

CITIES, MOBILITIES, PLACE AND SPACE STREAM

PLENARY

TUESDAY 13 APRIL 2021, 16:45 - 17:45

ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR HOUSING: COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATION AND RESISTANCE

This session brings together housing academics, activists and community organisers to discuss the causes, consequences and potential solutions to the 'housing crisis' (which of course is not singular). Drawing upon experience working in various international contexts, the panel aims to connect global trends and localised responses. Through sharing examples of community-based organisation and resistance the panel offers alternative futures for housing beyond capital accumulation, addressing concerns such as: the right to the city; community ownership and commons; and gentrification and displacement.

Professor Loretta Lees

(University of Leicester)

Loretta Lees is an urban geographer who is internationally known for her research on gentrification/urban regeneration, global urbanism, urban policy, urban public space, architecture and urban social theory. She has been identified as the 17th most referenced author in urban geography worldwide and the only woman in the top 20 (*Urban Studies*, 2017). She has published 13 books, has over 60 journal articles and over 40 book chapters to her name. She is currently Professor of Human Geography at the University of Leicester, previously she was Professor of Human Geography at King's College London. She is a scholar-activist who has lived in London for over 20 years and is a regular commentator on urban issues there eg her TEDxBrixton talk (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMz1x5_yF2Q). She is also co-organiser of the London Urban Salon and the Leicester Urban Observatory.

Jess Steele, OBE

Jess has nearly 30 years' experience as a local community activist and entrepreneur in Deptford and Hastings and at national level as Deputy Chief Executive of the British Urban Regeneration Association and Director of Innovation at DTA/Locality, including leading the development and delivery of the Meanwhile Project, the Campaign Against Delinquent Ownership, and the national Community Organisers programme. An active social entrepreneur over several decades, she has established community enterprises in publishing, heritage, tourism, childcare, financial management, neighbourhood development, workspace, and homes that are genuinely affordable in perpetuity. Jericho Road Solutions provides coaching to neighbourhood groups and community businesses as well as working with government, funders, corporates and academics on national initiatives to make neighbourhood work easier. It invests profits directly into people and projects in Hastings. Building on her experience of saving Hastings Pier and other community assets, Jess specialises in supporting ambitious local projects to rescue and repurpose the most challenging of precious buildings across England and Wales. She was awarded an OBE in the 2016 New Years Honours for services to community assets in the UK. She is an advisor to Architectural Heritage Fund, supporting local groups to take enterprising approaches to rescuing historic buildings. In Hastings, Jericho Road was a founder investor in the 9-storey creative community at Rock House and has led the redevelopment of the Observer Building. Jess nurtured and coordinated the Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust to support bottom up development and bring local property into community ownership. She is currently writing up a PhD in 'Self-Renovating Neighbourhoods as an alternative to gentrification or decline', due for submission in September 2021.

Elisa Sutanudjaja

(Rujak Center for Urban Studies)

Elisa is educated as an architect. She is a co-founder and the executive director for Rujak Center for Urban Studies, a think-act tank focusing on urban and regional issues and based in Jakarta. Elisa's current advocacy is the right to adequate housing and mainstreaming urban kampung in Indonesia's city planning.

Dominic T. Moulden

Dominic T. Moulden is the initiator of the Elephant Free School, a laboratory of Black imagination and freedom as well as a floating academy offering political education, coaching, and training. A community organizer in Washington, DC for over three decades, Dominic was the Resource Organizer for Organizing Neighborhood Equity (ONE DC), a collectively-led organization that builds people power and economic and racial equity in the nation's capital. In that capacity Dominic recruited, trained, and coordinated a 34-member team to spearhead the successful campaign to raise \$1.2 million for a building to permanently house the Black Workers and Wellness Center. He continues to organize in his hometown of Baltimore, where he is the 2020-2022 Lucille Gorham Fellow at VOLAR (Village of Love and Resistance), an equitable redevelopment and community wellness collective.

His most recent publications include "Housing Spaces Are the Commons," a book forum response associated with *Society & Space*, as well as the co-authored article, "The Making of the Just City: Housing, Gentrification, and Health" that appeared in *Housing Policy Debate*. In addition, his writing appeared in *Shelterforce's* "What Does Community Control of Land Mean To You?" essay series in its State of Permanent Affordability issue.

Rita Silva

(Habita - Association for the Right to Housing and the City)

Rita has been a housing activist since 2005 based in Lisbon. They started this struggle organising against mass demolitions and forced evictions of informal neighborhoods occupied mainly by migrants, whose land was being bought by real estate promoters. With the years the struggle spread for other problematics and started to connect forced evictions, demolitions, rising rents, the overindebted families, overcrowding and deterioration of housing conditions for many. Together with other activists Rita formed Habita, a grassroots organisation that organises and promotes action, challenging the uneven development of the city, between luxury and tourism, for one side and displacement and housing poverty for the other, resulting in growing inequality.

Getting more interested on reflecting about the processes Rita started a PhD in Political Economy. Currently, they are studying the institutional investors in housing and the role of the state.