World Forum on Urban Forests
Mantova 2018

Human faces, forest places:
An examination of urban green equity in multicultural cities

Lorien Nesbitt, PhD
University of British Columbia

UBC

Urban Green Equity:

Fair access to, and governance of, urban forests regardless of differentiating factors, such as socioeconomic status, racialization, cultural background, or age

Why does green equity matter?

3.7 billion people
CO_2 sequestration
increased property values and community investment
climate change adaptation
reduced air pollution
shade
emotional health
lower stress
improved attention
reduced flooding
recreation
increased biodiversity
physical health

Practitioner conceptions of equity
Spatial analysis of distributional equity

Practitioner conceptions of urban green equity

How is urban green equity understood?

How is it operationalized?

Portland
New York
Phoenix

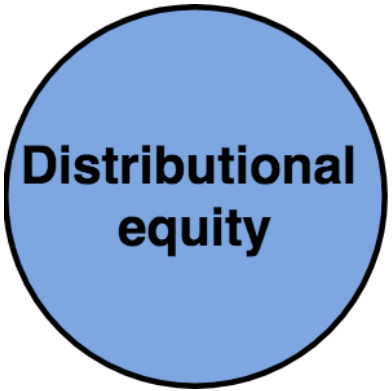
New York

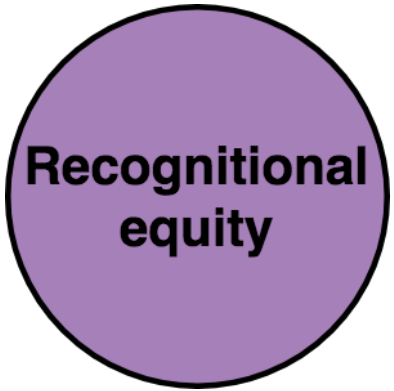
Phoenix

Portland
VOODOO
THE CLUB
ATM
OYSTER BAR
fuse
36
OPEN

Methods

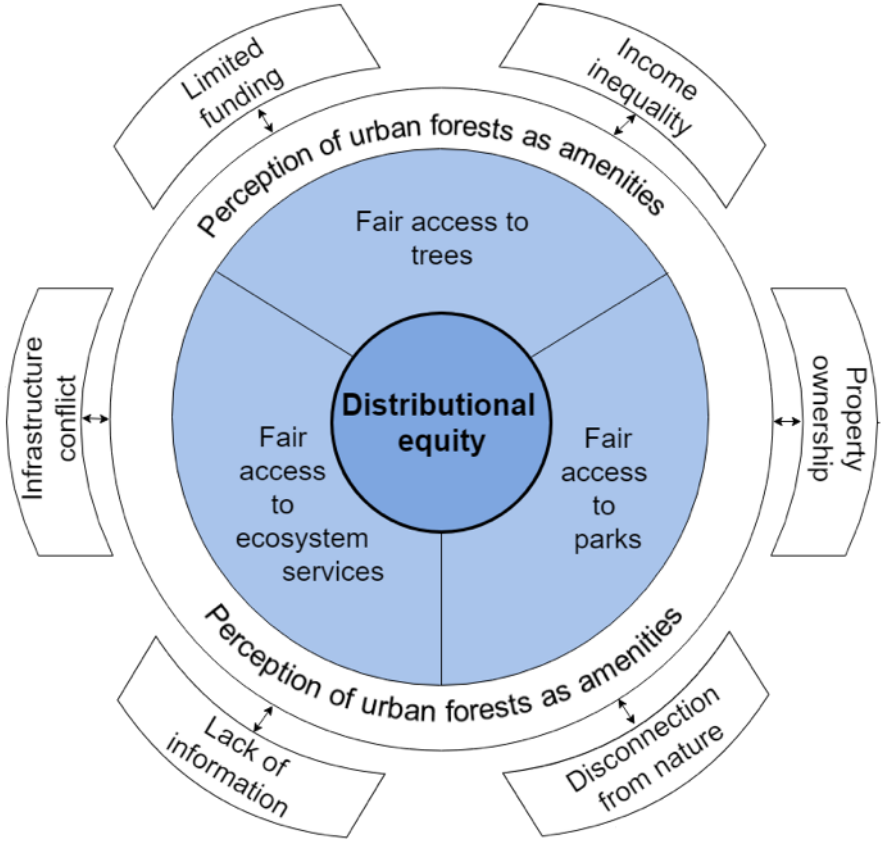
- Semi-structured interviews
- 34 practitioners across all cities (municipal/regional govt., NGOs, community members, academic, business)
- Thematic analysis to identify and quantify themes/sub-themes and relationships with each other





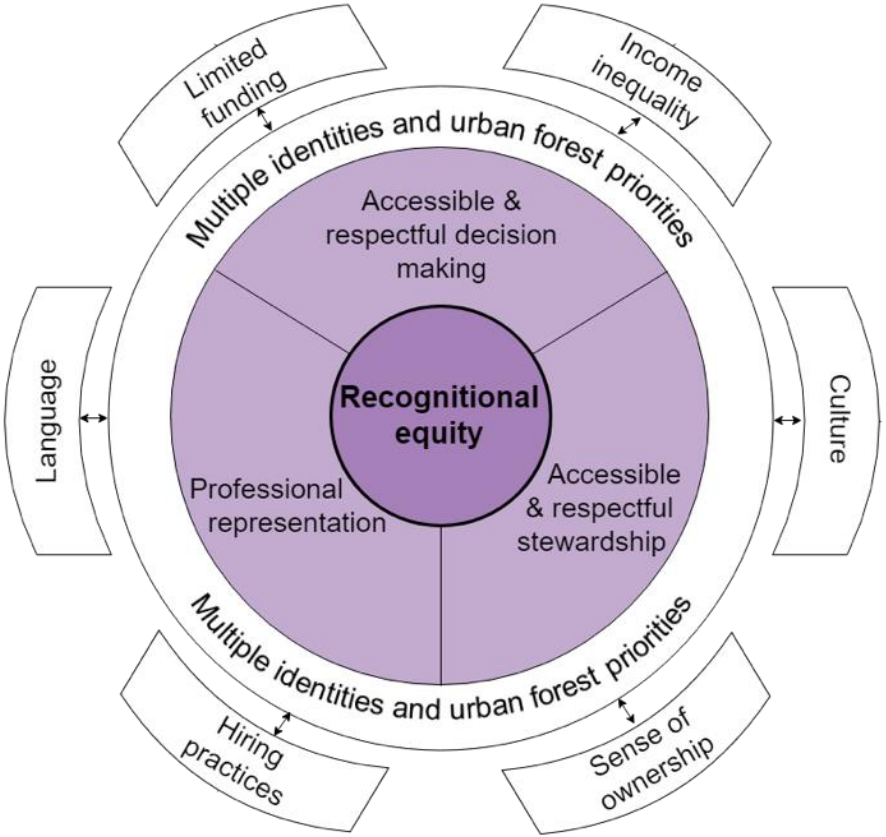
Nesbitt et al. (under review)
Ecological Economics

Nesbitt et al. (under review)
Ecological Economics



Nesbitt et al. (under review)
Ecological Economics

Nesbitt et al. (under review)
Ecological Economics



Nesbitt et al. (under review)
Ecological Economics

Results

- Distributional equity emphasized over recognitional equity
- Similar themes among municipalities
- Equity plays out through distinct local issues

Results

- Distributional equity emphasized over recognitional equity
- Similar themes among municipalities
- Equity plays out through distinct local issues

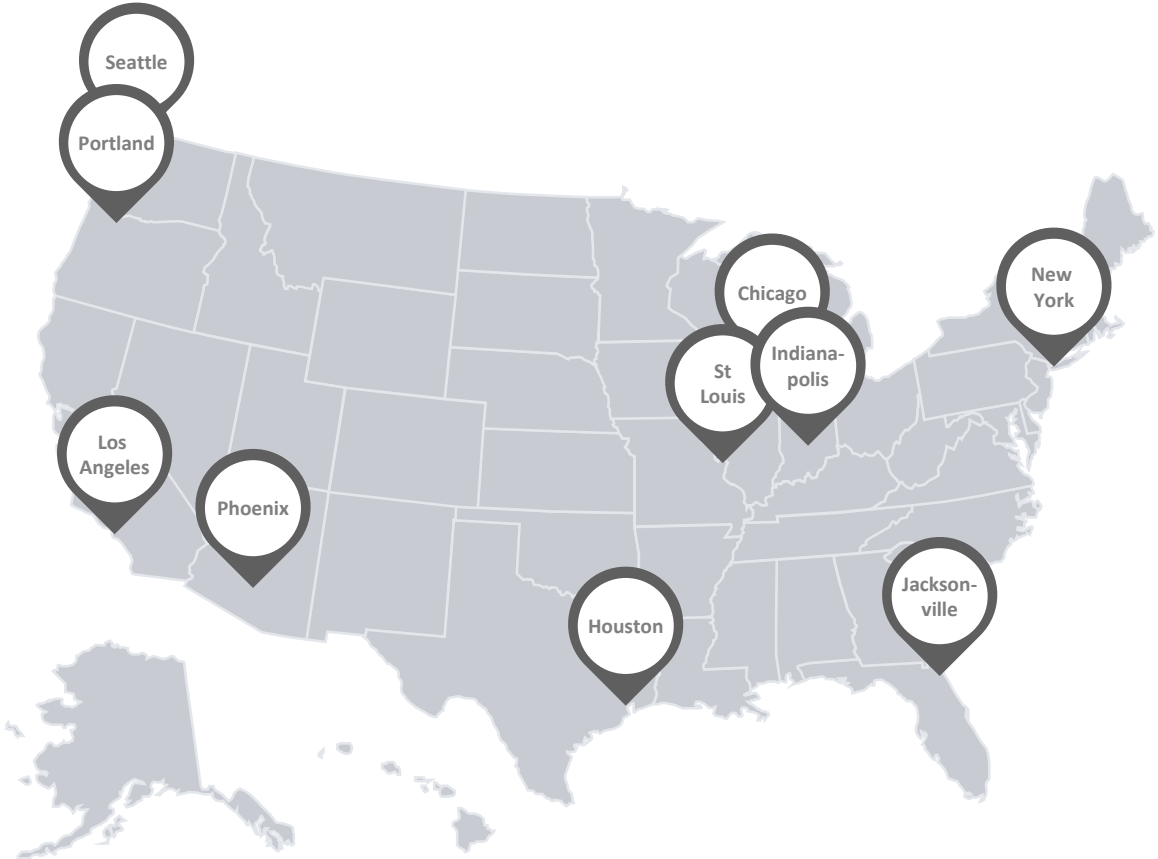
Results

- Distributional equity emphasized over recognitional equity
- Similar themes among municipalities
- Equity plays out through distinct local issues

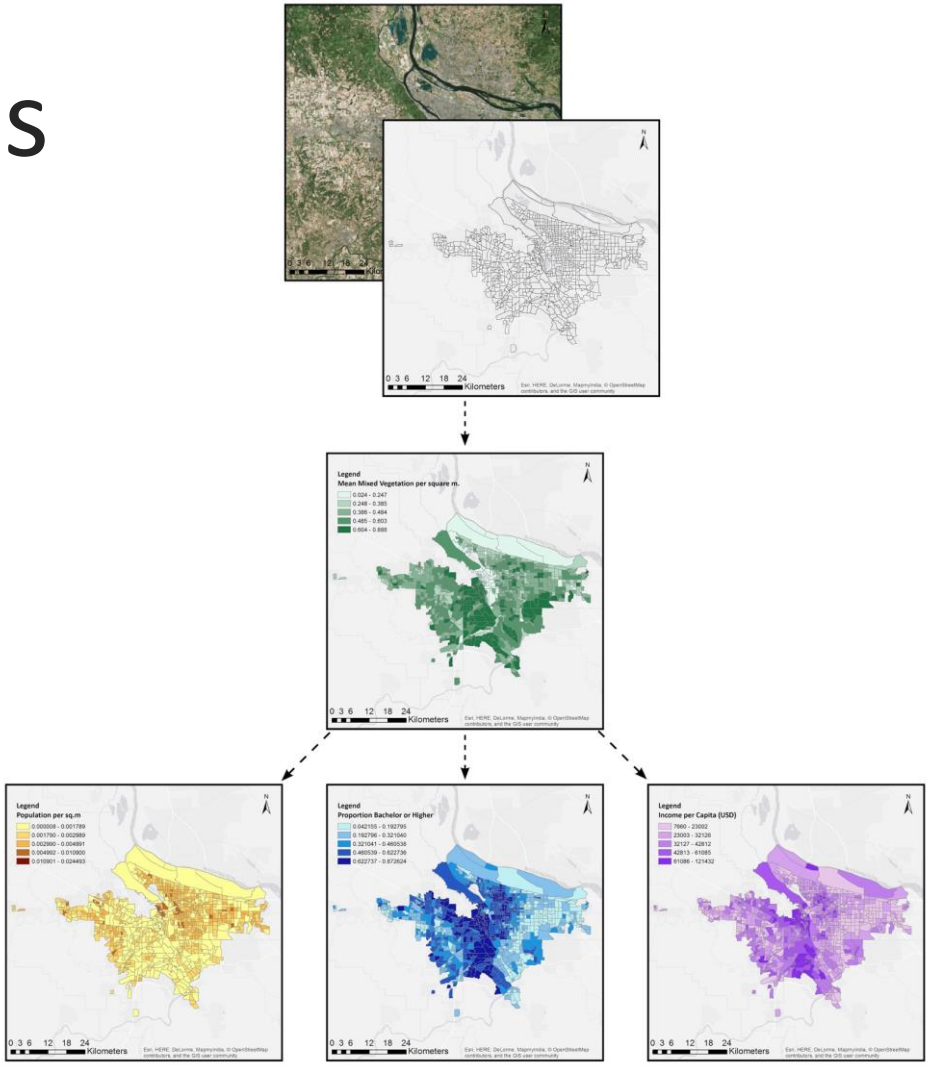
Distributional green equity: a spatial analysis

What are the principal socioeconomic factors associated with urban vegetation distribution across multiple urban areas and vegetation types?

Are different types of urban vegetation differentially distributed?


Seattle
Portland
Chicago
New York
St Louis
Indiana-polis
Los Angeles
Phoenix
Houston
Jackson-ville

Methods



Nesbitt et al. (2019)
Landscape and Urban Planning

Results

- Income and education most strongly positively associated with urban forest access
- Park area is more equitable than mixed/woody vegetation cover
- Racialized populations have lower access in richer, larger, denser cities
- *Why might this be the case?*

Results

- Income and education most strongly positively associated with urban forest access
- Park area is more equitable than mixed/woody vegetation cover
- Racialized populations have lower access in richer, larger, denser cities
- *Why might this be the case?*

Results

- Income and education most strongly positively associated with urban forest access
- Park area is more equitable than mixed/woody vegetation cover
- Racialized populations have lower access in richer, larger, denser cities
- *Why might this be the case?*

Implications

- Urban forests are generally desirable
- Canopy enhancement should focus on lower-income/lower-education and racialized neighbourhoods
- Urban forest interventions should also include recognitional equity
- Inclusive decision making, accessible stewardship

Implications

- Urban forests are generally desirable
- Canopy enhancement should focus on lower-income/lower-education and racialized neighbourhoods
- Urban forest interventions should also include recognitional equity
- Inclusive decision making, accessible stewardship

Implications

- Urban forests are generally desirable
- Canopy enhancement should focus on lower-income/lower-education and racialized neighbourhoods
- Urban forest interventions should also include recognitional equity
- Inclusive decision making, accessible stewardship

Implications

- Urban forests are generally desirable
- Canopy enhancement should focus on lower-income/lower-education and racialized neighbourhoods
- Urban forest interventions should also include recognitional equity
- Inclusive decision making, accessible stewardship

What does inclusive urban forestry really look like?

Thank you

Mike Meitner

Cecil Konijnendijk

Cynthia Girling

Yuhao Lu

Stephen Sheppard

lorien.nesbitt@ubc.ca