

**Title:** Just urban futures

**Abstract.** Cities need to take swift action to deal with a variety of challenges including the compounding effects of rapid urbanization and the steady uptick in the frequency and intensity of so-called natural disasters. In this context, the co-production of positive visions with urban stakeholders offers the potential to not only imagine but also intervene in guiding change towards more desirable urban futures. In the absence of strong international agreements, many municipal governments are leading the efforts to build resilience to climate change in general and to extreme weather events in particular. In this setting, anticipatory methods such as scenario planning with city professionals, experts, and members of civil society provide an opportunity to co-produce positive visions of the future. Visions are intended to inspire but also to compare the viability of alternative policy pathways. In this presentation, I will present two approaches to reimagining urban spaces. First, I present the work of the Urban Resilience to Extremes Sustainability Research Network (UREx SRN) which worked with nine cities in the United States and Latin America to explore possibilities for creating more resilient, sustainable, and equitable cities. Second, I introduce the ‘*barrio* innovation approach’, which emerged from a university-community partnership looking to address environmental injustice in Phoenix, AZ. Researchers and teachers designed activities with Latinx youth to name concerns and strengths in their community and envision more desirable, greener futures. Through these examples, I reflect on the possibilities for transformative change that may be catalyzed through the use of anticipatory and participatory approaches at different scales.

**Bio:**

Dr. Marta Berbés-Blázquez is the Caivan Communities professor at the School of Planning and the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo, where she is part of the Future Cities Initiative. Formerly, Dr. Berbés-Blázquez was an assistant professor at the School for the Future of Innovation in Society at Arizona State University with whom she continues to collaborate on projects related to urban resilience in cities in the United States and Latin America. She is a co-lead of the Futures and Scenarios team of the Central Arizona Phoenix Long Term Ecological Research that engages with a variety of actors to envision positive urban futures in the Phoenix valley. Her international collaborations include work with the Urban Resilience to Extremes Sustainability Research Network, NATURA, and Biosphere Futures. Locally, she has developed a variety of research partnerships with community members and organizers to catalyze change toward environmentally just futures.

Dr. Marta Berbés-Blázquez is a transdisciplinary scholar with a B.Sc. from McGill University and MES and PhD from the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. Broadly speaking, her research considers the human dimensions of environmental change in urban and regional social-ecological-technological systems with an emphasis on perspectives from marginalized populations. Dr. Berbés-Blázquez’s research is informed by resilience thinking and political ecology at a conceptual level, and it is practically oriented towards qualitative, participatory, and anticipatory research methods. She is the author of dozens of articles and book chapters on sustainable urban futures, environmental justice, resilience, ecosystem services and human wellbeing, and participatory action research, as well as the co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Ecosystems and People* and an editorial board member of *Ecology & Society*. Dr. Berbés-

Blázquez is also a contributing author to the IPBES Values Assessment on the role of diverse values of nature in visioning and transforming towards just and sustainable futures.