



Zurich Human Geography Colloquium

Program Fall Semester 2026

Prof Dr Simon Schaupp, KU Leuven

Public lecture: Tue, 20 October, 4-5pm, Room Y44 - H11

Work and Ressentiment in the Ecological Crisis. Why the Social-Ecological Transition is Failing

Workshop: Wed, 21 October, 10:00-12:00am, Room Y25 – H86

The fear of uselessness

Preparatory Reading: Schaupp, Simon (2026): The fear of uselessness: From the normalization to the enjoyment of ecological destructiveness. Thesis Eleven 193(1): 204–219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07255136241308885>

To participate in the workshop, please sign up via nuudel by Monday 19 October at the latest: <https://nuudel.digitalcourage.de/5FOERRDJKVYA8WTH> If you have any questions, please reach out to karin.schwiter@geo.uzh.ch

Prof Dr Mara Ferreri, Autonomous University of Barcelona

Public lecture: Tue, 10 November, 4-5pm, Room Y25 – H79

Thinking geographically about housing decommodification

Workshop: Wed, 11 November, 9-12pm, Room Y25 – L40

Please register for the workshop by 3 November 3 via e-mail to jess.linz@geo.uzh.ch

Prof (Em.) Oren Yiftachel, hon., UCL; Ben-Gurion University Beersheba; senior researcher «A Land for All – two states, one homeland»

Public lecture: Tue 24 November, 4-5pm, Room Y24 – G55

“The political geography of a never-ending conflict: Israel/Palestine between apartheid and peace”

Workshop: Wed, 25 November , 9-12pm, Y25 – L40

Please register for the workshop by 17 November via e-mail to hanna.hilbrandt@geo.uzh.ch





Tue, 20 October 2026: **Prof Dr Simon Schaupp**

Work and Ressentiment in the Ecological Crisis. Why the Social-Ecological Transition is Failing

Social-ecological transformations are confronted with a paradox: even where 'just transition' policies are taking effect and sectors stand to benefit from decarbonisation, resistance amongst workers is growing. To explain this, we need to understand the affective dimension of work: In the workplace, workers seek recognition but experience humiliation as they submit to supervisors. In the ecological crisis, this humiliation is compounded because externally dictated work is accompanied by an externally dictated adaptation to changing ecological conditions. This alienates even those workers from the transformation who, in principle, support it. Drawing on in-depth interviews in the construction, forestry, elderly care and energy supply sectors, the talk develops a theory of work-related resentment. This arises where managerial domination, the technocratic logic of constraints under conditions of austerity, and the disregard for experiential knowledge interact and are exacerbated by meritocratic systems of recognition. Workers react with obstinacy, often articulated as resistance against technocratic transformation but sometimes carrying the potential for a transformation 'from below'.

Simon Schaupp works as research professor for Labour and Sustainability at KU Leuven in Belgium. He received his PhD from the University of Basel in 2020. Afterwards, he held guest professorships at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and Technical University of Berlin. Schaupp is also affiliated to the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, where he is leading the project "Ecological Obstinacy. Worker Orientations in the Context of Climate Change" (2024-2027), funded by Hans Böckler Stiftung. He is a member of the Editorial board of the journal "Work, Employment & Society". In 2024, he published the monograph „Stoffwechselfolitik: Arbeit, Natur und die Zukunft des Planeten“ with Suhrkamp. The English translation "Metabolic Politics: Work, Nature and the Future of the Planet" is due to be published by Verso in 2027. His research won several awards, among them the Kurt-Rothschild award for economic scholarship.





Tue, 10 November 2026: Prof Dr Mara Ferreri

Thinking geographically about housing decommodification

Faced with increasing housing precarity and dispossession, new movements for 'decommodified' housing - affordable, non-speculative and resident-led - are emerging in many cities across Europe and beyond, promoting pathways for more just dwelling futures. Moving beyond the study of housing 'models', the lecture proposes to think geographically about decommodification through a relational and qualitative approach to the processes that politicise and rearticulate housing's multiple meanings and functions. Decommodification is here defined as the (often precarious) outcome of conflicting power and spatial dynamics across multiple registers: from transnational market forces, to shifting legal, governance and policy frameworks, to social justice organising and interpersonal relations. Taking as a starting point situated research with movements for decommodification, the lecture will share preliminary theoretical and methodological issues informing the recently launched ERC project "Enacting Decommodified Housing in Southern Europe". It will discuss how extracting housing (as property) from commodity processes also involves removing its potential for intergenerational wealth transmission. This, in turn, requires a profound rethinking of the promise and function of housing as a 'safe' asset against intersecting crises, pointing to a profound re-articulation of spatial imaginaries and practices of home, and, by extension, of urban life itself.

Mara Ferreri is an urban and housing geographer at the Autonomous University of Barcelona working on temporary and platform urbanism, housing precarity and organising for housing commons. She is a co-founder and editor of the Radical Housing Journal and the PI of the ERC Consolidator project Enacting Decommodified in Southern Europe: crises, family relations, and the future of collective property (2025-2031).





Tue, 24 November 2026: **Prof (Em.) Oren Yiftachel, hon.**

"The political geography of a never-ending conflict: Israel/Palestine between apartheid and peace"

The lecture will analyze the historical, political and legal geography of Israel/Palestine, as critical foundation to understanding the protracted conflict in the land. It will focus on colonial and national land regimes, settlement and digitalization as key factors in understanding the oppressive conditions leading to the October 7 attack and subsequent Gaza war, including its regional and global ripples. The lecture will draw on international comparative knowledge, as well as firsthand experience, to discuss possible scenarios of transforming conflict to reconciliation.

Oren Yiftachel is a professor of political geography and urban studies. He has published 11 books and over 100 articles; taught at 8 international universities; and was editor and board member in several leading journals. He is a co-founder and senior researcher in the Palestinian-Israeli peace movement "A Land for All – two states, one homeland".

