

# Dissecting Opposition to the 15-Minute City in the Post-COVID Era

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**Nigel Farage** @Nigel\_Farage

The climate change lockdowns are coming.

From dailymail.co.uk



“The international socialist concept of so-called 15-minute cities and 20-minute neighbourhoods will take away personal freedoms.”  
 Nick Fletcher, MP. 02/2023








Senator Pauline Hanson: *This law is a step towards controlling people, a step towards **15 minute cities**, already being imposed in the UK, heavily penalizing anyone travelling outside their community.*



Vancouver pop up campaign with stickers depicting 15 minute city concept in front of a fence



### Stop the 15 min cities project in Edmonton



3258 5000  
Firmas Próximo objetivo

**Firma esta petición**

Nombre

Apellidos

Correo electrónico

Creada 7 de febrero de 2023

Demonstrators in Edmonton. *This is just another step in the WEF [World Economic Forum] globalists great reset under the guise of the global warming agenda.*



# POLAND

“15min city is a prelude to enslavement”.

Lukas Warzecha, Journalist

The first 15min in Poland was Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Grzegorz Braun - Polish far-right politician

“Yes, these are feudalistic times. Satan doesn't invent anything new, he just takes the already invented and detects it”.

Wojciech Cejrowski, Journalist

What does another assault on our civil liberties look like? There's this idea of a fifteen-minute city. And it all looks very nice, but it's all done so that you can't move too often outside the boundaries of this zone. These zones are introduced, this is what the cities of the future look like, so that they can control where people are and **you have to spend most of your life in this ghetto and you can't leave it without the permission of the bureaucrats** And that's a really scary idea.

Marcin Sypniewski - Vice President of Nowa Nadzieja

# 15-minute city critiques

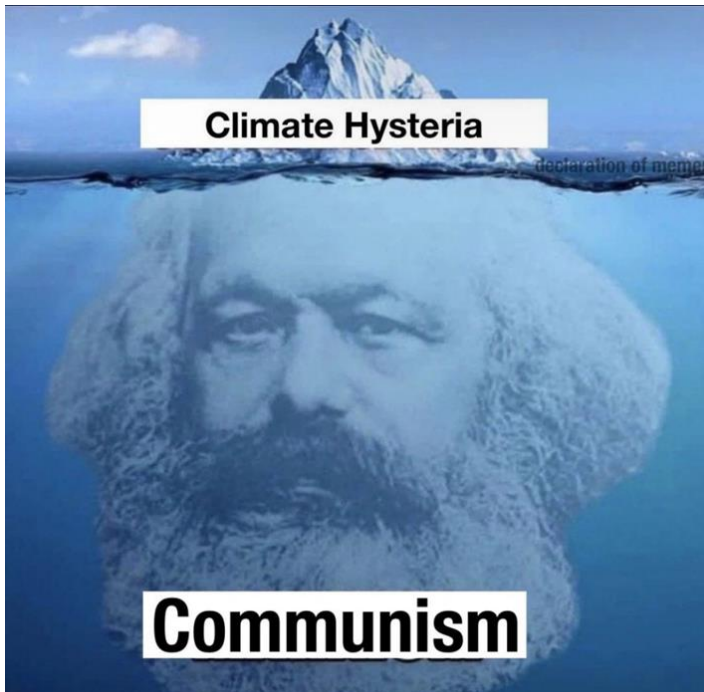
From unfounded accusations to substantiated claims





# Agenda 2030 and Globalism Conspiracies

- Worry over a **loss of sovereignty to a global agenda**
- Local autonomy being usurped by **hidden control measures**.
- Political orientation: Varied, often right-wing but also left-wing
- “Agenda 21” misinterpreted as a **plot for a totalitarian world government**
- **Textbook example of a conspiracy theory**. Cognitive dissonance: Rejection of contradicting evidence to alleviate discomfort (Nwokora, 2023)



*This is a World Economic Forum (WEF) initiative and they have no legal jurisdiction in Canada and should not be affecting policy and regulation choices at the municipal and provincial levels," Posa said. "We do not answer to the WEF and we are not interested in their initiatives. I'm hoping with this protest on Friday, we can inform people about how 15-minute cities are going to affect us, as well as what's happening in other places in the world.*

Protest organizer in Edmonton, Canada

01



CONSPIRACY  
THEORY

Social engineering and  
climate confinement threats

Deep political disillusion



# Fear of Overregulation and Surveillance

- The "Great Reset" narrative: claims of home confinement and restrictions  
*They want to control us, 15 minute cities are just a pretext to take away our freedom of movement*
- Perceived overregulation and intrusive surveillance that may accompany 15 minute cities
- COVID pandemic has left a legacy of distrust of public authorities and a strong belief among some groups (anti-vaxxers, anti-lockdown activists) about the existence of hidden nefarious agendas, ranging from vaccines and viruses to climate change plans and population control methods (Freeman et al., 2022; Pummerer et al., 2022).



## CONSPIRACY THEORY

Social engineering and climate confinement threats  
Deep political disillusion

 **Carl Benjamin**   
@Sargon\_of\_Akkad

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15 minute cities will go from "isn't that convenient?" to "why do you want to go anywhere else?" to "your permit does not allow you to leave zone 17" really, really quickly.

2:52 AM · Jun 3, 2023 · **5.1M** Views

1.5K 5K 19K 423

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

 **Sustainable Cities and Society** 

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/scs](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/scs)

### From lockdown to precise prevention: Adjusting epidemic-related spatial regulations from the perspectives of the 15-minute city and spatiotemporal planning

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#### ARTICLE INFO

**Keywords:**  
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#### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged emergency management in cities worldwide. Many municipalities adopted restrictive, one-size-fits-all spatial regulations such as lockdowns without fully considering the inhabitants' daily activities and local economies. The existing epidemic regulations' unintended detrimental effects on socioeconomic sustainability necessitate a transition from the "lockdown" approach to more precise disease prevention. A spatially and temporally precise approach that balances epidemic prevention with the demands of daily activities and local economies is needed. Thus, the aim of this study was to propose a framework and key procedures for determining precise prevention regulations from the perspectives of the 15-minute city concept and spatiotemporal planning. Alternative regulations of lockdowns were determined by delineating 15-minute neighborhoods, identifying and reconfiguring facility supplies and activity demands in both normal and epidemic conditions, and performing cost-benefit analyses. Highly adaptable, spatially- and temporally-precise regulations can match the needs of different types of facilities. We demonstrated the process for determining precise prevention regulations in the case of the Jiulong 15-minute neighborhood in Beijing. Precise prevention regulations—which meet essential activity demands and are adaptable for different facility types, times, and neighborhoods—have implications for long-term urban planning and emergency management.





# Ideological opposition I

- Long-standing **resistance to centralized planning**, especially among conservative and libertarian circles
- *Social engineering! Too much government intervention!* (Trapenberg Frick et al., 2015).
- **Cultural tradition of anti-urbanism** (US) (Conn, 2014; Meyer & Graybill, 2016)
- 15 minute city as **embodiment of urban life values**: diversity, interaction, public space.
- For conservatives, concerns arise when planning serves broader agendas like sustainability and social justice, challenging traditional values

02



## ANTI-URBAN AND CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

Distrust of centralized planning and of "preferential treatment given to urban life"

Fear of surveillance and technocratic solutions



Dr Jordan B Peterson ✓

@jordanbpeterson

The idea that neighborhoods should be walkable is lovely. The idea that idiot tyrannical bureaucrats can decide by fiat where you're "allowed" to drive is perhaps the worst imaginable perversion of that idea--and, make no mistake, it's part of a well-documented plan.





# Ideological opposition II

## Distributional unfairness:

- Conflict between urban-centric policies and suburban preferences (Amorim-Maia et al., 2023).
- Feelings of distributional inequity among less dense communities.
- Backlash against more feminist and care-driven urban polices (Kussy et al., 2023).
  - Changing the status quo regarding who we put at the center of our policies



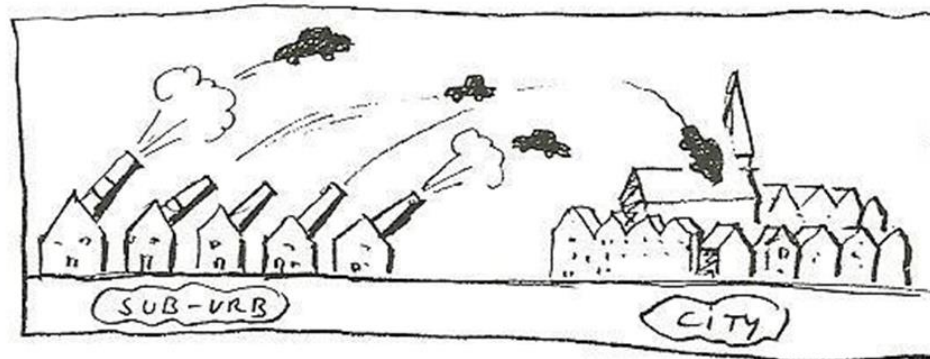
## ANTI-URBAN AND CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

Distrust of centralized planning and of "preferential treatment given to urban life

Fear of surveillance and technocratic solutions



NOT THE CAR BUT THE SUBURBAN HOME IS THE DEADLY WEAPON



DAILY SUBURBAN MORTARFIRE AGAINST URBAN CENTERS





# Individual and group fears I

03

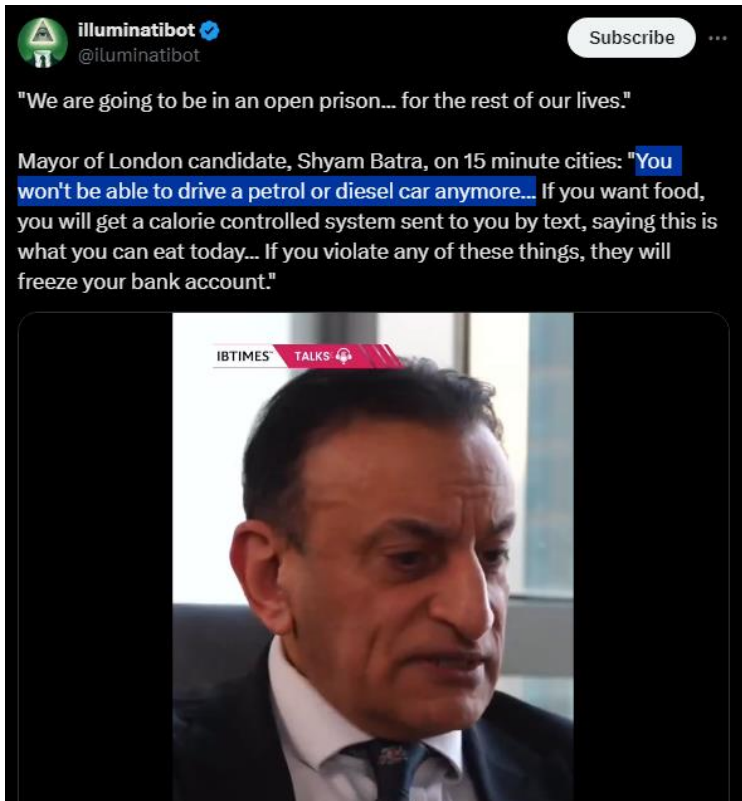


## INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP FEARS

Loss of automobile as loss of freedom, lifestyle and rights

Rejection of state interference with personal decisions

- 15 minute cities are seen as **anti car policies**.
  - Frequent overlap between 15 minute city policies and traffic management initiatives
- 1. Expected **impact on personal mobility**
  - Perception that reducing car space equals a **loss of personal freedom** and mobility
  - Cognitive biases: loss aversion, status quo bias.





# Individual and group fears II

## Cultural Values and Ideologies

1. Culture of individualism in travel behavior
  - Maximizing one's own travel utility, often at the expense of the collective good
  - Car use based on **private property and freedom**
  - **Collective decisions** can not restrict these **inherent rights!**
2. The car as a symbol of individualism and personal choice in opposition to communal urbanism.
3. Political **conservatism amplifying resistance** to perceived attacks on personal freedoms.

*“For many people in the 21st century, freedom is a set of keys, and basically any assault on the vehicle is an assault on the person”*

4. **Global culture war against motorists**  
**Increased polarization and partisanship**

03



## INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP FEARS

Loss of automobile as loss of freedom, lifestyle and rights

Rejection of state interference with personal decisions



9:38 AM · Sep 30, 2023 · 8.1M Views



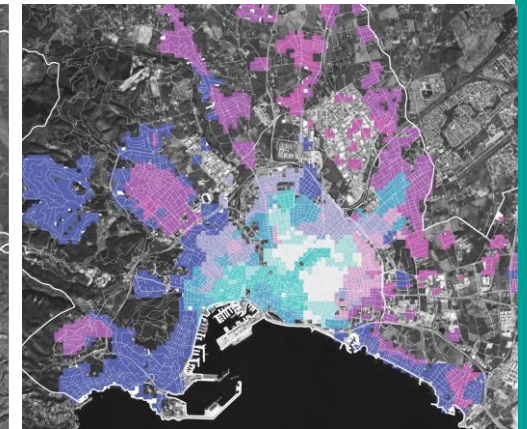
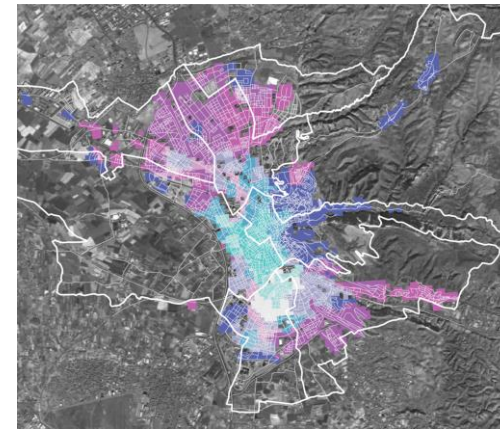
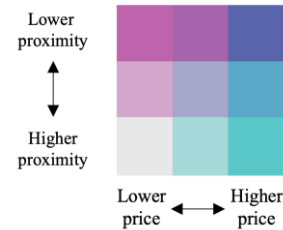
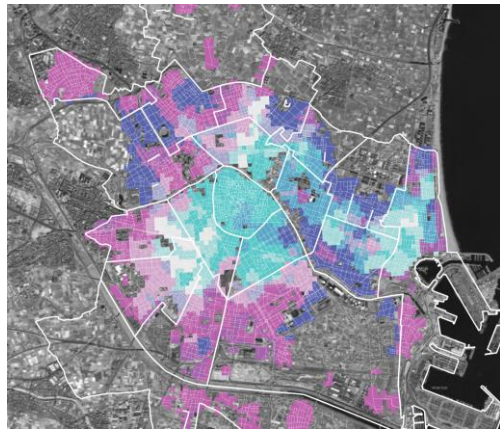
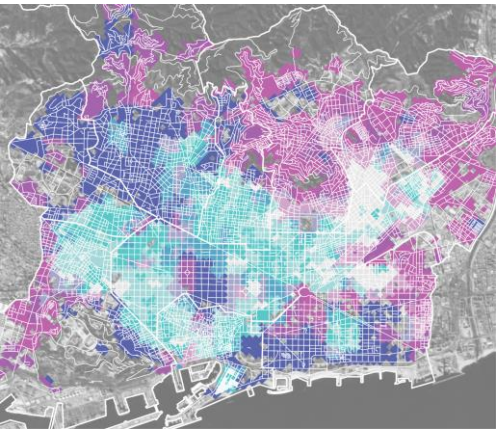


# Gentrification fears



## Environmental Gentrification

1. Displacement due to **increased housing prices** and real estate speculation in improved urban areas (Anguelovski et al., 2022).
2. **Concentration** of urban improvements potentially leading to **areas exclusive to elites** and investors.



# Participation issues

## 1. Procedural Criticisms and Participation Issues

1. Strong governmental **top-down approaches** in policy implementation (Dudley et al., 2022).
2. Fast-tracked urban initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic with limited public consultation.
3. Copy-paste policies promoted by international think tanks (C40)

## 2. Intersection of Political Views

1. Left and right converging in opposition to expert-led top-down planning.
2. Shared criticisms across political spectrums emphasizing participation and equity concerns.







# Going forward

COVID experience has accelerated the spread of conspiracy theories

- We never thought pandemic lockdowns could happen, and they did, so why not believe in future climate lockdowns?
- Recognize and differentiate between conspiracy-fueled criticism and valid concerns.
  - Counter-narratives emphasizing benefits over loss, engaging beyond partisan lines
- Participation issues and conspiracies are meeting points between left and right. (N. Klein, 2023; Kristensen et al., 2023)
  - Unconventional political alliances (Fainstein and Novy 2023; Liekefett 2023).
- Distributional justice is a key predictor of policy acceptability (Kallbekken & Sæælen, 2011; Semple & Fountas, 2022).
  - Implement strategies ensuring benefits and burdens are equitably shared
- Strip critics of valid arguments: focus on participation and gentrification!
  - Enhancing Participation and Adaptability
  - We need context-driven, participatory planning that reflects local realities
  - Implement gentrification plans and promote counter-gentrification strategies.







Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Cities

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/cities](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/cities)



# Pathways to 15-Minute City adoption: Can our understanding of climate policies' acceptability explain the backlash towards x-minute city programs?

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## ARTICLE INFO

**Keywords:**  
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## ABSTRACT

In recent months, 15-min city policies have faced significant backlash across social media, in opinion pieces, and even through street demonstrations, casting doubt on the future of x-minute city policies as effective tools in the fight against climate change. The protests and backlash not only challenge the effective implementation of x-minute city policies, but also highlight our lack of understanding regarding which acceptability factors affect public reactance to this new kind of urban policy. This paper reviews the existing literature to reveal the four main factors shaping policy acceptability. It then juxtaposes these factors against the common criticisms leveled at the 15-min city model. This comparative analysis not only illuminates the limitations of applying traditional policy frameworks to the x-minute city context, but also identifies critical gaps in the existing literature. By bridging this divide, we aid policymakers in navigating the spectrum of public skepticism of the 15-min city model, from addressing and debunking conspiracy theories to engaging with scientifically-grounded critiques. Our findings offer a roadmap for transforming these innovative urban planning concepts into widely embraced solutions for climate change mitigation.



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**Thank you**

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