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Introduction to Special Issue in *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*

Power in urban social-ecological systems: Governance, knowledge production, and marginalization

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Historically, the urban forestry literature, including the work featured in *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, has focused primarily on either quantitative, positivistic analyses of human-environment dynamics, or applied research to inform the management of natural resources, without sufficiently problematizing the effects of power within these processes (Bentsen et al 2010; Krajter Ostoić and Konijnendijk van den Bosch 2015; but see Lawrence et al. 2013). In past decades, the study of urban social-ecological systems has evolved into a mature field that explores patterns, processes, drivers, and dynamics of urban spaces as ecosystems that include social institutions, social order, and cycles of change (Pickett et al. 1997; Machlis et al. 1997; Alberti et al. 2003; Pickett et al. 2008; Pickett and Grove 2009; Grove et al. 2015). Greater understanding of the politics and power dynamics shaping urban ecosystems is becoming vital in an age in which expanding urban populations test the limits of the ecological strata, both within and beyond the city, on which urban life depends. Simultaneously, these same densities of human populations, and the thick relational networks in which they are embedded, make cities fertile sites where new organizations, policies, and practices emerge to manage, and indeed to reconstitute, urban nature. This special section offers a collection of papers that move urban social-ecological research further in this direction by demonstrating the utility of critical social theory for understanding the complex social processes and mechanisms that govern the management of urban ecosystems.

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