

UrbanA Podcast – Episode 11 Transcript

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Episode Information

Topic: Racial and Environmental Justice

Hosts: Ian M. Cook, Kate McGinn

Guest: Meera Ghani, ECOLISE and Tamara Steger, CEU

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Transcript

[Music]

Episode Introduction (0:15- 1:26)

Ian: Kate, you know how one of the key ideas we've been exploring in the podcast is the impossibility of separating out the ecological and the social when it comes to justice? I mean that there's no meaningful environmentalism without social justice, yet it is often forgotten when we talk about environmental matters.

Kate: Indeed.

Ian: Well, maybe a similar argument can be made for the ways we don't, at least often, think about what gets lost when we say justice. I mean, without thinking about different strands of justice and injustice.

Kate: You mean like environmental justice and racial justice?

Ian: Exactly.

Kate: We should really have an episode about this. Ian, check your Filofax to see who we can call up.

Ian: I got it. We can ask Meera Ghani, Policy Coordinator at ECOLISE – The European Network for Community led Initiatives on Climate Change and Sustainability, and Tamara Steger, Associate Professor at the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy at the Central European University. They'd be wonderful.

Kate: Sweet. Let's do it. Let's get them on the podcast.

Ian: You know what? A Filofax is?

Kate: No.

[Both laugh]

[Music]

The Relationship of Environmental and Racial Justice (1:25 – 7:19)

Ian: So let me start first then with Meera, because she's not here, and Tamara is sitting next to me in the studio, but I was wondering like, so what do you think, like, can there be any sort of environmental justice without racial justice?

Meera: Hm, short answer to that, no. They're both, they're very, very tied, and environmental justice, at least the way it's understood and the way that was framed during the First Peoples' Conference in I believe it was 1991, where there were 17 principles listed around environmental justice and what it entails, racial justice was a big part of it. Um, A lot of environmental issues impact people of colour and marginalised and excluded communities more than other communities which have more affluence, more access to resources, more opportunities to mitigate any kind of environmental impacts.

And so there's also this concept, which I'm sure you all are familiar with, is environmental racism, which is about the impact of environmental degradation and destruction on communities of colour. And if you look at it geographically, you also get evidence of what the environment is like in areas where people of colour reside, and that's where a lot of the industry tends to be, that's where a lot of the deforestation happens, that's where you see lack of resources being provided to mitigate some of these challenges. That's the same case in the US. You've heard the issues around Flint, Michigan and water.

And so these- environmentalism sadly has a long history of colonialism tied to it and how land of indigenous communities has been taken over. Indigenous communities, you know, even though they represent 20% of the world's population, they care for 80% of its resources. And so they've been in the right relationship with their environment, and as what they call bioregions for a lot longer than we have and others have, and they've been managing the planet's resources in a certain way. And when you take over their lands and take over their resources and take over their ability to manage then, it leads to a lot of the impacts that we're seeing now in terms of not just the environment, but also climate impacts. Oh, and I'll stop there.

Ian: That's great. I mean, and so Tamara may be just I mean, there's two- two ways I want to take the conversation. One is talking about the question of environmental racism that Meera mentioned and Meera raised this- this colonial aspect, but maybe first, let's talk about the the first one, is sort of, what you know from your work in the region where we are now in Central and Eastern Europe, Like how environmental racism has played out here?

Tamara: Mm hmm. I agree with Meera. You cannot have environmental justice without having equality of all kinds, so not only along the lines of race, but also class and gender issues. And these are intertwined very much so with racism probably at the top in terms of filtering down into all those other areas and manifesting in those different ways. Um, so in this region, the research that I've done is mostly involving Roma communities and there's clearly an issue there. But also we also identified class issues in Central and Eastern Europe. So there is class discrimination as well, and poverty usually runs into- in an integrated fashion with, um, you know, hmm, I don't like the word marginalised or vulnerable because it takes the, uh, it takes the responsibility off the perpetrator and kind of focuses on the person who's already experiencing the struggles. So let me say subordinated groups. So yeah, so but you definitely can't take, you know, the issue of race

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out of environmental justice. You can't have environmental justice without consideration for it, that's for sure, I think.

And I would add too, I appreciate that Meera also mentioned indigenous communities and this globalisation issue. And, I mean, I can't say, you know, whether or not, I mean, not in a position to judge whether communities are living well with the environment or not, broadly speaking, but the local recognition of communities and how they live and how they survive and recognition of that is key, I think. And so, so yeah, generally speaking, it's important to look at environmental justice at a global scale because there's lots going on there. But also it's really important to look at local communities and how, what are their struggles and how did they find ways to to live well and to recognise those?

Meera: I just completely agree. I work a lot with local communities in Europe, and they're the ones who understand their needs and contexts best and also come up with the right solutions, according to that. So yeah I completely agree.

Tamara: We probably won't disagree with each other much, we have disagreements with others outside of the discussion, probably.

Examples (7:20 – 12:38)

Ian: But what, what I would like from both of you then, is maybe if you can like some sort of concrete example that sort of shows this, this argument that you're making that maybe that somehow the, the case that local communities firstly are discriminated against on the basis of, of, of race or ethnicity and then also class, and also that some times that these local communities actually know better how to manage or work alongside or with their their local environment better than, you know, not only corporations, but let's say like people who are working on a, on a wider scale.

Meera: Well, in terms of discrimination and exclusion, you can see, I guess, clear examples in Europe. The Roma community are a good example because they tend to be in areas where there is less access to some of the facilities that aid wellbeing and that make your environment better. They end up in congested urban environments. I can just give by example of where I live in Belgium, in Brussels, I live in an area which is poorly resourced. It's mostly immigrant area, a lot of Muslim immigrants, but also Roma and people from Eastern Europe and people from Congo, more so now, and less Belgians and less other Europeans. Because it's an area which is not provided for with- or doesn't have the access or the resources that other neighbourhoods might have.

It's a- it's a cycle because the governments are able to get more revenues in terms of taxes, but also just historically, these are marginalised communities, immigrant communities that have been forgotten. And so, the area that I live in doesn't have any parks nearby. You have to travel quite a way to get to a decent park. It has, now, facilities around transport, but it's still poorly managed and it is one of the most heavily trafficked areas because it has a big throughway roads. So it's one of the most congested and air quality is not that great at this area as well. So this is where the immigrant communities are and the it's not just that, you know, it's a historical lack of attention and care that goes into it, so this area was never developed in a way or planned in a way where there would be more access. It's the same thing with schools. There are schools, but they're not well resourced. So, and they're heavily crowded with children, so some people have to go quite far to send their children to school. Same thing with hospital access. Same thing with

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access to government facilities. So it's just how the neighbourhood functions, or doesn't function because it's been, like I said, forgotten.

But in terms of communities, if you look at the opposite and I work with a lot of communities that have taken up the initiative to cater for their own needs and to provide for their own needs and come together to find solutions, there are many across Europe. We work with transition towns, permaculture initiatives, there're various ecovillages that have been set up across, well in Belgium there are a few on the outskirts, but in France, in Ireland, in Germany there are a large number of ecovillage communities and then smaller initiatives where just a small commune or we call it a commune in Belgium, but a small area where people come together and they're like, okay, we, we- this is what this is, the problem we're facing, our government is not doing anything, let's set up an initiative locally, whether if that's a local community garden or farm, or they set up a solidarity project where they have mutual aid for each other.

So the small initiatives and bigger initiatives and ECOLISE came into being because there was a collection of these initiatives and not much connection between them. So there was a collection, but not connection. And so ECOLISE was born out of the need of bringing some of these initiatives together. And then some of these initiatives were transforming into larger movements, like Transition is more than a collection of initiatives, it's a movement. And then urban initiatives that were coming about and we thought it would be good to provide space for everyone to interact with each other and learn from each other and build communities of practise and see how we can scale this out to mainstream communities because a lot of these initiatives are still considered fringe and exist within certain bubbles.

On Class in Environmental Movements (12:40 – 20:55)

And just to come back to what we were talking about earlier of racial justice, I have to say, having worked with a lot of these communities for about three years now, there's also an element of separation within the communities, because not everyone can afford to buy land and set up an ecovillage. So a lot of these communities, across Europe at least, tend to be white middle-class. And so for me personally, I've also been looking at how they can open up to immigrant communities, refugee communities around them and see how there could be a collaboration there. And that's a constant struggle no matter where you are, whether you're in an urban environment, working within the EU bubble, where there's also this hashtag, that started about two years ago, #BrusselsSoWhite. So it's a problem everywhere for communities of colour, how to integrate into white culture and organisations and communities and movements that are dominated by white, middle-class people. It's the same thing with Extinction Rebellion and other movements that have come about so.

So that's why I use marginalised because we are kept at the margins. So it's not as a sign of victimhood or assigning blame to the communities, but that we are kept excluded. Our access is revoked to a lot of these spaces, and we are kept at the margins. While it should be the opposite. People of colour and communities of colour and those impacted by environmental and climate injustice should be at the centre of it all.

Tamara: Yeah, thank you. That's so interesting to hear about your efforts. And, and so this was, you know, something also of interest was, you know, the environmental movement,

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for example, in the United States and Earth Day in the 1970s and how it was predominantly a white movement. And yet, you know, it's funny when we think of environmental justice, so it's a term that has largely gained resonance as this movement in the United States that started, you know, around hazardous waste sightings and so on in predominantly Black communities and also Hispanic communities and so on. And this research by Bullard, which was really striking, and still is, we're still trying to go, wow, that's really something when you see it in the numbers like that.

Um, but, and I wanted to add a point to that that I think of, yeah, I, I think of environmental justice really as something that people have been struggling for for a very long time. And, you know, within communities as well as, you know, in terms of the, you know, globalisation and so on and industrialisation. So they've been struggling for a long time all over the world. And, so, you know, it's even this funny colonial type issue when you think of, well, you know, environmental justice started with the movement in the United States. But yeah, I should confess, we're on a podcast so you can't see, but I am a white American woman, so I haven't experienced racism in the sense that others certainly have.

So, for example, at one of the UrbanA arenas, one of the participants, this resonated with me in other ways, but not in terms of the context that he was talking about, which was within his own community, and he said, I'm just so tired. He said it's, it's just constant, you know, it's every day. And, and you could just hear it in his voice. Gosh, you know, so every moment, every day facing this kind of issue, you know, from, because when we're talking about environmental justice, we're really talking about these basic quality of life issues, water air every day, it is the every day.

And you know, often when I've told people in the streets that, oh, I work on environmental studies issues, they say, oh, like cleaning up garbage or, you know, something nice for the elite, you know, yes, we make our streets nice and clean. That's what environmental work is. No, no, no. Environment is about the everyday. And, and so and that's, you know, something that environmental justice activists have brought our attention, you know, brought the world's attention to more so than the mainstream environmental movement. So that's been an incredibly important contribution, I think, to reconceptualize saying and understanding, understanding the environment also not as just something that's out there and surround us surrounds us, and that's resources and so on. But it flows in and through us and we through it and it's, you know, all connected. Um so, yeah, I really like your point. When you think about integration and this issue of marginalisation, that, yeah, it's all connected. We're connected across people now, no matter where we come from or, you know, where we're where we're going, we are connected and we go there together, whether we like to think so or not. I think so. Yeah.

Ian: Great. You know, one of the things I was thinking about when you were both talking, I was thinking back to, so how, how you put environment on the agenda and how, how it gets put on the agenda and who puts it on the agenda? Right? Because it is quite clear, you know, that very often we never framed anti-colonial movements as environmental justice movements, although very often they actually were. You know, it's like, how about who has the right to come and extract resources from somebody else's land or not?

And the same way then I was thinking that when, back when I used to live in England, like very often like being involved in left wing politics, very often like left wing groups would always say, stop talking about me environment, that's a middle-class issue. You know, like,

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you know, we can only start talking about environment once we once we've solved issues, you know, that are more important to it, to the working class. And then so the argument that I and others always used to put was like, it's such a working-class issue as well, you know. If you look at like Slack keeps left next to, you know, coal mines in like what, what, when I was growing up, former coal mining town, but were coal mining towns in the 70s and 80s, and it just like, okay, but, you know, and it's like trying to, this- this distinction, and I sometimes wonder whether this is maybe one of the big issues that the environmental movement, if we can call something like that, faces is this sort of, it's been sort of claimed a little bit as a middle class white space.

And Extinction Rebellion maybe a continuation of that to some degree. I mean, when I, when- when the sort of, the- the things that people in Extinction Rebellion are allowed to do, you would never get away with. I mean, I'm talking now in the UK context, when I see the way that they could basically break the law in a way where they don't really fear the consequences in the same way that, like a poor black man would in London, you know, who would be scared to go and provoke the police in such an obvious way.

So I'm just wondering like what, I was just wondering like, how do we, how do we then start to, if you'd like to say, sort of, re- rethink or reconceptualize or even reclaim environmental movements to stop being this sort of, you know, white middle class concern and to be something more holistic and actually go back to maybe where the people who are, who are feeling it, the sort of the brute end like, how do we get in there and change the direction?

Reclaiming Environmentalism (20:56 – 27:25)

Meera: Yeah, I think I wish I knew the answer. I've been trying to do that for all of my activist life and all of my community organising has been around communities of colour, mostly those who are most excluded. And I would say black trans women are some of the most excluded and discriminated against. If you look within, in different communities and how to centre their voices because there are many, many have been talking about environmental justice, racial justice being connected, black feminist authors have been like Audre Lorde, Bell Hooks, activists like Grace Lee Boggs have been talking about it for decades. But the fact is that nobody's listening.

So it's not like the voices aren't there, the people aren't there, the activists aren't there, the work isn't being done, the work is being done. The fact is who gets centred and whose voices get heard, and whose stories are highlighted. So the starkest example would be, and don't get me wrong, I, I love Greta Thunberg, but there have been black young activists and indigenous activists, and girls and boys from the Global South that have been talking about environmental justice, climate justice for a lot longer. But you never heard their stories, and it only became a movement which was centred around a white girl from Sweden. Um, and so there have been many cases where there's been newspapers and media houses, photoshopping black activists out of pictures of various activists together to focus only the on the white ones.

And so, yeah, it's all about framing. It's all about the white supremacist dominant culture. It's all about the colonia- colonial mindset. It's all about the capitalist mindset. It's all about the patriarchal mindset. It's about whose stories get centred and whose voices get

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decentred. And for me, I think it's about the power relations that exist within the global context.

And so unless white people are willing to cede space and give up power, it's going to be this difficult conversation where communities of colour are demanding power and demand- demanding access. But unless the other side concedes a little bit, it's not going to happen. So I think this power dynamic is something that we need to reflect on within the environmental and climate justice movements.

And these conversations happened. Not enough. But the focus always is on the science, which I am a scientist I'm not against. The focus is always on technical- technological solutions, and the narrative is all wrong when it comes to climate justice and environmental justice. The focus is on how the emissions are rising and how we need to adapt according to whatever carbon budget is left and how we need to get the governments and corporations. And that's fine. Of course, we need corporations. There are 100 corporations responsible for 71% of the world's emissions. So, yes, hold them accountable. But then the focus ends up being behavioural change, lifestyle change and the focus shifts from systems change to individuals. And that's where the problem comes in. And unless we get the framing and the narrative and the analysis right, we're never going to come to the right solutions.

Tamara: Really appreciate and admire your points in an optimistic sense. I hope that we're starting to see more and more how certain things are failing us that for- and this takes a long time, it does. It takes a long time to shift the narrative and to shift the way we've been thinking about things and looking at things and talking about things. And, and there is hope in the incredible bravery that people have to get out on the streets these days. That's I, the courage and the bravery to hit the streets these days, given that, for example, it's, I think, getting increasingly difficult. I know after the Occupy movement, for example, you know, a lot of cities then tried to really shift the local laws so that people couldn't congregate. Again, this idea of togetherness is very threatening right? To, to- so if we want to change things coming together is the- is, is the most powerful thing we can do.

Ian: Mm-Hmm. And I guess going back to the point Meera was making before, like you, you have a certain togetherness. But then when, when that togetherness takes place basically, relates to what you're saying now, to have a reflection on all of the differences which exist in any sort of coming together? Right? Because like, I'm sure, I've actually never been to an ecovillage, but I'm sure they are very white spaces. And, and so I mean, this constant reflection on what sort of everyday processes we put in place that make people feel included or excluded, not integrated because integration is, this means that you know that you should shift if you're from a marginalised group to the to the to the position of those who are superior.

Meera: Yeah, good point

Ian: But like inclusive, inclusive of different practises, different ways of thinking, different ways of knowing, especially in relation to the environment and how those are included in a wider understanding about what sort of environmental justice could be.

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Tamara: Yeah. And yeah, I want to add to that, you know, coming together sounds great, but it's extremely difficult, especially the more diverse a group is. You know, just trying to understand and, and listen is, yeah, it's not easy. It's not easy, for sure.

On Listening and Care (27:26 – 34:02)

Meera: Yeah. And I want to, and I think listening is key. And that's often what's forgotten in conversation. Too often we're in our own heads and we're not listening really to what the other person is saying. We're not present in the moment. And so I think if we develop this practise of deep listening, maybe things start to shift, where we listen to somebody with empathy of where they're coming from and having the space to listen to what they're saying without feeling defensive, or without feeling the need to respond.

But just from the point you were making Tamara earlier, about how this coming together and, and for me, that's something that I think about deeply. I think about what needs to shift for us to be developing what I call a culture of care, which is, and often care is just thought about either in terms of health care services or it's thought about in terms of the care being provided for our children or care services, other care services for or it's thought about in terms of interpersonal care. But for me, I really am thinking deeply about how we shift that focus towards more community care. And there is a lot of work being done in terms of, especially during COVID, we saw a lot of mutual aid groups come about.

And so for me, a large part of this is really developing these support systems and networks for community care, wherever you are for that everyday interaction and for that every day of coming together and for that really understanding and self-care as a part of that equation because you can't keep pouring from an empty cup. And these days, with all that's going on, especially for communities of colour, and like you said, it takes bravery to be out on the streets, it also requires that we find space to rest, and often, to quote somebody from Instagram who runs an account called @TheNapMinistry, it's a- rest is a form of resistance for communities of colour, for black, brown, indigenous people within a capitalist white supremacist system. Rest is a form of resistance, because without rest, we won't be able to get on the streets, we won't be able to keep demanding and fighting for our rights, and having these exhausting conversations that your colleague described. It definitely is exhausting. I feel that exhaustion every day.

But when I talk about a culture of care, why I centre care is because for me, that is the counter to the systems of violence we have. So for me, the violence we see from the state, in terms of police violence or any other kinds forms of brutality is not different to capitalist violence. It's not different to environmental violence. It's not different to climate violence. So right now, our systems are based on different forms of violence, it's not different to gender based violence. So there are lots of elements for it. But for me, it's really kind of providing, shifting the narrative from the narrative, narrative of scarcity, fear and violence, towards abundance, care and solidarity.

Ian: I like this focus on care and solidarity because I think very often when questions, especially when questions are framed in a global sense in terms of environmental justice coming from a white European or Global North perspective, it's never framed in terms of care, and solidarity is often framed in terms of help and humanitarianism and all these very sort of paternalistic understandings of, you know, who has the answers and who has the and who has the, you know, the need. And so, yeah, exactly a reframing of something

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which is more horizontal and something which is more mutual, like things like solidarity and care, I think is really important for any sort of global movement, but especially the environmental and climate movement, because it is one planet in which we live.

Tamara: Yes. Yeah. I, you- when you were speaking Meera about violence and so on, I kept thinking, yeah, and look at the ones that are in prison, versus, you know, yeah, maybe some of the real criminals in the world. I really do believe that our lives are better if we are all doing well, you know, we say that, but I really think that's true. If you look at a lot of the things that we all feel challenged by in the world, this could really overcome by lifting all of us up together. Um, so, yeah, I definitely, definitely agree with that. I had another point and I was trying to carry it, and yeah listen, so I thought I'll put those points aside and just really listen to what things- I should have been taking notes like Ian [Ian and Tamara laugh]. And so, yeah, well, it maybe it'll come back later. But yeah, absolutely.

Ian: I'm glad you mentioned listening because listen is a nice segue way for me to like close up the conversation because I think that listening is actually one of the things which, which is actually what I like about podcasting and making this podcast is that basically we're forced to really listen just to voices. And, and- and then really pay attention to what people say in a way that we don't often, unfortunately, in everyday, in everyday conversations or like in these sort of other, I mean, this is also like a staged conversation, in a sense, we agreed to come together, you know, people who didn't know each of, you know, Meera and Tamara to, you know, to have a conversation about something. But I hope it was done in a way which was based more around, you know, care and listening and not this sort of very performative, we can also say macho ways that very often you find at conferences or meetings where people have to display how clever they are versus the other person instead of actually listening to the other person and actually engaging in what they say. So, I hope that's been the experience for both of you. If not, then I'm going to cut it out [All laugh].

Meera: It has been, thank you for that.

Tamara: Yeah, thanks so much.

Ian: All right. Thank- thank you guys so much.

[Music]

Post-Interview Discussion (34:03 – 40:34)

Ian: Okay Kate. I hope you enjoyed listening to that conversation between Meera and Tamara with my own little, yeah, pointers along the way or guides along the way. I think one of the, one of the interesting things that came out of that, you tell me, is, is- is maybe how it points to something fundamental that Meera brought up, about often questioning systemic versus individual, I guess, solutions or attempts at changing things in- when it comes to environmental and also then racial justice matters, right? I mean, is it enough to recycle? Is it enough to not personally be a racist and so forth if we want to change things?

Kate: Well, no. And obviously the answer to that is no. We won't solve the big environmental challenges just by recycling our water bottles. But I think the issue is, it is just such a huge existential, hard to grasp problem that we're all facing and saying, well,

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we just have to solve all institutional problems that won't give you any more kind of gratification or hope for the future. And so, you know, a lot of times it's the individual things that feel- that make you feel empowered, but saying we need to be less racist as a society or break down institutional barriers or whatnot all these buzzwords that people keep saying, I just think that leaves you very hopeless at times.

Ian: Yeah. And so maybe that, that was the other thing that I guess a thread that runs through and maybe thread that runs through all of our podcasts, though so far is, I guess, a bit of a tension between being pragmatic and maybe being a bit – I mean maybe idealistic is a bit of a mean thing to say – but maybe thinking beyond the immediate sort of what we can do in the next in the next years or so. And I guess that's something else, which was a tension, I suppose, in, in this discussion, which is, which is going to be a tension which is hard to resolve with anything political, right? Like do we want to have a pragmatic type of, of movement that is not maybe so radical and transformative, that brings more people on board, or do we want to have something which is, you know, more deep rooted in it sort of ideas of what it wants to bring about and change?

Kate: Well, and that's the issue I think I'm really struggling with. You know, listening to this podcast and thinking about environmental justice and racial justice is, the world right now, look at any country is just so partisan and so divisive. And I feel like we can't seem to agree on anything, even basic fundamentals like caring about the environment. I think it'd be so great if the environment- environmental movement could be this kind of unifying point across class, across political lines, but unfortunately, it's just not the case. And I think while racial justice is so important to bring up because obviously racial justice is entirely linked to environmental justice, I think making racial justice the focus within environmental justice is not this unifying point, unfortunately, just given kind of our political environments today. And so even though it's very important, is that actually the best thing for the movement, let's say?

Ian: Yeah, I think I'm going to disagree with you there, because I'm going to say it's clearly a very political thing and there are losers in the environmental movement, and those losers are going to fight against any sort of, any sort of transformative change that we want to bring about. And I think we're just gonna have to say to them, we have to be maybe, maybe then be a little bit more honest about the fact is that we can't bring everyone on board because, you know, it will mean a lifestyle change for, for people. It will mean certain companies will go out of business maybe or, or, you know, have to fundamentally change the models of business.

Kate: So you're thinking by losers, you're thinking big companies?

Ian: Yeah, and even and even let's say like, I mean, if we talk, unless you know, someone invents a solar powered plane tomorrow, I mean, it's also going to be like, you know, we're going to have to fly less around, we do fly, I mean, before Corona, we flew around Europe all the time, we're going to have to go on less holidays maybe, we're going to, you know, these, these are some things, we're going to have to change the way business is done.

And so all of these things, I mean, are actually things that have to, have to change, shall we say, and it's, and it's I guess it's similar in asking questions about, you know, the environmental movement's or whiteness that we talked about a little bit. I mean, it's also,

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you know, it means that if there is going to be, you know, racial justice alongside environmental justice, it's also going to mean a reconfiguration, if you like about the sort of this environmentalist scene and maybe less of the sort of polite environmentalism and more of the radical stuff so that it means in a sense, there are also losers in the sense of who has a voice an- and so forth. It's not a, is not a, it's not a thing where we can bring in different voices and say that, okay, now that means that more, more and more people have a voice, what it will mean is there's only so much space, shall we say, in any sort of movement or any sort of idea, so we do bring in communities who have experienced marginalisation through, you know, various forms of injustice, it will actually mean less space for people who are less marginalised to actually have a say as well.

Kate: Yeah, I mean a rejigging of power, rejigging of power. Absolutely. And I think environmental discussions will become an increasingly large part of our political lives. And so, yeah, there's a certain aspect of if this is going to become a larger part of our political lives, you know, I can have more power by being part of this movement, and that doesn't necessarily cater to a diverse crowd.

Ian: Mm-Hmm. Mm-Hmm. And this is something we can keep discussing in future podcasts. Um yeah. So, as ever, you can get in touch. How can people get in touch, Kate?

Kate: Yes, you can email us through our contact form found at our website UrbanArena.EU or at UrbanA@ceu.edu. And you can also find us on Twitter or Instagram. At the handle @arena_urban.

Ian: One of the people who did get in touch this month was Meredith Haines, and she is our Urban Arena podcast correspondent this month, and she has sent us this short audio clip that we will use to play out the episode. As ever, thanks so much for listening and bye!

Kate: Bye.

[Music]

Guest Contribution (40:35 – 41:40)

Meredith: What does a just and sustainable city look like? As a climate activist I do like to think about what we are working towards and positive imagining of our future. So what I might have described is an electrified city that has energy efficient buildings, free public transportation, dedicated green spaces, pedestrian friendly corridors, cleaner and quieter than today due to the switch to renewable energy and incentives to reduce waste, particularly plastic, sustained clean air and water provide a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife.

For example, evidence shows that due to fewer trees, more asphalt- asphalt and other issues, temperatures can be more than 10 degrees hotter in poorer neighbourhoods, so some of the detail of what a just city would look like would be one that prioritises investing in tree canopy, pocket parks and urban agriculture spaces. A just city would have many partners at the table, equally contributing to the decision making.

[Music]

UrbanA Podcast – Episode 11 Transcript

Disclaimer

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