

INQUIMUS 2025

Beyond Risk Management: Centring Justice for Transformative Climate Futures

Ana Terra Amorim Maia
IMAGINE Adaptation
Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3)



São Paulo

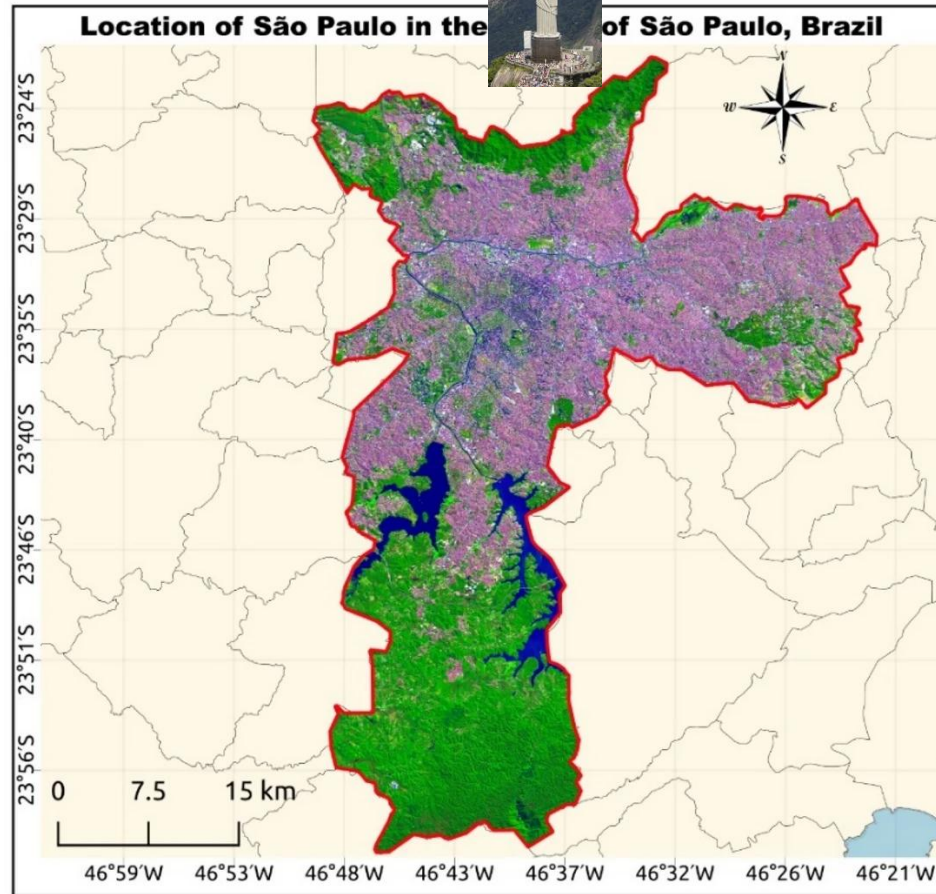
Population:

City: 12 million

Metro: 21 million

Most populous city in the Americas

Largest urban area by population outside Asia

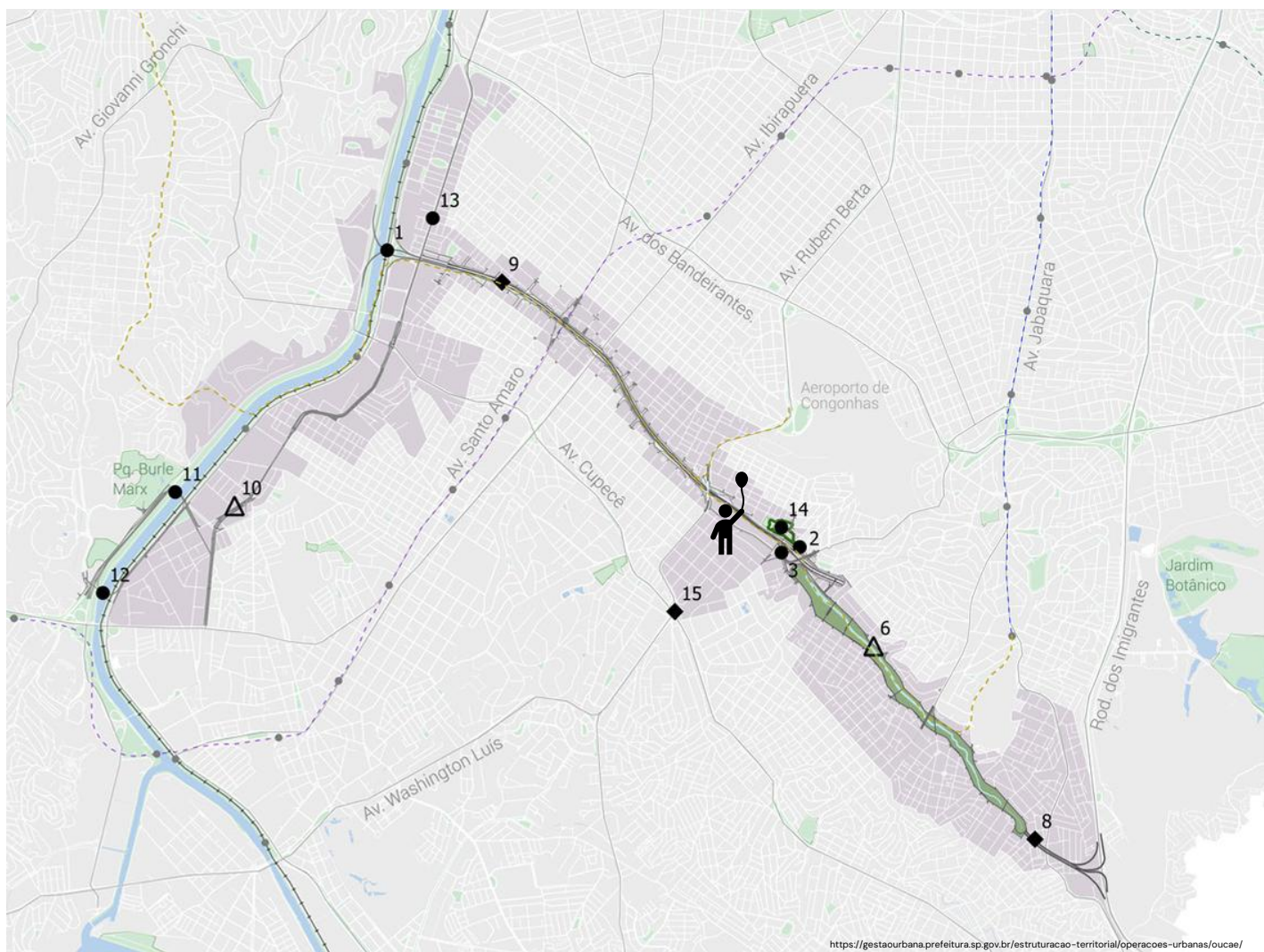


Environmental justice?

Urban Operation Água Espreada

On the surface:

- River restoration
- Urban recovery
- Line park
- Monorail
- Slum resettlement



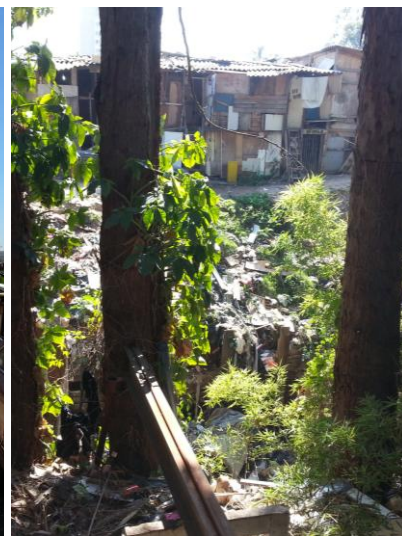
Environmental injustice?

Urban Operation Água Espreada

Deep down:

- Real estate development
- Green gentrification
- Dispossession
- Exclusion
- Discrepancy between official documents and social accounts, reports, and studies





Green gentrification: from São Paulo to Barcelona

Understanding the drivers of green gentrification through cultural ecosystem service value

- 18 parks: 9 gentrified; 9 non-gentrified.
- Analysis of 4000 (703) photos.
- Gentrified parks: aesthetics, recreational activities.
- Non-gentrified parks: cultural identity, social activities.
- Greenness does not determine gentrification; cultural value does.



From environmental to climate justice

Studying Barcelona's climate
adaptation measures through
a climate justice lens



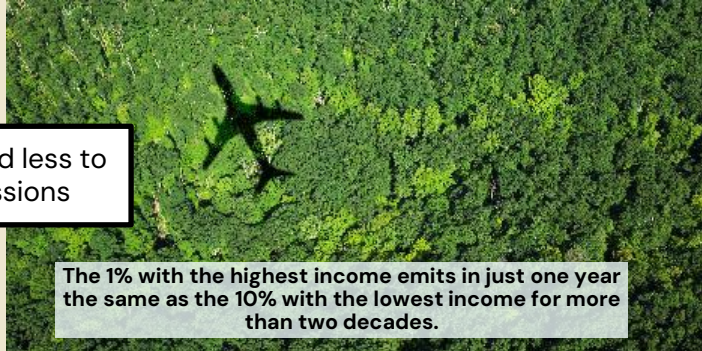
Climate injustice

- The climate crisis is not the great equaliser some predicted.
- Climate change brings to light and exacerbates existing inequalities.
- Vulnerabilities are spread unequally across territories and social positions.



Quadruple injustices

Contributed less to global emissions



The 1% with the highest income emits in just one year the same as the 10% with the lowest income for more than two decades.

Are left out of decision-making.



Poorer countries are often marginalized in climate negotiations or incorporated in a tokenistic way.

Suffer the worst consequences of climate change



Low-income countries are more exposed to climate risks and less able to cope with them

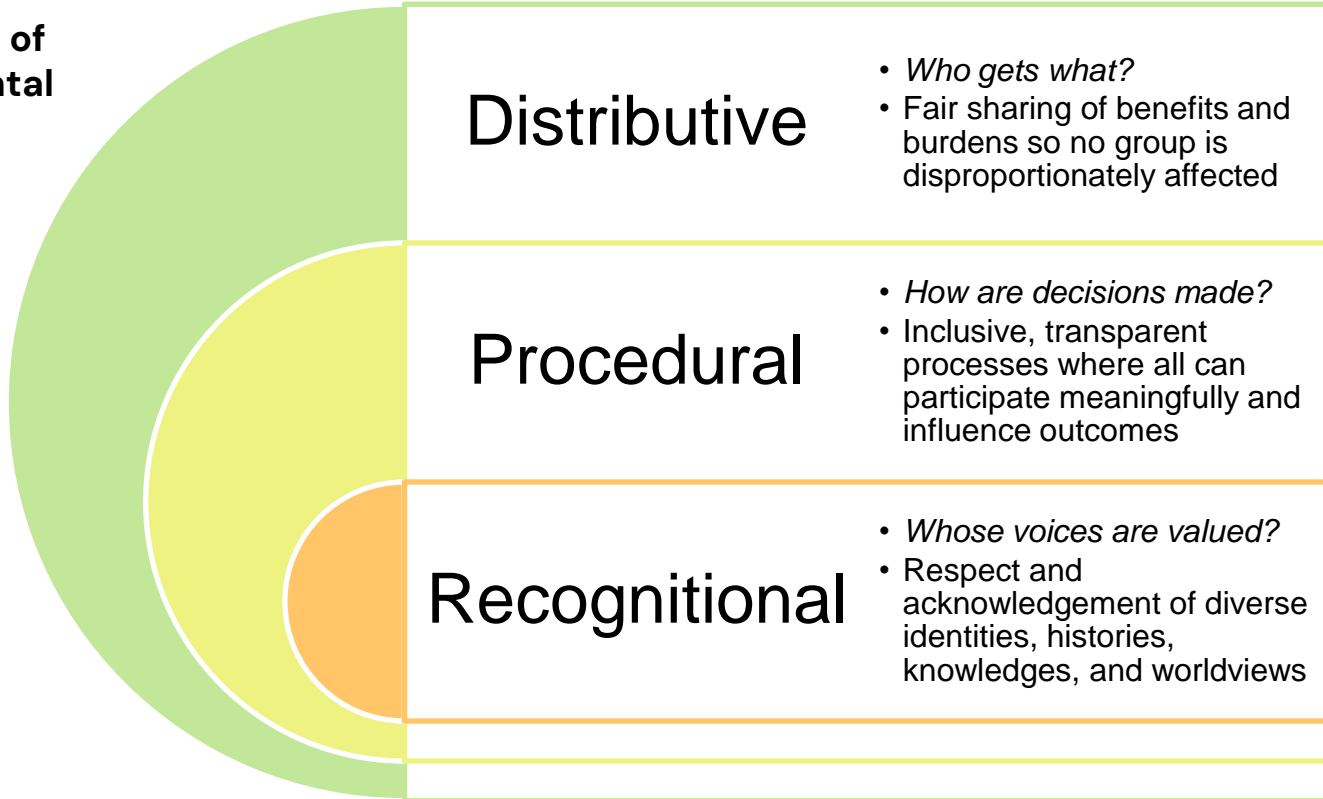
Often negatively affected by climate action.



Climate actions often protect or prioritize elites, at the expense of the most vulnerable communities.

Low-income populations – or historically marginalised, structurally disempowered, systemically disadvantaged...

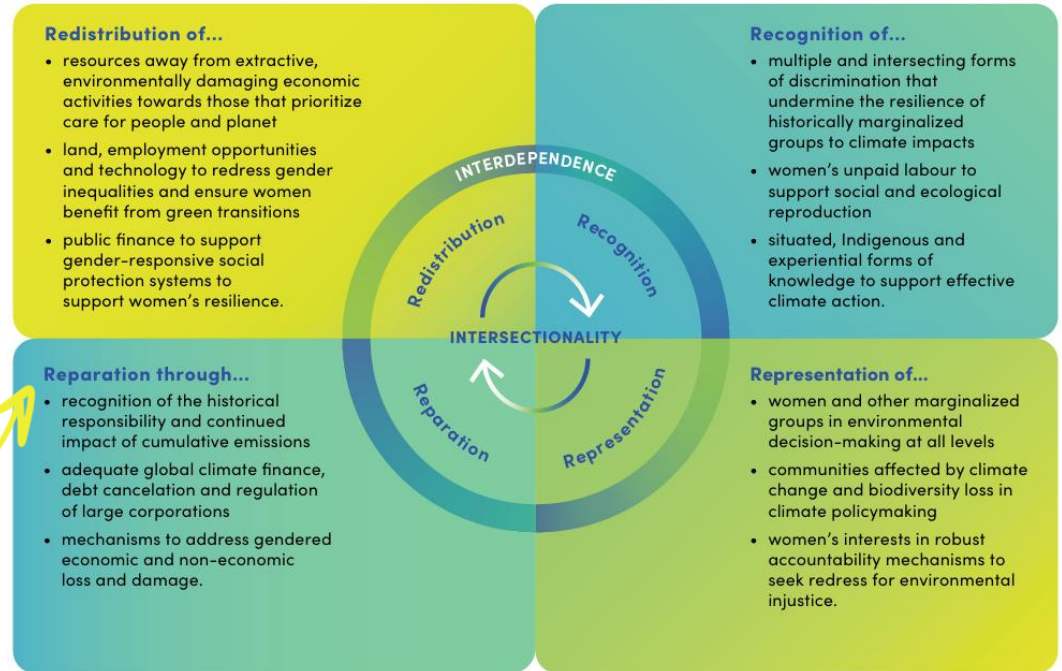
Dimensions of Environmental Justice



Beyond the traditional EJ/CJ dimensions

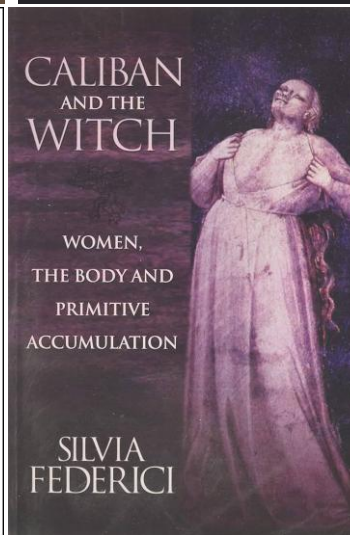
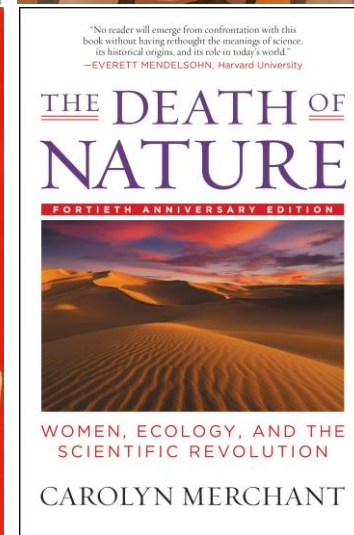
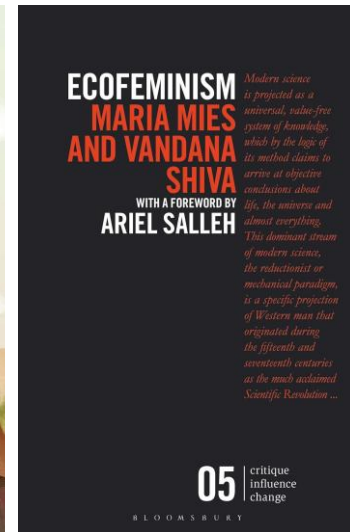
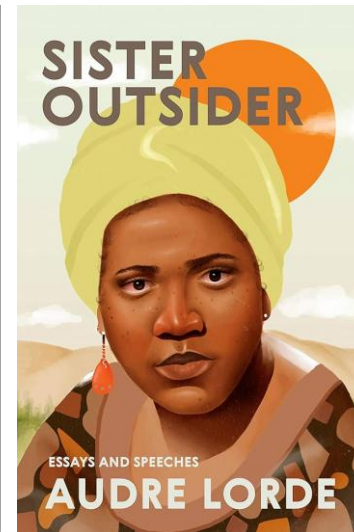
- Rights, responsibilities (Bulkeley)
- Emancipatory, antisubordination, relational (Anguelovski)
- Abolitionist (Ranganathan)
- Capabilities (Nussbaum, Sen)
- Reparation (UN Women)
- Intergenerational, restorative...

Figure 1.1 DIMENSIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF FEMINIST CLIMATE JUSTICE



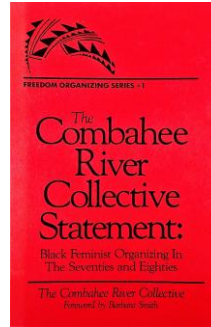
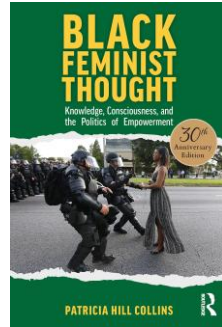
Becoming feminist

- Personal experiences and traumas shaped my commitment to feminism.
- Early on, I knew it would be a central thread.
- Extensive reading and learning showed me that feminism must be **intersectional**.



Intersectionality

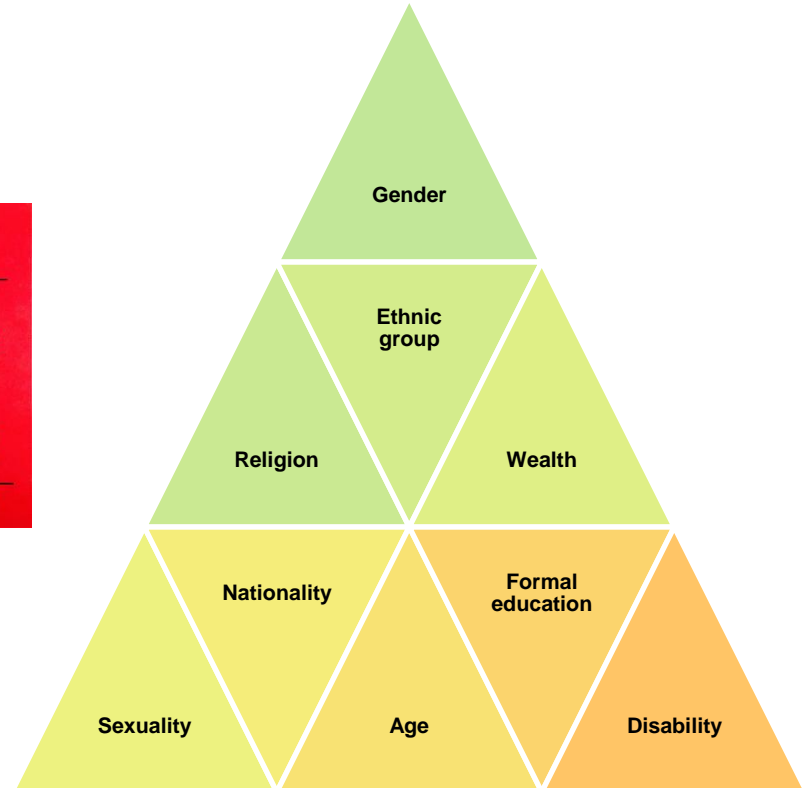
"Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated."



Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989) "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989, Article 8. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

Proposal that analyses how inequalities and discrimination are configured.

Based on the premise that inequality cannot be explained from a single axis; It is necessary to consider how they interact with each other.



Intersectionality and climate change



Intersectionality helps to understand how multiple axes of identities and social positions shape experiences of **power** and **privilege** – and thus, **climate vulnerability** and **adaptive capacity** – in climate-affected communities.

- *Child with a health problem with unemployed parents*
- *Migrant man in informal employment situation*
- *Older woman with a disability*

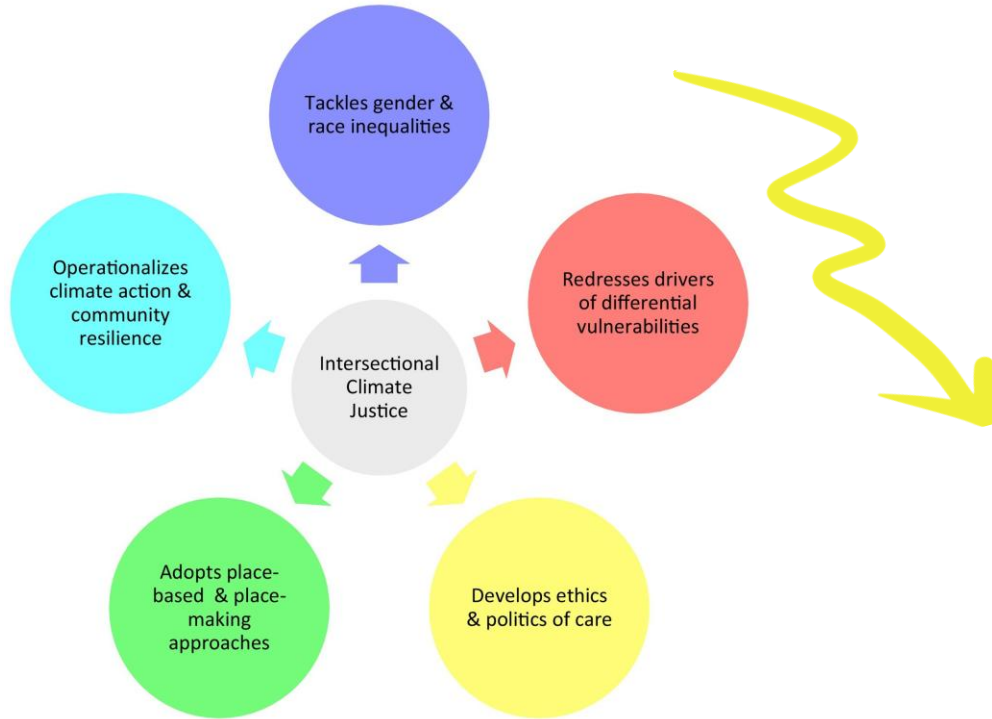


Intersectionality and climate change

Valencia floods: particularly affected older people and low-income households.

In addition, migrants in an irregular situation – especially in the care sector – were left out of government aid, being doubly affected.





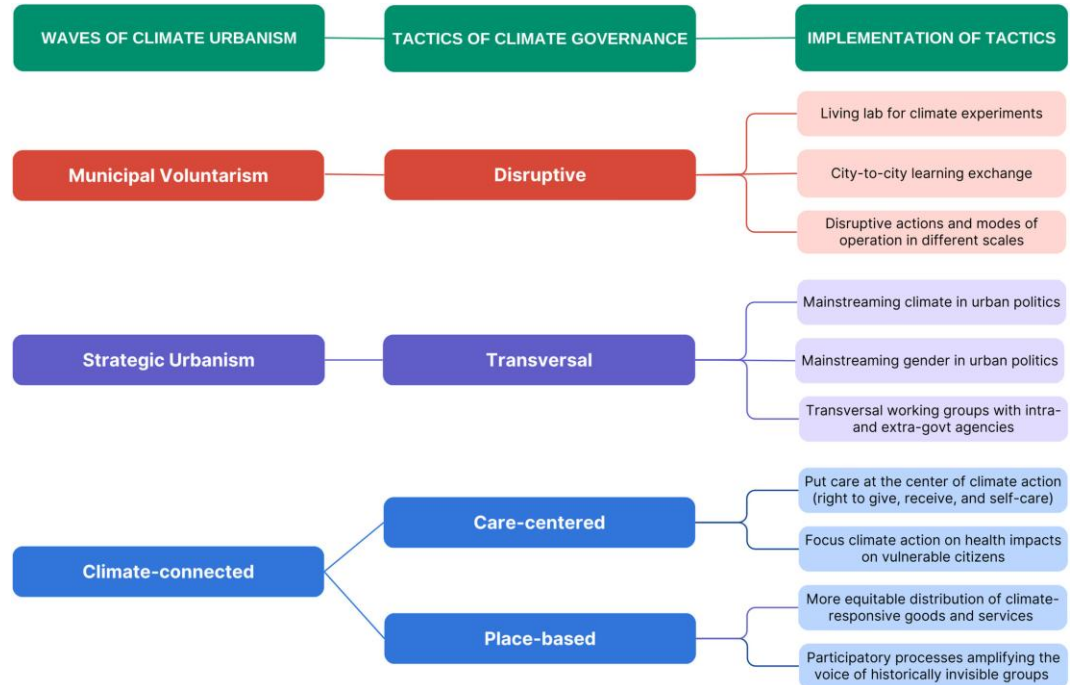
Intersectional climate justice

1. Tackle underlying systemic reinforcers of racial and gender inequalities
2. Redress drivers of differential vulnerabilities
3. Take politics and ethics of care seriously
4. Adopt place-based and place-making approaches
5. Promote cross-identity climate action and community resilience-building

Amorim-Maia, A. T., Anguelovski, I., Chu, E., & Connolly, J. (2022). Intersectional climate justice: A conceptual pathway for bridging adaptation planning, transformative action, and social equity. *Urban climate*, 41, 101053. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.uclim.2021.101053>

Governing intersectional climate justice

- Document and policy analysis (33 city plans, declarations, and commitments related to climate action and social justice).
- Interviews with 23 City Councillors and technicians – coded in Nvivo.



Amorim-Maia, A. T., Anguelovski, I., & Chu, E. (2023). *Governing intersectional climate justice: Tactics and lessons from Barcelona*. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 34 (3) 1–19. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eet.2075>

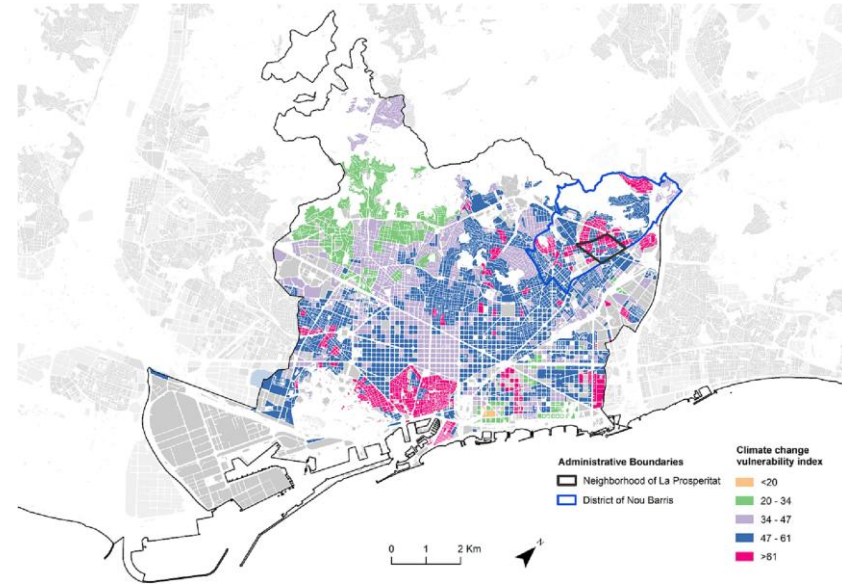
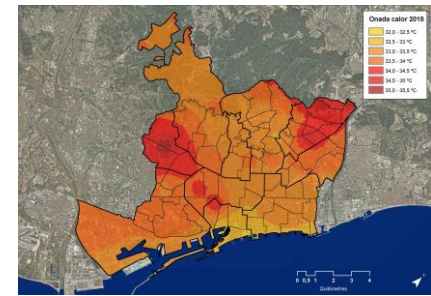
La Prosperitat

- Survey: collect information from (380) residents about how they cope with extreme heat and climate change more broadly.
- Understand how climate shelters address intersectional vulnerabilities.
- Methods: Archival and document analysis, survey (analysed in R), interviews for triangulation.



Intersecting vulnerabilities

- Results: inequalities of heat and cold, unequal experiences of thermal discomfort.
- Women, migrants from the Global South and low-income households suffer more thermal "dis-comfort".
- Public infrastructure must address immediate risks and historic inequalities.
- CHALLENGE – measuring intersectional vulnerabilities

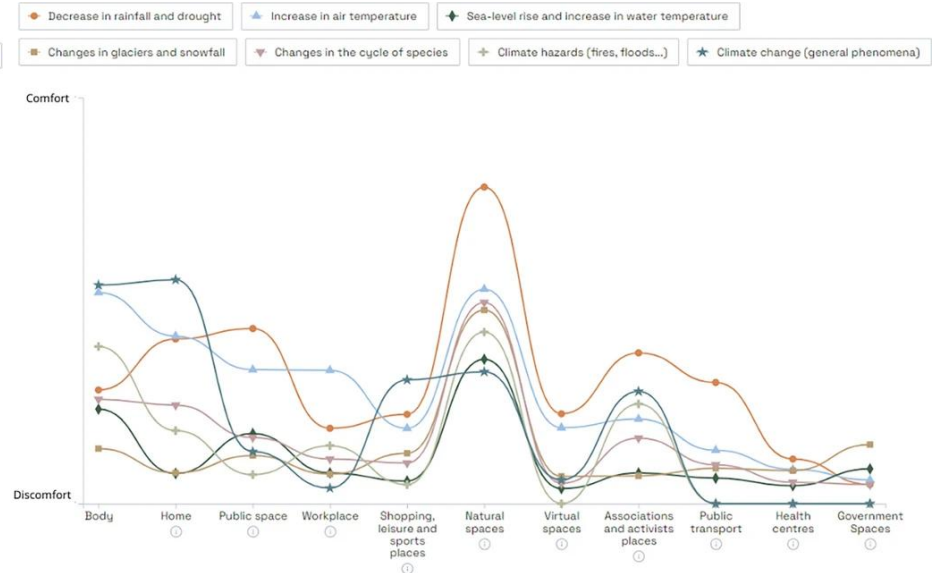
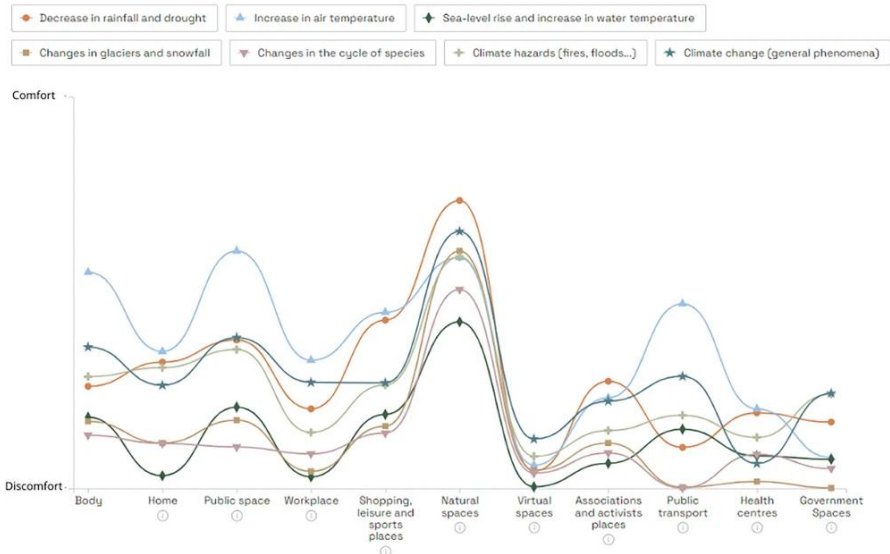


Amorim-Maia, A. T., Anguelovski, I., Connolly, J., & Chu, E. (2023). Seeking refuge? The potential of urban climate shelters to address intersecting vulnerabilities. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 238, 104836. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2023.104836>

Ways forward

Relief maps: studying inequality from an intersectionality perspective (Maria Rodó-Zárate)

- Rodó-de-Zárate, M. (2014). Developing geographies of intersectionality with Relief Maps: reflections from youth research in Manresa, Catalonia. *Gender, place & culture*, 21(8), 925-944. <https://www.reliefmaps.cat/en/about>
- Coll-Planell, M., & Rodó-Zárate, M. (2025). Climate Relief Maps: A methodological framework for exploring everyday experiences of climate change through an intersectional lens. *Ambio*, 1-14. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13280-025-02270-1>
- <https://www.reliefmaps.cat/en/about>



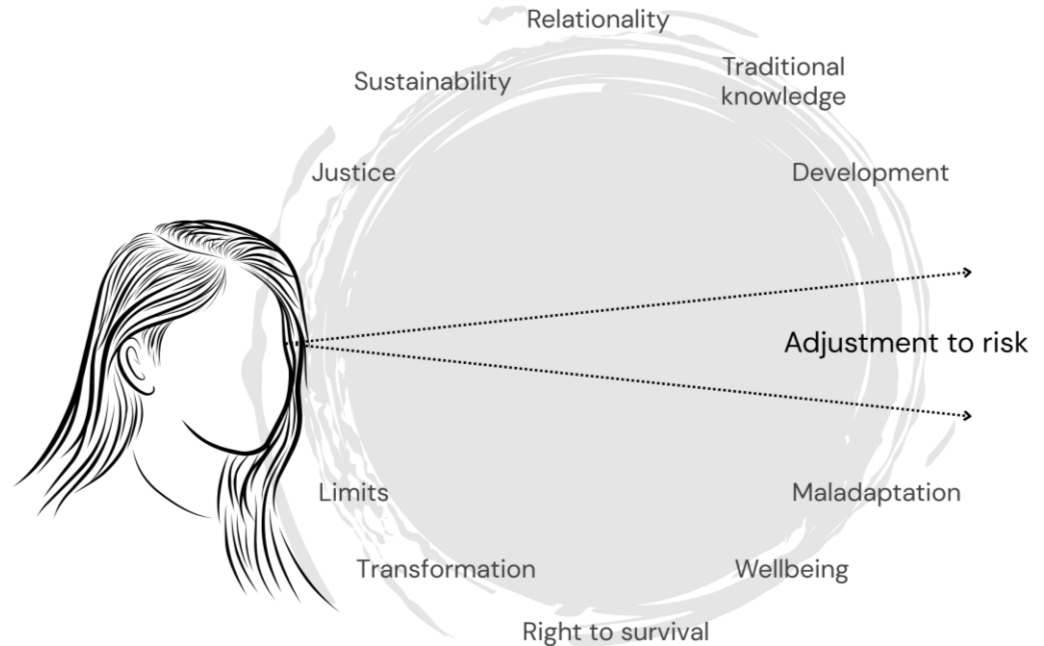
'IMAGINE adaptation'
Promoting pioneering
science, policy, and
practice *in the evaluation*
of urban adaptation.



Adaptation

“The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects” (IPCC)

- What is good adaptation?
- Conceptualisation influences planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Efforts to define and measure fail to grapple with deeper social, epistemological, and political tensions.



(Re)defining adaptation

Experts' interviews

- Gather experts' perspectives and worldviews on adaptation across the globe

Personal journey, pivotal events, milestones

- Explore the evolution of the concept of adaptation.

Specific realizations and experiences

- Understand views on successful adaptation.

Meaningful metrics to measure success



50

950 years experience in adaptation

736 pages of transcripts

26 researchers, 24 practitioners

30 women, 20 men

31 countries, 6 continents

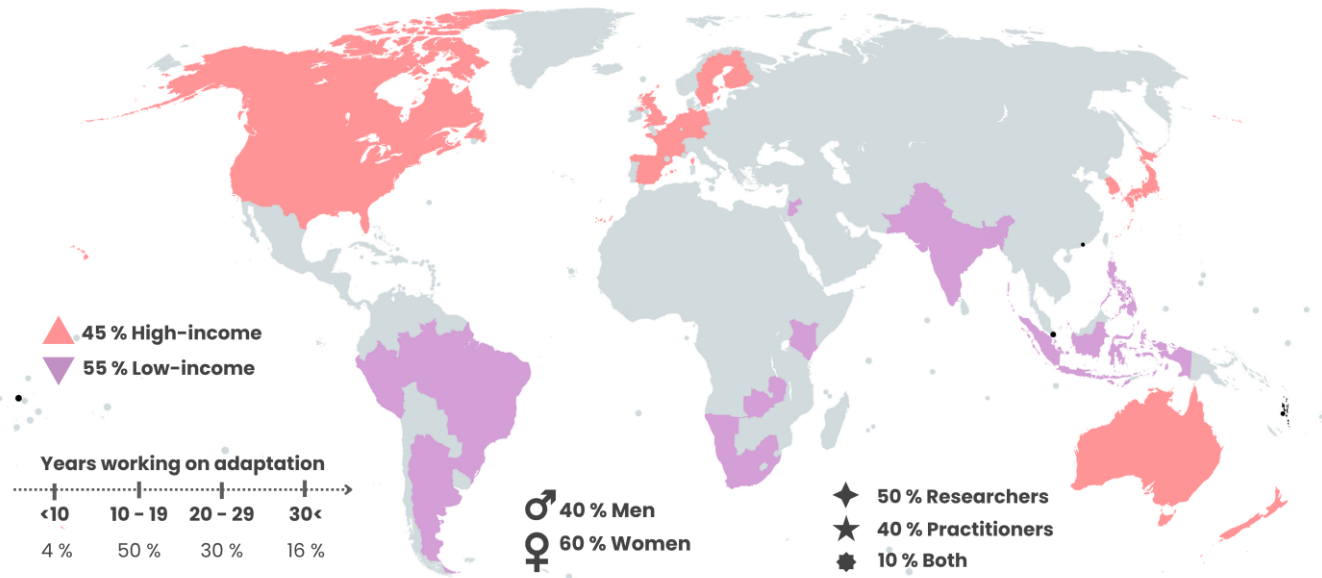
4 months interviewing

2 months summarizing

2 months coding

Methods

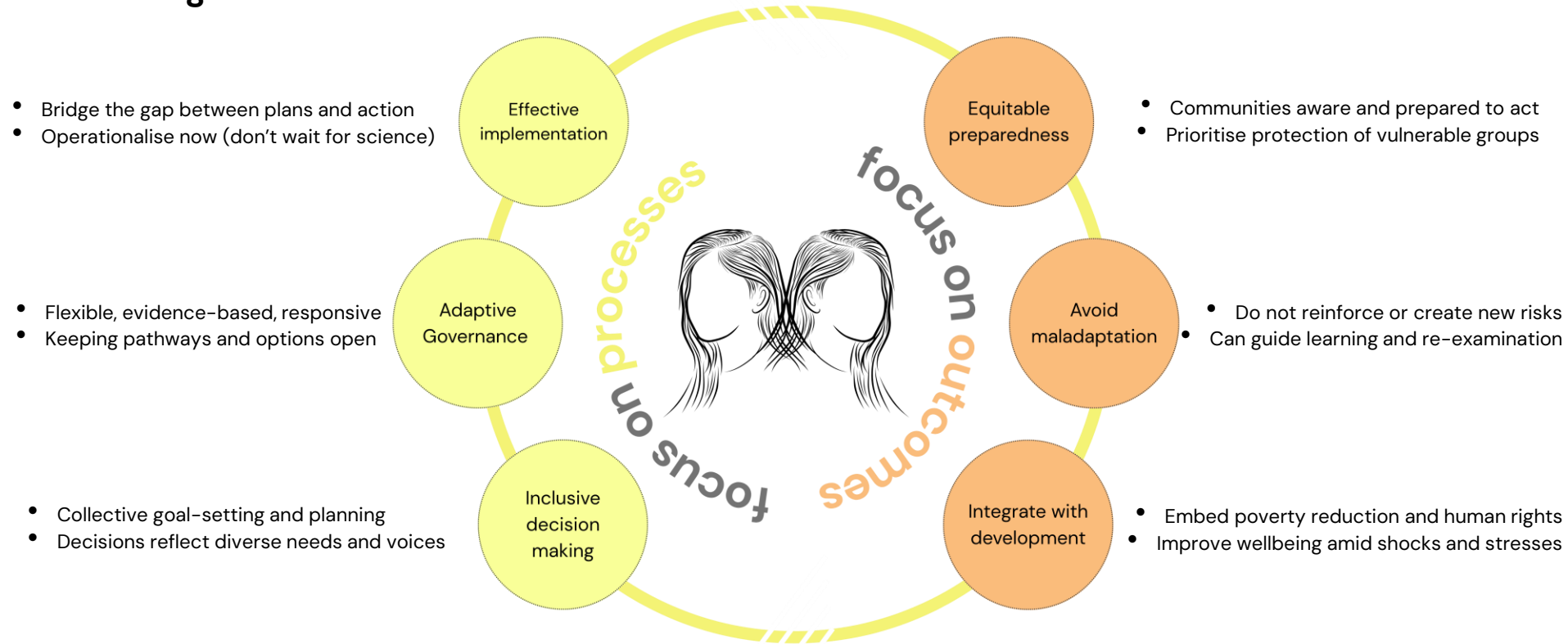
- 50 in-depth interviews with **scientists and practitioners** across **31 countries** accumulating **950+ years** of experience



- **36 hours** of recordings
- **736 pages** of transcripts
- **Thematic analysis** in **NVivo**

Amorim-Maia, A. T., & Olazabal, M. (2025). Beyond adjustment: A new paradigm for climate change adaptation in a complex world. *Global Environmental Change*, 93, 103027. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2025.103027>

Defining success:



Urban adaptation imaginaries



Academic literature

Books and papers in scientific journals.
Visual and verbal depictions of adaptation.

Grey literature



C40, UN Habitat, ICLEI, Climate Adapt, EEA, IPCC, Covenant of Mayors. Visual and verbal depictions of adaptation.



Media outlets

The Guardian, New York Times, El Pais, Reuters, Carbon brief. Visual depictions of adaptation.

Social media

#climateadaptation #climatechangeadaptation
Visual depictions of adaptation on Instagram.



Image banks

Getty images, Flickr.
Visual depictions of adaptation.

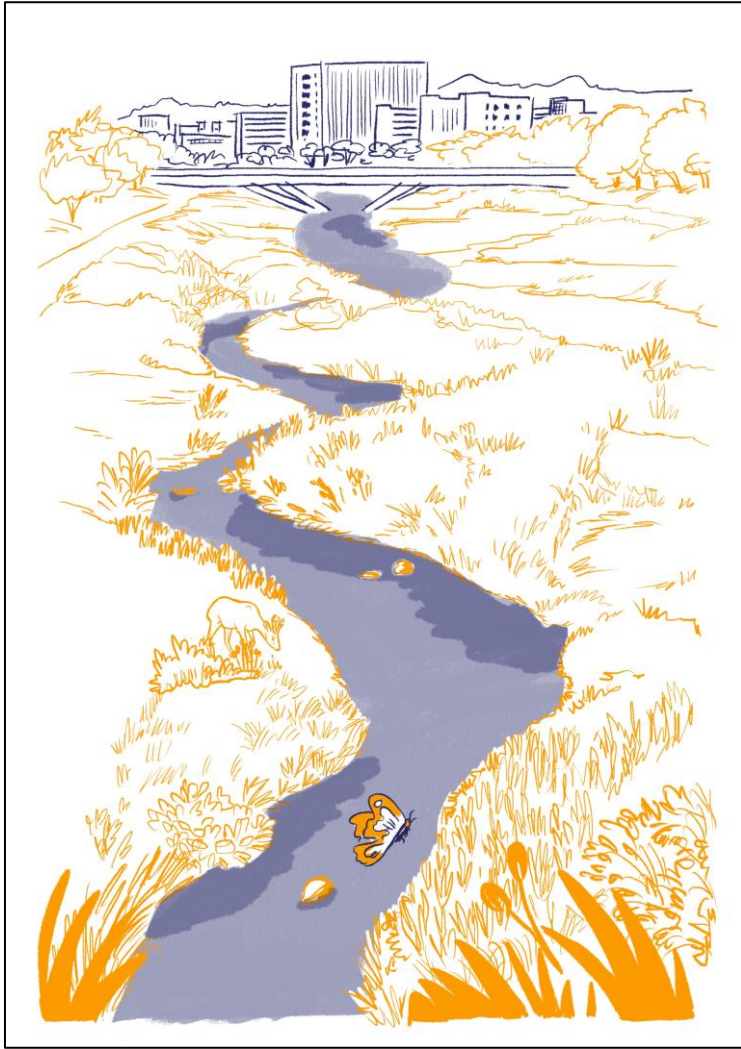


Identified 31 concepts that show different aspects of urban adaptation.



With the help of a local artist, these 31 concepts have been translated into illustrations...

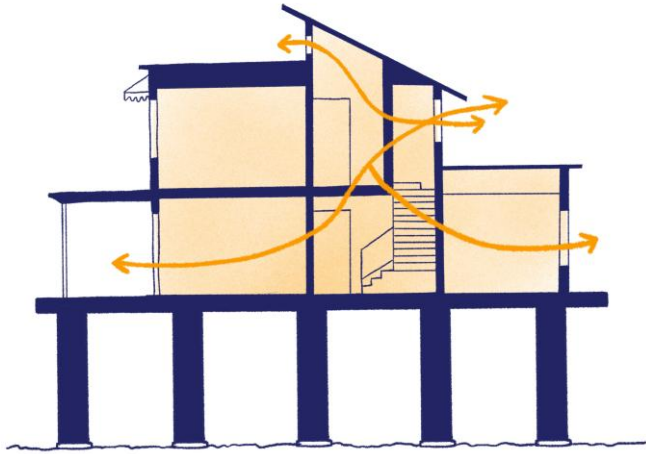




IMAGINE
adaptation

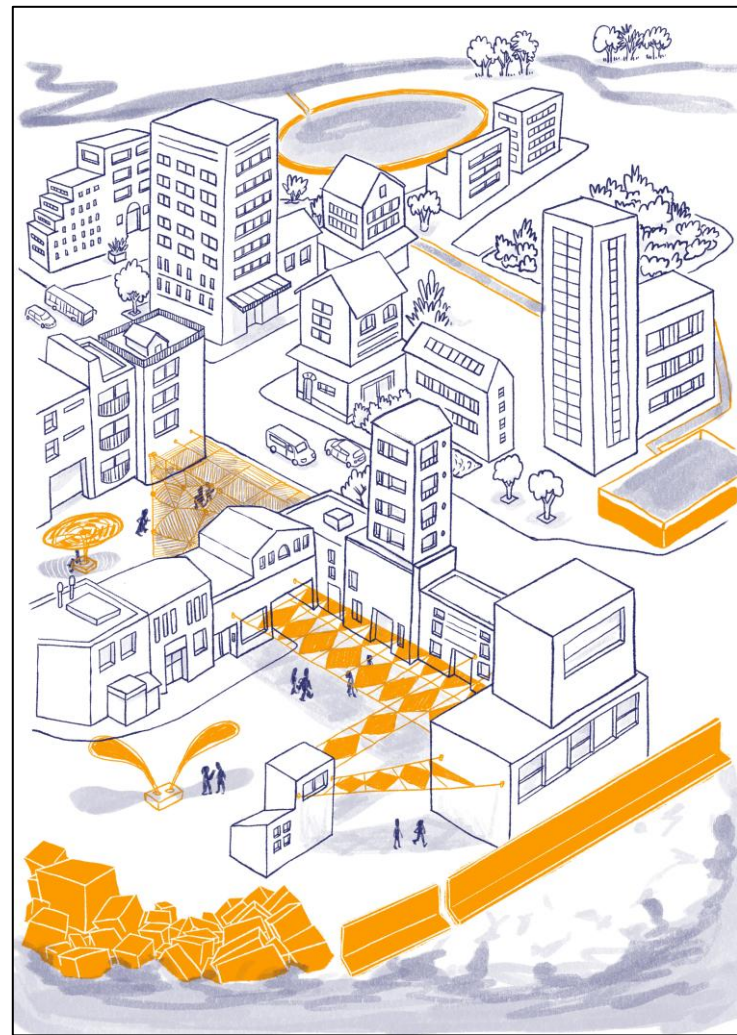
© All rights reserved

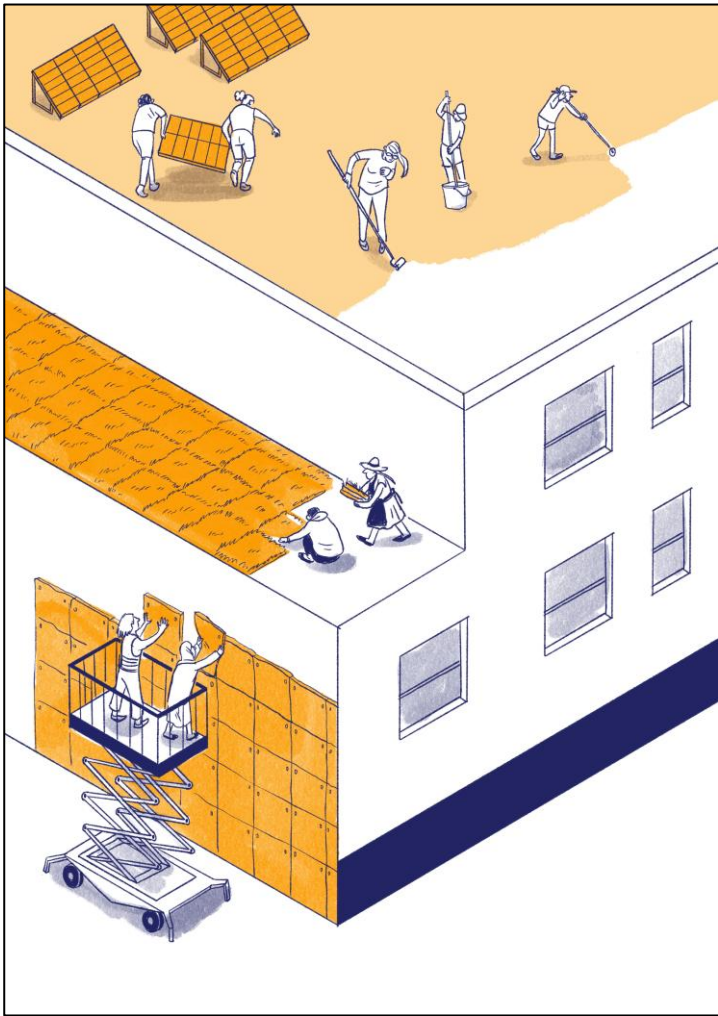




IMAGINE
adaptation

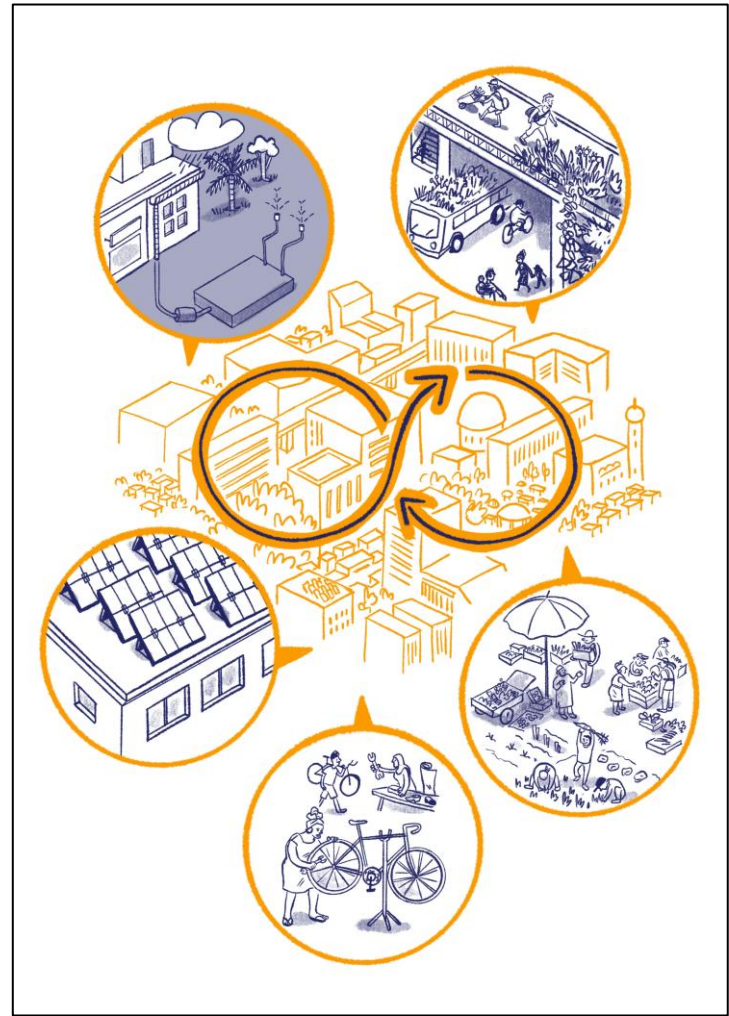
© All rights reserved

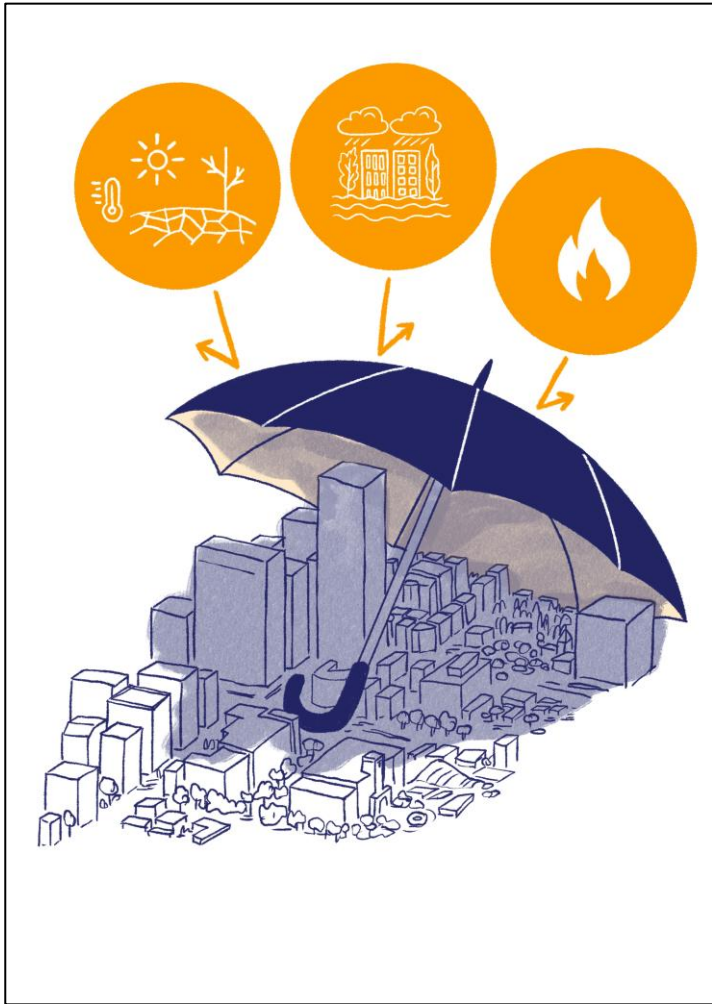




IMAGINE
adaptation

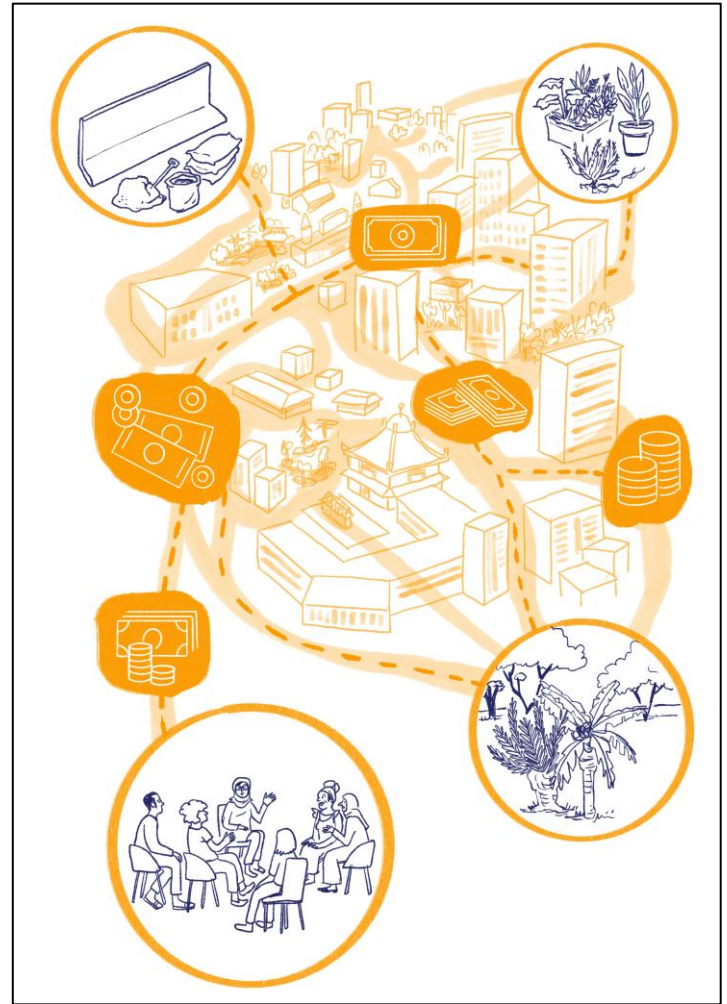
© All rights reserved

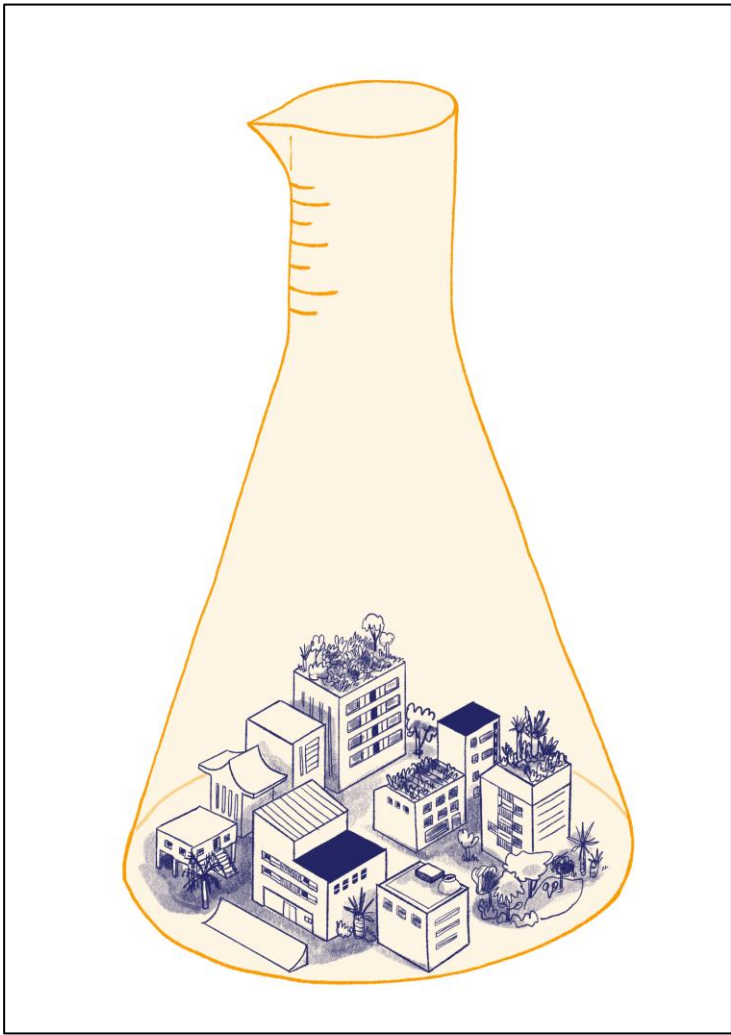




IMAGINE
adaptation

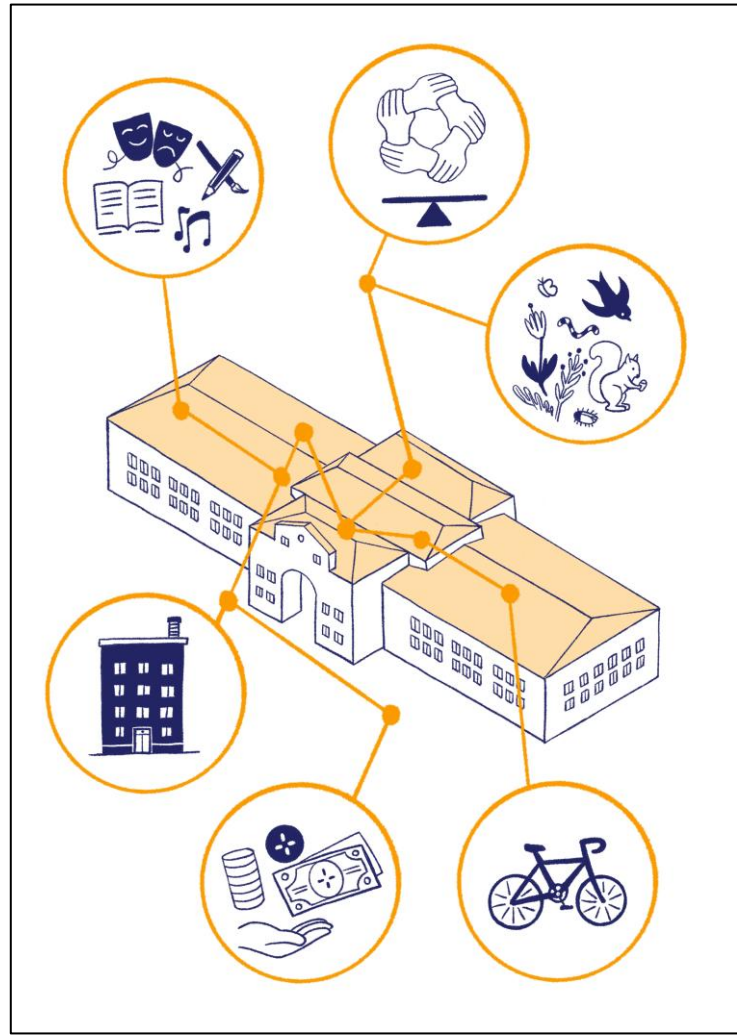
© All rights reserved





IMAGINE
adaptation

© All rights reserved



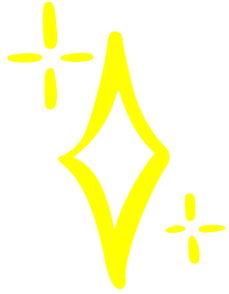


IMAGINE
adaptation

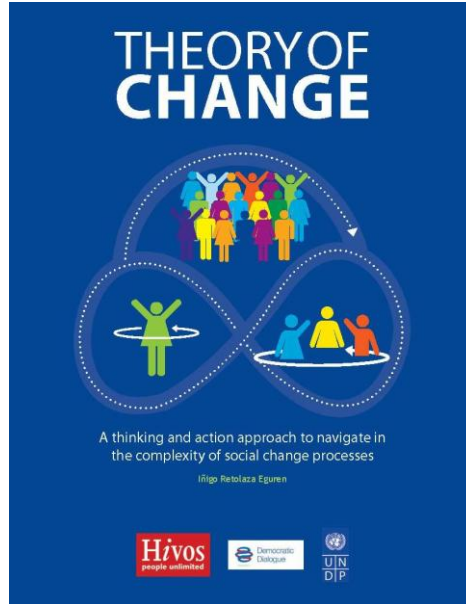
© All rights reserved





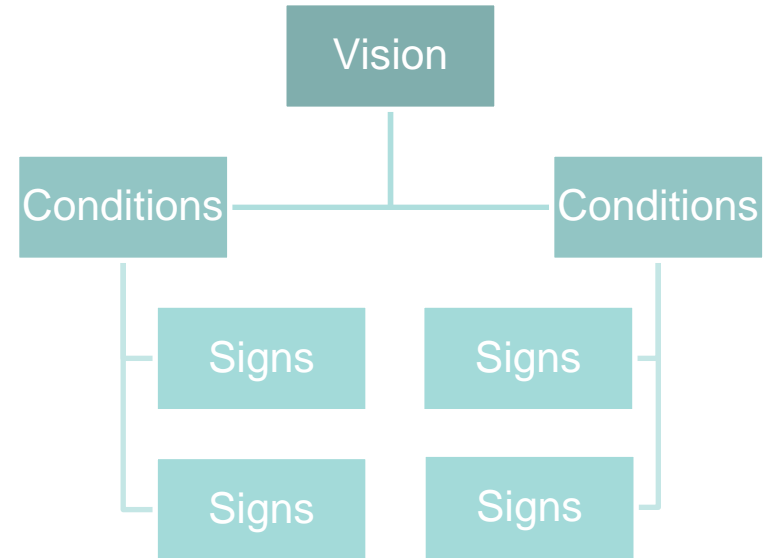


Theory of change



Source: Retolaza Eguen, I. (2011) Theory of Change. HIVOS.

An approach that allows us to organise our thinking and, based on our knowledge and experience, define the necessary conditions to achieve the desired change in a given context, monitor our actions, and be accountable for what we do.



Source: Olazabal, M., Alda Vidal, C., Amorim-Maia, A., Goodwin, S. & Lewis, W. (2024). Workshop Brief: Disentangling successful adaptation using theory of change.



© All rights reserved

Tackling the climate crisis cannot come at the expense of marginalised communities. We can confront **climate risks** while addressing deep **social inequalities**.

That choice begins with **imagination, political will**, above all, **putting people at the centre** – especially those who **contributed least, face the most risk**, and have long been **excluded** from both **decisions** and the **benefits of climate action**.

Thank you

IMAGINE
adaptation



Funded by
the European Union



erc
European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

BC3

BASQUE CENTRE FOR
CLIMATE CHANGE
Klima Aldaketa Ikergai

Ana Terra Amorim Maia

Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3)

Email: ana.amorim@bc3research.org

LinkedIn: [ana-amorim-maia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ana-amorim-maia)

X/Bluesky: [atamorimmaia](https://bsky.app/profile/atamorimmaia)

IMAGINE Adaptation

Website: [imagineadapt.bc3research.org](https://www.imagineadapt.bc3research.org)

Email: imagineadapt@bc3research.org

LinkedIn: [company/imagineadapt](https://www.linkedin.com/company/imagineadapt)

Bsky: [@IMAGINEAdapt](https://bsky.app/profile/IMAGINEAdapt)