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## Saila-Maria Saaristo

### Integrated Researcher

DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte - Centre for Socioeconomic Change and Territorial Studies (ECSH)  
[Cities and Territories]



### Contacts

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### Curriculum

Saila-Maria Saaristo is an urban anthropologist and global development scholar whose work examines housing precarity and urban informality, contrasting the contexts of the Global South and the Global North. She earned her PhD in Social Sciences (2022) from the University of Helsinki and the University of Coimbra. Her recent book, titled *Transgressive City-Making and Governance* (Brill, 2025), investigates the urgent global issue of housing precarity and forced evictions, focusing on two council estates in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. The book views occupations and evictions not just as crises or disruptions but as active practices of city-making. In this context, occupations emerge as a transgressive and feminised form of city-making—an act of resistance by marginalised urban residents, particularly women, facing severe housing exclusion. It explores whether and how such transgressive acts can create new forms of urban citizenship and democratic participation, challenging dominant neoliberal and capitalist urban governance.

Since 2022, she has been a researcher at DINÂMIA'CET - IUL, the Centre for Socioeconomic and Territorial Studies at ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon. Saila-Maria's current research concentrates on the connection between migration, labour, and housing among Angolan women. Her main interest is in ethnographic and action research, aiming to develop her work collaboratively with practitioners and housing activists. Recently, she has also explored environmental vulnerability within the context of informal housing in Angola. Additionally, she is a member of several research projects, including Care(4)Housing – A care-through-design approach to address housing precarity in Portugal, and UrbanoScenes – Post-colonial imaginaries of urbanisation: A future-oriented study from Portugal and Angola. She also serves on the Editorial Collective of the *Radical Housing Journal*.

### Research Interests

housing precarity; labour precarity; migration; insurgent practices; social movements

## Academic Qualifications

University/Institution	Type	Degree	Period
Helsingin Yliopisto Valtiotieteellinen tiedekunta	PhD	Political, Societal and Regional Change	2022
Universidade de Coimbra Centro de Estudos Sociais	PhD	Democracia no século XXI	2022
Helsingin Yliopisto Valtiotieteellinen tiedekunta	M.Sc.	Antropologia Social e Cultural	2009
Helsingin Yliopisto Valtiotieteellinen tiedekunta	Licenciate	Antropologia social e cultural	2007

## External Professional Activities

Period	Employer	Country	Description
2026 - 2026	Catholic University of Angola	Portugal	
2025 - 2025	The Catholic University of Angola	Angola	

## Supervisions

### • M.Sc. Dissertations

#### - Ongoing

	Student Name	Title/Topic	Language	Status	Institution
1	Sofia Dias da Conceição	Documentation, Rights and Exclusion: The Case of Migrants Experiencing Homelessness in the City of Lisbon	--	Developing	Iscte
2	Carolina Lopes Sanhudo Monteiro	The impact of social movements on the housing issue - PREC (1974-1976)	--	Developing	Iscte

## Total Citations

Web of Science®	21
Scopus	17

## Publications

## • Scientific Journals

### - Scientific journal paper

1	Lages, J., Saaristo, S.-M. & Dias, N. (2026). Quem cuida da Universidade? Habitação, migração e trabalho precário nas narrativas invisíveis de trabalhadoras de limpeza. <i>Passagens</i> .
2	Saaristo, S.-M., Lages, J. & Tomé, m. (2024). "They are grabbing houses for themselves!": Occupying 2 de Maio in the fervour of the Portuguese revolution. <i>CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios</i> . Autumn Special Issue, 80-100 - Times Cited Scopus: 1
3	Saaristo, S.-M. & Silva, R. (2024). Struggles against financialisation of housing in Lisbon: The case of Habita. <i>Housing Studies</i> . 39 (6), 1467-1494 - Times Cited Web of Science®: 13 - Times Cited Scopus: 15 - Times Cited Google Scholar: 23
4	Lages, J., Saaristo, S.-M., Sanchez-Betancourt, D., Scheba, A. , Scheba, S. , Abbadie, L. ...Matthew Wilhelm-Solomon (2024). Visualising urban commoning: Geographies of precarity, defiance and hope. <i>CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios</i> . Autumn Special Issue, 115-130
5	Saaristo, S.-M. (2023). Gendered and classed homelessness: A life-history analysis on displaced survival in Lisbon . <i>CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios</i> . au23, 36-52 - Times Cited Google Scholar: 1
6	Saaristo, S.-M. (2023). Lectio praecursoria: Transgressive participation: Housing struggles, occupations and evictions in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. <i>Suomen Antropologi</i> . 47 (1), 70-73
7	Saaristo, S. (2022). Informal Modes of Governance: Negotiating Evictions and Housing Rights in Lisbon, Portugal. <i>Radical Housing Journal</i> . 4 (1), 9-30 - Times Cited Web of Science®: 8 - Times Cited Google Scholar: 12
8	Saaristo, S. (2016). Favela associations: Between repression, violence and politics. <i>Suomen Antropologi</i> . 40 (2), 28-49 - Times Cited Scopus: 1 - Times Cited Google Scholar: 3

### - Editorial

1	Can, A., Fernández Arrigoitia, M., Saaristo, S.-M., Crosby, A. & Koepke, M. (2025). The longue durée of housing justice. <i>Radical Housing Journal</i> . 1-7
2	Lages, J. P., Saaristo, S.-M., Sanchez-Betancourt, D., Scheba, A. & Scheba, S. (2024). Housing as commons: Sites of struggle and possibility. <i>CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios</i> . Au24, 1-9 - Times Cited Google Scholar: 1

## • Books and Book Chapters

### - Book author

1	Saaristo, S.-M. (2025). <i>Transgressive City-Making and Governance Housing Struggles, Occupations and Evictions in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area</i> . Leiden. Brill.
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**- Book chapter**

1	Saaristo, S.-M. & Bogado, Diana (2021). Subjective and symbolic disputes in the fight for the right to the city: Actions of the collective Stop Despejos for resistance of the 6 de Maio neighbourhood in Lisbon. In Research Tracks in Urbanism: Dynamic, Planning and Design in Contemporary Urban Territories. London: CRC Press. - Times Cited Google Scholar: 3
2	Saaristo, S.-M. (2019). Asociaciones de residentes de las favelas: entre represión, violencia y política. In Leticia Durand; Anja Nygren; Anne Cristina de la Vega-Leinert (Ed.), Naturaleza y neoliberalismo en América Latina. (pp. 541-591). México: UNAM. - Times Cited Google Scholar: 2

**• Conferences/Workshops and Talks**

**- Talk**

1	Saaristo, S.-M. & Farias, A. C. C. (2025). Navigating Neutrality and Advocacy: Activist Research in Contested Urban Spaces . 5th ISA Forum of Sociology: Catalysing the Public Role of the University: Reimagining Universities As Progressive Urban Actors .
2	Saaristo, S.-M. (2025). Navigating Displacement: Housing Precarity and Migrant Survival Strategies in Luanda. 5th ISA Forum of Sociology: Displacement, Peripheralization and Dignity in Housing Politics.
3	Saaristo, S.-M. (2025). Participatory Diagnostics for Climate Resilience: A Case Study from Luanda. ENHR 2025 Grand Paris "Affordable housing in greening cities" CONFERENCE.
4	Santos, S., Saaristo, S.-M., Farias, A. C. C. & Lages, J. (2024). 'Community Land Trust'. Um caminho alternativo às abordagens convencionais de política e planeamento através dos bens comuns urbanos. Comuns: III Encontro de Ecologia Política.
5	Saaristo, S.-M. & Lages, J. (2024). Commoning and Occupations: Transcending the divide in Portugal. 1-Day conference: From Occupation to Inhabitation.
6	Saaristo, S.-M. (2024). Makeshift Urbanism by Occupation. Gendered housing struggles in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. RC21 CONFERENCE 2024: "The politics and spaces of encounters: advancing dialogues between and within the Global North and the Global South".
7	Farias, A. C. C., Saaristo, S.-M. & Lages, J. (2024). Care through Design: Mixed Methods and Temporal Dimensions in Tackling Housing Precarity in Lisbon. Urban vacancy, occupation & commoning: Advancing methodological approaches.
8	Farias, A. C. C., Lages, J. & Saaristo, S.-M. (2024). Is collaborative housing (really) for all? Bridging the gap towards inclusive collaborative housing in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. ENHR Conference 2024: Making Housing Systems Work .
9	Saaristo, S.-M. & Pestana Lages, J. (2024). Household trajectories of immigrant cleaning workers. ENHR Conference 2024: Making Housing Systems Work .
10	Saaristo, S.-M. (2024). A Importância da Extensão Universitária. Abertura do Ano Lectivo 2024-2025 da Universidade Católica de Angola.

11	Saaristo, S.-M., Lages, J. & Farias, A. C. C. (2023). Collectively formed counterproposals to question housing precarity: Insights from the Lisbon Metropolitan Area . EADI CEaA General Conference 2023: Towards New Rhythms of Development.
12	Lages, J., Saaristo, S.-M. & Dias, N. (2023). Who cleans our desks? The Nexus of Housing and Labour Struggles of University's Cleaning Staff in Portugal . Colloque international - Habiter le care.
13	Lages, J., Saaristo, S.-M. & Farias, A. C. C. (2023). Inquirir para propor: a experiência da Plataforma de Habitação de Loures no desafio da precariedade habitacional. XV Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais (CONLAB) e IV Congresso Associação Internacional de Ciências Sociais e Humanas em Língua Portuguesa (CONAILPcsh).
14	Lages, J., Saaristo, S.-M. & Mendes, L. (2023). Mapeando a intersecção: Precariedade habitacional e práticas espaciais de cuidado na região de Lisboa. XIV CONGRESSO DA GEOGRAFIA PORTUGUESA Territórios em transição e sustentabilidade: crises e respostas.
15	Saaristo, S.-M. & Silva, Rita (2023). Financeirização e Movimentos Sociais pelo direito à Habitação em Portugal – o caso da Associação Habita. 6º Encontro Anual da Economia Política. Dependências, Assimetrias e Territórios.
16	Saaristo, S.-M. (2023). Gendered and Classed Homelessness: A Life-history analysis on displaced survival in Lisbon . ENHR Conference 2023: Urban Regeneration - Shines and shadows.
17	Saaristo, S.-M. (2022). Why Occupy a House? Understanding the forms of subalternisation. Twenty-Eighth International Conference of Europeanists The Environment of Democracy.
18	Saaristo, S.-M. & Silva, Rita (2022). Social Movement Struggle against the Unfolding Financialisation of Housing and Violation of Housing Rights in Lisbon – the Case of Habita. American Association of Geographers, Annual Meeting.
19	Saaristo, S.-M. (2021). A Incerteza quotidiana. Ocupações e despejos na Área Metropolitana de Lisboa. XIV Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro (CONLAB 2021) Utopias pós-crise. Artes e saberes em movimento.
20	Bogado, Diana & Saaristo, S.-M. (2021). A memória popular como dispositivo de luta pelo direito à moradia: O caso do bairro 6 de Maio, na Amadora, AML., XIV Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro (CONLAB 2021) Utopias pós-crise. Artes e saberes em movimento.
21	Saaristo, S.-M. (2021). Makeshift Urbanism by Occupation: Negotiating Evictions and Housing Rights in Lisbon, Portugal. dislocating urban studies: rethinking theory, shifting practice.
22	Saaristo, S.-M. (2020). Social Movements against Evictions: Association Habita's Contribution to the Struggle. Exalt Symposium 2020. Extractivisms and Alternatives.
23	Bogado, Diana & Saaristo, S.-M. (2020). Disputas subjetivas e simbólicas na luta pelo direito à cidade. Seminário Internacional de Investigação em Urbanismo.
24	Saaristo, S.-M. (2020). A Rearguard Intellectual in Solidarity? Reflecting upon the Limitations of Activist Anthropology. RAI2020: Anthropology and Geography: Dialogues Past, Present and Future.

• **Other Publications**  
- Other publications

1	Saaristo, S.-M. (2020). Ser mulher e mãe sem habitação condigna. Crise Pandémica e Crise na Habitação: Mulheres em foco.
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### - Doctoral Thesis

1	Saaristo, S. (2022). Transgressive Participation: Housing struggles, occupations and evictions in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. 1-264 - Times Cited Google Scholar: 9
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### - Newspaper article

1	Tulumello, S., Jorge, S., Castel' Branco, R., Saaristo, S.-M., Biagi, F. , Carmo, A...Mendes, L. (2024). A habitação nos programas eleitorais: na direção certa?. Público. 29 de fevereiro
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### - Report

1	Lages, J., Saaristo, S.-M., Santos, S. & Farias, A. C. C. (2024). Síntese Do Inquérito Sócio-Habitacional — Apelação e Quinta Da Fonte.
2	Lages, J., Saaristo, S.-M., Santos, S. & Farias, A. C. C. (2024). Síntese do Inquérito Sócio-habitacional — Bairro do Talude Militar.
3	Saaristo, S.-M., Lages, J., Mendes, Maria Manuela, Viegas, S. & Xerez, R. (2023). REDE H Input for the Call on Decriminalization of homelessness and extreme poverty from the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

Research Projects			
Project Title	Role in Project	Partners	Period
Inhabiting the Revolution: Perspectives on social transformations and spatial production from the squatted houses of Amendoeirias neighbourhood, in Lisbon	Researcher	DINAMIA'CET-Iscte (CT) - Leader, AMBA - (Portugal)	2024 - 2026
Displaced Survival and Neoliberalism from below. The Nexus of Migration, Labour, and Housing Struggles of Migrant Women in Portugal and Angola	Global Coordinator	DINAMIA'CET-Iscte (CT) - Leader	2024 - 2030

UrbanoScenes. Post-colonial imaginaries of urbanisation: A future-oriented investigation from Portugal and Angola	Researcher	DINAMIA'CET-Iscte (CT), ICS/UL - Leader (Portugal)	2022 - 2025
Care(4)Housing - A care through design approach to address housing precarity in Portugal	Researcher	DINAMIA'CET-Iscte (CT) - Leader, FAUL - (Portugal), IGOT - (Portugal)	2022 - 2025

## Awards

Best paper in the conference Seminário Internacional de Investigação em Urbanismo (SIU) (2020)

## Research Networks

Research Network Name	Representative Role	Period
Gender & Housing	Working group coordinator	2024 - 2025

## Professional Associations

RC21 Urban and Regional Development (Since 2024)

International Sociological Association (ISA) (Since 2024)

European Network of Housing Research (ENHR) (Since 2024)

Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science (HELSUS) (Since 2021)

## Organization/Coordination of Events

Type of Organization/Coordination	Event Title	Organizer	Year
Member of non-scientific event's organizing committee	Urban Thinkers Campus 9.0 – CLT Community Land Trust, an innovative tool for access to housing	DINÂMIA'CET	2024
Member of free course/summer school's organizing committee	Minicourse on participatory and collaborative research methods	Care4Housing	2024
Member of scientific event's organizing committee	Getting to know in order to act	C4H, AMUA, Pastoral dos Ciganos	2024
Coordination of scientific event (with scientific committee) at ISCTE-IUL	The language of patterns as a method of care in co-design - Liza Andrade, Un. Brasília	C4H	2024

Coordination of scientific event (with scientific committee) at ISCTE-IUL	Polarisation and urban vulnerability. The 'peripheries' of planning and public policies in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area - Sebastião Santos, DINÂMIA'CET	C4H	2023
Member of scientific event's organizing committee	Brazil-Portugal Dialogues	C4H	2023
Member of scientific event's organizing committee	CLT - Community Land Trust Conference	C4H	2023
Coordination of scientific event (with scientific committee) at ISCTE-IUL	Cuidanía: a reflection on integrating care into everyday urban life - Karol Yañez Soria, CONACYT e CentroGEO, Un.México		2023
Member of scientific event's organizing committee	Censuses of the Maré and community knowledge production - Everton Pereira da Silva, Redes da Maré, Rio de Janeiro	C4H	2023
Member of scientific event's organizing committee	Thinking carefully about care - dimensions, uses and meanings - Sara Canha, CRIA	C4H	2023
Member of scientific event's organizing committee	A Luta pelo Direito à Habitação em Lisboa e as Oficinas de Memória no 6 de Maio.		2018

## Diffusion Activities

Activity Type	Event Title	Activity Description	Year
Talk/Conference in public diffusion event	Leituras EtnoUrb: The aesthetics of belonging: Indigenous urbanism and city building in oil-boom Luanda.		2025
Talk/Conference in public diffusion event	GDS Talks: "Women's Informal Housing Struggles in Lisbon: the Politics of Transgressive Home-making"	A hybrid seminar organised by the Global Development Studies discipline of the University of Helsinki	2025
Coordination of knowledge diffusion event	Friday Debate: "Occupying homes, building rights: Women in informal housing in Lisbon"	Presentation at an event (online and in-person) organised by Development Workshop Anfolá	2025
Member of organizing committee of knowledge diffusion event	Community Land Trust — A Tool for Fair and Affordable Access to Housing	Our campus COMMUNITY LAND TRUST - A TOOL FOR FAIR AND AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO HOUSING aims to promote equitable and inclusive urban development through the transformative potential of CLTs, with three main objectives (i) to raise awareness of the CLT model in Portugal; (ii) facilitate collaborative discussions on its application, creating materials and a set of tools to be used; (iii) inspire actionable strategies together with the residents' associations and residents of Cova da Moura.	2024



Coordination of knowledge diffusion event	Seminar on Knowing in order to Intervene I	The seminar shared the results of the community-based survey we had promoted in social housing estate Quinta da Fonte. It included comments by the representatives of the city council of Loures, local residents, and researchers.	2024
Coordination of knowledge diffusion event	Seminar on Knowing in order to Intervene II	The seminar shared the results of the community-based survey we had promoted in the self-built neighbourhoods of Talude, Montemor, and São Sebastião. It included comments by the representatives of the city council of Loures, local residents, and researchers.	2024

## Scientific Editing/Reviewing Activities

Type of Activity	Journal Title	ISSN/Quartile	Period	Language
Scientific journal editor	Radical Housing Journal	2632-2870	Since 2025	English