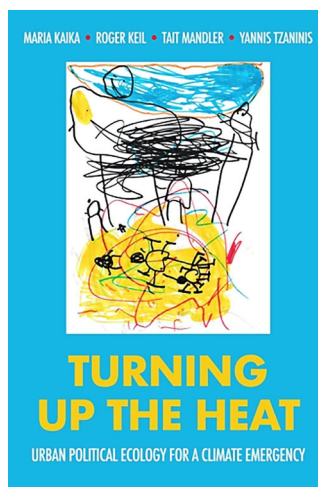


Kaika, Maria; Keil, Roger; Mandler, Tait; Tzaninis, Yannis (eds.) (2023): Turning up the heat. Urban political ecology for a climate emergency

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The enormous material flows characterizing cities result in specific nature-society relations within urban spaces, and in social and ecological crises. Distant regions are claimed where resources are extracted or processed into intermediate products under poor working conditions and which are used as sacrifice zones for toxic waste at the end of the value and recycling chain. The object of urban political ecology is to examine the conditions of these nature-society relation-

ships at a local level and in a global context. Urban political ecology, in contrast to other approaches, such as ecological urbanism or urban landscape design, always questions the conditions and effects of a capitalist logic of exploitation and employs the approach of historical materialism.

This approach is becoming increasingly relevant due to the consequences of climate change and the overshooting of planetary boundaries, the negative effects of resource extractivism and the externalized ecological burdens of urban metabolism. Since the 1990s, urban political ecology has been an important interdisciplinary strand of urban and environmental research. While the initial focus was on the social production of urban nature and the significance of this nature for social dynamics in cities with reference to neo-Marxist approaches, the focus expanded in the 2000s to include the global dimension of the use of nature for urban life.

The anthology brings together current findings and debates on this research perspective. The editors are among the most internationally renowned scholars in political ecology. Maria Kaika is Professor of Urban, Regional and Environmental Planning at the University of Amsterdam, Roger Keil is Professor of Environmental and Urban Change at York University in Toronto, Tait Mandler is a postdoctoral researcher with a project on embodied ecologies at the University of Wageningen, Yannis Tzaninis is a researcher on European suburbanization at the University of Amsterdam. Together, they also published the much-cited article “Moving urban political ecology beyond the ‘urbanization of nature’” in the journal *Progress in Human Geography* in 2021 (Tzaninis/Mandler/Kaika et al. 2021). These and other contributions were published in the context of the international research initiative on Global Suburbanisms.

The anthology brings together 32 authors from three gen-

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erations who present different approaches to urban political ecology. Some of the authors already contributed to the influential anthology “In the nature of cities. Urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism” from 2006, which primarily covered the Anglo-American debate (Heynen/Kaika/Swyngedouw 2006). The majority of current contributions still come from the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, but there are now also some from Chile, Hong Kong, Kenya, Singapore and Brazil. The new anthology not only offers an epistemological expansion with a focus on climate change, but also responds to the criticism of a neo-Marxist urban political ecology that views cities as ecosystems and pays too little attention to urban and international social change and the postcolonial history of urban space.

The title “Turn up the heat” is to be understood in a physical, social and political sense, referring to the sustained rise in temperature, the increasing and unequal social burden of heat stress in cities and the intensifying struggles against unsustainability. And it is also to be understood as an epistemological call “to overcome the distinction between core and periphery, inside and outside, city and nature” (p. 2). Social, spatial and economic inequality feature heavily. But interconnections across space and processes of globalization, urbanization and geopolitics are neglected. With strategies linked to the green economy or ecological modernization, more and more species and other types of nature are being mobilized and economically appropriated for ongoing urbanization (p. 3). The editors could not have found a more qualified author for a comprehensive, well-founded foreword than Mike Davis, who has spent three decades working on the urbanization of nature. He sets the tone for the volume with a contribution on the political ecology of California’s megafires and makes the relevance and urgency of political ecology in climate change very clear.

The volume is structured in four chapters. The contributions in the first part extend the urban political ecology beyond the “urbanization of nature” thesis. There is no longer a recognizable material demarcation of the city between centre and periphery, especially in metropolitan areas, and material flows have become increasingly globalized. Transcending the dichotomies that have been constitutive of urban studies and environmental policies has been a key concern of urban political ecology since its inception in the 1990s, but the metabolic flows and socio-environmental processes still privilege a perceived “centre”. “Extended urbanisation is understood in the volume as a global process that exceeds the conventional conceptualisation of ‘the urban’ to include a vast variety of expansion of form and process” (p. 7). Extended urbanization includes non-central forms, such as suburban, peri-urban, post-urban, corridor urbanization, informal settlements, logistics “cities” and recre-

ational spaces. The authors of this section, like Matthew Gandy, Neil Brenner and Erik Swyngedouw, identify opposing claims between situated urban political ecology and the call for a post-cityist urban political ecology. City and non-city landscapes are dialectically coproduced under modern capitalism. “Hinterland” is not only a technical term within economic geography, but is intermeshed with racialized historical geographies of colonization, land grabbing, territorial dispossession and enslavement (p. 113).

The authors of the second chapter emphasize situated knowledge with a call to mobilize a Global South perspective as a tool for conceptional and empirical reorientation, rather than simply as an afterthought. This chapter pays more attention to everyday practices, makes a more nuanced examination of power as diffused and relational, and emphasizes constellations of environmental racism. The epistemological potential of this perspective is illustrated with case studies on climate-change-induced water problems in Nepal, nature degradation in Nairobi in colonial times, water conflicts in India’s urban periphery and a deconstruction of resilience narratives in South African and Ugandan cities.

The third chapter discusses more-than-human perspectives using the examples of the spread of Ebola virus disease in West Africa and regional water governance in Jakarta, Rotterdam and New York City.

The fourth chapter discusses the ongoing disjunctions between policy, politics and academic debate. While academia has moved beyond privileging cities as objects of inquiry, cities have increasingly become the preferred sites for policy and governance experiments to address climate change (p. 18). There is a strong consensus among international policymaking organizations that cities are the right scale and place to save the planet through technomanagerial innovations like smart cities, circular economies or municipal voluntarism. The authors of this chapter regard these universalized solutions as a depoliticization of urban and sustainability policies. They articulate the dialectic between socio-environmental policy and politics and emphasize situated urban political ecologies with examples from Romania and Singapore.

The contributions are framed by an introduction and an epilogue by the editors, in which they elaborate on the focus of the anthology and clearly explain the structure of the volume. The volume concludes with a detailed index. The result is an outstanding publication on urban political ecology that provides inspiration for urban studies, planning, as transformation and sustainability research and offers the latest knowledge for academic debates and education.

Full reference of reviewed title

Kaika, M.; Keil, R.; Mandler, T.; Tzaninis, Y. (eds.) (2023): *Turning up the heat. Urban political ecology for a climate emergency*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

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