

responsible

swiss responses
to housing in
socio-ecological crisis

city

Lunch Lecture

The Responsible City Lunch Lecture

In the opening decades of the 21st century, cities have increasingly been threatened by socio-ecological crises that have triggered controversies around how to negotiate the trade-offs between environmental goals and questions of social justice. The Responsible City aims to understand how cities respond to socio-ecological controversies in housing. In this online lecture series, we seek to discuss the projects key research concerns: the grammars of responsibility that guide housing controversies, the ways in which they are put into action by planners, real estate actors, tenants or urban communities, how they shape the urban fabric, and how they can be transformed into a politics of transition.

Oct

16.10.2024, 12:30 – 13:30 | Online → [Zoom Link](#)

Dr. Joe Hover, Queen Mary, University of London
Responsibility and Democratic Moral Agency in the City

Nov

13.11.2024, 12:30 – 13:30 | Online → [Zoom Link](#)

Dr. Hannah Widmer & Dr. Jennifer Duyne Barenstein, ETH-Z
Exploring the impact of the 'green transition' on housing inequality in Europe

Dec

11.12.2024, 12:30 – 13:30 | Online → [Zoom Link](#)

Prof. Dr. Thierry Theurillat, HES-SO
The dynamics of real estate in Switzerland: a tool for financialization and/or a driver of regional development?

Organized by the Research Units:

- Social Geography and Urban Studies, UZH
- Laboratory of Urban Sociology, EPFL
- Institute of Geography, UniNe
- Spatial Development and Urban Policy, ETH-Z



Wed,
16.10.
2024

12:30 – 13:30

Dr. Joe Hover, Queen Mary, University of London

Responsibility and Democratic Moral Agency in the City

Questions of moral responsibility increasingly look beyond individualistic notions of liability and punishment. Drawing on Young's social connection model, a forward looking and political alternative conceptualises responsibility as a social practice. This shift recognises the social construction of both our moral agency and the moral ends of our practices. I argue for a political shift from a liberal to a democratic form moral agency. This leads to the question of how to make such a shift in our moral agency and social practices. I suggest three key tasks: 1) altering the affective orientation in practices of responsibility from obedience and resentment to care and attentiveness; 2) creating alternative social spaces and institutions in which democratic moral agency can be developed and habituated; and 3) addressing inequalities of material resources and political access. To begin addressing these, I outline three strategies drawn from urban justice movements. [Online → Zoom Link](#)

Wed,
13.11.
2024

12:30 – 13:30

Dr Hannah Widmer & Dr Jennifer Duyne Barenstein, ETH-Zurich

Exploring the impact of the 'green transition' on housing inequality in Europe

Most European countries, including Switzerland, are committed to attain carbon neutrality by 2050. The so-called 'green transition' is expected to involve deep transformations towards sustainability and energy efficiency in multiple sectors of the society and economy. It has a strong focus on housing as one of the most climate-exposed and energy consuming sectors. However, in several countries critical challenges are emerging as housing solutions that are ecologically more effective might be socially more exclusionary. With particular reference to energy refurbishments, nature based solutions, and urban densification, we explore the complex relationship between green transition initiatives and an equitable access to affordable housing. Reference will be made to the issues emerging from our recently started EU Horizon research project "Contextualized Pathways to Reduce Housing Inequalities in the green and digital transition" (ReHousIn) in several European countries with a particular focus on Switzerland. [Online → Zoom Link](#)

Wed,
11.12.
2024

12:30 – 13:30

Prof Dr. Thierry Theurillat, HES-SO

The dynamics of real estate in Switzerland: a tool for financialization and/or a driver of regional development?

This presentation extends the debate regarding the variegated forms of financialization. On the one end, financialization has been a key concept to address the investments of large property investors and their impacts on urban development such as the capture of urban rent, gentrification or crowding out issues. On the other end, financialization concerns only a part of urban production in large cities as well in lower-tier cities and rural regions. Property development out of large cities remains under-addressed by scholars. Simultaneously, real estate and housing dynamics have been also increasingly dependent on the mobility of people, both as residents and consumers. This implies that housing and real estate are drivers of regional development by attracting people. By using the case of Switzerland, this presentation contributes to a renewed understanding of housing and real estate dynamics within different places by linking them with local dominant activities and various financing circuits. [Online → Zoom Link](#)