

Call for papers

Decommodification of land for housing: the role of the public sector

Online seminar **11 January 2027**

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The excesses of the real estate market (Farha & Schwan, 2021), the financialisation and commodification of the housing sector (Aalbers, Rolnik, & Krijnen, 2020; Aalbers, 2017), and the expansion of private property with its exclusionary effects have been widely debated over the last two decades. Against this backdrop, new forms of land and housing arrangements are experimented to resist these powerful and mainstream processes. In many European cities, such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin or Vienna, some counter-pressures against the financialisation of housing have emerged (Wijburg 2021). These come from city government bodies and/or pressure from social movements and grassroots collectives (Lang, Carriou, et Czischke 2020). Cities of the Global South also provide a number of experiments of land and housing tenure schemes alternative to individual private property aiming at avoiding market-based evictions in upgraded informal settlements (Payne et al. 2009; Shelby 2021, 2025).

Decommodification of land is one of the most promising ways to facilitate access to decent housing. Community Land Trusts, for example, are designed to hold land in perpetuity, taking it off the market with the intention of developing affordable housing. In some housing cooperatives, land is owned by the cooperative. Resale restrictions are another type of tool to prevent land speculation. Land decommodification is seen as a way of supporting a 'social production' of housing, guided by the needs of residents rather than the prospect of profitability, and allowing intra-community and sometimes inter-generational solidarity through anti-speculation provisions. Emerging models of decommodification often differ from traditional social housing through greater emphasis on resident and community engagement or the engagement of actors outside the public sector.

The emergence and development of land decommodification experiments in many countries, such as CLTs in North America, Europe, or Australia are noteworthy (Davis et al, 2020). In Brazil the model is being increasingly encouraged at the municipal level, and is currently examined at the federal one. It is explicitly designed to limit land speculation during the rehabilitation of favelas. In France, new public-interest landholding bodies, the OFSs (*organismes de foncier solidaires*), have been developing since 2017 to produce affordable home ownership thanks to a mechanism for stripping out the land (Bernard 2018).

As CLTs gain this international recognition, research examining the circulation of CLT principles and its adaptation in different contexts is expanding rapidly (Simonneau 2018; Basile et al 2020; Davis et al, 2020). So too does the number of theoretical papers examining the social and political benefits of deconstructing the notion of land ownership (Engelsman, Rowe, et Southern 2016). Others focus on the role of social movements that led to the emergence of some of these mechanisms or concentrate on the community dimension of CLT governance (Moore and McKee 2012; Bunce 2016; Aernouts et Ryckewaert 2017; Mullins and Moore 2018; Archer, 2022). However, among this growing literature, there are few international comparative studies that examine the localised implementation of these principles and their effects, and that document the social, institutional and economic conditions in which this wider dissemination occurs (Moore 2018; Ayoade et Ahmed 2014). The issue of public

support for the dissemination and implementation of decommodified land tools remains an under-researched field.

With this in mind, the University of Liverpool, research labs LATTS (Université Gustave Eiffel, CNRS, and Ecole des Ponts), and Lab'urba (Université Gustave Eiffel and Université Paris Est Créteil), together with the Co-Lab Research Group at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at the TU Delft are convening an online seminar on the role of national and local public authorities in the design, implementation or management of decommodified land tools. This draws upon several areas of focus introduced in the 'Decommodification of land for housing: trends and tools' workshop hosted at the ENHR 2025 Grand Paris conference.

We invite papers that respond to any topic related to the theme of this call for papers. Areas of focus could include:

- the role of the public sector in decoupling land ownership from housing ownership and embedding such principles into national legal and institutional frameworks
- the role of the public sector in implementing these principles, paying attention to the governance schemes of CLT or other forms of decommodification instruments. What effects, for example, does public intervention have on community participation in governance?
- the role of public actors in enabling access to funding, creating dedicated policies to enable the decommodification of land, or in developing urban planning instruments that promote their dissemination. To what extent does this facilitate the dissemination of the model? What are the trade-offs?
- the capacity of public actors to regulate market mechanisms in housing.
- Other topics and themes relevant to the role and influence of public authorities in the promotion and development of land decommodification tools.

Contributions should preferably be based on empirical data and be focused on the actual implementation of decommodification tools and instruments, through single case study or comparative perspectives. Abstracts from both the Global North and the Global South are welcome.

The seminar will take place online on **11 January 2027 afternoon (and possibly on 12 January)**.

Abstracts (1000-1200 words) should be emailed to all conveners (see email addresses in CC) by **October 15**. Please note that participation in the seminar does not require you to submit a full paper.

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