Parallel session E2
Unaffordable Housing
Monday 11 November, 16.00 17.30
Haldane Room

Housing and the Authoritarian Turn Dr David Madden, Associate Professor in Sociology, LSE

We are living in an era of intersecting crises. This paper will theorise the connections between two widely experienced areas of crisis: housing crisis and political crisis. The housing crisis consists of the difficulty for households in obtaining affordable and stable housing; the growth of homelessness, evictions, displacement, overcrowding, and other forms of precarity; the growing inability for the housing system to ensure the social reproduction of labour, especially low-wage labour; and the mismatch between the types of housing being produced in most cities and the social need for residential space. The political

guarantee the standard of living; in the fragmentation of traditional political institutions; and in the rise of neo-authoritarian politics in many places. In short, in many different contexts, both the housing system and the political system appear to be under intense structural strain. These crises are directly impacting one another, but they are generally theorised separately. This paper argues that these two crises are linked politically and experientially, and therefore need to be analysed together. The housing question is taking new forms that are distinctive to the urban spaces and processes of authoritarian neoliberalism. Urban housing is increasingly a site for new repressive political technologies and forms of variegated citizenship created by states that are simultaneously empowered and hollowed out. It is also potentially the source of new kind of resistance. This paper identifies the specific ways in which crisis conditions in the residential and political spheres mutually shape one another. The contours of the urban future will be shaped by intersecting struggles in response to these crises.