

Partnering-Up for Sustainable Futures: Eco-Citizenry and the Governance of Urban Biodiversity Conservation

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At the current juncture of environmental concern and economic austerity the governance of socio-ecological sustainability is a key challenge for governmental constituencies at international, national, and local levels. In such a context, currently burgeoning “big society” logic - whereby it is suggested that citizen-consumers and/or crowdsourcing might play a role in off-setting the financial cost of urban biodiversity conservation - can appear to constitute a viable strategy to overcome the limitations of national and municipal budgetary constraint impeding urban biodiversity conservation. Relying on first hand data collected at botanic gardens in urban centers in Europe and in north America working under the umbrella of the international organization Botanic Gardens Conservation International, this paper argues that, alternatively, rethinking classic notions of citizenry and its relation to the “polis” under the aegis of the concept of eco-citizenry provides much more solid foundations on which to build sustainable urban futures.

KATJA NEVES initiated her career as Invited Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the Institute of Anthropology, University of Heidelberg, Germany, after receiving her PhD degree in Anthropology from York University, Ontario, with distinction. She is currently Associate Professor of Sociology of the Environment and Social Sustainability at Concordia University, Montreal. The Junta Nacional de Ciencia e Tecnologia (Portugal), the Fonds Quebecois de Reserche Sur la Societe et La Culture (Quebec), and Concordia University, financed Dr. Neves’ early research. She currently holds 2 research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to investigate the contemporary reinvention of botanical gardens as agents of social and ecological biodiversity conservation. This research builds on her research on neoliberal conservation and on socio-ecological sustainability, which has been published in top-rated journals. Some of these articles are now considered top-cited articles within the scholarly literature.



Dr. Neves has served on numerous scholarly committees. She has been senior member at large of the executive board of the Environment and Society Section of the American Anthropological Association, executive board member of the Canadian Association of Sociology, and Associate Editor of the Environment and Society Journal. She served as a regular committee member of a SSHRC Insight Development Grant Committee in 2012, and chaired a SSHRC Insight Development Grant Committee in 2013.