

The Research Group
Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Studies

has the honor to invite you to the public defense of the PhD thesis of

Line Algoed

to obtain the degree of Doctor of Sciences

Title of the PhD thesis:

"Our Land, Our Survival": Vulnerabilization and Decolonial Resistance through Communal Land in Puerto Rico and Barbuda

Promotors:

Prof. dr. Bas van Heur
Prof. dr. David Bassens

The defense will take place on
Wednesday, September 18, 2024
at 4.00 p.m. in auditorium I.0.02

Please register here:

<https://forms.gle/HYMsNgzLezeutEUs9>

The defence can also be followed through Teams,
online registration: <https://shorturl.at/h0Q7P>

Members of the jury

Prof. dr. Michael Ryckewaert (VUB, chair)
Prof. dr. Nele Aernouts (VUB, secretary)
Dr. Adriana Moreno Cely (VUB)
Prof. dr. Brenna Bhandar (University of British
Columbia, Canada)
Prof. dr. Érika Fontánez Torres (University of
Puerto Rico)
Prof. dr. Rosalba Icaza (Erasmus University
Rotterdam, The Netherlands)

Curriculum vitae

Line Algoed's career is dedicated to advocating for land and climate justice, participatory urban development, and affordable housing. Her PhD research, using Participatory Action Research methods, involves close collaboration with the people of Barbuda and the Caño Martín Peña Community Land Trust (CLT) in Puerto Rico, facilitating exchanges among communities involved in land struggles. Line serves on the Board of the International Center for CLTs and is a co-editor of *On Common Ground: International Perspectives on the CLT*. She is also a member of the "Stronger Caribbean Together for Land, Food, and Climate Justice" action and research group. Additionally, she is a teaching assistant in the Bachelor of Geography and Master of Urban Studies at VUB.

Abstract of the PhD research

This dissertation examines the crucial role of communal land tenure in addressing the climate crisis, focusing on the voices from communities in Barbuda and in the Caño Martín Peña area in Puerto Rico. Centered on the aftermath of the 2017 hurricane season that devastated the Caribbean region, the study investigates external factors that exacerbated community vulnerability and analyzes how the communities resisted against this vulnerabilization. The research found that in the hurricanes' aftermath, priority was given to attracting international capital over addressing local needs, leading to land grabbing and displacement, especially in environmentally fragile yet resource-rich areas.

Based on Participatory Action Research, the study reveals how communal land systems empower communities to resist these land grabs and displacements, strengthening a sense of unity, enhancing political influence, and fostering mutual aid and international solidarity, all while preserving the natural environment. The research highlights how communal land embodies an ethos of interconnectedness between humans and nature, challenging dominant colonial and patriarchal views of land as mere 'property' or a commodity. For these communities, land means survival, not a resource to be "turned into billions." The study emphasizes the importance of amplifying local voices and countervailing knowledge systems to effectively address the climate crisis. It reframes these communities not as passive victims, but as active contributors of essential knowledges, paving the way for sustainable land use and equitable development.