and a demand a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*".

Lefebvre (1996)

"Ultimately, redressing past racial injustice and its manifestation as present spatial injustice means formalizing the rights of poor people, an act necessarily predicated on the state's recognition of the universal right to urban services".

The Right to the City Alliance (2007)

Towards just sustainability:Planning for intercultural cities.

In the intercultural city there is a 'diversity advantage':

interaction/exchange of ideas between different cultural groups;

a pluralist transformation of public space, institutions and civic culture;

proactive engagement between cultures;

mutual learning and joint growth;

acquisition of particular skills and competencies enabling people to interact functionally with anyone different from themselves regardless of their origins.

THE INTERCULTURAL CITY

PLANNING FOR DIVERSITY ADVANTAGE

PHIL WOOD & CHARLES LANDRY

Towards just sustainability: Strengthening 'community capital'.

1 *Minimizing* consumption of natural capital:

Living within limits

2 *Improving* physical capital:

Community assets/infrastructure

3 *Strengthening* economic capital:

Making more with less
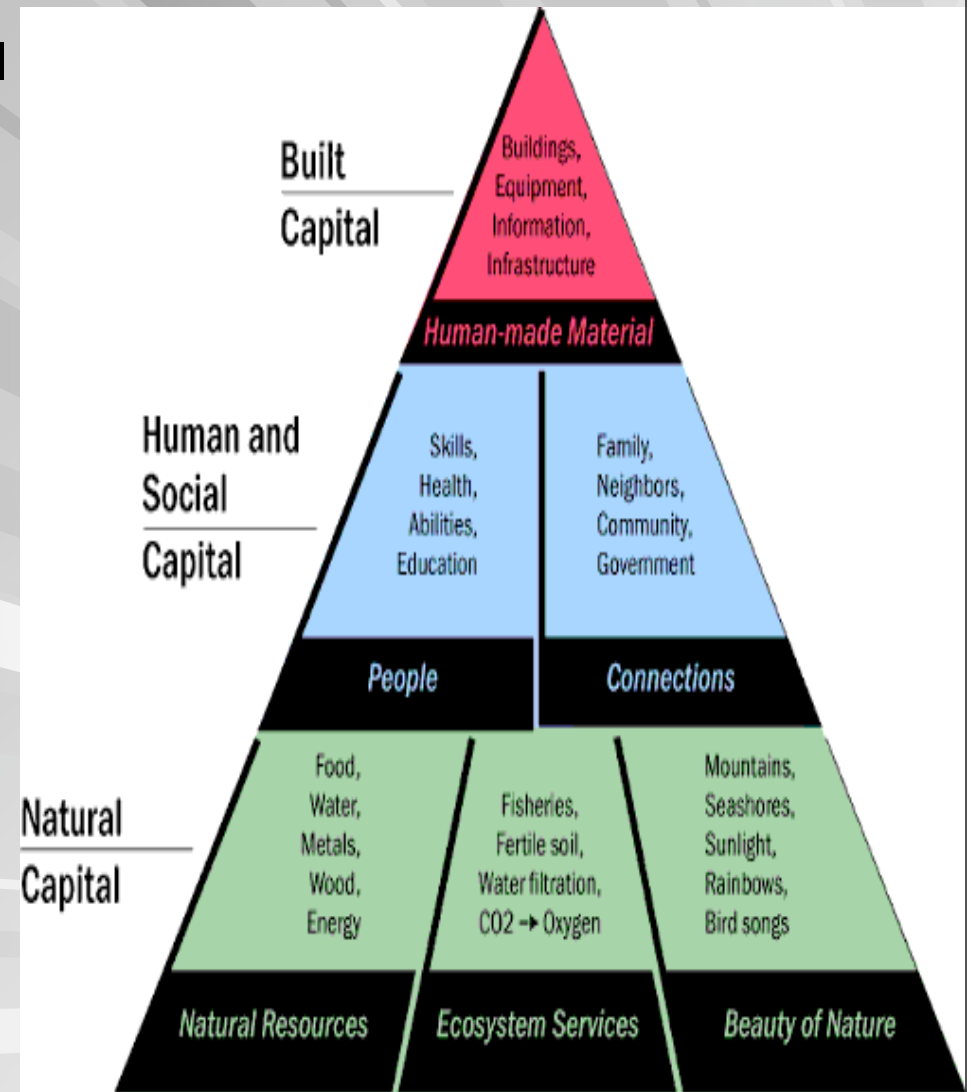
4 *Increasing* human capital:

Focus on health, education etc

5 *Multiplying* social capital:

Capacity building/partnerships

6 *Enhancing* cultural capital:

Attention to values, place, arts, diversity

Roseland (2005)

Toward Just Sustainability in North American Cities

Integrating justice into policy:*The City and County of San Francisco.*

Culturally responsive urban design: *City of Toronto.*

'Green collar' jobs:*The Apollo Alliance.*

The City and County of San Francisco

"In July, 1997, the goals and objectives of the Sustainability Plan became policy of the City and County of San Francisco". The Plan has 5 EJ 'goals' and has 3 EJ indicators. This is unique in US city sustainability programs.

SUSTAINABLE CITY
WORKING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR SAN FRANCISCO

"The 'Less Toxic Pest Management', 'Less Toxic Purchasing', and 'Green Building' programs are working examples of the Precautionary Principle."

City of Toronto: Culturally Responsive Urban Design

"what can urban design practitioners do to cater to ethno-cultural influences?.. [they] must immerse themselves into a cultural milieu and make every attempt to understand and respect its nuances"
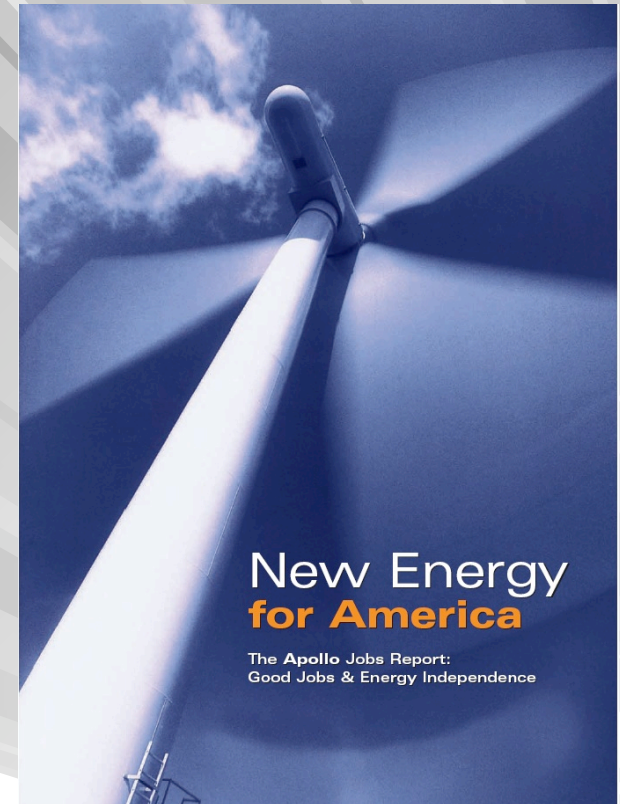
(*Kumar and Martin 2004*)

Apollo Alliance and Green Collar Jobs

"We envision eco-industrial parks on land once blighted by prisons. We dream of struggling cities like Watts, Detroit and Newark blossoming as Silicon Valleys of green capital. We dream of a multi-ethnic, grassroots movement transforming America by creating jobs, reducing violence and honoring the earth".

(*Van Jones 2007*)

New Energy
for America
The Apollo Jobs Report:
Good Jobs & Energy Independence

The Alliance's aim is to create 'sustainable energy independence'. It is supported by leaders from labor, environmental, business and communities of color. The latter are most harmed by current energy policy.

Thanks!