CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD: QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Privatization and its Aftermath – a Data-Driven Simulation to Predict Demographic Changes Resulting from the Privatization of Affordable Housing

• Author(s) Name:
Sharon Yavo Ayalon

• University or Company Affiliation:
Jacobs Institute, Cornell Tech, New York, New York, USA

• Abstract (300 words):
The lecture will present on-going research that develops a data-driven tool to predict displacement and gentrification resulting from privatization processes of affordable housing. Many American cities are facing demographic changes as result of gradual privatization processes; On the one hand, urbanization and migration processes and extending life expectancy are accentuating the need to provide affordable housing. On the other hand, the neoliberal fragment planning system forces cities to relay on Private-Public-Partnerships to redevelop. In the midst of these two conflicting urban trends, privatization processes of affordable housing are gradually changing the demographic profile of cities. Unlike urban renewal projects that cannot pass without the public attention, as the building destruction perforates the urban fabric, privatization processes are happening quietly and behind closed doors. However, the cumulative change they produce is almost as dramatic as those urban renewal projects of the sixties that have pushed weak populations out of city centers. This study joins the research and practitioners’ communities’ attempts to examine the nature of these demographic movements, mainly displacement and gentrification, and to develop a practical tool that will be able to predict those changes. It asks: How might the demographics of a neighborhood change as a result of the privatization processes of buildings that were
previously affordable? To trace those changes the tool simulates demographic movements through an Agent Base Model (ABM) in a concrete environment undergoing accelerated privatization. Roosevelt Island in NYC was chosen as a unique case study of a planned mixed-income community, with tenants protected under Mitchell Lama and Section 8 affordability plans, that are about to or already expired. Building on ethnographic fieldwork combined with census data, history of past rents and sales and tenant-owner legal agreements, the simulation run through several scenarios to depict the changing the demographics of the island.

- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

  Sharon Yavo Ayalon is a Postdoctoral Associate at Cornell Tech, researching the social effects of urban renewal projects. Her research explores the nature of the demographic changes caused by urban redevelopment and develops computerized tools to visualize those changes and simulate future scenarios. Her PhD explored the linkage between urban renewal and art and the manner in which local identity, spatial (in)justice and social (ex-in)clusion are forged or deconstructed by artistic activity in cities, focusing on artistic interventions in contested cities and the ways in which they affect and are affected by urban segregation patterns and boundaries. Her PhD research was awarded the President of Israel’s Grant for Scientific Excellence and Innovation. She received her PhD from the faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the Technion IIT, where she graduated summa cum laude BArch and MSc.