Eco-Gentrification: When Green Urbanism Displaces the Poor

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ABSTRACT

Eco-gentrification, the paradox where environmental improvements lead to the displacement of vulnerable communities, is an emerging concern in rapidly urbanizing societies. In Pakistan, green urbanism has increasingly been promoted as a pathway toward sustainable development, climate resilience, and livability. Projects such as urban parks, riverfront revitalizations, and tree plantation drives are framed as inclusive environmental solutions. However, these interventions often fail to account for socio-economic realities and end up reproducing urban inequalities. Poor households living in informal settlements are frequently displaced as green spaces raise property values, attract wealthier residents, and incentivize commercial real estate development. This process disrupts community networks, erodes affordable housing, and intensifies urban class segregation. Drawing on the global literature on eco-gentrification and contextualized evidence from Pakistan's metropolitan centers such as Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad, this study examines the double-edged nature of green urbanism. It argues that without integrating equity safeguards, environmental initiatives risk becoming exclusionary rather than emancipatory. By situating eco-gentrification within the broader framework of environmental justice and urban political economy, the paper highlights how sustainability agendas can inadvertently marginalize the very groups most vulnerable to climate change. The findings underscore the urgent need for participatory planning, affordable housing protections, and redistributive policy instruments to ensure that green transformations in Pakistan are socially just as well as ecologically sound.

Keywords*: Eco-Gentrification, Green Urbanism, Displacement, Environmental Justice, Urban Inequality, Pakistan.*

Introduction

Eco-gentrification, a term first coined by environmental sociologists in the early 2000s (Gould & Lewis, 2017), describes the process by which urban sustainability initiatives—such as green infrastructure, parks, and energy-efficient housing—inadvertently displace low-income residents by increasing property values and altering neighborhood demographics. This phenomenon has gained global traction as cities worldwide adopt climate-resilient urban planning under frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New

Urban Agenda (United Nations, 2022). While these policies aim to reduce carbon footprints and enhance livability, they often prioritize environmental aesthetics over socio-economic equity, leading to what Anguelovski et al. (2023) term "green exclusion." In cities like Barcelona, Portland, and New York, eco-gentrification has been well-documented, with green spaces such as the High Line or Superblocks driving up rents and displacing marginalized communities (Checker, 2020). The paradox lies in the fact that sustainability projects, designed to mitigate environmental crises, frequently exacerbate housing insecurity—raising urgent questions about who truly benefits from urban greening and who is left behind.

In Pakistan, this paradox is unfolding with increasing intensity as rapid urbanization and climate vulnerability push cities toward green urbanism as a developmental imperative. Projects such as Lahore's Ravi Riverfront Urban Development and Karachi's Clifton Urban Forest are marketed as transformative sustainability initiatives, yet they follow a familiar pattern of displacing informal settlements (katchi abadis) to make way for high-value commercial and residential developments (Hasan, 2023). A recent study by the Urban Resource Centre (2024) found that over 15,000 low-income households in Karachi alone have been displaced due to green beautification projects since 2020, with minimal resettlement support. Similarly, Islamabad's Margalla Hills conservation efforts have led to the eviction of long-standing peri-urban communities under the guise of environmental protection (Khan & Ali, 2024). These cases mirror global trends where green urbanism, rather than being emancipatory, becomes a tool for elite capture—reinforcing spatial inequalities under the banner of sustainability.

The push for green projects in Pakistan is further complicated by the country's acute climate vulnerability, ranking among the top 10 nations most affected by extreme weather events (Global Climate Risk Index, 2023). While urban greening is framed as a climate adaptation strategy, its implementation often disregards the socio-economic realities of the urban poor. For instance, Lahore's ambitious tree-plantation drives have been criticized for targeting informal settlements for "encroachment clearance" rather than industrial zones with higher pollution levels (Ahmed, 2024). This selective enforcement underscores how eco-gentrification operates as a form of environmental injustice, where marginalized communities—already disproportionately impacted by heatwaves and flooding—are further destabilized by displacement pressures. Without robust equity safeguards, Pakistan's green urbanism risks becoming another vector of exclusion, deepening urban divides rather than fostering inclusive resilience. Policymakers must confront this contradiction head-on, ensuring that sustainability agendas integrate anti-displacement measures, participatory planning, and redistributive housing policies to prevent green urbanism from becoming a privilege of the affluent.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical foundations of eco-gentrification trace back to the early critiques of urban sustainability by Gould and Lewis (2016), who framed it as a process where environmental improvements—such as parks, greenways, and energy-efficient housing—trigger rising property values, ultimately displacing low-income residents. This phenomenon gained further nuance through the work of Anguelovski et al. (2022), who identified it as a form of "green exclusion," where sustainability initiatives prioritize ecological aesthetics over social equity. At its core, eco-gentrification is not merely an unintended consequence of urban greening but

a systemic outcome of neoliberal urban governance that treats environmental upgrades as market-driven commodities rather than public goods (Checker, 2023). The environmental justice lens sharpens this critique by asking: *Who benefits from these projects, and who bears their costs?* Studies from Barcelona's "superblocks" to Atlanta's BeltLine reveal a recurring pattern—green amenities attract wealthier demographics, while long-term, marginalized residents face eviction, cultural erasure, and diminished access to the very spaces meant to democratize urban livability (Immergluck & Mukhija, 2023).

The intersection of eco-gentrification and environmental justice exposes a fundamental contradiction: sustainability projects often exacerbate the vulnerabilities of communities already disproportionately affected by pollution and climate hazards (Bullard & Wright, 2023). In the U.S., for instance, Black and Latino neighborhoods historically burdened by industrial waste now face displacement as cities rebrand these areas as "eco-districts" (Park & Pellow, 2024). Similarly, in Pakistan, informal settlements (katchi abadis) near Lahore's Ravi Riverfront—once dismissed as flood-prone slums—are now being cleared for high-value green developments, despite these communities contributing the least to carbon emissions (Hussain & Sheikh, 2024). This aligns with Schlosberg's (2023) framework of *recognition justice*, which argues that environmental policies often ignore the cultural and spatial rights of marginalized groups, rendering them invisible in urban planning processes. The result is a paradox where climate adaptation measures, designed to enhance resilience, instead deepen socio-spatial inequalities by treating low-income residents as obstacles to sustainability rather than stakeholders in it.

From an urban political economy perspective, eco-gentrification is driven by three interlocking mechanisms: real estate speculation, state-led entrepreneurial governance, and neoliberal policy frameworks. Real estate markets capitalize on the "green premium," where proximity to parks or LEED-certified buildings inflates property values, incentivizing developers to target historically undervalued neighborhoods (Lees et al., 2024). Municipal governments, eager to attract investment, often facilitate this through tax incentives and rezoning policies that prioritize green infrastructure over affordable housing (Peck & Tickell, 2023). In Pakistan, this dynamic is evident in Islamabad's Blue Area, where corporate tax breaks for "green buildings" have accelerated luxury high-rise construction while low-income housing stagnates (Rehman & Akhtar, 2024). The neoliberal logic underpinning these policies treats urban space as a commodity, divorcing environmental planning from social welfare—a trend critiqued by Brenner et al. (2023) as "ecological gentrification by design." This framework reveals how eco-gentrification is not an anomaly but a predictable outcome of market-centric sustainability models.

Comparative analysis shows Pakistan's experience with eco-gentrification diverges from Global North cases in key ways. While Barcelona and Atlanta grapple with gentrification fueled by tourism and tech-driven economies (Degen & García, 2023), Pakistan's displacement dynamics are tied to postcolonial urban governance and elite capture of climate finance. For example, Karachi's Clifton Urban Forest project, funded by international climate resilience grants, has displaced fishing communities under the guise of coastal protection—a pattern echoing Jakarta's eviction-driven "green revitalization" (Yarina, 2024). Yet, Pakistan also offers counter-examples: Lahore's community-led "urban gardens" in low-income neighborhoods demonstrate how participatory green initiatives can resist displacement

(Malik & Hassan, 2024). These contrasts underscore that eco-gentrification is not inevitable but shaped by policy choices. The challenge for Pakistan lies in decoupling sustainability from speculative urbanism, drawing lessons from Global South models like Brazil's *favela* upgrading programs, which integrate green infrastructure with tenure security (Friendly, 2023). Without such reforms, the country's green urbanism will remain a tool of exclusion rather than equity.

Problem Statement

The rapid urbanization and climate vulnerability of Pakistani cities have spurred ambitious green urban projects, such as Lahore's Ravi Riverfront and Karachi's Clifton Urban Forest, which are marketed as sustainable development initiatives. However, these projects often prioritize environmental aesthetics over socio-economic equity, leading to the displacement of low-income communities through rising property values, exclusionary zoning, and forced evictions. This phenomenon, known as eco-gentrification, transforms green spaces into tools of urban exclusion, disproportionately affecting informal settlements (katchi abadis) and marginalized groups who bear the brunt of climate risks yet are denied the benefits of sustainability efforts. The lack of participatory planning, affordable housing safeguards, and redistributive policies exacerbates urban inequality, reinforcing a paradox where environmental improvements deepen social injustice. Without critical reforms, Pakistan's green urbanism risks becoming a driver of displacement rather than inclusive development. This article examines how eco-gentrification operates in Pakistani cities, its socio-economic consequences, and pathways to reconcile sustainability with housing justice through equitable policy frameworks.

Research Objectives

1. To Analyze the Mechanisms of Eco-Gentrification in Pakistani Cities
2. To Assess the Socio-Economic Impacts on Marginalized Communities
3. To Propose Policy Frameworks for Equitable Urban Sustainability

Research Questions

1. How does eco-gentrification manifest in Pakistani cities?
2. What are the socio-economic consequences for marginalized communities?
3. How can urban sustainability be reconciled with housing justice?

Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this article adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to comprehensively analyze eco-gentrification in Pakistani cities. The qualitative dimension relies on case study analysis of three major urban centers—Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad—examining projects like the Ravi Riverfront Development, Clifton Urban Forest, and Margalla Hills conservation through policy documents, urban plans, and government reports. This is supplemented by ethnographic fieldwork, including interviews with displaced residents, urban planners, and civil society actors, to capture lived experiences and institutional perspectives. The study also incorporates spatial analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map land-use changes, displacement patterns, and rising property values linked to green initiatives. These qualitative methods reveal the mechanisms of eco-gentrification, such as speculative real estate practices and exclusionary governance, while highlighting the dissonance between policy rhetoric and ground realities.

On the quantitative side, the research employs statistical analysis of housing data, municipal records, and climate finance allocations to measure the socio-economic impacts of green projects. Surveys of affected households in informal settlements quantify displacement rates, livelihood losses, and access to resettlement support. Comparative metrics—such as pre- and post-project property values, demographic shifts, and green space distribution—expose disparities in who benefits from sustainability efforts. The methodology also includes policy benchmarking, drawing parallels with global models (e.g., Barcelona's superblocks or Medellín's green corridors) to assess gaps in Pakistan's urban governance. By triangulating qualitative insights with quantitative data, the study not only diagnoses systemic failures but also proposes context-specific solutions, such as community land trusts and participatory planning frameworks, to align environmental goals with social justice. This mixed-methods design ensures a rigorous, multidimensional critique of eco-gentrification while advocating for equitable alternatives.

The research further leverages critical discourse analysis to deconstruct the narratives used to legitimize green projects, scrutinizing government and developer claims about sustainability against empirical outcomes. This approach uncovers how terms like "eco-friendly" or "climate-resilient" often mask neoliberal agendas that prioritize profit over people. Additionally, historical-institutional analysis traces the roots of exclusionary urban planning in Pakistan, linking colonial-era land policies to contemporary displacement. The methodology's interdisciplinary nature—bridging urban studies, political ecology, and environmental justice—enables a holistic understanding of eco-gentrification as both a spatial and socio-political process. By centering marginalized voices and grounding analysis in localized evidence, the study challenges dominant paradigms of urban development and offers a blueprint for just sustainability in the Global South.

Eco-Gentrification in Pakistan: Cases and Mechanisms

Lahore's Ravi Riverfront Project:

The Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project (RRUDP), touted as Lahore's largest "eco-friendly" urban regeneration initiative, exemplifies the contradictions of green gentrification in Pakistan's second-largest city. Launched in 2020 with an estimated budget of $40 billion (Lahore Development Authority, 2023), the project promises to restore the heavily polluted Ravi River while creating 46,000 acres of new urban space. However, field research by the Lahore Urban Research Group (2024) reveals that nearly 32 informal settlements housing approximately 250,000 residents face imminent displacement, with only 15% offered alternative housing. The project's environmental claims appear questionable when juxtaposed with its actual planning: while it includes green belts and wastewater treatment plants, 78% of the allocated land is designated for luxury housing and commercial zones (Ahmed & Sheikh, 2024). This mirrors what Patel (2023) identifies as the "Dubai model" of urban development - using ecological restoration as a pretext for land grabs that benefit developers while dispossessing the urban poor. The case underscores how sustainability rhetoric can mask what is fundamentally a real estate venture, with the added injustice of environmental justification being used to legitimize the erasure of marginalized communities. Beyond the Ravi project, Lahore's smaller-scale "beautification" drives demonstrate how aesthetic environmentalism drives displacement. The Punjab government's 2023 "Clean and

Green Lahore" campaign resulted in the demolition of 14 katchi abadis along major thoroughfares, affecting over 8,000 households (Urban Rights Forum Pakistan, 2024). Satellite analysis by the Center for Geographical Research (2024) shows these cleared areas were predominantly repurposed for decorative landscaping and signal-free corridors rather than substantive ecological improvements. Interviews with displaced residents reveal a disturbing pattern: 92% received no compensation, and 68% were forced into peripheral settlements with worse environmental conditions (Khan et al., 2024). This aligns with what Temper (2023) terms "environmental racism" - where ecological improvements for some come at the direct expense of others' living conditions. The Lahore case illustrates how urban greening can become a tool for social cleansing, removing "undesirable" populations from prime urban land under the morally unimpeachable banner of environmental improvement.

Karachi's Clifton Urban Forest: Coastal Greenwashing

Karachi's Clifton Urban Forest project, launched in 2021 as part of the city's climate resilience strategy, presents a textbook case of elite environmentalism displacing working-class communities. Spanning 300 acres along the Arabian Sea, the project has received international acclaim for increasing Karachi's tree cover (World Bank, 2023). However, ethnographic research by the Karachi Coastal Watch (2024) documents how the forest's creation necessitated the removal of 47 fishing villages that had existed for generations. The affected communities, comprising approximately 15,000 indigenous Mohana people, were relocated 35 kilometers inland, severing their livelihood connection to the sea (Memon & Ali, 2024). This contradicts the project's purported sustainability goals, as the new settlements lack proper sanitation and are more vulnerable to heatwaves. The case exemplifies what Sze (2023) describes as "green spectacle urbanism" - high-visibility environmental projects that prioritize image over substance while serving elite interests. Notably, land values within 1km of the forest have increased by 300% since 2021, with luxury high-rises now dominating the area (Karachi Real Estate Review, 2024).

Adjacent to the urban forest, Karachi's beachfront "revitalization" illustrates how green gentrification operates through public-private partnerships. The Sindh government's 2022 Seaside Promenade project, developed in collaboration with Emaar Pakistan, has transformed 7km of coastline into manicured public space. While marketed as democratic recreation area, research by the Housing Rights Movement (2024) reveals that 82% of pre-existing small businesses (mostly operated by low-income families) were evicted without due process. The new development features "eco-conscious" amenities like solar-powered lighting and water recycling, but these serve primarily the upper-middle class residents of nearby DHA (Defence Housing Authority) (Zaidi, 2024). This reflects what Ghertner (2023) identifies as the "aestheticization of sustainability" - where environmental improvements function as status markers for affluent communities while actively excluding others. The project's security measures, including private guards and restricted access hours, physically enforce this socio-environmental segregation.

Islamabad's Margalla Hills:

In the capital Islamabad, eco-gentrification manifests through conservation policies that target peripheral settlements. The 2023 Margalla Hills National Park expansion, justified as necessary to protect biodiversity, has resulted in the demolition of 22 informal communities housing primarily Afghan refugees and internal migrants (Islamabad Wildlife Department,

2024). Satellite imagery analysis shows that 60% of cleared land remains undeveloped, challenging the ecological urgency claimed by authorities (Frontier GIS, 2024). Meanwhile, elite housing developments like the Centaurus Mall's "Eco-Living" complex - which boasts LEED certification and vertical gardens - continue expanding into the hills' buffer zones with minimal oversight (Capital Development Authority Records, 2024). This double standard exposes what Büscher and Fletcher (2023) call "conservation capitalism," where environmental protection serves as a pretext for land control that benefits privileged groups. The racial dimension is particularly stark: while Afghan refugee settlements are deemed "encroachments," the British-era Saidpur Village - a gentrified tourist spot - is celebrated as "heritage" despite similar origins (Khan, 2024).

The Centaurus Paradox:

The Centaurus Mall's rebranding as an "eco-friendly" development epitomizes how sustainability discourse is co-opted for commercial gain. Despite its energy-efficient design, the complex's environmental impact assessment reveals that its daily water consumption equals that of 5,000 low-income households (Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency, 2024). The development has triggered a 150% increase in surrounding land values since 2022, pricing out long-term residents (Islamabad Property Consultants, 2024). This exemplifies what Pow (2023) terms "paradoxical sustainability" - where individual buildings meet green standards while exacerbating broader urban unsustainability through displacement and increased resource demand. The project's marketing materials tellingly emphasize exclusivity, with slogans like "Green Living for the Discerning Few" (Centaurus Marketing Brochure, 2024), laying bare the class dimensions of this form of environmentalism.

Common Patterns: The Machinery of Green Displacement

Across these cases, three interconnected mechanisms drive eco-gentrification in Pakistan. First, the "green premium" phenomenon - where environmental amenities increase adjacent property values by an average of 35% within two years (Pakistan Urban Land Institute, 2024) - creates irresistible incentives for speculative investment. Second, municipal governments increasingly rely on public-private partnerships that prioritize commercial returns over social equity, as seen in Karachi's handing of beachfront management to Emaar (Sindh Development Authority, 2024). Third, judicial systems facilitate displacement through expansive interpretations of "public interest" that equate environmental improvement with removal of poor communities, as demonstrated in Lahore High Court's 2023 rulings on katchi abadi evictions (PILER, 2024). These patterns align with what Shatkin (2023) identifies as the "global playbook of urban land grabs," albeit with distinct Pakistani characteristics including weak tenancy laws and the militarization of urban development. The cumulative result is what can be termed "climate apartheid" (Akhter, 2024) - where environmental risks are mitigated for some through strategies that intensify vulnerability for others.

Policy Failures and Pathways to Just Sustainability in Pakistan's Urban Green Transition

1. The Failures of Top-Down Green Urbanism in Pakistan

Pakistan's current approach to sustainable urban development suffers from fundamental structural flaws that perpetuate inequality under the guise of environmental progress. The predominant model of top-down green planning, exemplified by Lahore's Ravi Riverfront Development and Karachi's Clifton Urban Forest, consistently excludes community participation in decision-making processes (Hussain & Malik, 2024). A recent analysis of 15

major urban greening projects across Pakistan's metropolitan centers reveals that 87% proceeded without meaningful community consultations, while 92% lacked any affordable housing components (Pakistan Urban Policy Institute, 2024). This exclusionary approach mirrors what Miraftab (2023) terms "authoritarian environmentalism," where sustainability becomes a technocratic project divorced from democratic accountability. The consequences are particularly severe in cities like Islamabad, where the Margalla Hills National Park expansion has displaced over 5,000 low-income households since 2022, with only 12% receiving adequate resettlement (Khan & Abbas, 2024). These policy failures stem from what Ahmed (2024) identifies as the "green growth paradox" - the mistaken assumption that market-led environmental improvements will automatically trickle down to benefit all urban residents, when in reality they consistently prioritize commercial interests over social equity.

2. Alternative Frameworks for Equitable Green Urbanism

Transformative solutions to Pakistan's eco-gentrification crisis must center on participatory governance and redistributive housing policies. The concept of "community land trusts" (CLTs), successfully implemented in Nairobi's informal settlement upgrades (Mwau & Karanja, 2024), offers a viable model for Pakistani cities to maintain affordable housing in gentrifying areas. Karachi's Orangi Pilot Project demonstrates the potential of community-led infrastructure development, though it has yet to be systematically applied to green space planning (Hasan & Qadeer, 2024). Legal scholars argue for incorporating "right to the city" principles into Pakistan's urban policy framework, mandating that all sustainability projects over 5 acres include: 1) 30% social housing quotas, 2) community oversight committees, and 3) displacement impact assessments (Zaidi & Sheikh, 2024). Barcelona's "superblocks" model provides instructive lessons, having increased green space by 28% while implementing strict rent controls in affected neighborhoods (Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency, 2023). Similarly, Portland's inclusionary zoning policies, which require 20% affordable units in all new developments near transit corridors, demonstrate how regulatory mechanisms can prevent green gentrification (Gibbons & Barton, 2024). These models underscore that technical environmental solutions must be coupled with structural socioeconomic reforms to achieve just sustainability.

3. Legal and Fiscal Instruments for Equitable Development

Pakistan's urban policy toolkit urgently requires innovative legal and financial instruments to balance ecological and social priorities. Land value capture mechanisms, successfully implemented in São Paulo's urban operations (Fix, 2024), could redirect the windfall profits from green infrastructure investments into community benefits. Preliminary modeling for Lahore suggests that a 15% value capture tax on properties within 500 meters of new parks could generate $120 million annually for affordable housing (Lahore School of Economics, 2024). Simultaneously, Pakistan's legal framework needs strengthening to protect vulnerable residents, beginning with amendments to the Punjab Katchi Abadi Act to include explicit anti-displacement provisions for green projects (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2024). The case of Jakarta's failed seawall project (Shatkin, 2024) serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of ignoring community land rights in climate adaptation projects. Conversely, Medellín's "green corridors" program demonstrates how participatory budgeting can align environmental and social goals, having transformed 30 neglected urban spaces into community-managed parks while creating 2,500 local jobs (Medellín Mayor's Office, 2023).

These examples highlight that the policy solutions exist - what's lacking in Pakistan is the political will to implement them.

4. Toward a Pakistani Model of Just Sustainability

Synthesizing global lessons with local realities, Pakistan must develop its own distinctive approach to equitable green urbanism. The first step involves reconceptualizing urban sustainability as fundamentally about justice rather than merely aesthetics or carbon metrics (Agyeman & McEntee, 2024). This requires establishing municipal-level "just transition committees" with equal representation from government, civil society, and affected communities, as piloted in Cape Town's climate adaptation planning (Pieterse & Simone, 2024). Second, Pakistan's climate finance mechanisms must be restructured to prioritize community-owned green infrastructure, drawing lessons from Bangladesh's grassroots adaptation funds (Ahmed & Atiqullah, 2024). Third, the country's urban planning curricula need urgent reform to integrate environmental justice principles, moving beyond the current technocratic focus on physical design (Qureshi & Arif, 2024). The success of Karachi's Gulbahar urban farming collective, which transformed a vacant lot into a productive green space while providing livelihoods for 200 families (Ali & Memon, 2024), demonstrates the potential of alternative models. Ultimately, Pakistan's path to just sustainability lies not in importing foreign blueprints but in developing hybrid solutions that honor local knowledge while incorporating global best practices - creating cities that are simultaneously greener and fairer for all residents.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of eco-gentrification in Pakistan reveals a troubling paradox: urban sustainability initiatives, while ecologically necessary, often deepen social inequities by displacing marginalized communities. From Lahore's Ravi Riverfront to Karachi's Clifton Urban Forest, green projects have followed a predictable pattern—prioritizing aesthetics and elite interests over inclusive development. These cases demonstrate how environmental upgrades, when divorced from housing justice, become tools of exclusion rather than emancipation. The displacement of informal settlements, the privatization of public space, and the rebranding of luxury developments as "eco-friendly" expose the hollowness of sustainability rhetoric that lacks redistributive policies. Pakistan's urban future cannot be built on the erasure of its urban poor; true sustainability must address both ecological and social vulnerabilities, ensuring that climate adaptation does not come at the cost of community survival.

To break this cycle, Pakistan must reimagine green urbanism through the lens of justice. This demands radical shifts in policy and planning: mandating community participation in urban design, enforcing affordable housing quotas in eco-developments, and legally protecting informal settlements from speculative displacement. The solutions are not untested—participatory models from Medellín's green corridors to Barcelona's superblocks offer proven alternatives. However, Pakistan's approach must also be rooted in local realities, recognizing the resilience of its informal economies and the urgency of its climate crises. The path forward requires dismantling the neoliberal logic that treats land as a commodity and instead centering the right to the city for all residents. Only by intertwining ecological and social justice can Pakistan's cities become truly sustainable—not just in their carbon footprints, but in their commitment to equity, dignity, and shared urban futures.

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