

GEOGRAPHIES OF FORCED EVICTION

*Dispossession, Violence,
Resistance*

*Katherine Brickell
Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia
Alexander Vasudevan*



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Katherine Brickell • Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia
• Alexander Vasudevan
Editors

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Geographies of Forced Eviction: Dispossession, Violence, Resistance

Katherine Brickell, Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia,
and Alex Vasudevan

Forced eviction, claims UN-Habitat (2011, p. viii), is a ‘global phenomenon’ and ‘global crisis’. Figures published by the agency indicate that during the 2000s at least 15 million people globally were forcibly evicted. Between 2007–2009 alone, over 4.5 million people were affected. Forced evictions are, ‘when people are forced out of their homes and off their land against their will, with little notice or none at all, often with the threat or use of violence’ (Amnesty International 2012, p. 2). Today, forced evictions in the name of ‘progress’ are attracting attention as growing

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numbers of people in the Global South are ejected and dispossessed from their homes, often through intimidation, coercion and the use of violence (Datta 2012; Nally 2015; Olds et al. 2002; Otiso 2002; Jeffrey et al. 2012; Janoshka and Sequera 2014). At the same time, we have also witnessed the intensification of a 'crisis' urbanism in the Global North characterized by new forms of social inequality, heightened housing insecurity and violent displacement (see Delclós 2013; Desmond 2012, 2016; Novak 2014; Purser 2016; Romanos 2014; Vasudevan 2013). These developments have led to an explosion of forced evictions supported by new economic, political and legal mechanisms, and increasingly shaped by intensifying environmental change. As UN-Habitat & UNHRP have recently concluded, 'accelerating urbanization, climate change and globalization, financial and other global crises have contributed to making forced evictions even more acute and complex' (2014, p. v).

It is against this background that this book offers the first collection of international academic research on contemporary forced evictions, drawing on empirical studies and interpretative frameworks emanating from both the Global South and North. In bringing together accounts from across urban Africa, Asia, Latin America and America, the collection challenges and breaches a significant geographic and conceptual divide that has tended to frame forced evictions either as an overwhelmingly Global South phenomenon, or as an experience more common to the rural landless poor. A recently published collection on *The Global Land Grab* excludes any examples from the Global North and it also eschews wider instances of dispossession beyond the poor who rely on access to land for their livelihood. If the volume compiled by Kaag and Zoomers (2014) does an effective job of bringing together important case-study material from the developing world, we seek to append a sympathetic and theoretically expansive corrective through engagements with forced evictions in the Global South and North. The chapters in our collection move away from geographically-restricted and partial understandings of forced evictions to consider the distinct urban logics of precarious housing or involuntary displacements that stretch across cities such as London, Accra and Rio de Janeiro to Colombo, Shanghai and Barcelona.

By highlighting the range of experiences and multi-scalar expressions of forced evictions that are unique but also common to these diverse local

environments, the book provides a comparative, empirically grounded perspective on a foremost global challenge. It also responds, in this way, to the emergence of ‘new logics of expulsion’ that the sociologist and urbanist Saskia Sassen (2014) has recently described as a major feature of the contemporary global economy. As Sassen argues, the last two decades have borne witness to a sharp growth in the number of people, enterprises and places expelled from common economic and social orders. Expulsions, according to this view, are not simply a residue of contemporary capitalism but have become increasingly central to its workings (see Feldman et al. 2011). Sassen examines the development of new ‘predatory formations’ across a range of different sites from land grabs to resource extraction, from new financial instruments to the privatization of prisons. At stake here, Sassen suggests, is a commitment to marking ‘the visible site or moment of expulsion’ (2014, p. 215). It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that Sassen devotes little sustained attention to the brutal disagreeable materialities of forced evictions. While Sassen argues that the ‘spaces of the expelled cry out for conceptual recognition’ (2014, p. 222), our aim here is to *connect* grounded empirical research with detailed conceptual recoding.

To understand forced eviction as an ‘embodied, located and grounded phenomenon’ (Brickell 2014, p. 1257) has therefore prompted us to ask the following set of questions. What is the relationship between tenure insecurity, forced evictions and wider economic and political processes? To what extent do forced evictions prompt us to re-think the links between homes, bodies and spaces? How are evictions mobilized across different affective, emotional and material registers? Is it possible, even desirable, to think about the different ways that global capital conditions evictions across the North-South divide? What might we discover, in other words, about the *geographical* character of evictions if we were to connect the experience of precarious tenants across Europe to domicile in China, to housing evictions in Rio de Janeiro’s *remoções*, and to conflict-driven expulsions in Sri Lanka? Finally, is it possible to re-imagine the space of eviction as an embodied site of care, resistance and subversion?

In setting out to answer these framing questions, this collection breaks new ground through its inquiry into the everyday brutalities of forced displacement and dispossession. The book illuminates the complex set of

material and emotional geographies that, taken together, shape and configure spaces of eviction. In so doing, it raises important questions about the convergence of changing market forces, deepening housing insecurity and intensifying logics of dispossession. More specifically, the main argument of the book can be divided into five interconnecting propositions. Taken together, these propositions provide a conceptually rigorous and empirically grounded approach to the geographical study of forced evictions. Of concern here is a critical understanding of the complex set of logics and materialities underpinning evictions and the deeply uneven geographies that they depend on.

Historical Trajectories of Forced Evictions

The first proposition is that forced evictions are themselves nothing new and that the elementary brutalities associated with displacement and dispossession must be located within a much wider historical narrative. As Stuart Elden has recently reminded us, ‘conflict over land, at a variety of scales, is a major factor in human affairs and [...] its effects have been almost entirely negative’ (2013, p. 1). According to Elden, such effects are often intimately intertwined with struggles over property and ownership and have depended on historically specific forms of allocation and distribution and equally contingent expressions of control, power and violence. These tendencies have assumed an important role within the history of capitalism and many, in this context, have singled out its constitutive dependency on the logics of primitive accumulation, violence and displacement. The relationship of eviction and expulsion to the enclosure of common lands and more recent forms of land-grabbing is thus well-established (see Blomley 2008; Jeffrey et al. 2012; Liberti 2014; Linebaugh 2014, Nally 2015; Retort 2006; Vasudevan et al. 2008; Sevilla-Buitrago 2014; Springer 2013). A number of scholars have also highlighted the concomitant emergence of a settler colonialism as a conspicuously violent form of domination and dispossession (Veracini 2015).

At the same time, attention has also been directed to the creative destruction of urban landscapes and the cardinal significance of cities as engines of dispossession (see Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey

1981; 2007, 2008, 2012; Vasudevan 2015). If the assembling of 'predatory formations' has expanded rapidly over the past few decades, the recrudescence of primitive forms of accumulation demands, we believe, a geographical approach that is attentive to a range of genealogies and trajectories. This approach focuses, in particular, on the relationship between neoliberal urbanization and the historical production of specific 'regimes of dispossession'. We contend that a carefully developed geographical (and historical) framework is absolutely vital and is indeed at the heart of this book. We are not, however, interested in aligning this project with a blithe urbanism. Of significance here are complex logics of enclosure that speak to specific contemporary rural/urban transformations while, in turn, operating across a range of scales, sites and networks (Roy 2015).

Attentiveness to the deep history of forced evictions highlights the need to re-examine the nature of capitalist accumulation as a violent process of exclusion, expropriation and expulsion. If Matthew Desmond's magisterial account (2016) of the everyday realities of eviction has highlighted the relative invisibility of eviction within contemporary accounts of 'advanced urban marginality', we seek to render visible the *historical* dimensions of displacement and dispossession (see Wacquant 2008). A number of chapters show how recent forms of housing insecurity are in fact the 'product of recurring cycles of creative destruction and accumulation by dispossession, which have repeatedly condemned significant numbers of people to misery and prompted many to seek informal forms of housing and shelter' (Vasudevan 2015, p. 29). Crises of capital represented in this way, are crises of dwelling and inhabitation. As Castellas and Sala show in their chapter "Home Eviction, Grassroots Organizations and Citizen Empowerment in Spain" on the Spanish anti-eviction organization Platform for People Affected by the Mortgage (PAH), grassroots organizing in Barcelona must be understood in the context of an *enduring* history of struggle in the city over affordable housing and sustainable urban planning. This is a struggle that has its origins in the grassroots social movements that emerged during the Franco era to challenge the lack of basic infrastructure and services in many of the city's growing neighborhoods. At stake here, in other words, is a critical optic that points to the 'contextual seeds' that have come to shape and define the repertoire of contestation adopted by activists in the

PAH movement. Vasudevan in his chapter “*Zwangsräumungen* in Berlin: Towards an Historical Geography of Dispossession” on *Zwangsräumungen* (forced evictions) in Berlin, places particular emphasis, in turn, on the relationship between a contemporary rise in forced evictions in the city and the complex history of adaptation and improvisation through which many ordinary Berliners have traditionally responded to what Friedrich Engels (1995 [1872]) once described as the ‘housing question.’ As Vasudevan argues, it is impossible to understand the recent resurgence of forced eviction outside a broader narrative of urban development, dispossession and resistance. This is a narrative of urban development and capitalist accumulation closely allied to repeated crises of housing in the city. It is equally, however, a narrative that encompasses the long history of resistance to housing precarity in Berlin.

Collyer et al., in their chapter “The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post-Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka”, writing in a rather different context, highlight the recent eviction of many of Colombo’s poorest residents, and they demonstrate that the provision of alternative housing in the city falls well short of recognized international definitions of ‘adequate housing.’ This is a process, they argue, rooted in the history of urban re-development in Colombo, and set against the backdrop of civil war in Sri Lanka. The freeing-up of land in Colombo for ongoing re-development projects is thus closely connected to a conspicuously militant form of neoliberal urban regeneration. The theme of war and conflict has also been mobilized, as Zhang, in chapter “‘It Felt Like You Were at War’: State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide”, shows, in the resistance to a recent wave of mass evictions that were undertaken in the lead-up to the 2010 World Exposition in Shanghai. Zhang demonstrates how the process of *Chaiqian* (demolition and relocation) was tantamount, in fact, to a form of domicile and represented a historical inversion of earlier forms of urban re-development. In this case, a putatively Communist state was now targeting the working class it had always claimed to represent. Ultimately, what all of these chapters demonstrate is that the book’s conceptual animus is underpinned by an equally committed approach to re-centering recent patternings of displacement and dispossession within wider historical trajectories.

Assembling Displacement

While advocating an historical approach, we also argue, second, that forced evictions are far more than the result of an individual's or an institution's decision or action. They are also part of a larger assemblage of elements, conditions, materials and knowledges (Sassen 2014, p. 77). Such an approach recognizes the complex material geographies through which evictions and acts of displacement are staged and articulated. An engagement with assemblage as a key spatial heuristic builds, in this way, on a growing body of geographical scholarship that focuses on how particular places are 'subject to disassembly and reassembly through unequal relations of power and resource' (McFarlane 2011, p. 653; see Dittmer 2014; Farías 2009; Gandy 2005; Jacobs 2012; Jacobs and Cairns 2011; Jacobs and Merriman 2011; McFarlane and Vasudevan 2013).

Assemblage also connects with a particular 'genre of thinking' that seeks to narrate the social life of a city through its constitutive materialities and infrastructures (Amin 2014). According to this view, both the social and the material are *co-produced* as assemblages of human and non-human association. Another major aspect of these various engagements is an understanding of city life that is radically open, uneven and shaped by momentary 'gatherings of fragments, efforts and forces' (Simone 2014, p. 4; see Lancione 2014; Vasudevan 2015).

While this new thinking has re-imagined the city as the *making* of complex socio-technical alignments and arrangements, in this book we have adopted a complementary analytic that focuses on the ways in which city lives, livelihoods and infrastructures are *unmade* and, as such, the product of particular practices, objects, knowledges, sentiments and affects. As the various chapters in this book demonstrate, it is not enough to show that forced evictions are the expression of wider economic and political forces. It is equally important, as Baker argues in his chapter "Bailiffs at the Door: Work, Power, and Resistance in Eviction Enforcement", to focus on the '*how*' of evictions. Researchers, he adds, need to think more about the kinds of individuals, agencies and processes engaged in displacing people from their homes. What, he asks, is the material stuff of an eviction? How are legal documents transformed into acts of expulsion and enforcement? Baker seeks to answer these questions by drawing close

attention to the work of bailiffs in the UK. This is work that not only enrolls specific practices and techniques but also depends, in his view, on forms of affective management and regulation passed on and disseminated through experience. Other chapters notice the assembling of evictions in other ways form the domicidal consequences of specific political and legal maneuverings (see chapters by Nowicki “Domicide and the Coalition: Austerity, Citizenship and Moralities of Forced Eviction in Inner London”, Vasudevan “*Zwangsräumungen* in Berlin: Towards an Historical Geography of Dispossession” and Zhang “‘It Felt Like You Were at War’: State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide”) to the complex temporalities of relocation and resettlement (Fernández Arrigoitia “Unsettling Resettlements: Community, Belonging and Livelihood in Rio de Janeiro’s *Minha Casa Minha Vida*”).

Scalar Geographies of Forced Eviction

In the collection, contributors take forward the idea that forced evictions—as ‘geographies that wound’ (Philo 2005)—represent processes that emerge from, traverse and oscillate within and between, scales (Brickell 2014). Relatedly, our third proposition is that the field of feminist geopolitics has a particular utility value for examining forced eviction and the intermeshing of the global and intimate (Hyndman 2004; Massaro and Williams 2013; Pratt and Rosner 2006; Smith 2012). In three main, though not exhaustive respects, it is possible to read a global/intimate thread through the specificities of each forced eviction case presented.

First, a scalar geographic reading of evictions brings to the fore home spaces as political sites that are both intensely intimate and local, as well as being constitutive of wider economic and political rationalities (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Brickell 2012; Fernández Arrigoitia 2014; Harker 2009). Intimate/state interpenetrations, for example, are woven through the fabric of Nowicki’s chapter “Domicide and the Coalition: Austerity, Citizenship and Moralities of Forced Eviction in Inner London” on the precarities that emerge from the so-called ‘bedroom tax’ in the UK.

Drawing on experiences of social tenants affected by what is officially referred to as the ‘removal of the spare room subsidy,’ Nowicki shows how the policy as part of a wider neoliberal ideology has worked to morally and financially sanction ‘under-occupying’ social tenants via penalty charges and tenant evictions for those who fall into arrears. Centered on Spain’s burst housing ‘bubble’, Casellas and Sala, in their chapter “Home Eviction, Grassroots Organizations and Citizen Empowerment in Spain”, show similarly how the deep recession of the global financial crisis (2007–8) has locally specific impacts and consequences. The mortgaged Spanish home is the ‘ground zero’ of recent economic crisis on account of high levels of home ownership; dependency of the country’s economy on the housing market; and the predatory arrangement of mortgages in which Spanish homeowners remain liable for accrued debt even after the bank have repossessed the property.

While the unraveling of home arises from discourses and practices of austerity and crisis, domestic space is also the collateral damage of corporate and governmental ambitions towards larger landscapes of ‘progress.’ Whether it be urban ‘regeneration’ and beautification in Colombo (Collyer et al. “The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post-Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka”); the creation of prime real estate in Accra (Morrison “Struggling for the Right to Be Recognized: The Informal Settlement of Old Fadama, Accra, Ghana”); infrastructure building for mega-events and transport in Rio de Janeiro (Fernández Arrigoitia “Unsettling Resettlements: Community, Belonging and Livelihood in Rio de Janeiro’s *Minha Casa Minha Vida*”); or the World Expo in Shanghai (Zhang “‘It Felt Like You Were at War’: State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide”); many of the chapters demonstrate the malevolent impacts of ‘development’ for the majority populace. Despite this, the necessity to lure international business is repeatedly harnessed to justify evictions and the bulldozing of peoples’ homes. What Casolo and Doshi (2013, p. 802) have described as ‘the ubiquitous intensification of dispossession through neoliberalization’ thus connects domestic precarities with wider political forces.

In addition to considering how intimate violences are discernable in the home precisely because of their rootedness in other sites and processes, a

second and related global/intimate thread is to think of the ‘micro-geopolitical’ manifestations of forced eviction. Responding to the calls made by Wofford et al. (2013) and Dwyer (2014) for a closer inspection of the practices and meanings of local politics and territorial relations that are invariably complex and place-dependent, the chapters draw attention to the role of local agents in reproducing, or resisting, unequal structures (Giddens 1984). The ‘enforcers’ of forced eviction are part of the assemblage of actors who enable the process and often, all too literally, inflict wounds on the ground. Together, chapters on the affective power and body language of bailiffs in the UK (Baker “Bailiffs at the Door: Work, Power, and Resistance in Eviction Enforcement”); on uniformed soldiers in Colombo (Collyer et al. “The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post-Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka”); and on eviction crews in Shanghai (Zhang “‘It Felt Like You Were at War’: State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide”), mark the importance of a critical geography of vulnerability that maps the spatial linkages between the hurt and the hurter—between the vulnerable and the powerful (Philo 2005). In other words, and again drawing on feminist geopolitical scholarship, it is important to consider how the diffusion of ‘geopolitical’ violences are achieved through their presence in the intimate’ (Pain and Staeheli 2014, p. 345) and notably via different tactics of intimidation, fear and violence from ‘above’ and ‘below.’

Third, taking into account our two prior points, the book indicates the need for the security–development nexus to be further problematized. For too long it has been ‘assumed that the domain of the (geo-)political is discrete and separable from the supposedly economic and technical domain of development’ (Power and Mohan 2010, p. 487). The chapters testify to the abundance of contradictory narratives on the security–development strategies that claim to ‘secure’ and ‘develop’ a country and its population. Human security approaches, however, perpetuate what Lemanski (2012, p. 62) identifies as top-down security concerns and strategies that ‘ultimately ignores and overlooks the (in)security realities of urban dwellers.’ Put another way, for urban dwellers, forced eviction is a security experience that takes place primarily at the local scale and as such, it is important not to foreclose their experiences in conceptual debates and policy circles. In summary then, the chapters work against

what Anderson and Smith (2001, p. 9) have criticized as ‘anaemic knowledges predicated on the artificial separation of private and public, body and citizens, domestic and global.’

Emotional and Differentiated Dynamics of Forced Eviction

That forced evictions are often intensely traumatic experiences feeds into our call, fourth, for more attention to the emotional and differentiated impacts that forced eviction brings. We argue that a critical optic is now needed that acknowledges and attends to the different affective and emotional registers of displacement and dispossession and the un-making of home spaces. A critical geographical understanding of forced evictions depends, for example, on a closer inspection of the micro-political meanings and emotional responses to the experience of lost domesticities and intimacies. As Richardson et al. (2014, np) identify, ‘Although physical and economic losses are the most apparent impacts of forced land evictions, there exist serious mental health consequences for those who experience or who are at risk of losing their land.’ Indeed, situating the subjective collisions of affect in dynamic relation to the global material forms of home expulsions challenges, we argue, the sanitizing and domesticating discourses normally surrounding ‘discardable’ people and places, and re-centers threatened urban homes as critical terrains of lived and felt habitation, self-organization and politics.

The collection’s chapters emphasize, likewise, how forced evictions are detrimental processes that hurt, haunt and linger before, during and after their eventuality. Two chapters, for example, harness the concept *domicide*—the ‘deliberate destruction of home against the will of the home dweller’ that can precipitate the ‘loss of historical connection; a weakening of roots; and partial erasure of the sources of memory, dreams, nostalgia and ideals’ (Porteous and Smith 2001, p. 63). While Nowicki, in chapter “Domicide and the Coalition: Austerity, Citizenship and Moralities of Forced Eviction in Inner London”, focuses on socio-symbolic dimensions of *domicide*, namely ideological rhetoric that renders forced eviction morally just in the UK (see also Nowicki 2014), Zhang, in chapter

“‘It Felt Like You Were at War’: State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide”, contrasts the ‘intimate war’ and torture that comes about through forced eviction with the suffering denied and intentionally obscured through technical and abstract intellectual language used by Chinese officialdom. Although not drawing directly on Porteous and Smith’s concept, other chapters also demonstrate the damaging effects that forced eviction has on peoples’ lives at the community, family and individual level. From the breakdown of neighborhood trust and conviviality in chapters by Fernández Arrigoitia “Unsettling Resettlements: Community, Belonging and Livelihood in Rio de Janeiro’s *Minha Casa Minha Vida*” and Collyer et al. “The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post-Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka”, to the breakdown of family and marital life by Zhang “‘It Felt Like You Were at War’: State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide”, the chapters show the splintering of social relations that forced eviction triggers or else hastens.

Being attentive to the differentiated impacts of forced eviction also brings into view how the process is not a gender-neutral phenomenon (Brickell 2014; COHRE 2010). Fernández Arrigoitia, in her chapter “Unsettling Resettlements: Community, Belonging and Livelihood in Rio de Janeiro’s *Minha Casa Minha Vida*”, shows in Brazil the heavy burdens that women shoulder given traditional roles and pressures to ensure family well-being. In Spain, Casellas and Sala, in their chapter “Home Eviction, Grassroots Organizations and Citizen Empowerment in Spain”, highlight the setting up of a gender commission by the PAH after identification of gender-based violence against women as a major problem arising from home eviction. Their chapters, like others in the volume speak to Judith Butler’s (2006, p. 20) work on social vulnerability in which she writes, ‘Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure.’ In respect to women’s bodies, for example, research by Richardson et al. (2014) found that for women in Cambodia who have endured forcible eviction overwhelming sadness, compulsive worry, difficulty in sleeping, difficulty in concentrating and emotional outbursts are commonplace.

It is important to note that such deleterious experiences are not necessarily isolated to those of women alone. In fact, the book emphasizes the crucial need for other differentiated experiences of forced eviction to be mobilized in line with other emerging work in geography. Research by Gorman-Murray et al. (2014) on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) experiences of displacement, home loss and rebuilding in the face of natural disasters shows that the initial home un-making results from natural disaster, but the injustice is magnified by state policy. Regulations, for example, do not account for the challenges and marginalization that LGBT communities face in emergency shelters. In this sense, there is a double enactment of home un-making that Gorman-Murray et al. posit as ‘queering’ notions of domicide given that disaster impacts destroy LGBT residences and neighborhoods, but response and recovery strategies favor assistance for heterosexual nuclear families and elide the concerns and needs LGBT survivors. As Baxter and Brickell (2014, p. 138) write, ‘it also important to consider the invisibilizing of home un-making stemming from discrimination, a lack of recognition, and the choice to selectively attend to normative spaces of home and exclude those that do not fit an ideal model.’ Much as the point made by Zhang, in chapter “‘It Felt Like You Were at War’: State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide”, concerning the denial of victimhood, the chapters in this volume illuminate the diverse everyday politics of precarity in equally diverse empirical settings. At the same time, however, they point up how loss can be animated for a more hopeful politics. It is to this creative politics of resistance that this chapter now turns.

Geographies of Resistance

The violent logic contained and enacted through forced evictions is also, always, a fragile performance of power that must contend with the people and places infracted upon, before, during and after the intervention. The profound emotional and material dislocations that the loss of home produces is therefore not prefigured as a closed or final defeat but as a generative environment for varied forms of resistance and contestation.

As Butler puts it (2006, p. 30), ‘to grieve, and to make grief itself into a resource for politics, is not to be resigned to inaction, but it may be understood as the slow process by which we develop a point of identification with suffering itself.’ Our fifth contention then is that the injustices involved in the expulsions of people, economies and life-worlds have enabled subjective and collective identifications that have, in turn, produced a rich historical geography of resistance (see Brickell 2014; Novak 2014; Vasudevan 2015).

From protests against enclosures and land grabs, to claims for an alternative right to the city and the human right to housing, activism against forced evictions depends on a complex repertoire of resistance that brings bodies, spaces and livelihoods into new forms of solidarity and relation. In the chapters that follow, a sustained attention to the micro-political and multi-scalar dynamics of forced evictions reveal diverse forms of contestation to this foremost human rights violation, including: the possibilities and constraints of grassroots activisms and urban protest; the promise and failure of community empowerment and insurgent citizenship; or the power of language and discursive registers; and the relevance of trans-local geographies of solidarity shaping anti-eviction movements.

Across the Global South and North, individual and collective forms of precarity and austerity politics are increasingly dominating urban space and its inhabitants while fuelling an array of challenges to their underlying forms of dispossession. In Barcelona, Casellas and Salas, in chapter “Home Eviction, Grassroots Organizations and Citizen Empowerment in Spain”, offer a poignant contemporary example of this contestation through an account of the empowering impacts of PAH—a far-reaching platform of activism, rooted in urban protest, which has sought to address, at once, the causes, processes and impacts of forced evictions. This case underscores the power of individuals to highlight and contest the neoliberal construction of housing as an object of consumption, investment and speculation through collective action that makes legal claims to housing rights and calls for court mediation, mortgage debt forgiveness after bank repossession and the right to relocation (Barbero 2015). A core strategy has involved an insistence on spatial de-territoriality and a diffuse, issue-oriented approach that, while resisting confinement to a particular place, is also cognizant of the ‘agency of place’ (Álvarez de Andrésa et al. 2015)

to formal organization and protest. Significantly, its empowerment tactics combine the public and geopolitical with the private and intimate spheres by focusing on both the provision of legal and economic advice *and* the creation of a sense of identity, empathy and solidarity. Specific mental health support, for example, is offered to counteract the recognized emotional distress of forced removals and foreclosure processes to victims of home eviction.

Morrison, in chapter “Struggling for the Right to Be Recognized: The Informal Settlement of Old Fadama, Accra, Ghana”, reiterates the relevance of community empowerment as a vehicle for resistance in relation to the protracted struggle for recognition pursued by Accra’s Old Fadama residents, where a series of strategic alliances with regional and international organizations helped inform and mobilize residents inside and outside courts of justice. This led to stronger positions of negotiation and political presence in the anti-eviction battle, but the achievements made by their collective mobilization and in situ co-production of housing alternatives was thwarted by a State unwilling to fundamentally transform its decision-making processes. Here, just as in Colombo’s resettlement sites (Collier et al. “The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post-Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka”), long-standing governmental deceptions and veiled intentions limit the possibilities for an insurgent citizenship forged with and through community organization for greater self-determination. In both cases, pretence and misrepresentation generated a new emotional/political register of mistrust and disbelief. The collective sense of suspicion and bitterness generated by the wound can also be understood, via Butler (2006, p. 30), as ‘a point of identification with suffering itself’—a future emotional frontier or affective bastion of resistance.

Whether individual or collective, organized or spontaneous, any reluctance to submit to a forced eviction is continually exposed to criminalization, framed as an actual or potential security threat that must be contained. Drawing on the embodied experience of bailiffs and other legal enforcement actors (facilitated by a range of novel public-private arrangements), Baker in his chapter “Bailiffs at the Door: Work, Power, and Resistance in Eviction Enforcement”, shows how the official apparatus of repossession in the UK can use, and appropriate, knowledge gained

from previous anti-eviction opposition and activist practices for its own ends. Resistance, in this case, is not just a reaction to power moves ‘from above’ but also a catalyst for subsequent alterations and changes in eviction ‘policing events.’ In this way, official institutional power has effectively wielded and deployed the tools of the resistant against resisters. We are urged to consider the relevance of these interrelations for organized resistance and eviction practices into the future.

At the heart of many of the struggles between those being evicted and those who wish to enforce the eviction is a struggle over legitimacy that often takes place at the intersection of discourse and the law. Language is a crucial source of power in the battle to define and challenge the symbolic and material dimension of bodies and places that ‘belong’ within the urban system (Ramakrishnan 2013, 2014). In some of the chapters, it is possible to see how disparaging metaphors are used to present slum dwellers as an ‘unauthorised’ (Morrison “Struggling for the Right to Be Recognized: The Informal Settlement of Old Fadama, Accra, Ghana”) presence that must be removed, and to frame and demonize squatters as irresponsible and deviant ‘rogue citizens’ (Nowicki 2014; Lees 2014) that deserve criminalization. The very language of official resettlement (Collier et al. “The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post-Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka”; Fernández Arrigoitia “Unsettling Resettlements: Community, Belonging and Livelihood in Rio de Janeiro’s *Minha Casa Minha Vida*”) can serve as a justificatory euphemism for sanctioned practices of forced evictions.

However, anti-eviction movements have become well-versed in the idiom of legal and popular legitimacy and are working to re-frame evictions through various formats. The PAH, for example, has been using new language that highlights the tenuous interdependence of national economies to housing, and challenges previous hegemonic versions of ‘the truth’ about default, debt and foreclosures, shifting responsibility from evictees (individuals) onto the State (structural failures). Squatting, for example, has been legitimately justified ‘in the name of extreme need’ by incorporating anti-speculation and anti-crisis discourses (Martínez López and García Bernardos 2015, p. 159). In Colombo, Collier et al., in chapter “The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post-Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka”, argue that residents of informal settlements and their neighbours use the word *watta* (‘garden’ or ‘land’)

as a way of rebranding the official term ‘slum’ and infusing it with local value. These discursive manoeuvres name, reject and counteract the implicit frameworks of urban belonging and deviance that animate evictions, leading to the formation of resistant subjectivities and practices.

These resistances often gain the most strength and momentum through solidarities forged across local and global scales. Morrison, in chapter “Struggling for the Right to Be Recognized: The Informal Settlement of Old Fadama, Accra, Ghana” on Ghana, attests to the potential of a global sense of citizenship, where alliances with wider regional networks and international organizations helped (for a while) to empower local communities and their specific anti-eviction interests by working with but also transcending narrow power relations. In Spain, the PAH’s anti-eviction platform is again a fine example of how, inspired by events in Tunisia and Egypt square, a local housing struggle (*V de Vivienda*) ‘converged’ with the *indignados*/15-M movement to branch out across diverse spaces. Specifically, an amply conceived ‘precariat’ around the country was able to root a widely felt call for justice at the grassroots rather than central level by re-appropriating multiple public (and political) spaces. This helped cultivate mainstream support, including changes to established political configurations. In their claims to urban place, a politics of multiplicity allowed for the recognition of the concomitant erosion of housing alongside a slew of other socio-economic rights. The UK, too, has recently witnessed the emergence of new cross-sectorial affinities merging class-based and ‘right to the city’ movements, linking social and private renters with homeowners in common protest against urban unaffordability, dispossession, evictions and networking across the Global North and South (Baker “Bailiffs at the Door: Work, Power, and Resistance in Eviction Enforcement”). Key to all of these examples is an insistence on the value of local, socio-spatial struggles alongside an emphasis on the need for broader, global connections and geographies of solidarity. Their convergent purposes, without strict conformity to a single kind of claim, resonate strongly with Butler’s most recent conceptualization of the freedom and performativity of public assembly (2015), where ‘acting in concert’ (via Arendt) does not pre-suppose acting in the same way, or according to the same voices; instead, it involves plural actions, with plural bodies, where even things like collective silence, humor and mockery may constitute creative action.

Activist practices have challenged the inevitability of displacement and expulsion while producing new resistant geographies that remap the traditional boundaries between the intimate and the political, and the local and the global. Moving beyond a mainstream focus in geography on political behavior and economic rationality in ‘areas of public life whose emotional content is usually (deliberately) played down’ (Anderson and Smith 2001, p. 8), the chapters in this collection powerfully demonstrate how ‘(grassroots) activism against forced eviction in different geographical contexts animates rather than inhibits an emotive topography and language of activism in public (and private) spaces’ (Brickell 2014, p. 1259). They also contribute to Power’s (2010, p. 436) call for a deeper dialog on ‘the political geographies of globalization and a more detailed consideration of the forms of resistance and anti-geopolitics that have emerged across the South.’

In summary, *Geographies of Forced Eviction* offers critical insights into expulsions as punitive arenas where multiple logics of urban dispossession, violence and insecurity are assembled, and where wider socio-economic, political and legal struggles converge. It highlights the urgent need to combine emotional and affective registers of dispossession and insecurity with an understanding of the socio-political and financial economies driving, mediating and conditioning forced evictions across distinct geographic scales. These are admittedly not new tendencies or trajectories and a major aim of this book is to provide a geographical and historical framework for making sense of the enduring violence behind forced evictions. To do so, the book concludes, is to also draw wider lessons for how we, as geographers, come to think of home as a site of political struggle.

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Struggling for the Right to Be Recognized: The Informal Settlement of Old Fadama, Accra, Ghana

Nicky Morrison

Introduction

Academics and international development organizations generally maintain that the first step in addressing the complex challenges facing informal settlements is for the state to legally recognize the entire site (Gulyani and Bassett 2007; Amnesty International 2010; Datta 2012a). There is now a wealth of experience of participatory in situ subsequent upgrading, investing in skills and empowering those at the bottom to be involved in decisions that affect their lives (Archer 2012; World Bank 2008, 2013). Yet there is a paucity of case study material on what happens in a situation where the state and the slum community reach deadlock. In such instances, the state is not prepared to legally recognize the informal settlement nor to provide public assurances to residents that their properties

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and livelihoods will not be demolished. The slum dwellers, instead, live in a state of impermanence, with the fear of forced evictions hanging over them. Their futures within the city remain stalled and fixed in uncertainty. The sense of limbo and waiting is not only created by the state but also perpetuated, reinforcing the message of political subordination and marginalization (Ramakrishnan 2013, 2014).

Drawing on community empowerment literature and focusing on the Old Fadama informal settlement within the heart of Accra, in Ghana, as a case study, the purpose of this chapter is to chart how slum dwellers sought ways to empower themselves and negotiate their right to stay. The power struggles over access to land at Old Fadama have deep and complex roots, involving conflicts with the state and community efforts to resist eviction (Du Plessis 2005; Grant 2006; Afenah 2010). Whilst the claims and counterclaims over land titles and property rights are hard to resolve, state power ultimately holds sway.

In the present case, the state with vested interests in removing residents in Old Fadama eventually broke the deadlock in June 2015, justifying forced evictions as a means to remove an ‘infamous’ slum and reclaim this prime centrally-located site and clean up the city (Lepawsky and Akese 2015, p. 1). Rather than through constructive dialog and participatory in situ upgrading, advocated by international development organizations (see COHRE 2004; UN-Habitat 2005; Amnesty International 2010), the state lost patience and went ahead with large-scale slum clearance with no consultation or regard for the people whose homes and livelihoods were destroyed nor any strategic plan where those displaced should be resettled. This state action not only reinforced the message of political hegemony, forcing slum dwellers into submission, it also heightened the dispossessed residents’ sense of spatial and temporal uncertainty, as many become relegated to the periphery of the urban system (Datta 2012a; Simone and Rao 2012).

The chapter concludes that, in the aftermath of these recent evictions, the slum community—both those displaced and remaining—needs to continue to draw on the principles of community empowerment in order to reclaim their right to be recognized. Although the theory of community empowerment is powerful, as the chapter demonstrates, putting it into practice is inherently difficult when those with power are unwilling

to admit citizens, particularly the marginalized poor, into their final and abrupt decision-making (Livingstone 2012).

The Principles of Community Empowerment

At the heart of community, empowerment is the principle of social justice—that citizens have a right to be part of decisions that affect their lives (Lasker and Guidry 2009). Community empowerment not only enables citizens to claim their right to have some control over their future, it also recognizes the skills, knowledge and expertise that citizens can contribute to decision-making (CDX 2015). Discrimination and oppressive institutional practices can be challenged, and instead, cooperation between the state and community to identify and implement action plans is sought. Through this form of inclusivity, the importance of open, democratic and accountable working practices are recognized to instill a belief that communities can make a difference in improving conditions.

These principles of community empowerment are mainly derived from Western intellectual thinking, where countries share certain fundamental political ideologies, including liberal democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Yet whilst acknowledging countries' different cultures, histories and geographical contingencies, Healey (2006) argues that these differences do not make general principles inappropriate and mobilizing ideas about community empowerment have universal applicability. Community empowerment, however, often conflicts with dominant and entrenched organizational values, deeply rooted professional cultures and mindsets that are difficult to penetrate. If state organizations are unwilling to admit citizens into their decision-making processes, 'real' power sharing never materializes (Arnstein 1969). If there is no guarantee that citizens' concerns are heeded, this results in disillusionment in which the community feels there are no real options available to them, and leads to resentment and anger, whereby citizens feel powerless (Albrechts 2002).

Power, as defined by Wilcox (1994), is the ability to achieve what one wants, and powerful stakeholders (who have a stake in what happens) are invariably unwilling to allow people to participate for fear of losing control. Power is therefore perceived as a zero sum game, on the assumption

there is only so much power to go round and giving some to others means losing their own (Lowndes 2009). Yet as Wilcox (1994) argues, working together allows everyone to achieve more than they could on their own. If genuine effort is made to engage different stakeholders and equip them to take part and influence decisions, particularly those historically excluded, then mutual benefits can be established. In doing so, difficult issues can be tackled collectively and shared visions co-produced (Innes and Booher 2010).

The term community, however, often masks the complex social composition of the community itself, with people having a complex range of interests, needs, desires and many different priorities. Not everyone who has a stake in what happens has an equal say or access to connections, skills, resources or confidence. Power imbalances and competing interests are also perpetuated within the community itself, whereby ordinary and marginalized residents are far less likely to influence planning decisions than those with more influence, resources and acknowledged expertise (Albrechts 2002). Making complex decisions and tackling difficult issues therefore requires strengthening individual capabilities through skills training and confidence building, so that they are in a position to negotiate with others on an equal basis and can have a meaningful input in decision-making processes (CDX 2015). If diverse voices can find common ground, understand each other's needs, and remain committed to achieving a common purpose, then, as Wilcox (1994) argues 'there is no excuse to duck difficult questions' (p. 2). Through this concerted effort to engage everyone, especially those historically excluded from decision-making, a sense of ownership over the co-produced plan ultimately can become acceptable to as many as possible, with different stakeholders understanding the rationale for final resource allocations (Lasker and Guidry 2009).

Drawing on first-hand experiences from California in the USA, Innes and Booher (2010) suggest key criteria to foster greater citizen engagement include creating incentive structures that encourage citizens not only to participate but also to work towards an agreement. Leaders and sponsors also need to provide generative-training so that citizens sustain their engagement throughout the negotiating process. Staffing needs should also be dedicated to offering support, consulting widely and

responding to feedback. Finally, a negotiating text and evolving agreement needs to be formulated that records the negotiation progress. This agreement should be constantly updated and shared among stakeholders to generate confidence that residents' ideas are being incorporated into future plans.

Moreover, Healey (1997, 2006) suggests that to truly achieve community empowerment, a structure of challenges needs to be created so that relevant state authorities have to answer for their actions. By specifying the nature and distribution of rights and duties at the outset, transparency and accountability in the state's decision-making will materialize. Rights need to be considered in relation to citizens' rights to be consulted and informed as well as their right to a 'voice' that influences decisions and outcomes. She also argues that state institutions have duties to pay attention to citizens' concerns and to acknowledge their particular circumstances and values. They need to carry out agreed policies, operate within openly agreed principles, and report to citizens. Whilst Healey (2006) acknowledges that citizens do not have the capacity to continually engage, and the state's (in) action cannot be contested all the time, if inclusive participatory practices are enacted then citizens start to trust state institutions' decision-making. Trust is earned by demonstrating good intentions and is followed through with actions (Lasker and Guidry 2009). It is not achieved through ignoring, placating, or at worst, coercing its citizens (Arnstein 1969).

'The rise of Informal Settlements in Developing Countries'

Rapid urbanization in developing countries, beyond the capacity of state institutions to provide basic infrastructure and social amenities, has given rise to the creation of informal settlements, with individuals developing their own housing on, often hazard-prone, land that the state has not legally allowed them to occupy (Varley 2013). As Turner (1968) suggests, this invasion with new settlers establishing themselves in provisional shacks and improvising wherever they can is not a 'social aberration ... but inevitable' (1968, p. 108), given that existing institutional structures

are inadequate for the increase in demand. Slums are ‘not the product of willful lawlessness ... (they are the ...) only solution for an often large and dominant sector of urban population whose needs are inadequately served by society’s formal institutions’ (p. 121). Motivated by the need for minimum costs, cost-inflating planning and building regulations are ignored as they are inappropriate and unattainable for the vast majority who prioritize the basic components of housing. At the same time, the settlers need to be in locations within walking distance of casual employment and social amenities. Yet despite their inevitability, little is done, as Turner (1968) contends, to determine how to integrate these informal settlements administratively into the urban system, nor to improve them physically. Although their demolition and relocation costs are also often prohibitively high for the state to undertake, he argues that ‘the great majority of provisional settlements that exist today will be eradicated eventually if only because they are on land of potentially high value’ (p. 116).

The colossal scale of contemporary urbanization remains unprecedented, with slum demolition and resettlement being overshadowed by continual rising demand (Pieterse 2011). More than 1 billion people live in an estimated 200,000 informal settlements defined as slums today, with forecasts indicating that the number of residents living in such slums will increase to about 2 billion by 2030 (World Bank 2013). As Silver (2014) notes, rapid urbanization in continents across the Global South has become an amalgam of disjointed circulatory processes, in which informal structures that are provisional and improvised are intermingled with formal planned infrastructure authorized and built by the state and the private sector. Similarly, McFarlane (2011) illuminates the survival strategies of slum dwellers building out all sorts of salvaged and re-assembled materials in order to eke out precarious living conditions. Yet he stresses that these informal processes and structures are far from *ad hoc* or spontaneous, instead they take shape incrementally over space and time (p. 39).

Although slums are the defining feature of contemporary metropolises of the Global South, Varley (2013) equally argues that they should not be depicted as dysfunctional, with informality of the poor being demonized. As she contends, ‘the belief that informal means unplanned or spontaneous is one of the foremost myths about urban informality’ (p. 10). Moreover, she argues that the state and opponents

perpetuate the 'them and us' myth; that slum dwellers have their own laws and codes and do not share the same values, with this 'parallel city' (p. 10) being unable to participate within the urban system. These dualistic interpretations and entrenched stereotypes, however, often go unchallenged. Datta (2012b) and Ramakrishnan (2013, 2014), in their respective studies of informal settlements in Delhi, reiterate the way the state's derogatory reference to slum dwellers is perpetuated. Notions of second-class citizens are created and maintained both in their exclusion from urban space and dwellings as well as through the state's abject treatment of these marginalized urban poor. Moreover, through the state sustaining its legitimacy to remove 'unauthorized' urban residents, the slum dwellers are unable to capitalize on economic opportunities as a result of perpetually waiting to be 'corrected' through state relocation. This, in turn, deepens their sense of insecurity, disconnection, and marginalization from society. As a result of these sustained and systemic discriminatory processes, Amnesty International (2010) argues that slum dwellers, in fact, face a violation to their human rights, particularly through living under the constant threat of forced eviction, that need to be addressed.

Community Empowerment in Developing Countries

Community empowerment as a means to resolve slum dwellers' plights is by no means a new concept. As Apsan Frediani (2009) notes, Turner's self-help approach became the dominant strategy of international agencies in the 1970s. Rather than a shift in direction of the development paradigm, this strategy has been continually championed for decades by international organizations, such as the UN Habitat (2012), World Bank (2008, 2013), and Amnesty International (2010). Turner (1968) argues that slum dwellers are better able to judge their needs than hierarchical bureaucratic governments. Moreover, the investment capacity of the urban poor can only be mobilized if the state works with them, with the cost of services needing to be in economic reach to those whom they are offered. They should therefore be given freedom from impediments, such as building regulations, and have improved access to information and

resources, such as plots of land, materials, basic technical assistance, tools and credit, so that they can live the kind of lives they value. As Turner contends, ‘resources cannot be metamorphosed into money collected by the state and used at the state’s discretion ... popular resources ... consist mainly of initiative, effort, skills’ (1968, p. 128).

Narayan (2002) reaffirms Turner’s stance and goes further by suggesting that community empowerment entails ‘the expansion of assets and capabilities of the marginalized poor to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control *and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives*’ (1968, p. 17, emphasis added). A community empowering approach, in effect, puts poor people at the center of decision-making, viewing them as an important resource rather than as a problem (Narayan 2002). Whilst it does not necessarily entail an equal share of power, the intention is to build capacity within the community so that they strengthen their resistance against human rights abuses and negotiate with state institutions over their rights to stay.

However, as Simone and Rao (2012) note, this rights-based discourse may come under pressure in the face of a proliferation of ‘mega-developments’ within central cities, as local governments ensure the progressive growth of its urban middle class and the city’s status as world players in the longer term. Yet, they contend that mobilizing citizenship rights remains an important tool in preventing the urban poor from becoming increasingly relegated to the city’s periphery, as underdeveloped city centers are made ready for regeneration. Yet rather than confrontation, with citizens taking matters into their own hands, the purpose of community empowerment is to allow complex challenges to be tackled collectively (Lasker and Guidry 2009). Moreover, engendering constructive dialogue through negotiation-based practices needs to also be viewed as a mutually beneficial process. As Livingstone (2012) stresses, it is crucial for politicians to understand that this is a ‘win-win’ strategy for them and their citizens, which carries political dividends.

Archer’s (2012) study of participatory slum upgrading in Bangkok highlights these mutual benefits, with community empowerment enhancing slum dwellers’ confidence and ability to plan longer term for their future, whilst at the same time the state gains from better integration of citizens into urban society. Through collective action and collaboration with

the local government, citizens, in effect, became active partners in urban processes. Simone and Rao (2012) similarly comment upon Bangkok's widespread upgrading program, suggesting that the inter-linkages with government-sponsored, community-based organizations were its critical component. 'A readiness for these efforts already existed' (p. 327), with collective organizations stepping into municipal government's prevailing practices. Yet, as these low-income districts become accountable and tolerated within the city, residents' aspirations can, in turn, be subsumed, as they accrue indebtedness in terms of money they owe in the future and through the concomitant working in partnership with the state.

Similar slum upgrading initiatives exist across the African continent. In Tanzania, Anyamba and Nordahl (2012) document how education, training and technical assistance, for instance, on housing construction and sewerage disposal, alongside establishing savings and credit schemes allowed slum communities in Dar es Salam to develop self-help efforts. Such initiatives were particularly important where municipalities were overstretched and basic service provision inadequate; addressing the challenges alone was therefore unfeasible. Significantly, therefore, these partnerships, in effect, develop out of financial need (for example, through state austerity) rather than being adopted through a fundamental citizen right to address the growing precariousness of life situations of the urban poor. As Apsan Frediani (2009) argues, these self-help project-based strategies, adopted by international agencies, focus primarily on local short-term needs, and alleviation of poverty rather than tackling root causes of poverty. They thus have a tendency to perpetuate social, political and economic inequalities, rather than tackling structural determinants of the housing problem that are mediated by the state's urban regulatory system.

In reality, tensions exist in both contestation and negotiation-based practices employed by slum dwellers in claiming substantive citizenship rights. As Butcher and Apsan Frediani (2014) note, in their research on insurgent citizenship practices in Nairobi, Kenya, that, through necessity, strategies adopted are inherently complex with trade-offs continually made, as the urban poor contest hegemonic practices of the state whilst resisting co-option as they attempt to obtain missing entitlements within the city. Moreover, articulating citizens' rights to urban spaces is particularly demanding within informal settlements, where entrenched

positions over land rights are difficult to reconcile and where the state is unwilling to formally recognize the slum site (Gulyani and Bassett 2007; Silver 2014).

Old Fadama: The Case Study

The challenges facing state institutions in Africa are acute, with the continent urbanizing at a rate of 5 % per annum and having the highest regional urban growth rate in the world (UN Habitat 2012). Unprecedented population increases and uncontrolled expansion of cities have culminated in the rapid growth of informal settlements, as governments become incapable of providing adequate, affordable housing and services through formal processes (Gruffydd Jones 2009; Simone 2011). As Silver contends, 'with limited institutional anchorage and financial capital, the majority of African urban residents have to make what they can out of their bare lives' (2014, p. 790).

The Rockefeller Foundation notes that in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, where 43 % of the urban population lives in slums, 'epitomizes the informal city' (2015, p. 1). With growth rates of 4.4 % per annum, Accra's population is predicted to reach 4 million by 2020 (UN Habitat 2012). Whilst Ghana's Constitution stipulates the protection of all citizens' human rights and freedom, international housing rights legislation, however, has not been adopted, to date. There is therefore a distinct lack of national legal mechanisms that Ghanaians can use to claim their right to housing and protection from forced eviction (Afenah 2010).

Old Fadama settlement, in the heart of Accra, has developed informally, having an estimated population of around 80,000 living in 146 hectares in the upper reaches of the Korle Lagoon (People Dialogue 2009). Depending on the exact area referred to, or the attitude of person spoken to, it is variously known as 'Agbogbloshie', 'Old Fadama' or 'Sodom and Gomorrah', with the latter derogatory name used by those calling for it to be demolished (Du Plessis 2005). As Datta (2012b) and Ramakrishan (2013) both suggest, these types of disparaging metaphors contribute to the 'them and us' mentality, with the representation of space evoking sites of savagery and fear, thus helping to sustain the

pervasiveness of exclusion and insecurity that marginalized slum dwellers face on a daily basis within the city.

The contemporary land struggles witnessed in Old Fadama have a long history. As Grant (2006) documents, they have tangible roots in clashes between Ghana's traditional landowners, the Ga tribe, and colonial administrators, over land tenure between 1914 and 1920. In 1956, on the eve of independence, the land at Old Fadama was designated as a mixed industrial site. In 1961, Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), which is the political and administrative authority of Accra, claimed the land for a Korle Lagoon Ecological Restoration Project (KLERP) that would restore the marine and river system to a cleaner and more natural ecological state. AMA issued a certificate of title to the area, acquiring land in the public interest and extinguishing all subsisting land rights and interests. The lagoon was dredged to reclaim some of the land, yet the area of Old Fadama was left unused. The Ga chiefs did not dispute the government's right to use the land in the national interest, yet if the land was not used for its intended purpose, then, under Ghanaian law, settlers would be allowed a renewed claim to the land or receive compensation after 12 years of occupation. AMA renewed its restoration efforts in the early 1990s; with phase 1 obtaining US\$ 73 million from the OPEC Fund for International Development and the Arab Bank for economic development in Africa (Du Plessis 2005; Grant 2006).

Old Fadama continued to grow in size throughout the 1990s, primarily as result of AMA's decision to relocate hawkers and the yam market to the area in 1993, and following the aftermath of civil unrest in the North of Ghana in 1995 that led to a mass exodus, particularly of Dagomba peoples, to Accra (Grant 2006). The transportation logistics, required by the relocated hawkers and yam merchants also culminated in motor repair services clustering in the area, with Old Fadama continuing to attract new settlers from all over Accra and Ghana (Lepawsky and Akese 2015). As with many centrally located slums across the Global South, Old Fadama meets the needs of poor residents by offering comparatively low-cost housing and multiple livelihood opportunities, alongside minimal commuting costs (Simone 2011; Silver 2014). Low-income groups are therefore strongly attracted to Old Fadama, due to its close proximity to Accra's central business district.

The slum community today effectively runs Accra's main fresh produce market (called Agbogbloshie market) and there are numerous burgeoning entrepreneurial operations, including running the city's bus operations, scrap and waste businesses, vehicle servicing, timber, housing construction and bulk-processing of, for example, palm-nut oil (Recyhub 2015). These enterprises therefore play a vital role in Accra's economy, with young residents, in particular, wanting to stay in this vibrant space of commercial enterprise, rather than being relocated back to their hometowns or resettled further out of the city (Farouk and Owusu 2012). Yet at the same time, residents live under the continual threat of forced eviction, with no legal status to stay. Government investment is also minimal, resulting in a lack of basic urban amenities, including rudimentary drainage, sanitation facilities, street lighting, electricity and access roads. There is also no water piped into the community, so the slum dwellers pay exorbitant prices to obtain water from vending machines on a daily basis (People Dialogue 2009). Moreover, these precarious living conditions are likely to worsen in this hazard-prone area.

The State's Reluctance to Compromise

In May 2002, AMA served the residents of Old Fadama with eviction notices, as state officials were keen to proceed with the stalled KLERP initiative (Grant 2006). In response to these eviction notices, letters of protest were written by a number of organizations, including the Centre of Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), appealing to Accra High Court, and stating that international legal obligations would be violated if forced eviction took place. In July 2002, the High Court rejected the appeal and authorized AMA to evict. COHRE subsequently commissioned an independent study, recommending that if the Old Fadama site was legally recognized by the state and upgraded, it could co-exist alongside the government's river and marine rehabilitation project. Given a stronger political will, the settlement could develop in situ, rather than the government continuing to maintain an uncompromising position towards the community (Du Plessis 2005).

Whilst AMA won the High Court appeal to evict, government officials did not act upon it in a large-scale way, apart from a few isolated incidences of forced evictions. Although the Ghanaian government secured a US\$ 48 million loan from the Belgium government and the Standard Chartered Bank of London in 2003, the KLERP project was shelved until the conditions in the loan agreement could be met in relation to slum dwellers encroaching on the lagoon being removed. A highly indebted, poor country like Ghana, however, could ill-afford the loss of direct foreign investment allocated to this project. The potential profits from urban renewal and the lagoon's restoration were therefore seen at stake.

Whilst the deadlock between the state and slum community ensued, AMA had given no assurances that the threat of eviction would be removed. State officials, in effect, wanted to preserve their right to remove the slum dwellers 'in the name of public benefit' (Afenah 2010, p. 2) and did not want to suggest permanency of the informal settlement. At the same time, they did not want the obligation of having to pay for basic service delivery, including drainage, access roads, piped water and electricity (Farouk and Owusu 2012). However, while there is no moratorium on evictions, slum dwellers live in deteriorating living conditions and in the fear of being forced out. As witnessed in other land disputes across the globe, reconciling the need for environmental protection with citizens' social rights and interests is difficult to resolve, particularly where the state is able to use environmental arguments selectively as a tool with which to oppress the marginalized poor and reclaim centrally located sites within the city (Simone and Rao 2012; Datta 2012a; Ramakrishnan 2014).

Slum Dwellers and Community Empowerment

Although AMA gained a legal victory through Ghana's High Courts in 2002, Grant contends that the slum community gained 'a political victory' (2006, p. 15) that also ignited the process of community empowerment. Having an international organization, like COHRE, involved in the legal proceedings was critical in strengthening the slum dwellers' position. It not only enabled the slum community to act in concert with

a powerful and well-connected organization, but also brought international pressure on the government not to evict the settlers without considering alternatives, or without consulting the community. Through COHRE's involvement, Old Fadama residents were able to galvanize additional grass-root efforts to resist eviction. In 2003, the slum dwellers strengthened their network of resistance further by federating themselves with Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI). A community-based organization, named the People's Dialogue (PD), was thus formed, which linked the slum dwellers to SDI headquarters in Cape Town, and to their methods of community empowerment (Du Plessis 2005). In effect, this insurgent citizenship practice of disenfranchised communities linking to wider networks of resistance, like the SDI, shares a number of similarities with the Butcher and Apsan Frediani (2014) account of that witnessed in Muungano wa Wanavijiji in Nairobi, Kenya, in which the slum dwellers equally drew on alliances with SDI.

Through strategic alliances with these different international organizations, PD was able to leverage additional funds to support its negotiations with AMA on the slum dwellers' right to stay. At the same time, drawing on SDI's wealth of experience in community empowerment, PD took the initiative to create a joint savings scheme, in which local residents paid into as and when they could. By mobilizing the energies and resources of existing slum dwellers, the community-based organization were able to build a strong platform for negotiations with AMA. Their cause was further strengthened in 2005, when UN Habitat selected Old Fadama as one of the beneficiaries of its slum upgrading facilities (UN Habitat 2005). In 2012, Amnesty International's public awareness campaign, named 'Human rights live here,' chose Old Fadama to create a constructive dialog around the obligations that society had towards slum dwellers. By challenging negative labeling of slums and promoting a platform for slum dwellers' voices to be heard, Amnesty International sought to hold the state to account (Morrison and Davies 2014).

Largely in response to these high profile community empowerment efforts that received international support, AMA was forced to open dialog with the Old Fadama community and consider finding an alternative solution to evictions. As Narayan (2002) argues, 'informed citizens are better able to take advantage of opportunities' (p. 19) to strengthen their negotiating position. In the case of Old Fadama, Lepawsky and Akese

note that ‘clearly, the residents have long been agents of their own destinies’ (2015, p. 1), showing a willingness to engage in constructive dialog and formulate shared agreement, rather than adopting a purely confrontational stance, which Butcher and Apsan Frediani (2014) suggest can be counter-productive. For instance, PD took the initiative to conduct an enumeration of the community that mapped economic activities in the area (see People Dialogue 2009). This self-enumeration helped to inform the negotiations with AMA, with government officials being prepared to give partial recognition to the lay ‘expertise’ that existed in the community, as Livingstone (2012) suggests, needs to be acknowledged. The studies also assisted with future planning of a potential in situ slum upgrading and could help in facilitating the move of slum dwellers to alternative suitable locations, if deemed necessary (Farouk and Owusu 2012).

In 2011, the Old Fadama community also instigated its own demolition of all building structures that were within 50 m of the lagoon, in an attempt to address the difficulties of the settlement’s encroachment on this resource, and which were exacerbated during its annual flooding. Yet, following the 2015 annual floods, where 14 people died in Accra, AMA decided that the slum community’s demolition was insufficient and had planned to undertake a 100 m range of demolition from the lagoon in due course (Lepawsky and Akese 2015). In effect, the state’s use of environmental arguments was again brought against the marginalized poor living in this hazard-prone land, providing the state with a perceived justification for forced removal (Datta 2012a).

Breaking the Deadlock

Whilst the slum dwellers’, PD’s and international organizations’ united efforts to open up the space for negotiations with regard to the slum dwellers’ future were vital, they ultimately remained ineffectual in the face of a state that had no intention of relinquishing control over power and decision-making. While AMA and the government of Ghana were not prepared to declare a moratorium on evictions, community empowerment was thwarted.

On June 20, 2015, the Ghanaian authorities, including military personnel, entered Old Fadama and demolished nearly half of the

informal settlement and ‘violently’ dispersed its residents (ARP 2015, p. 1; Recyhub 2015, p. 1). Yet, as Lepawsky and Akese (2015) argue, the recent evictions cannot be reduced to a simple case of ‘rapacious urban capital usurping land from the marginalized poor’ (p. 1). Their impetus needs to be understood in relation to the long-standing struggles over land rights in Old Fadama, although these trajectories are often intertwined (Afenah 2010). A possible cause for the swiftness of the evictions, with no consultation or warning, Lepawsky and Akese (2015) contend, should be traced back to events 12 years ago, in 2003, when the government secured its international loan agreements. This agreement stipulated that after 12 years of occupation, Ghanaian law would allow settlers to claim a title to the land (Grant 2006). AMA’s vested interests in removing slum residents before settlers’ claims could be made therefore overrode any community empowerment efforts to assert slum dwellers’ rights to stay (Lepawsky and Akese 2015).

Tracing this 12-year trajectory demonstrates not just the initial set of conditions, but also explains AMA’s continued interest in keeping land out of the hands of the settlers. As Simone and Rao (2012) argue, activating citizenship with marginalized poor securing a viable place in the city, is likely to wane in the face of the state’s quest to ‘clean up’ the city. As Datta (2012b) and Ramakrishnan (2013, 2014) equally confirm in the example of New Delhi, the fear of the impending removal becomes intensified once these central urban sites become ‘prime’ in the government’s eyes and ‘bourgeois dreams of re-making the city’ (Ramakrishnan 2014) come to fruition.

When such state power is forcibly imposed, communities, particular those with the least voice, will make little difference to outcomes (Albrechts 2002). The theory of community empowerment is, in effect, impossible to realize when the state has no intention of allowing citizens to be part of final decisions that affect their lives (Lasker and Guidry 2009). When the state pretends (by action *or* inaction) that it is tolerating the slum community through allowing the deadlock to be maintained over the 12 years, these veiled or dormant intentions compel residents to live in ‘time dictated by others’ (Ramakrishnan 2013, p. 756), thus reinforcing the message of political subordination. In these situations, trust is broken down and individual human rights are effectively ignored.

Conclusions

Whilst the importance of community empowerment has long been espoused in the Global South (Turner 1968), the commitment to its principles and approaches is prevented, however, if decision-making processes within individual countries become entangled in political interests with the state having no intention to compromise (Butcher and Apsan Frediani 2014). Moreover, if there is no state ratification of international housing rights legislation, then there is no guarantee that citizens' rights will be heeded (Afenah 2010). Marginalized poor therefore remain powerless to influence decisions that affect their lives (Simone 2011). As Healey argues, securing political agreement to legislative review is invariably the greatest barrier to institutional change, yet 'relevant authorities have to answer for their actions to all members of a community' (2006, p. 295).

Barriers to community empowerment are heightened in informal settlements, and particularly those located on disputed central city lands (Datta 2012a; Silver 2014). Articulating slum dwellers' claims to these urban spaces will be thwarted in the face of state pressures to redevelop these central sites in order to ensure the city's status in the longer run (Simone and Rao 2012). Despite concerted community-based organizations' and international efforts to negotiate their right to stay, marginalized poor will persistently live in spaces of insecurity, being confronted with unmet expectations of urban citizenship (Datta 2012a; Ramakirshnan 2013). In the case of Old Fadama, in the heart of Accra, the state had legal authority to force evictions and the slum clearance happened without consultation. This violation of international human rights and the consequences of such unilateral action, however, may have implications in the longer term.

A single case study, by nature, reflects a particular set of empirical realities (Yin 2009). Each informal settlement has its own local historical particularities and distinctive institutional settings, with struggles over land rights varying according to circumstance. Finding ways to resolve conflicts and break deadlocks will inevitably vary. Nonetheless, sharing experiences and insights into ways to resolve the growing and complex challenges facing informal settlements is a crucial academic and policy endeavor (Owusu et al. 2008; Simone 2011; UN Habitat 2012). Through

promoting a sense of global citizenship, rather than being confined to local, regional and national spaces, new forms of trans-local political solidarity and consciousness amongst marginalized poor can develop (Grant 2006). This global ambition to develop community empowerment approaches not only allows collective action to transcend narrow power relations, it also helps towards citizens taking back their right to be recognized and securing for themselves the ongoing possibility to carve out a viable life within the city (Simone and Rao 2012; Silver 2014). As Pieterse (2011) equally concludes, only through strategies premised on empowerment through collective action alongside ‘dogged mobilization’ (p. 3), the vicious cycle that the marginalized face can be interrupted, deconstructed, and remade into a new urban logic rooted in the interests of the urban poor.

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The Right to Adequate Housing Following Forced Evictions in Post- Conflict Colombo, Sri Lanka

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The city of Colombo has witnessed substantial development since the end of Sri Lanka's long civil war in 2009, under the ongoing Urban Regeneration Project (URP). The dirty wooden hoardings that surrounded major buildings have come down, parks have been opened up and landscaped and several major new developments are underway in the historic centre of the city. According to Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Minister of Defence and Urban Development until January 2015, the 'beautification' of Colombo is intended to attract tourism and international business so

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that the city 'will once again be known as the garden city of the East' (Daily Mirror 2013). This rather orientalist ambition encapsulates much of the criticism directed at this post-conflict programme of urban development: it is designed to benefit a wealthy, international elite, while overlooking or brushing aside the very real problems of poverty in Colombo. Indeed, it is possible that the project will actually exacerbate the lives of the very poor, since the areas of Slave Island and Colombo Fort, where new commercial developments are concentrated, also contain some of the highest densities of informal housing. Particular criticism has been focused at widespread forced evictions, which the project has required, highlighting the 'ugly side of beautification' (Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) 2014). These population movements are officially called 'resettlements' and housing is seen as part of or the entire compensation package offered to evicted households.

This chapter reports on a large-scale survey conducted in Colombo between October and December 2013 and a range of follow up interviews in early 2014 of resettled populations to consider the impact of these evictions, particularly on the adequacy of housing as compensation in forced evictions. The full research team included the authors¹ and a number of other colleagues who contributed in a variety of capacities. The research confirms that material improvements in housing conditions have occurred, but the chapter argues for a much broader sense of compensation that guarantees a defined standard of adequate housing. Adequate housing is much more than simply the provision of a house and involves a full recognition of all the ways in which housing affects social, economic and cultural life. This understanding of 'adequate housing' draws in international legal understandings set out by the UN High Commission on Human Rights' Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR 1991) but it also reflects a 'politics of home' emerging within critical geography (Brickell 2012).

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authors involved surveys of almost 3,000 households in Colombo and Jaffna, in Sri Lanka, and Kochi (in the southern Indian state of Kerala). This chapter reports only on the Colombo survey, which involved 450 evicted households and a control group of 450 non-evicted households. Survey interviews with evicted households took place in several large rehousing projects in Colombo. Individuals had mostly been resettled in this housing between 2001 and 2005, though a small number had arrived in 2012 as a result of preparations for the URP. Non-evicted households came from underserved settlements nearby the original homes of those who had been moved. In order not to draw unnecessary media attention to those forced to move, research avoided evictions that were directly related to the URP, so this work does not explicitly consider the most recent stages of eviction.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into 4 sections. The first section briefly reviews the history of housing in Sri Lanka. The second section considers the nature of development-related displacement and the provision of 'adequate housing' as compensation. The third section explores experiences of displacement, and the fourth turns to the nature of community relations, which have been seriously disrupted. The chapter concludes that it is vital to consider all the ways in which forced evictions have affected people's lives in preparing a compensation package to properly alleviate forced evictions.

Urbanisation and Housing Policy in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has always had an extremely low rate of urbanisation. According to the 2012 census, only 18.2 % of the country's 20.4 million people live in urban areas. Colombo, by far the largest urban agglomeration in the country, has not been inflated by migration from rural areas to the extent that many other major cities in South Asia and Latin America have been. Colombo has, however, witnessed a persistent and growing inequality that successive major urban plans have failed to address. In 1974, the Colombo Metropolitan Council (CMC) identified 54,416 families living in tenements, slums and shanty housing (cited in Silva and Athukoral 1991), approximately half of the city's population at the time.

The Urban Development Authority (UDA) was established in 1978 to address the need for housing for the urban poor, though its role has evolved over time. The most recent survey, conducted in 2011 by the UDA, found 68,812 families living in what are now called ‘underserved settlements’ in Colombo, now 53 % of the city’s population (cited in World Bank and UN-Habitat 2012). The proportion of the city’s population living in inadequate conditions has barely changed in 40 years. Although this period included the 25-year civil war, at a national level inequality has actually increased since the end of the conflict. The most recent attempt to address this situation is the Urban Regeneration Project (URP), which began in 2012, and is a key part of the beautification of the city.

Sri Lanka’s long history of housing policy has informed this current approach. The role of the state in the provision of housing has shifted from one of direct provider to one of enabler, in close cooperation with the private sector. This private provider orientation is obvious in the organisation of the URP. Yet rather than focus exclusively, or even mainly, on housing, the URP sets housing in the context of a comprehensive urban development plan. Comprehensive urban planning is now also favoured by the World Bank, replacing the more targeted sectoral policies funded in the 1970s and 1980s (World Bank 2000).

The particular challenge of housing in Colombo is the widely dispersed geography of underserved settlements in the city, with small numbers of houses clustered along railway lines, drainage facilities or on other areas of previously abandoned land in-between other buildings. Many of the informal settlements became established from squats in the gardens of large abandoned homes and all informal settlements are referred to as *wattas*, (literally ‘gardens’, sometimes also ‘land’, in Sinhala) by residents of these areas, even Tamil speakers, as a more valorising label than the officially used ‘slum’ or ‘shanty’. The 2012 UDA study confirmed findings of earlier surveys: it identified 1,499 separate underserved settlements around Colombo, 74 % of which have fewer than 50 houses.

The dispersal of these *wattas* has 3 clear implications for housing policy. First, any housing policy has to involve broader, comprehensive planning. Second, major new commercial and infrastructural developments typically impinge upon several of these small settlements, particularly in the centre of the city. In this context, the internationally preferred option of in situ slum upgrading would involve formalising dispersed occupations

of often very valuable land, preventing larger, often very lucrative, development projects going ahead. Finally, the dispersed pattern of settlement has led to very small-scale community organisation, and broader mobilisations have been very rare. This context has facilitated the relatively large-scale operation of forced evictions from underserved settlements.

Forced evictions have also been much easier, due to the highly authoritarian nature of the post-war regime in Sri Lanka. While the end of war, in 2009, brought great relief to many, in the absence of any significant move towards national reconciliation, dissent was stifled, religious nationalism spread, the power of the military expanded and inequality increased. The defeat of the incumbent president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, in the presidential elections of January 2015 is widely interpreted as an explicit rejection of these authoritarian politics, which had become strongly associated with his regime. The new president, Maithripala Sirisena, has promised a symbolic break with the policies of the immediate post-conflict period, though at the time of writing, it is not yet clear if these promises will produce genuine change. During the final revisions of this chapter, on June 13, 2015, the government suspended all forced relocations within Colombo (CPA 2015) though there is no sense yet if this will be a permanent or temporary move.

Since 2009, Sri Lankan society has also become increasingly militarised and urban development has not escaped this process. Immediately after the end of the conflict, the Urban Development Authority (UDA) was incorporated into the Ministry of Defence and Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the Minister of Defence and brother of the President, assumed overall control of urban development (Herath et al. forthcoming). Many of the ongoing evictions, renovations and building work in Colombo have been carried out by soldiers, often in uniform, which has also had a significant dissuasive effect on protest against these developments.

Forced Evictions and Adequate Housing

Forced evictions are widely recognised as a violation of human rights. According to the generally accepted legal definition, forced eviction is 'the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy,

without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection' (CESCR 1997, para 4). The Government of Sri Lanka is party to a range of international conventions that oblige states to protect against forced evictions, most obviously the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). One of the difficulties of enforcing this obligation is distinguishing forced evictions from other forms of legally sanctioned displacement. Large-scale development in urban areas almost inevitably results in some people having to move house and this is not always referred to as forced eviction. In Sri Lanka, it is called 'resettlement' both officially, as well as in public and media discourse, and there is a long history of such movements across the country related to development, conflict and natural disasters (Muggah 2008).

General Comment 7 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) recognises that the explicit exemption of 'legal' forms of displacement from the internationally accepted definition of forced evictions is extremely problematic, since it assumes the relevant law is just. There is also frequently disagreement over what is 'voluntary' since it is very common for evictions to be formally voluntary but highly coerced in practice. At a minimum, the law should ensure that displacement is absolutely necessary, potential risks are addressed and compensation is appropriate. In Sri Lanka, the government adopted a National Involuntary Resettlement Policy (NIRP) in 2001 in an effort to address these obligations. Where the NIRP has been applied, evaluations are very positive and the impacts of forced evictions have clearly been alleviated.² Unfortunately, the NIRP has been erratically applied, even to cases of development-induced displacement for which it was designed and, in many cases, its provisions are entirely lacking. The NIRP has not been applied to urban development in Colombo, both under the current URP and previous urban resettlements.

The NIRP was modelled on an approach to the identification of risks outlined by Cernea (2000) who considers 8 risks associated with displacement: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food

²The construction of the Southern Expressway, which opened in late 2011, is widely considered a model application of the NIRP where displacement was avoided if possible and, where displacement occurred, compensation was provided and a robust complaints system was effectively operated (Jayawardena 2011).

insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property assets, and social disarticulation. The prevention of forced evictions requires attention to all 8 of these risks and appropriately directed compensation. In the absence of the NIRP in urban development in Colombo, inadequate attention to these risks has inevitably resulted in large-scale forced evictions. In many cases, no attention has been paid to the impacts of displacement at all; in others, limited forms of compensation have been offered. The most common form of compensation has been the provision of housing (Brun and Lund 2009). Yet the provision of housing only responds directly to one of the 8 risks identified by Cernea: homelessness. Joblessness and marginalisation are related to the location of the new house, and this is increasingly taken into account through specific efforts to move people relatively close to their original home. Landlessness, food insecurity and loss of access to common property assets are only relevant to intra-urban displacement for the small minority who actually uses the tiny amount of land for livelihood reasons. Social disarticulation is the most significant overlooked risk in urban redevelopment. The maintenance of community is one of the main reasons why in situ slum upgrading is recognised as the preferred practice by international organisations such as UN Habitat (2003).

In Colombo, not only does urban resettlement policy fail to directly address 7 of Cernea's 8 identified risks, but also even the one that is addressed, homelessness, is very limited. It is extremely rare that evicted households are given full deeds to the house they have been moved to. Ownership rights vary substantially but are typically severely limited in order to discourage people simply selling their new houses and moving back to the old settlements or moving out of the city to other underserved areas. In the 2001 and 2002 evictions, individuals were not given deeds to their new apartments and, although they could pass the house on to their children, it could not be sold.³ In more recent cases, evicted individuals were expected to make regular payments towards the cost of their new house, taking on substantial debts. Again, in the case of in situ slum upgrading, these risks are very substantially reduced. These provisions

³ Although in practice a substantial number of these earlier arrivals had managed to sell their purpose-built flats.

violate several of the 7 characteristics of ‘adequate housing’ set out by the CESCR, considered here in more detail (CESCR 1991, para 8).

1. ‘Legal security of tenure’ involves a guarantee that further evictions will not occur, which is best reinforced by legal title to the house, or a secure rental agreement. The absence of deeds may well violate this consideration.
2. ‘Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure’ covers everything from basic utilities to transport. The CESCR stipulates ‘sustainable access’ that links to affordability, since new payments for access to these services is likely to affect the sustainability of that access.
3. Affordability may be affected by the requirement to repay a loan for the new house even if, in the case of Colombo, the loan is usually below market value. It may also be affected by the requirement to pay new types of bills, or much higher bills, for things like basic utilities, particularly if they were not paid in previous accommodation.
4. Habitability includes both the material conditions of the new houses and the elimination of other threats to safety, such as disease or violence.
5. Accessibility relates to the individual requirements of particular members of society, such as the elderly or infirm, which must be considered.
6. Location requires access to public services, such as schools and health facilities, but also employment. This should not only be considered in absolute terms, but relative to previous location, so as not to unnecessarily disrupt access to schools or employment.
7. Cultural adequacy refers to everything about the house that ‘enables the expression of cultural identity’ (CESCR 1991, para 8g). These forms of expression are, crucially, collective, building on well-established forms of community organisation and representation. This is important for this research since appears to encompass Cernea’s (2000) ‘social disarticulation’ risk.

The Colombo survey assessed the characteristics of houses to which individuals had been resettled in terms of the CESCR ‘adequate housing’ criteria above and Cernea’s risk model.

Researching Forced Evictions in Colombo

A total of 900 household surveys were conducted, divided equally between those who had been moved to specially constructed new housing and those living in neighbouring areas who had not (yet) been moved. Without this comparison, we had no basis to distinguish what was an impact of the resettlement process and what was common to residents of *wattas* across the city. Sampling was purposive so as to avoid households who had purchased homes in the new blocks from the original evicted owners. Surveys included information about all members of the household. Questions about individual opinions also noted the particular household member who had answered the question, enabling key individual characteristics of sex and age to be controlled in considering responses. Surveys were conducted in the respondents' homes, in the language of respondents' choice (either Sinhala or Tamil) by a specially trained team of enumerators based at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Colombo. Surveys were followed by 20 interviews that are more detailed with individuals who had previously responded to the survey.

Research with evicted households was conducted in 4 sites: Sinhapura, Sahaspura, Wadulu Sewana, and Lunawa. The first 3 locations are large blocks of purpose-built flats to which people from across Colombo were resettled. Sahaspura, in particular, is relatively well known (Samaratunga and O'Hare 2014; Wijayasinghe 2010). Lunawa is an in situ upgrade of an existing underserved settlement. Sahaspura is a 14-storey block that opened in 2001 (Samaratunga and O'Hare 2014), Sinhapura is an adjacent development that opened in 2007 (Unit 1) with a further stage in 2011 (Unit 2), and Wadulu Sewana opened in 2007 on a separate site. Further similar purpose-built blocks have opened and others are under construction with the eventual aim of rehousing the entire population of almost 70,000 households living in underserved settlements at the time of the 2011 UDA survey. The households moved to these purpose-built flats come from underserved settlements all over Colombo. In order to preserve the anonymity of interview respondents, they will be referred to by a unique number and letter.

Housing Conditions in Informal Settlements

Housing in underserved settlements is almost universally of very poor quality. Almost half of non-evicted households surveyed reported that the roof of their houses was made of plastic or metal sheeting and a further 41 % that it was made of asbestos, and these proportions were almost identical for evicted households before rehousing. Twelve percent reported that the walls were made of temporary sheeting and a further 10 % that the walls of their previous homes had been made of palm branches. In the purpose-built flats, houses are clearly far more weather-proof, which has far-reaching benefits for health and security. Flooding and poor sanitation are also very common in underserved settlements across the city. Improvements in material living conditions are therefore one of the most widely cited benefits of rehousing (Wickrema 2005).

Despite these poor material conditions, very few people were interested in moving anywhere else. Any enthusiasm expressed was almost entirely for in situ improvements. Residents from across Colombo's underserved settlements were highly aware of the ongoing rehousing schemes and cognisant of the city's long history of evictions. Experience and the details that they had heard of the new schemes made them extremely suspicious of government involvement in rehousing. Moreover, as a 62-year old man living in a house made of plastic sheeting with no legal title summarised:

Once they tried to demolish the houses [in this settlement] but they did not carry it out because the people opposed it. Then there were not even 200 houses. At election times, the government allowed people to build more houses. The government gave houses for some of the people here. They sold those houses and they have returned here. They have their incomes here and so they like to live here. (Interview, D3)

This kind of experience highlights why the state is experienced as a random, unpredictable force by many slum dwellers. Yet distrust goes both ways and this account also suggests why urban planners want to build in some way of preventing people from simply selling up and returning to their previous homes.

Experiences of Eviction in Colombo

Two contrasting stories of the move to the Sinhapura housing development further illustrate the very different experiences of eviction, from 2 different underserved settlements. Both were located in one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods of Colombo; one group of people moved from a settlement with 74 houses (Colombo A), the other from a slightly larger settlement (Colombo B). Many of those from Colombo A had lived in the settlement for their entire lives. They were all strong supporters of the former regime and they reported receiving regular visits from ministers and even the former president's son. Most people had deeds for their houses. Those in Colombo B lived in much more temporary housing, mostly without legal title to the land, though they did not report visits from ministers, and were much more politically diverse. Interviewees from both of these settlements reported that they were not forced to move, since physical force was not used to move them. Nevertheless, in both cases the evictions fall into internationally agreed definitions of forced evictions, since they did not move voluntarily. The process, particularly the level of indirect violence, varied considerably in the evictions of the 2 settlements.

One former resident of Colombo A, a single mother of 3 children, described the background to their move to the Sinhapura housing estate:

We were not forcefully evicted from our previous homes. The biggest problem we had in those houses was flooding during the rainy seasons when common toilets overflowed. The Government asked us whether we would like to get new houses. We agreed. However, when we got the houses they were built here and not in [Colombo A]. We were helpless and had no other choice but to accept what was given to us. The houses that we have now are far better than the ones in which we lived, there's no question about it. But [Colombo A] is a much better location. (Interview, I1)

This quote highlights the ambiguous relationship with the places in which they lived that residents of *wattas* described. On one hand, they deplored the conditions in which they were obliged to live, but on the other hand,

they had a real attachment to the place itself and to the people that they lived among. All the residents of Colombo A left in the belief that new houses would be constructed for them on the location of their former homes. They were housed in temporary rental accommodation for over 2 years, with an annual contribution of approximately US\$ 1,000. It was only during the third year that they were told that their rental support would be stopped and they would be offered flats in Sinhapura: residents from Colombo A moved to Sinhapura in 2007, but more than 6 years later they were still feeling extremely bitter.

While the process of deception described by residents of Colombo A clearly fits the CESCR definition of forced eviction, residents of Colombo B, on the other hand reported a more obviously violent process of eviction. An elderly woman reported that:

Some young people came to our houses in [Colombo B] and said they came for a survey. They asked us whether we would like to get better houses. We, of course, didn't need better houses as our house already had all the comforts. They disconnected our electricity supply and then took our roof off. It is only after that, they gave us the key to this house. They charged us 40,000 Rupees [US\$ 400] and said it was for maintenance. But there is absolutely no maintenance done here. (Interview, I5)

Very few of these residents had legal title to the land, though several reported that they had lived there for decades. Still, their limited legal rights and lack of political patronage meant that this technique of partial demolition was widely reported. Another woman reported a similar experience where demolition began while the family was still inside:

We asked for 2 days to move, we weren't granted that. We cleared the house, hired a vehicle, and came here. Everything had to be rushed. I was very cross and yelled at the officer who came with the removal order. My youngest son who was only few months old at the time was covered in dust. (Interview, I3)

This woman was officially recognised as the head of her household in the allocation of new housing. Almost a third (29.4 %) of households surveyed in Colombo was female-headed. This is substantially larger than the figure for the entire city.

The militarisation of the urban redevelopment and the eviction process, symbolised most clearly by the institutional relocation of the UDA to the Ministry of Defence, discussed above, was already beginning in 2007. The presence of the army obviously gave people far fewer options about moving:

It was the army that came and bothered us. They would come every day and ask us to vacate. Their bothering stopped after they managed to break one wall of our house. Who can live in a house without one wall? That was their strategy to get us out. Then we left in fear. (Interview, I4)

Even though people from Colombo B once again highlighted the absence of direct physical violence forcing them to move, it is clear that there is a very significant level of violence in operation here and these experiences should definitely be considered forced evictions (see also Zhang, this volume). Following the process of eviction, residents of Colombo A and B faced very different treatment in relation to payment for the housing. An elderly woman from Colombo B who shared her flat with her husband, 2 sons and their families explained the financial situation now faced:

We were promised a house for a house, but in the end they asked for money from us. They didn't do what they said they would do. We have lived in our former house for over 50 years. So we didn't want to leave that house. But we came here because we got scared that they might relocate us in some faraway land. [...] After leaving that house and coming here our biggest problem was money. My husband borrowed from the local moneylenders with very high interest rates. My daughter-in-law's gold was pawned. A lady from REEL Company comes every month to collect money. [REEL is Real Estate Exchange Limited, a private company working with the UDA]. Some people pay 1,000 Rupees (approximately US\$ 10) per month to settle the amount they owe for the house. (Interview, I4)

Flats in Sinhapura reportedly sell for 500,000 Rupees, so 100,000 Rupees is substantially below market rate, though still excessive for residents who expected to get a house free. The REEL Company worked in collaboration with the UDA to assist in commercial operations around the new housing developments. This financialisation is a strategy to encourage a sense of ownership and prevent individuals returning to the settlements they had

been evicted from. Yet this is a very delicate balance, since payments of this nature directly affect the sustainability of the new housing. In addition to the practicalities of making regular payments from livelihoods that often produce highly irregular salaries, the psychological impact of owing, what to many is a huge sum of money, can act as an additional deterrent.

Residents who had moved from Colombo A were also asked to pay, though, unlike residents from Colombo B, these requests for payment were not pursued and no one mentioned any discussion of interest accruing on these debts. Yet they had not been issued the deeds to their new flats. There may be other advantages to not issuing deeds for the sponsors of this redevelopment, since the credibility of the schemes depended on a substantial number of people remaining in their new houses. Everyone interviewed in their new houses reported that they would sell the house as soon as they were given the deed. Many had already been able to sell the house, even without the deed, despite this being technically illegal.

We will sell this house and leave this place if we get the deed. Many people are planning the same. Government asked for 110,000 Rupees for the deed. We refused to pay. They took such a valuable piece of land from us and landed us in this *kunugoda* [garbage dump] and now they want us to pay money for it! (Interview, I1)

When we came here, they promised to give the deeds in 6 months. Now it's 2 years. Still no deed. (Interview, D7)

According to information from the survey, just over half of respondents reported that they had deeds to their new house, following eviction (Table 1). This compares to just under a third of households who had a deed to their former house. Yet, as Table 1 shows, this was not a simple pattern of some of those without deeds gaining them. Half of those who reported that they had a deed for their former house did not (yet) have one for their new flat, having been living there for as long as 12 years, whereas half of the households who had no deed in their previous home reported receiving one since eviction.

In addition to the negative experiences of the process of forced eviction, the criteria of affordability and legal security of the new housing add further burdens to evicted families. As Table 1 shows, some significant positive changes have occurred, particularly in the extension of legal title

Table 1 Households with deeds to their homes before and after eviction

		Before eviction		
		Had deed	No deed	Total
After eviction	Have deed	208	168	376
	No deed	73	249	322
	Total	281	417	698

to flats, but this is balanced by some loss of title and widespread concern about new debt obligations.

The quality of the new physical infrastructure is widely cited as one of the key benefits of the redevelopment. The survey data illustrates the improvement in construction materials and this has significant benefits, as previously noted. Yet some of the new residents reported much more negative experiences and argued that the quality of the new houses was purely superficial:

Sewage water from all the housing complexes [...] is brought to one pit close to our complex. Obviously, the pit lacks capacity to keep sewage water from such a lot of houses. We have a drainage pit right in front of our house. That, too, overflows. We can't even step outside the house when that happens. I'm the one who collects money from the neighbours and gets people from the municipal council and get it cleaned. Imagine having drainage water overflow right in front of your house. *Meka apayak* [This is a hell]! We didn't have this kind of dirt flowing in front of our house previously. (Interview, I3)

This example undermines the assumption that the new houses inevitably had a positive impact on the health of the residents. The quality of the common areas was also widely criticised and they had quickly become degraded, resulting in additional health problems. This was partly lack of maintenance, but, more significantly, it resulted from a general withdrawal into private space. Many people had lived in their previous homes, in particular *wattas*, for long periods of time. In their classic study *The Watta Dwellers*, Silva and Athukoral (1991) highlight the strong community identities between residents of particular *wattas*. This identification with particular *wattas* remained strong amongst communities involved in this research. Many *wattas* are referred to by a number,

often the street number of the house that once existed on the site and even individuals who had been displaced a decade or more ago would say 'I'm from *watta* 44' or 'my people are all *watta* 92' (these are randomly selected numbers, not intended to refer to any particular *watta*) indicating the durability of these forms of identification.

These strong community ties within the *wattas* resulted in forms of social control, often institutionalised through the existence of local community organisations or societies. In addition to general 'societies' for the entire *watta*, usually referred to simply as 'the society', most *wattas* also have a women's society. Other specialised societies are common, focused at young people, sporting activities, savings (typically also women's societies) or cultural activities, so there is a dense network of institutional life in which many people are members of 2 or 3 different groups. These societies restricted the occurrence of anti-social behaviour, such as damage to common resources or dumping of rubbish in common areas. The degraded environment of the new large housing developments is one result of this loss of community structure, Cernea's 'social disarticulation' (2000). This was widely commented on in interviews and it is clear from the survey that this had a widespread impact.

***Watta* Dwellers No More: The Loss of Community**

Please write in your book not to break apart people who were living together like us. (Interview, D7)

The loss of community was the most significant negative change reported in the survey and in longer interviews with forcibly evicted households. Tangible changes were noted in the decline in participation in community organisations and the lack of trust between residents of the new housing blocks. Table 2 reports on 3 questions in the survey on trust in the neighbourhood from 3 distinct perspectives:

1. Those of all households in neighbouring *wattas* (who had not experienced eviction).

2. The situation before eviction, as remembered by those who had been evicted and were living in new blocks of flats at the time of the survey.
3. The actual post-eviction situation for those who had been evicted.

In all 3 questions there is a significant difference between the situation before and after eviction. In the new housing developments, a third of respondents reported that they knew no one, or only very few, who would help in an emergency, compared to less than 15 % in their former neighbourhoods. This is similar for each of the 3 measures. For the key question of trust, the percentage of people reporting that they do not trust anyone in their neighbourhood doubled after eviction. This is not a result of a sudden recent change, since the mean period of time since eviction for people responding to the survey was almost 10 years. It is, of course, possible that people are remembering their former households fondly in the light of the current difficulties they were facing. We used data from

Table 2 Measures of community trust in pre and post eviction (% of those who responded)

	After eviction	Before eviction	Non-evicted
Q1. Do people in this neighbourhood contribute to the safety of the neighbourhood?			
None	11.6	6.4	3.5
Few	32.2	19.7	29.5
Many	43.0	42.9	46.7
Almost all	13.2	31.1	20.3
Total	100	100	100
Q2. Do you have neighbours who may help you in an emergency?			
None	2.5	0.7	2.0
Few	30.9	14.1	25.3
Many	42.8	45.8	45.5
Almost all	23.8	39.4	27.1
Total	100	100	100
Q3. Do you think most people in the neighbourhood can be trusted?			
None	29.3	14.3	34.6
Few	51.1	52.5	49.8
Many	13.9	23.3	12.1
Almost all	5.7	10.0	3.5
Total	100	100	100

the non-evicted group living in very similar neighbourhoods as a form of comparison. Evidence is clearly varied, but in most measures of trust, those living in the new post-eviction housing reported much poorer results.

This picture is reinforced by the changing levels of organisational involvement, which provide a more concrete comparison between the situations before and after eviction. Poor communities across Sri Lanka have a dense associational network and *wattas* in Colombo are no exception. A woman interviewed from one of the non-evicted communities described how she had benefited from societies and her level of engagement was in no way exceptional:

Researcher: *Are you a member of any society?*

Yes, I'm in the women's society, the self-help society and the funeral aid society. I have been in the women's society for 8 years. It has 24 small groups. We meet once in a week. People can also save if they want. They can take loans. Each week the group till has a collection of 5,000 rupees (US\$ 50) or so. One can get a loan of 50,000 [Rupees] (US\$ 500) for 1 % interest. I got 200,000 [Rupees] to build my house. Now I have repaid the loan. (Interview, D2)

These dense civil society networks are clearly beneficial. Stronger community participation has benefits for the individuals concerned and also for the environment of the *watta*. Maintaining this level of community activity is a major reason cited by UN Habitat (2003) for the preference for in situ slum upgrading. Evicted households reported similar levels of community organisation in their previous neighbourhoods, but this has not transferred to the new housing blocks:

Researcher: *How is the level of associations among residents?*

100 % there. 10 % here. (Interview, D7)

This succinct answer highlights the scale of the problem. This woman had been living in the Sinhapura development for 7 years at the time of interview, yet she still only rated participation in community societies (often just *samithiya*, or 'committee' in Sinhala) as '10 %'. Another woman, also from Colombo A, linked this decline in community organisation with the problem of broader social disarticulation:

We like the previous location. That was our village. We could go anywhere during the night in our village, but not here. It's mostly because of the drug problem. The nights are louder. [...] When we lived in [Colombo A], the *samithiya* was our source of energy for everything. [...] I used to be more active within the community in [Colombo A]. I made hoppers for selling and had a small shop. Here I don't do anything because of this environment. You don't feel comfortable doing all that here, because you do not know half the people who walk in and out of Sinhapura. (Interview, I1)

Although there have been attempts by the government to initiate some form of organisation, the size and anonymity of the new housing developments discourage the levels of community organisation witnessed in previous neighbourhoods. The displacement, particularly the forced nature of their eviction from their previous community, is central to this loss of trust.

We have been brought to this 'who knows where' place and we feel lost and confused. There, we used to leave our front door open all the time. But, here we are scared to do that. People trespass through this complex all the time. So far nothing has happened to us. But, we are scared. There are lots of thieves and drug addicts here. They even steal the petrol from parked vehicles. (Interview, I2)

It is unlikely that such clear memories as leaving the door open and walking around all night are entirely a product of selective remembering. This decline in the sense of safety and togetherness is a key reason for dissatisfaction with new housing developments and closely resembles Cernea's (2000) notion of the risk of 'social disarticulation'. Although people who formerly lived in very poor quality informal housing in some of the many *wattas* around Colombo, now have permanent houses, they have lost the well-established communities that characterise these settlements. As this section has argued, this loss of community reduces individual well-being, since people now feel more afraid of crime and violence. It also has clear impacts on the quality of the new environment, as the community structures that restricted anti-social behaviour have also been lost. It is possible that these will gradually re-emerge with time but there is currently no indication that this is happening.

Conclusions: Reaffirming the Right to Adequate Housing

The dispersed pattern of underserved areas of housing in Colombo into as many as 1,500 distinct *wattas*, has meant that the ongoing Urban Regeneration Project (URP) has necessitated, and to a significant extent been funded by, large-scale dispossession of the city's poorest residents. The preferred option of in situ slum upgrading has largely been rejected in favour of rehousing the urban poor in large, high-density purpose-built housing projects. Individuals have been given new apartments in these new purpose-built blocks. This chapter has considered the impact of this change in relation to the UNHRC's 7-point definition of 'adequate housing'. There is no doubt that these rehousing projects mark a dramatic improvement in material living conditions, when compared to *wattas*. Yet this has come at significant cost.

The most obvious costs have fallen on the individuals concerned. The eviction process was traumatic for many and has resulted in the loss of important networks, trust and organisation. The actual evictions took place under very substantial coercion and some involved direct physical violence, including the army dismantling people's houses while they and their very young children were in them. The specially designed and widely admired National Involuntary Resettlement Policy (NIRP) has not been applied. The complexity of risks identified in the NIRP is reduced to one, homelessness, through the provision of housing as the only tangible form of compensation, for most households interviewed.

Yet the provision of housing alone falls short of international definitions of 'adequate housing'. This research has highlighted 4 essential aspects in which the provision within the URP is lacking. First, legal security of title had improved compared to previous housing, but was far from universal and of most concern. Members of 59 households reported that they had had deeds to their previous houses but, even after several years, had not yet received them for their new houses. Second, affordability: the requirement to pay for the new houses is unevenly enforced. Some people seemed to think it had been forgotten about, others had been told that their debts were accruing interest, but in all cases of resettlement since 2009 there was a clear connection between payment and receipt of deeds and although the payment requested was below market rates it posed a very significant

financial burden. The third problem is habitability; although in some respects this had improved, particularly in private spaces, public spaces were becoming increasingly degraded. This was linked to the final problem of social disarticulation, which was the widest reported loss with the new housing in terms of trust and the density of civic organisations.

Very significant improvements in all of these areas would be required for this housing to be considered adequate. In terms of legal security, deeds would have to be issued as a matter of course, naming all members of the household with right of ownership in previous locations. There should be much greater clarity about the requirement to pay for the new homes. Where houses are provided as compensation for previous homes to which individuals held legal title the requirement to pay appears to lack justification. Continuing habitability should be guaranteed through regular maintenance and the institutionalisation of community societies to report problems. Further efforts to tackle social disarticulation may require a reduction of housing density and a broad array of social services and community policing. None of these interventions will be cheap, but the financial rewards from the resale of the land are very substantial and wholesale relocation of established communities can never be a cheap option.

The broader costs go beyond those evicted and may affect the continuation of the ongoing process of urban redevelopment. One resident of Colombo A highlighted this very danger:

People in other *wattas* know this ... know what happened to us. They will never leave their *wattas* again knowing what happened to us. (Interview, D7)

The ongoing urban redevelopment scheme in Colombo depends on the continued relocation of *watta* dwellers into new housing developments in order to free the land for ongoing redevelopment projects. Without this relocation, commercial development in the centre of Colombo cannot take place as planned. Opposition to rehousing schemes has grown over the last few years, as suspicions have developed that these projects do not serve the interests of the urban poor but facilitate the development of Colombo principally targeting an international business and tourist elite. In February 2014, residents of one *watta* refused to move; they began a large protest, registered a complaint against the UDA in the Supreme Court, and attacked a Member of Parliament from the then ruling party

who came to mediate (Ceylon Today 2014). This protest was widely covered in the Sri Lankan media, yet following a process of military intimidation, they eventually moved in September 2014 (Perera 2015).

In January 2015, a very different national administration came to power based on widespread rejection of the militarised nationalism associated with the previous regime. If this new government holds onto power, it will face tremendous opposition to the continued use of violence in the eviction process. As final revisions to this chapter were being made, on 13 June 2015 the new government announced the suspension of forced evictions in Colombo. It is hoped that they will now address the history of forced evictions under the previous regime and take steps to ensure adequate housing for those evicted.

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Unsettling Resettlements: Community, Belonging and Livelihood in Rio de Janeiro's *Minha Casa Minha Vida*

Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia

Introduction

Whoever said this was a sea of roses was lying. It's a sea of roses because we're in an apartment, but they removed people from where they were to place them here and it's all been at a cost. (Rose¹)

... there's a girl that was classified for housing in Santa Cruz [Rio's West zone], and she didn't have the conditions to go there. Her mom lives here. She works and her mom takes care of the kids. How is she going to work and the mom take care of the kids in Santa Cruz? (Pedro)

Forced evictions and subsequent resettlements are dialectical processes that respond to a common logic of (and push towards) urban and housing dispossession. While evictions may precede relocations in chronological

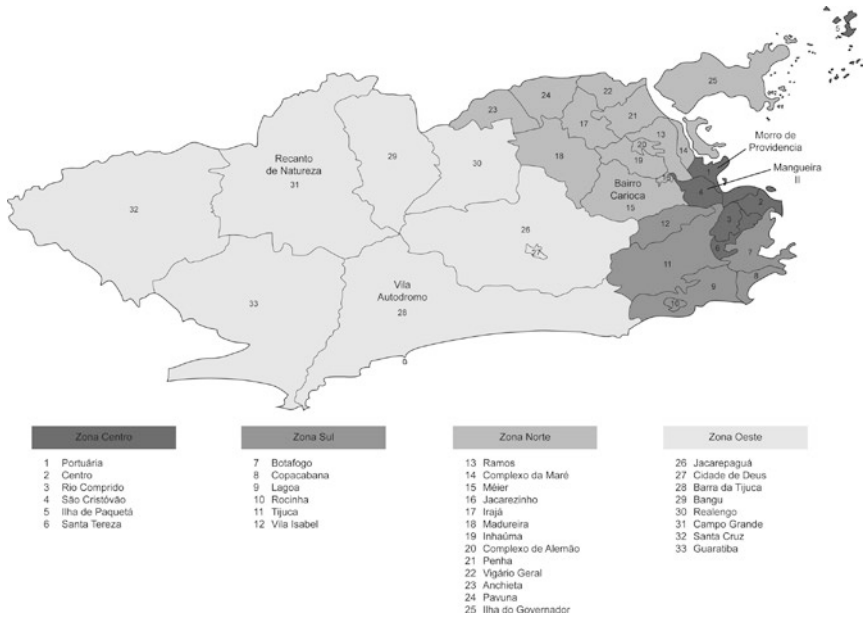
¹All names have been changed to protect respondents' identities.

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terms, they are complexly interrelated in other ways. A delayed new-build resettlement scheme, for instance, can alter the timings and dynamics of a planned eviction, while resistance to an enforced community resettlement can lead to unplanned changes in who is moved, and to where. Once re-situated, people's memories and aspirations can also disrupt or destabilise the official narratives of progress and improvement that tend to place the bodies of evictees firmly within the 'fixed' grounds of a new home site. Despite this relationality, studies that focus on evictions far exceed those that look at the lived experience of relocation. This may be due to the fact that evictions tend to be more explicitly destructive and unjust, whereas a relocation appears to offer an alternative of sorts or, at the very least, a shelter. However, the brick and mortar 'solution' offered by a resettlement does not always 'settle' the brutality and exploitation that characterise so many evictions. Instead, these injustices can continue, masked by newly built shapes and forms. Focusing on the lived experiences of resettlement or relocation can therefore help challenge the common-sense notion of temporal finality associated to forced evictions—opening it up to a broader framework that recognises its continuity across space and time.

In the opening quotes above, residents who were officially relocated from their central *favelas* to newly-built housing complexes in peripheral Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, through the national MCMV programme speak to the unfulfilled promises, lies and deep ruptures that accompanied official 'resettlements'. As we will see, such acts resonate strongly with previous forms of discrimination and disrespect they had experienced. I argue that, despite increased media coverage, popular denouncements (via films and demonstrations) and academic production (articles, debates and symposia) regarding the links between mega-event urban developments and forced evictions² (and other injustices) (see, for example, COHRE 2008; Gaffney 2010; Garcia Castro and Ramos Novaes 2015; Horne and Manzenreiter 2006; Olds 1998), the relationship between those processes, community life and livelihoods—understood here not only as work, but also as the ability to sustain and flourish in life—has

² It has been estimated that up to 170,000 people could be evicted due to projects associated with mega-events (Comitês Populares da Copa 2011).



Map 1 Rio de Janeiro municipal map, with research sites

been much less attended to. I delve into those connections by considering the emotional, geographic, material and economic dimensions of post-eviction housing resettlements as experienced by residents.

What follows is based on socio-economic surveys and life/work history interviews carried out between August 2013 and February 2014 in 4 different housing sites (Map 1).³ It draws on data from 2 of the sites where displacement and relocation had *already* taken place—one close to a metro stop (‘Triagem’) and the city centre (‘Bairro Carioca’), and another further out in the western periphery (‘Recanto de Natureza’, off Avenida Brasil). Despite their differences in terms of size and location, Recanto de Natureza and Bairro Carioca are comparable on a number of fronts: they

³ The fieldwork focused on 4 communities affected either by eviction, resettlement or its threat: Vila Autodromo (evicted and threatened), Morro Providencia (evicted and threatened), Recanto de Natureza (evicted/relocated), Bairro Carioca (evicted/relocated) and Mangueira II (evicted/relocated). The local coordinating researcher and sociologist was Camila Lobino from ETTERN/IPPUR/UFRJ. Her input was—and continues to be—invaluable to the success of the research and the project’s afterlife.

both materialise a ‘normalising’ turn towards a new wave of government-enforced evictions and displacement framed officially within a discourse of progress, growth and development; they emphasised ‘community-mix’ (that is, housing residents from a number of different low-income areas) yet remained sealed out from their urban and peri-urban surroundings; and they were heralded as improved versions that integrated design and social ‘lessons learnt’ from the first phases and mistakes of MCMV.⁴ Except one, all respondents quoted here were moved involuntarily (that is, their previous housing was declared un-liveable due to environmental risks or was to be re-developed).

Rio’s Urban ‘Revitalisation’

Rio de Janeiro, a dense metropolis of 5.5 million inhabitants, has in recent years been re-imagined as a ‘world-class city’, garnering the influx of economic and symbolic capital. It has been the focus of large and expanded investments in urban infrastructure, renewal and development. These changes have been made possible through a range of measures, including exemption from taxes and finance with reduced interest rates; transfer of property, primarily through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and consortiums for urban operations (Pedlowski 2013); and the removal of low-income communities from areas to be revitalised (Galiza 2015). Forced evictions and voluntary relocations to peripheral areas have been directly related to the ‘regeneration’ goals of the city through the delivery of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics (Garcia Castro and Ramos Novaes 2015; Gaffney 2010). Specifically, evictions have been justified in the name of the construction of new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines; sport installations; tourism-related infrastructure and removal from areas recently reclassified as geo-technically unsafe or environmentally dangerous (Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015; Nobrega 2015; Comitês Populares da Copa 2013).

⁴This mainly included design problems, but also addressed legal issues, such as ensuring the provision of land-titles before expropriation, and not requiring a spouse in order to have contracts in place.

The revitalisation of the city centre has been imagined almost exclusively with the privileged in mind, while working class communities have been the primary target for new housing in the peripheries—an unequal distribution of space and resources that occludes the deepening patterns of urban exclusion and inequality ‘marked by isolation (self-segregation of the elite, by denying an urban order of alterity) and by a new round of mercantilisation (valorisation) of large areas of the cities’ (dos Santos Junior and Monteiro dos Santos 2014, p. 405). These shifts in the way land is distributed, valued and divided have led to sharp and accelerated rises in central real estate prices and speculation, the re-valuation and gradual gentrification of areas previously considered undesirable, and a growing crisis of housing affordability for the middle and working classes. They have also galvanised a wave of popular resistances, protesting against the poor quality and high costs of current transportation, health and education systems; the ingrained corruption in political systems, including a lack of political participation; human rights violations and wasteful public spending (Vainer 2013; Halais 2013).

MCMV and Its Critics

One of the main avenues through which *favela* residents are being displaced, and resident relocations managed and facilitated, is through the low-income housing project called *Minha Casa, Minha Vida* (MCMV)—a federal construction programme devised by the Ministry of Cities under the 2008 federal Growth Acceleration Programme (PAC). Developed in three phases (2009, 2011, 2015), MCMV has sought to build millions of new homes for owner occupation to confront its historic deficit and noted housing shortages⁵, to generate economic activity and increase the workforce in civil construction and its associated industries.

Despite its large-scale provision of minimum standard housing and its access to home-ownership and related benefits (Cardoso et al. 2014, p. 133), serious deficiencies have been noted regarding the process and implementation

⁵ Estimated by the National Housing Plan—PlanHab—to be around 7.9 million homes until 2023.

of MCMV. These include issues such as: inadequate resident compensation and information; municipal pressures; lack of participation in devising urban plans or choosing alternatives; weak and individualised negotiation processes; illegal—yet officially sanctioned—eviction practices; and an attitude of disrespect and disregard towards property-less citizens (dos Santos Junior and Monteiro dos Santos 2014, pp. 402–03).

Concerns have also been raised regarding the kind of ‘corporate urbanisation’ (Nascimento Neto et al. 2012) facilitated by the lack of appropriate land strategies and instruments instituted during periods of land price boom, which have ended up favouring real estate actors more than social housing residents and their needs (Rolnik et al. 2008; Bonduki 2009). The exclusive use of for-profit private developers in the construction of these housing units also raises significant questions regarding the possibility of adequate and affordable long-term management and maintenance; about the appropriate allocation of stock and provision of other social services; and about the ability of its low-income residents to afford, not just new interest payments, but the additional on-site services, utilities and consumption items (for example, furniture) that come with it⁶ (Whitehead and Fernández Arrigoitia 2015).

The most common critique levelled against MCMV relocations is that despite the Municipal Law’s (*Lei Orgânica*) statute that prohibits moving urban dwellers beyond a 7 km distance from their original homes, most, though not all, of the MCMV complexes in Rio de Janeiro are located as far as 50 km away in the *Zona Oeste* (West Zone). This region, technically labelled AP4 and AP5, is Rio’s ‘wild west’—an ever-expanding ‘sub-central’ frontier where cheap land can be quickly found, acquired and built upon (see Map 1). Here, location is not just incidental, but central to the way the city is being imagined, elaborated and contested. The design of new BRT corridors, for example, appear to privilege access from the *Zona Sul* to ‘high value’ south-western areas, such as Barra de Tijuca, where many Olympic installations are located and middle and

⁶The credit card ‘Minha Casa Melhor’ offered by the CAIXA gives MCMV residents R\$ 5,000 in credit to buy home furniture and appliances at a 5 % discount rate. All, or some, of the money should be spent within the first 4 months with repayments made subsequently made in monthly instalments. This has been discontinued for the third phase of MCMV.

upper classes are increasingly flocking to, while the problem of collective transport between these poorer resettlement areas and downtown remains unresolved.

The dire lack of urban infrastructure surrounding or connecting MCMV projects can have a detrimental impact on residents' livelihoods; exacerbating the already existing imbalance between employment and housing opportunity (see Fernández Arrigoitia 2013). One of the key lessons learnt over time, from large-scale post-war social housing developments in Europe, is that poor-quality transport links limit people's access to jobs as well as services and retail, thereby severely curtailing their livelihood or social mobility opportunities, and facilitating the so-called 'concentration of poverty' which, in turn, has required major maintenance and improvement investments (Whitehead and Fernández Arrigoitia 2015).

Finally, displacements to the periphery can have social implications related to increased forms of isolation and segregation. For example, there is no tenure or income-mix designed into the project. Instead, new blocks (of exactly the same size and number of rooms) are grouped together according to means-tested classifications as a deliberate way of keeping certain classes apart. This is justified in the name of 'culture', through a discourse that naturalises the intolerance of different classes living alongside one another. Within the MCMV projects, the only identifiable variations that exist amongst new inhabitants are the places they came from and their reasons for going there (whether voluntary or involuntary). This was also true in the earlier evictions and resettlement programmes of the 1960s that led those from the same communities to exchange apartments informally as a way of recreating social bonds (Quak & Pilar 2013). Today, this initial lack of established networks combines with the schemes' remoteness and absence of public services, leaving some residents feeling vulnerable to the swift control of militias and corrupt management practices. In short, MCMV can be understood to be at least partially complicit in the creation and reproduction of socio-spatial marginalisation and segregation through the concentration of low-cost, low-rent units in distant and unconsolidated urban frontiers.



Fig. 1 Recanto de Natureza complex. *Source:* Photo taken as part of 'Forced Relocations and Livelihoods' project, 2013

Two MCMV Resettlements

Background

Sprouting along the heavily trafficked Northern artery of the city called Avenida Brasil, about 50 km away from the city centre, Recanto de Natureza (RN, Fig. 1) looks like one of many new-gated MCMV projects. Inaugurated in April 2013, it has a total of 384 units in 20 blocks, as well as a parking, a playground and a leisure area. Surrounded by industrial and manufacturing factories and other similar-looking housing complexes it has full infrastructure provision. Each of the 44 square metre apartments consists of a living room, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom and service area (with 4 units adapted for handicapped residents). It was built for families with incomes of up to R\$1,600.00 (£423) per month.

For our team, gaining entry into Recanto was not especially difficult. Its novelty gave housing officers reason to believe that the units were



Fig. 2 One lot of the Bairro Carioca complex

secure; that is, that they were not yet overtaken by the militia—an informal yet well-articulate mafia related to the drug-trade, which often take violent control over urban territories considered state-less in order to tax residents or forcibly remove them.⁷ They also felt that the physical and social provisions therein were some of the most advanced in the national housing programme so far and worthy of study. I was told that ‘having learnt from past experiences’ this new development was now built close to schools where children were guaranteed enrolment, and that social workers would now speak with residents *before* they moved in, to establish needs and offer relevant advice.

The second site we studied, Bairro Carioca (BC, Fig. 2), was initially visited with the backing and encouragement of municipal housing personnel who even drove us and gave us a tour of the grounds. Built on the lands of the public utility company ‘Light’ in the ‘Northern’ zone of Méier (Rocha),

⁷ Within MCMV, especially in the western Campo Grande zone, there have been many cases where new residents have been forcibly evicted by militia who go on to sell those apartments in the private housing market. Murders and cases of official corruption have also been in the news regularly.

about 10 km away from downtown Rio, these 11 condominiums destined for up to 11,000 people in 2,240 units of 45 square metres were said to be the *menina dos olhos do Governo do Estado* (the ‘little girl’ of the State’s eye)—a pride that rested on the fact that it was one of the only MCMV projects built relatively close to central Rio, with easy access to a metro stop, and with a plan to integrate health, security and education services on site (Pereira Veríssimo and Gomes Paulo 2013, p. 9). On their website, the project is advertised as offering ‘comfort, dignity and quality of life ... with apartments of 2 bedrooms, living room, bathroom, kitchen and service area ... destined for *cariocas* that for years suffered in housing of bad condition’ or who were ‘relocated due to vital projects for Rio’. The walls of the Caixa offices I visited were partially covered with BC’s images as ‘success’. The president herself, Dilma Rousseff (rather than the State governor or city mayor) had attended its inauguration. According to a respondent who was well-aware of the intricate political-performative power of this project, Dilma was ‘the only one [politician] who had the courage to show her face here ... but only once ... during her election campaign’.

Yet only a few months after our initial visit there, right when fieldwork was due to begin, the municipal workers who had initially been so forthcoming became highly uncooperative and—in full knowledge that our project time frame was very narrow—employed numerous delaying tactics to block our access. We suspect the sudden reticence was related to the highly tense and politicised environment that evictions and relocations had generated around the time of the study, including the 2013 summer protests, as well as with a series of structural deficiencies that had surfaced publicly after their ‘model’ project was flooded during heavy summer rains, damaging apartments. In the words of a resident, the *menina dos olhos do Governo do Estado* ‘had already gotten conjunctivitis ... a cataract, unable to see anything else, they’ve left us practically abandoned’.

Community and Place Making: Living with and In-Difference

US studies on the public housing demolition and relocation programme HOPEVI suggest that involuntary displacements, forced relocations and

evictions (different names for similar processes) undermine previously existing social capital strategies, increase economic insecurity, decrease supportive social ties (where these previously existed) and increase isolation. Furthermore, no positive correlation has been found between these moves and employment or earnings.⁸ The one consistent factor that *has* been found to make a difference in post-relocation satisfaction is community attachment and proximity to informal social support (Kleit and Glavez 2011; Manzo et al. 2008).

For many of those evicted and relocated to 1 of the 2 MCMV sites we looked at, moving represented a radical break and separation from their previous homes and lives. In both RN and BC, relocated residents came from what are officially, and often controversially, designated to be environmental ‘risk’ zones, or from ‘invaded’ land (favelas). RN relocatees came from as many as 29 different regions. For many of our interviewees, there was a concern that, in the absence of greater social ties or a common cause, this large mix of people still attached to their past communities were causing new rivalries amongst groups that were ‘beginning to close-up ... and soon, they’re gonna’ eat each other up’. Yet there were no simple idealisations either of past home spaces. As two individuals put it, there were,

... all types of misery (were) back there ... shootouts, flooding ... but we could find ways to manoeuvre that misery and cohabit ... but communities have a bit of everything, you have people living on steep slopes, people using all kinds of drugs, so if some guy shows his face there and it’s not to use drugs, he’s gonna’ be killed, cause the militia won’t accept it. (Pedro, BC)

‘I’m not going to say I got used to the *favela* but we had our friends, our everyday life in there. You know who was from there and who wasn’t, what one could and couldn’t do, each one respecting the other’s space. Those friends spread out, today we have friends in Campo Grade, we have friends still in social rent. ... we don’t have that conviviality anymore.’ (João, BC)

A still-developing sense of place and belonging was narrated through complex stories of attachment and loss, where the difficulty of adapting

⁸ For a summary review of US studies on forced displacement and their effects, see Goetz (2013, pp. 237–239).

to old favela life, including its topography (steep slopes) and its internal, often brutal rules of differentiation was tempered by the kind of trust and long-term relationships that can only develop over time. What is common to the two memories, then, is not an unequivocal love for their previous home, but a common sense of having lost established orders of ‘conviviality’ and respect known to them through a long-term commitment (and adaptation) to a place; a social richness that was still uncertain, precarious and even threatening in the new MCMV site. The contrasting temporalities embedded in and highlighted through their experiences illustrates what Brickell and Baxter (2014, p.140) have noted as ‘the multiple and interrelated events, or factors, that co-produce domestic injustice’ in processes of home-making and un-making.

In a different account of place-making, told from the perspective of a resident who moved voluntarily to RN, he compared the reality of his past life where people used to take drugs in front of his daughter right on his front door to what he described as the new ‘chic and sophisticated’ buildings from this MCMV scheme. For him, the materiality of these cement buildings embodied an important class-based distinction that separated him from a favela life he preferred to leave behind. While he lamented the distance he now had to travel to get to work as well as complaining about the insecure, solitary circumstances in which his daughter had to walk to school every day, he also felt a new sense of ‘tranquillity’ in being able to leave her alone at home after school; a positive assessment that could be linked to the fact that he moved voluntarily. A previous study of MCMV found that forms of acquisition (whether voluntarily through the market, or via evictions or resettlements) are crucial in determining the levels of resident satisfaction with their new spaces (Cardoso 2013).⁹

A different, deeper critique was offered as to why they—poor, often ex-favela residents—were targeted for resettlement in the first place, and how the novelty of the sites concealed in plain view a common, historic order of exclusion and segregation from their fellow citizens and urban environs:

⁹This has also been found to be true in ‘neighbourhood restructuring’ experiences in Europe where pre-relocation attitudes—that is, a desire to move, versus being forced out—were found to be directly linked to increased satisfaction or upward residential mobility (Kleinmans and Varady 2011).

From the moment that you live in a community you're a *favelado*, they changed the name of 'favela' now, but in truth favela was always *favela*, known around the world as such. It used to be *favela Rocinha*, *favela Jacare*, *favela Mandela*, and now they've invented this vulgarity of a term, *comunidade* (community) ... because for the government favela doesn't look good abroad. But, that name is a historic marker of Brazil, of Rio de Janeiro ... there was a time when the government wanted to fence in the favelas, you remember? And now, they've managed because what we have here is surrounded by fences and in the future they're gonna' put a wall here. If you look closely, lot 1, lot 2, lot 3, 4, 5, 14 ... here you have all manner of lots, all fenced in, all separated. Soon it'll all be closed off by walls and become an isolated community ... (Pedro, BC)

For Pedro, the discrimination lived and felt by those who came from favelas had not been eliminated but supplanted and transposed onto a new architectural order characterised by the repetition of 'lots', and by an urban layout that separated them with isolating fences from the nearby neighbourhood. In Brazil, the aesthetics of recurring lots has historic negative connotations, seen as a moral threat to the value of individuality and space. In his analysis of Brasilia's modernist architecture, for example, James Holston argues that in cultural terms, aesthetic standardised models of housing design are felt to be 'antifamily ... against the traditional social solidarities and structures of the Brazilian household' (1989, p. 181). Uniform apartment buildings only became popular with the middle and upper classes over time, as they represented 'not only that which is collective, but also that which is uniform, is considered bad and ugly' (Caldeira 2000, p. 284). A similar logic applies to the uniformity of boundary walls as an architecture of security, which, in certain sectors of Brazilian society, have become commonplace. To differentiate themselves in the use of an otherwise undifferentiated technology, the wealthy include personal, often elaborate, decorations on domestic walls (Caldeira 2000, p. 292). This material representation of individual personality and wealth contrasts sharply with the identical fences or walls around MCMV sites. Through repetition, uniformity and separation, difference is imprinted on these spatial boundaries as a sign of lower status. Power is here enacted not just by the act of imposition, but also by ignoring (or indeed, stumping on) what was lived and felt as the richness and diversity of residents' previous home space.

The materialisation of their stigma, we were told, came in other guises. For instance, in BC, the sludgy foundations on top of which the buildings had been built and the thin (7 cm, we were told) asphalt between their buildings that had already sunk and could no longer support the weight of heavy lorries, were felt as discriminatory and insulting, 'because they think if the people came out of a *comunidade* they don't have sewage, they don't have asphalt, they don't have anything so they throw these *asfaltozinhos* (little asphalts) and think they duped us'. The irony of moving some of them from a 'risky' favela zone to a MCMV site, where floods and inundations caused significant structural damage soon after arrival, was not lost on some who noted, 'This here is a risk area. That river was never cleaned, and it will never be cleaned, because they don't have the equipment, and if they do, it's stored away.' These words flipped the logic designating certain favelas as dangerous, naming the government's own site and their lack of official resources (or willpower) as the real menace. Indignantly, he continued to say that after the floods, the Civil Defence only did *uma maguiagem* (a superficial clean-up) 'giving us a mattress that was worth nothing, cause they think that because we're poor, we're forced to accept those ... those crumbs'. He saw the government's compensation for the damage as a cheap form of charity and '*deboche*' (mockery).

Another way in which social exclusions were said to be reproduced was through the rising and 'absurdly high' cost of utilities now faced, 'they say that *favelados* spend too much, but it's not that they (we) spend too much, but that the government does certain things ...'. This quote referred to the fact that residents had been promised fixed utility rates but were in fact being charged many times the expected amount. This individual insisted that even though there were ten people living in his house, they only cooked once a day and that 'even if you were cooking a cake every hour for a month, not even a bakery would use that amount of gas.' The stark contrast of prices, alongside the social forms of sharing and cooperation that had allowed for those and the sense of abuse currently felt, reminded him of the very different practices of sharing and 'community' which he had, and lost, in his old community *Mandela*:

... if a neighbour of mine didn't have gas, I'd lend him the money, or a gas cylinder. If a neighbour didn't have light, I'd hook up my light to his house.

Not here. Here if you hook up your light with the neighbour, you may as well put a rope around your neck and pull, cause it's (the cost) absurd. (João, BC)

He insisted that while the *gato* (illegal hook-up) systems they had employed to circumvent the insertion of private company rates were against the law, it was also against the law to steal from people:

... because those who steal are only *favelados* (ironically). Since 'Light' [electricity firm] is a company, it doesn't steal, noooo ... according to businessmen, that is. But, to us, an electricity bill of 200 or 300 Reais, that's the same as a *coup de grace*, because 200 Reais of an electricity bill is what you could use to pay for your child's prep school. (João, BC)

Over there, we didn't pay water or electricity, just internet and telephone. Here, it's a lot of things, you have the condominium, you have 'Sky' ... telephone and internet ... It's 8 set of papers every month, also gas ... the bills are coming in really high, too expensive. I'm finding them exaggerated. (Carlos, RN)

These recollections were not straightforwardly nostalgic or denunciatory. They contain a questioning of what was felt as a warped logic of legitimacy and formality that punishes the poor for less abusive practices that have been deemed 'illegal' and officially condemned due to their informality. One of the principal and explicit goals of the MCMV programme is to integrate residents into the formal economy through consumption, including the use of private utilities. There are therefore strict rules in place about paying bills attached to discourses of appropriate citizenship rights and urban order. If these new costs are not covered in the expected monthly instalments, such arrears are regarded (and penalised) as a failure of the individual to become 'formalised' in accordance with the dominant capitalist logic of citizens as responsible consumers. The quotations above challenge the social and economic legitimacy of those requirements, which are lived and felt as restrictions, rather than as a display of disorder. Many of our respondents, across both sites, irrespective of their employment status, had to cancel their utility accounts, or not use newly acquired electric appliances such as air conditioners (facilitated by the government issued 'Minha Casa Melhor' credit card). Some even

had to cut down on food and medication for their children to cover the balance. This concern with costs was also raised in relation to the ‘model’ commercial market that had been placed inside the BC premises as an amenity for residents:

Everything is expensive here, because the rent [meaning mortgage payment] itself is expensive. So, that’s a place for those who have the ability, somewhat, to go. The pharmacy there is expensive; everything is expensive. And you just can’t do it ... you go to the little market there, to buy anything ... You just won’t be able to ... it’s too expensive. People that don’t live here have a business there ... you have to give 3,000 Reais up front to be able to place your business there. What poor person is able to do that and also buy additional items to sell? I only know one person from in here that’s there. (João, BC)

In all of the examples above, resettlement was not described as a discrete moment in time, but as a process understood effectively through a series of practices, spaces and materials that marked a difference from their previous community life. Spatial and emotional memory figured strongly in the accounts. However, while there were enforced geographic departures from old networks and ways of living, there were also significant continuities in the ways exclusion and a separation from the rest of society was felt. Whether near or far from the centre of Rio de Janeiro, social distance expressed via senses of exclusion or discrimination remained. So far, the promise of a better life through MCMV home-ownership appeared—at least at this stage of resettlement—to be damaged or, at best, incomplete.

Broken Promises and Distance

Even those who were, on balance, positive about their new housing sites offered nuanced counter-narratives to the official story of positive progress and change typically attached to MCMV. They challenged the dominant discourses that presented their schemes as successes or ‘models’. In BC, some stressed that, while it was true that they were very close to a metro stop, the government had also ‘unashamedly’ built their site next to a rail



Fig. 3 Bairro Carioca school

track where very loud old trains passed precariously close to some of the apartments—causing unwanted and highly intrusive noise pollution. Even though there was a health clinic nearby, it had not been granted enough resources for delivering proper service to all residents, which meant that some were unable to use its facilities. In addition, the school located on site (Fig. 3) was too small to serve all of the community’s children.

In RN, where there was no on-site day-care facility (as promised) or nearby school, access to education was mediated by its peripheral location. Its isolation made traveling anywhere difficult and time-consuming. Consider the three quotes below:

‘They said, “Oh, when you go there, you’re gonna’ have a school, a local bus, a hospital, you’re gonna have it all!” Out front we have a kind of square close to the garbage zone that was gonna be a day-care! And, they never did

anything. Those of us who have little ones here, with day-care age, none of them are studying. Even the big ones, they don't study! Many here didn't get a place. So, you pulled your children out of their studies to come here, and they ended up without school. (Mariana, RN)'.

'Transport is complicated ... for work, it's further away. For doctors it's further away ... for school, it's far ... [Takes me] an hour just to get to school ... and walking because I don't have the money to be taking a bus'. (Pilar, RN)

'This place is far, everything is far here. My daughter has to do some tests for a microsurgery on her nose, because she's bleeding ... and I walked her down a path here with blood coming out ... We don't have a doctor here for her because none of them will see her, here none will do it ... so I'm gonna' consult another one in *Recreio* (different area)'. (Laura, RN)

As the traditional carers of children and the family, women are typically more susceptible to evictions and suffer greater social, emotional and economic hardships in their aftermath (UNHR 2012). The testimonies above show how these increased pressures and vulnerabilities can manifest themselves. For Pilar and Laura, what appear as gender-neutral issues of distance and access were deeply implicated in their economic possibilities and everyday working lives. Instead of saving travel time and being able to rely on on-site support with after-school care, they would now need to deliver and pick-up the children somewhere outside the complex. A lack of day-care facilities would have disproportionate effects on the women's possibilities to seek or keep work, which, in turn, did not allow some to pay someone to accompany their children to school—a double bind exacerbated by the absence of secure familial or neighbourhood networks, which for many were yet to be established here. Their economic independence was jeopardised and material security put at risk.

In other expressions of these gendered differentials, some of the women we spoke to had experienced break-ups in their marriages or had become single mothers after their partners had not wanted 'to go to the middle of nowhere'. In these cases, where they had decided to accept a MCMV unit in the name of better living conditions for their children, the move proved emotionally disruptive and reduced their networks of domestic support, limiting their possibilities of working outside the home. It also

increased their isolation and boredom, and we found evidence of mental health issues that appeared connected to this new loneliness. These findings are consistent with data from COHRE's Programme of Women and Housing Rights (2013) which conclude that policies and practices with gender-biased effects disfavour women within and outside the home, especially if they are the sole economic providers of that household.

Health facilities, too, were problematically distant. Doctors in the nearest clinics refused to see the daughter quoted above because, in Rio, health provision is tied to place of residence and she was not considered part of the appropriate area. This seemingly illogical arrangement, whereby residents had to travel (with bad transport links) to facilities further away from the nearest ones suggests a lack of communication or coordination between the different social services, and insufficient planning from the housing authorities.

Working Re-arrangements

In a recent MCMV 'Beneficiary Satisfaction Survey' (SNH and Ipea 2015) carried out by the government, the issue of job and income creation was very briefly mentioned. It accepted that if jobs were inadequate before moving, they were likely to get worse; but they also speculated that *were* residents to be asked about this deterioration directly (which they were not), they would see it as a rational trade-off in light of their new home. It concluded, finally, that public authorities should support the improvement of job and income conditions by making rents of retail areas, such as those in BC, lower and by providing technical support to help individuals move towards formality. These proposals are not unreasonable, but, on their own, remain disconnected from the realities discussed above regarding distance, community life, poor public and social services and lack of transport routes. Official post-occupancy evaluations that focus too much on the design and construction improvements or indeed deprivations of accommodation, while important, fail to capture how that materiality is entangled with the emotional complexity of resettlements and the everyday significance of community and multi-faceted aspects of work and income, whether formal or informal.

For many of our interviewees, relocation to a peripheral zone or to an area far from their previous homes had also meant a vast disruption to their everyday pace of life, particularly in relation to work:

‘We leave at the crack of dawn, those of us who work, then stop at 10 pm ... have to take a bus, and get off there ... Great [ironically] ... at that time, Brazil [referring to *Avenida Brasil*] is like a desert. So, there should be a bus-stop out front, a pathway ... I think that if the government, the municipality promised it, right? The day they handed over the keys here, they talked about putting a bus-stop, a path, a van for the children to go to school, a school for the children, but not anymore ... No one talks about that now’. (Luis, RN)

Others lost or changed jobs—a side of displacement which is normally discounted or minimised (in relation to ‘decent housing’ gain). A RN woman who used to make carry-out lunch for truckers in transit in the São Sebastião market close to where she used to live explained that she could no longer maintain her take-away shop from home because no-one was buying drinks during the day within the condominiums and there wasn’t a daily demand for lunches. Some interviewees had transferred from informal jobs as porters and security guards in central areas to work as janitors or guards in the housing site itself. Some, who had a combination of informal jobs had managed to keep one or the other, losing overall income; others had kept both but increased their commuting times substantially, and joked that they were often still confused about the right bus lines to work. One RN interviewee, pregnant with her tenth child, explained how she had moved because the state required her to get a better home, but that her partner ended up losing his job due to the move. This, of course, would represent a huge economic blow to their household income and to the possibilities of providing for their dependent children.

For another RN neighbour, the change of locale had meant a much more intense rhythm of work that had almost cost her life, as she’d fallen asleep and crashed twice driving back home—dangerous events that pushed her to open a food and amenities shop in her house. She now uses her living room as a vegetable market. Like many others, she told us about the intimidating way in which social service workers from the municipality tried to control home-based work by giving her daily reminders that such commerce was prohibited.



Fig. 4 Working space at home

Yet despite the official policy against it, and the fact that, as one resident put it, ‘It’s a little room, 3 × 3, honestly, it’s an egg’, we witnessed plenty of informal activities inside apartments, mainly by women, from hairdressing and manicures to cosmetic sales, shops and cafeterias (Figs. 4, 5, and 6). For a computer technician who had managed to maintain a home-based activity despite losing his previous shop, what he gained in terms of cleanliness and organisation within the new apartment he lost in square metres, ‘You don’t have a lot of space to actually do your work’. These spatial deficiencies have been discussed and addressed by the government in design terms within the newer MCMV phases of development. However, the way in which scarce space influences the ability to be socially or economically productive, and individuals’ and families’ shifting relationships to the home is yet to be researched. For instance, one respondent who was using the living room as a shop noted being pleased that they only had one daughter since traditional gendered notions of morality and decency would not allow her to share a room with brothers.



Fig. 5 Makeshift nail polish shop in front of a RN building

Conclusions

Residential voices and experiences presented here begin to challenge, in no uncertain terms, some of the mainstream discourses of Rio de Janeiro as a ‘world-class city’. The normative belief in stability offered by a purportedly solid economic and material valence of new residential projects (house as commodity) misses out entirely on the multiple *unsettling* effects of evictions and forced relocations. They fail to acknowledge the way in which security and insecurity coexist, how home, community and work are interrelated, and how a house offered under conditions of duress and difficulty does not solve the underlying precariousness of residents’ lives, but can simply rearrange and deepen the uncertainty that already marked daily existence. The urban geographies of inequality (re)created in this



Fig. 6 A home-made window sign indicating sale of hamburgers and hot dogs at BC

way can also reproduce and intensify traditional gendered structures of society. Faced with greater isolation in relocated sites, the domestic and familial responsibilities assigned to women impact upon their ability to perform other social or economic activities inside and outside the home.

As this writing was completed, and the 2016 summer Olympics and their infrastructure delivery time-lines loomed ever-closer, resettlements became a much more pressing issue, with an aggressive wave of ‘flash-evictions’ taking place in a number of different communities with the heaviest pressure being placed upon those that had been resisting resettlement for years.¹⁰ Even though this chapter has not focused on the direct aggressive violence influencing those processes, the *unsettling* accounts of resident’s lives in their resettled homes capture some of its legacies and embodied

¹⁰The most emblematic of all is Vila Autódromo, a poor community that sits alongside the Olympic stadium site and which designed its own participatory urban development plans as a counter-proposal to the government’s own initiative. For years, its 100 or so families (out of an original 600) were subjected to bouts of violence and continuous forms of official and extra-legal intimidation (for detailed news on these, see: <http://www.rioonwatch.org/>).

aftermath. And, while the way evictions are performed and resettlements materialised are different, the discriminatory practices and stigma that appears to permeate the way MCMV projects are designed, located and implemented highlight a common logic—one that can be labelled, in its effects, violent. Specifically, the affective dimensions of resettlements provide us with a picture of a subdued, more silent violence that rips at the seams of social networks, livelihoods and community economies.

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'It Felt Like You Were at War': State of Exception and Wounded Life in the Shanghai Expo-Induced Domicide

Yunpeng Zhang

Introduction: Displacement as a Sunbath?

To clear the land to host the Shanghai World Expo, more than 18,000 registered households were removed from their homes and communities. *Chaiqian* (demolition and relocation) or the synonymous term *dongqian* (displacement and resettlement) was represented in Chinese media as a social intervention, lifting the displacees out of housing distress and poverty. Smiling faces of the displacees were repeatedly circulated to celebrate the Expo-induced displacement as an epitome of *yangguang dongqian*. This metaphor of *yangguang* ('sunshine' in literal translation) paints the displacees as bathed in the light from the radiating sun, i.e., the party-state led bulldozer regime. By appealing to the symbolic meanings of sunlight in expelling darkness and conjuring up feelings of warmth, security,

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trust and vibrancy, the party-state choreographed itself as a compassionate, caring and paternalistic saviour.

This chapter gives voice to those displaced in order to show ‘what the daily grind of being displaced actually looks or feels like’ (Porter 2009, p. 397). It works to demystify the Expo-induced displacement by offering a narrative of the lived process of displacement and forcible eviction. Inspired by Katherine Boo (2012, p. 251) who contends that ‘better arguments, maybe even better policies, get formulated only when we know more about ordinary lives’, I draw on the displacees’ testimonials collected from formal and informal settings and examine their intense, layered and complex experiences of losing homes and communities, or domicile.

Coined by Porteous and Smith (2001, p. 12), domicile refers to ‘the deliberate destruction of home by human agency in pursuit of specified goals, which causes suffering to the victims’. Following this definition, this chapter brings the victimhood of domicile to the fore, which fills the gap in extant literature on residential displacement in China where technical, obscure and abstract intellectual language de-sensitises us to the lived experiences of raw exploitation and injustice (Wu 2004; Li and Song 2009; Weinstein and Ren 2009).

The domicile experiences are frequently compared by the displacees to those of war. It is argued that war is not only a dominant frame for them to make sense of their uprooting experiences but also a guiding logic in organising the displacement. This chapter unpacks the production of such warlike domicile experiences. It holds the eviction crew directly culpable for the sufferings of the displacees and explores enabling conditions that make it possible, and so easy, for the eviction crew to consciously inflict unnecessary pain on the displaced.

To address this, I draw inspiration from the literature on the state of exception. Agamben (2005) uses it to describe the suspension of law by sovereign power, which produces naked life that cannot be sacrificed but can be killed with immunity. Recent scholarship has convincingly demonstrated the ways in which the myth of competitive growth has been established as the new *doxa*, enabling exceptional practices to lubricate the flow of capital, allowing for disproportional amount of ‘freedoms’ and immunity for a minority of elites (Garrett 2014)

whilst at the same time depriving many of constitutional protections (Wacquant 2008, 2009; Nice 2011). This body of work diverts us from the extreme case of the camp, in Agamben's thesis, to more mundane, banal and everyday exception, reaffirming that the state of exception is omnipresent and ubiquitous, a normal state of governance (Sánchez and Broudehoux 2013; Baptista 2013; Swyngedouw et al. 2002). The Expo Park is conceived as a space of exception, which denies the rights of the displaced and tolerates extra-legal practices against them. It testifies to the normalisation of the state of exception as prevailing technique of governance.

In addition to the oral accounts from the displaced, the empirics of this chapter are based on a survey study, a collection of petitioning materials, administrative orders and newspaper articles. The objective of conducting/constructing an alternative survey study was to demystify *chaiqian* in the very language favoured by the Chinese elites. In total, 300 displaced were recruited from 2 giant resettlement sites (Sanlin Expo Homeland and Pujiang Expo Homeland). Amongst them, female ($n = 168$), seniors (aged over 60-years, $n = 190$) and retired ($n = 103$) displaced might have been overrepresented.¹

Moreover, I also consulted 2 books, *Fashengzai Pudong Shibo Dadongqian de Baige Gushi* (100 Stories from the Expo-induced Displacement in Pudong) (Du 2006) and *Pudong Shibo Dadongqian* (The Grand Displacement in Pudong) (Shanghai Pudong New District Expo-Induced Chaiqian Command Centre, Shanghai Pudong Construction Bureau and Shanghai Expo Affairs Coordinaton Office in Pudong 2006), written by journalists and pen-pushers commissioned by the political establishment. I argue that those 2 books can be read as Scottian 'public transcripts' (Scott 1990); texts of the ruling elites published to proclaim and legitimatise a particular political order and maintain their respectable façade. By identifying moments of moral inversion and legal suspension, and examining the ways in which they were celebrated in public transcripts, my agenda is to lay bare the hypocrisy and disturbing values of the ruling regime.

¹ There is no census data available to draw a definitive conclusion.

The Expo-Induced Displacement as a War

Many displacees chose to compare *chaiqian* to a war, as they feared that their command of vocabulary would not paint the disruptive events and their traumatic consequences accurately. Given excessive media products on warfare in China, the Anti-Japanese War in particular, and also the fact that many displacees witnessed or even served in wars, I did not pursue the semantics further at the time of my fieldwork. It is only after I re-read the officially sanctioned propaganda materials that I started to draw connections between official and popular narratives and understand the roots and significance of this war frame.

In the book *The Grand Displacement in Pudong*, forwarded by Zhang Xuebing (former Director of Municipal Public Security Bureau of Shanghai), military terminology and logic are more than abundant. For instance, leaders of the eviction crew are named as *junshi* (military strategists, p. 31) and their subordinates are represented as *bing* (soldiers, p. 46). The imperative of displacement within the set deadline is described as *junling* (military orders, p. 97). The special task force in charge of gathering intelligence and negotiating with the 'stubborn' displacees is entitled as *jiandaoban* (sharp knife squad), whose mission statement is to 'punch into the battlefield and seek most swift solution to any problems' (p. 203). It seems that war is more than rhetoric: it is the guiding logic for murdering homes during the Expo-induced displacement.

An immediate question is, exactly whom are the eviction crew at war with? To answer this question demands that we draw a line between friends and enemies. This friend/enemy dichotomy finds its roots deep in the Chinese Communist Party's revolutionary tradition (Dutton 2005). After the Party came into power, it radically reformed the language by simplifying the characters and introducing the *pinyin* system. This was accompanied by a grassroots-level dissemination and penetration of revolutionary vocabulary into the everyday life owing to the interactions with newly-arrived revolutionaries, on the one hand, and many mass campaigns and class struggles on the other. The upshot, as Dutton (2005) contends, is the militarisation of language and everyday life. As he noted, metaphors of revolution and war became a hegemonic frame for the elites and ordinary citizens to construct the reality (p. 138). This set

of militarised language continuously shapes the political imagination in contemporary Chinese society.

At the heart of this language lies the friend/enemy dyad, upon which the Party built its own security structure. In Mao's China, the Party relied on constant identification of opposing classes, dissidents and even ordinary citizens as enemies to mobilise the populace, justify the use of policing institutions and excessive violence, and thereby consolidate its position (Dutton 2005). This is also known as the mass-line campaign politics, a legacy that has been passed down to generations of party elites. Material and symbolic infrastructures—as in language, administrative organisation, and human resources—have stamped clear marks on governing mentality and rationality. Despite the effort to depoliticise everyday life (Dutton 2005), introduce liberal legality (Peerenboom 2002) and professionalise the bureaucrats (Pieke 2009), there is little sign of the demise of the campaign politics. In post-Mao China, it is still widely used to operate outside routine political parameters, sometimes outside legal confines, to mobilise populace and temporarily suspend conflicts within state apparatus, channelling available resources to pursue a definitive agenda within a short period of time. The distinction between friends/enemies still lies at the core, although the extent of material violence against the enemies is significantly less.

This political logic was translated into the organisation of the Expo-induced displacement. Coordinated by the *ad hoc* organisation, the Expo Affairs office, the entire state apparatus was activated to clear the land. Lines of responsibilities and chains of command were clearly drawn. Quantitative and auditable targets—as in the number of families to be displaced within a certain period—were adopted to ensure a swift process. With their political career at stake, state agents launched many 'wars' and 'battles' against street-vendors, against 'informal' businesses, and against the migrants (see *The Grand Displacement*, pp. 96–97, 156). Although the elites may refuse to admit it, the land battle against the displacees is another state-led class struggle in a new historical conjuncture. The difference from historical precedents is that this struggle is not against the exploitative or oppressive class this time, but targets the working class who the Party, at least in ideology, claims to represent. As the militarised official narrative implies, the displacees were potential threats and the defiant were immediate enemies of the state.

Zone of the Expo-Induced Domicide as a Space of Exception

Fabricating Necessity and Manufacturing Consensus

The Expo-induced displacement benefited significantly from centralised state power, which created important conditions for its execution as an exception to routine politics and its use of various measures, often violent and illegal, to appropriate properties and evict the dwellers. It runs the danger of missing a key point if we quickly ascribe the suspension of law to a thin narrative of corruption (Zhu 2012), or the lack of meaningful autonomy of judicial system (Potter 1999), or the distance between law on paper and law in practice. The proliferation of laws and regulations in post-Mao China has cultivated the growth of legal consciousness, and law has been used to successfully challenge and restrain the power of agents of capital (Erie 2012; Brandstädter 2011; Hsing 2010). The critical question we need to probe is, why at the time of the Expo-induced displacement, has the legal system failed so completely?

The literature on the state of exception offers invaluable insight into how we might approach this question. In summary, Agamben's work (1998, 2005) concerns the loose exercise of sovereign power in modern democracies that enables the state to proactively authorise and legitimise violence against certain categories of people, unrestrained by legal or ethical concerns. Life of the victims of the state of exception is reduced to *homo sacer*, bereft of legal protection and political status. Agamben pursues his inquiry further by looking into the ways in which juridical procedures are activated to invoke legal abandonment. He (2005, pp. 24–31) identifies the fabrication of necessity in legal discourses as a critical condition for legal abandonment. This line of inquiry is followed by Gray and Porter (2015) in their interrogation of the contradictions surrounding the compulsory purchase order in Glasgow, Scotland. Political and economic necessity justified the violation of private property rights, which presented an antithesis to the 'sacredness' of private property rights within the capitalist economy and value system. In view of this, they forcefully argue that 'state of exception is founded on the

fictional *necessity* [emphasis original] of maintaining “economic truth” as public good—even if democracy itself must be sacrificed’ (2015, p. 386).

Urban development in China is also powerfully legitimatised by similar tropes of progress and growth. Such discourses lent much support to the ruthless destruction of people’s homes and livelihood as an economic necessity. The Expo is not an exception in this regard. However, in this case, these economic necessitarian discourses are intimately related to, and further reinforced by, the party-state-led nationalist discourse. The Expo was constructed as a critical occasion to finally show off China’s re-rising as a global power (Schell and Delury 2013). The overriding strength of nationalism in China’s context derives from the century-long colonial history and the continuous efforts of political elites, intellectuals and the masses in exploring the pathways to modernise the nation and restore past glories (Zhao 1998). The variant written by the Communist Party paints the Party as the only agent capable of leading the nation to power. The moral element of this discourse requires individual citizens to subordinate personal interests to the party-state whenever necessary.

This is the principle underlying the design of the *ad hoc* regulation on the Expo-induced residential displacement. As an overarching legal document, this regulation only defines the obligations of the displacees and offers no concrete advice on their rights and the procedures to seek legal remedies. The displacees are obliged to submit to the needs of the Expo and evacuate themselves in line with the progress of the Expo project and the deadline specified in a demolition permit (Article 3). In the case of ‘stubborn’ displacees, this regulation refers to the legal innovation in Shanghai by-law on residential displacement—*xian chaiqian tengdi, hou chuli jiufen* (clear land first and resolve dispute later). This clause deprives the displacees of the rights to exhaust legal resources before they lose their homes to the bulldozers.

Apart from top-down legitimation, the ruling elites also rigorously manufacture consent and commitment to political and economic necessity on the street-level. Shortly after Shanghai had won the bid, the ruling regime organised a citywide debate on the significance of the Expo upon Shanghai’s future. Experts from local universities were commissioned to produce scientific evidence for the boosterism of mega-events. Party organs of state agencies, civic organisations, educational establishments,

publically-owned enterprises and grassroots governing agencies (residents committees and street offices) organised many political sessions to study the talks, the debates and the directives in relation to the Expo. These were accompanied with explosive positive mass media coverage and a massive marketing campaign in the form of street displays and community propagandas. Efforts as such effectively connected different publics to legitimatise and naturalise the Expo.

Practising Legal Abandonment

Whilst the state of exception has been normalised as a prevailing political craft, recent effort in applying this notion has questioned inequalities in its enactment (Nice 2011; Tyler 2013; Wacquant 2009; Pratt 2005). It shows that exception is produced and translated by a group of state agents in a chain of places. Those agents in such situations embody sovereign power to (re)produce categories of an abandonable population and police categorical boundaries. Decisions may follow legal procedures, or on other occasions, they rely on the discretionary interpretation by state agents, or on the interactions between state agents and potential targets of exception. This then leaves room for the possibility of opposing exception through covert or overt tactics. The implication for empirical inquiry is to identify agents, targets and triggers of exception (Jones 2009).

In the context of the Expo-induced displacement, I see the eviction crew as agents of exception. They are a mixture of career politicians, public servants, penal systems (court judges and the police), the grassroots organisation officers and private professional *chaiqian*, fusing the power of the state and the market. Such organisational design can benefit from the professionalism and efficiency of profit-driven private companies and the authority and coercive power of the state apparatus. The boundary of this eviction crew is difficult to minutely map out because personnel from diverse agencies—private or public in nature—are frequently recruited either as temporary members of the eviction team at times of staff shortage or as special force to handle some families.

The substance of rights in dispossession subjects to the discretion of the eviction crew. The displacees' rights are confined to monetary

compensation whereas rights to stay put, to legal protection of private property and to legal representation and legal justice, are denied in most cases from the very moment the party boss calls in the bulldozers to their neighbourhoods (Sargeson 2013; Qin 2013). Similarly, whose rights count also relies on the interpretation of the eviction crew. Established categories offer them convenient frames (for example, *hukou*, land and housing tenures) to create variegated citizenship during *chaiqian*. These categories split the displacees into local *hukou* holders and non-local *hukou* holders, rural versus urban household, and homeowners and renters, which ties their entitlement to their institutional identities, thus undermines the collectivity within the displacees.

Compensation—a euphemism to conceal violent undertakings and commoditise citizenship—is contingent on endless bargains and subtle plays of power on those encounters between the eviction crew and the displaced (Ho 2013). The eviction crew has substantial discretionary power owing, first, to their access to policy documents and legal expertise, second, to their knowledge of the bottom line of bargaining, and third, to the ambiguities of the legal framework guiding the practices of displacement. Bargaining is not played on a fair ground in that the eviction crew could make an offer or concede to the demand of the displacees within the budget limits depending on the situation.

Discretion in monetary compensation also leaves room to decide the targets of naked life. Prime targets are the displacees who insist on a fair compensation or who are unwilling to surrender their rights easily. They are usually portrayed as *dingzihu*, nails that need to be pulled out. Life as 'nails' is filled with excessive violence and the spectre of uprooting can haunt them for their entire life, as forcibly evicted displacees are very likely to end up homeless after violent evictions. Once they started to address their grievances to higher levels of state agencies, they are likely to become targets of severe political censorship and abusive physical violence, because the exposé of local state terror reflects poorly on the performance of local party cadres.

What is most disturbing perhaps lies in the fact that close friends, relatives and family members may partake in the production of legal abandonment. Some may be under duress; whilst in other cases, their

participation is their own choice. This can be attributed to 2 tactics of the eviction crew—(a) kin liability, holding relatives of a displaced family collectively responsible for holding out, and (b) atomisation, manipulating family relations, pitting one family member against another and thereby manufacturing cracks within a displaced family.

The displacees react in heterogeneous ways that shape the courses and intensity of their domicidal experiences. They had to undertake most of the emotional labour. Whilst a minority may bribe the eviction crew to secure a commoditised citizenship, many consider surrendering as the only way out. In this sense, political citizenship is turned into a commodity for sale to displacees who could afford it. The emotional life of the displaced within the exceptional space of the Expo Park is the focus of next section.

Wounded Life Inside the Zone of Domicide

Negotiating Domicide as Warfare

The eviction crew deployed a wide range of ‘warfare’ techniques to force the displacees out of their homes, causing them significant anxiety, anger, frustration and pain. So-called ‘negotiation’ meetings, experienced as ‘see-saw’ battles, were usually arranged at the displacees’ homes during their spare time. Invasive visits unsettled the public/private boundary and disrupted the temporal and spatial structures of the displacees’ everyday life. Family dynamics and everyday life of the to-be-displaced were subjected to the gaze and calculation of the eviction crew to strategise their offers. The biological time, the calendar time, the industrial time, the family time and so forth, that structured the quotidian life of the displacees became less relevant and were dictated by the clock time of the eviction crew. Many displacees also experienced what Bourdieu (2000) calls alienated time, featuring a helpless ‘wait[ing] for everything to come from others, from the holders of power over the game and over the objective and subjective prospect of gain that it can offer’(p. 130). This is the most brutal exercise of power, manipulating the fears and desires of others.

Due to the fixed deadline of the Expo, displacement was condensed to a few months or even weeks in an earmarked neighbourhood. Although the law grants the displacees up to 2 days of paid leave, none of the displacees was aware of this and none would have dared to take any time off in any case, given the highly disciplined and exploitative wage-labour market. The displaced were forced to prioritise and to accommodate new exploitation of their life. It must be remembered that the decision to move home is more than a simple relocation from one place to another. It concerns more than technical calculations of property values, compensation packages or commuting choices. It involves a dissolution and reformation of families, and the destruction and reconstruction of life support systems. For many displacees, it also requires deliberation over an alternative livelihood. Those decisions however were required to be heroically made within a few days.

Endless meetings during the day and late evenings were experienced as a torture to many displacees. The experience of Mrs Zhou is germane here. At the time of displacement, she was working as a welder and her granddaughter was only a few months old. Her daughter-in-law was already back to work. So, she offered as much help to babysit as she could whilst balancing her demanding job. Displacement and relocation could not have arrived at a worse time. After a few failed resettlement meetings, the eviction crew accusing her of being 'stubborn' and 'unreasonable' gave her a final warning. She recalled her depression and deteriorating health conditions after an intimidating and tearful visitation.

When they were in my house, I felt scared suddenly. I was not lucid. My granddaughter was crying all the time. And, I could not even hear her cry. My mind was miles away. After that visit, I could not think. I could not work. I could not take care of my granddaughter. I could not remember to cook for the family, either. I felt detached and apathetic. I stayed at home dumbly and idly. I could not sleep at night ... I could not focus on anything. (Interview, March 2012)

For the sake of her health, Zhou soon made a 'rational' choice and moved out. For those who 'irrationally' prioritised their job and livelihood and sought to disengage with temporal subordination, the consequences are

deadly, as in Wang's case. I met her in a public space and it did not take long before she had an emotional outburst. In 2005, her family were running a long-haul coach business after she and her husband were made redundant from their factories. They purchased the coach with the severance cheques plus loans. They had to pay a coach station daily to be able to work on a long-distance coach line. Their son was about to take a college entrance examination. Tuition, debts and subsistence—pressure of all sorts—forced the couple to practically live on the coach. Suspending their business to attend endless negotiation meetings meant imminent crisis in their livelihood. Unable to coordinate their schedules with the eviction crew, the couple was excluded from the negotiation meetings. Without any warning, their family was subjected to forcible eviction and their home was listed for destruction. On the day of eviction, Wang tried to commit suicide. Fortunately, she was rescued, but with lasting scars—dental prosthesis, several broken ribs and clinical depression.

If Wang's family was excluded because they chose the 'wrong' priority, denial of Mr Chen's rights was more strategic and cunning, with his son's complicity. Although he was the legally registered owner, he somehow was denied the rights to give any input regarding resettlement plans because the eviction crew considered him 'too old' and incapable of understanding the stakes and negotiated the whole deal with his son's family only. Emotionally distant to his son's family long before displacement, Chen had plans to live separately from them. The absolute domination by the eviction crew, with the complicity of his family members, forbade Chen from anticipating and making decisions of his own life. Chen now lives with his son's family and pays rent monthly, like a tenant. He cooks separately and spends most of his time in his small bedroom without much interaction with his son's family.

Most displacees had to prove their loyalty and support for the Expo as soon as they could before they were relegated to enemies of state. If they miscalculated the patience and tolerance of the eviction crew, *xietiaohui*—coordination meeting—was the final warning before imminent violence. *Xietiaohui* signals a significant change in the modality of the exercise of power. Those meetings were held in public offices, bringing the displacees to the gaze of state agents from various departments operating at different levels. The ritualistic setting and activities brought

alive the memory of *pidou dahui* (the struggle meeting) in revolutionary times. The central issue was to define and reach a consensus about the 'unruliness' and 'unreasonableness' of the displacees, which could then be used as evidence to necessitate excessive violence. Mr Zhu was a victim of *xietiaohui*. He had been recently discharged after heart surgery when the eviction crew knocked on his door. He was agitated by their repeated invasive visits and strongly insisted on not moving. He was later summoned to join a coordination meeting, with attendees including the police, the street office officials, the residents' committee officers and the eviction crew. Although he did not suffer from any physical abuse at this meeting, the tormenting 'thought work'—mixing persuasion, exhortation and intimidation—touched his nerves. Fearing another heart attack, he took the resettlement offer on the table.

Zhu's case also illuminates the geographical dimension in producing exceptions. The battlefield of the negotiation meetings can be extended from the homes of the displaced to public offices, and if necessary, to the workplace, educational institutions, hospitals, or whichever place that the displacees were using. Mr Zheng, a policeman, amongst some 40 policemen whose homes were within the Expo site, was summoned by the chief of the Public Security Bureau and warned not to cause any disputes with the eviction crew. Mr Li's son, an entry-level doctor, was called by the head of his hospital and instructed to convince him to take the resettlement offer. Mr Feng had to sign a resettlement deal while in his sickbed in hospital. A girl was called out from a lecture and forced to meet the eviction crew who travelled to the campus against the wishes of the family, who had begged for her right to education to be respected. For many displacees, those visits clearly demonstrated the eviction crew's capacity in unsettling their entire lifeworld—a main reason for them to cave in.

Violence as a Pedagogical Event

The zone of domicile is suffused with violence. Violence—material and symbolic—was not a last resort but an indispensable tool. Although not all displacees were direct victims of physical violence, most of them witnessed abusive violence during property dispossession. According to

my survey, 19 displacees were harassed or attacked by thugs during displacement, while 115 displacees witnessed their neighbours or friends become victims of physical violence. Furthermore, 248 displacees witnessed *qiangzhi chaiqian* (forced eviction) of some ‘nail households’ during which the dispossessed were treated without any human dignity (for example, torture, public humiliation, and so on).

In official representations, ‘nail households’ are usually portrayed as greedy, unreasonable, uncivil and selfish. Before eviction, such ‘truth’ about them has to be manufactured in order to assign them to this category, thereby justifying excessive violence. This is usually done through ritualistic coordination meetings, arbitrations, public hearings and other bureaucratic processes in order to maintain a respectable appearance of law. Each bureaucratic procedure was an abuse of coercive state power, a reinforcement of the slander against the evictees, and an escalation of violence. The bureaucratic terrorism was to accumulate bodily pain and paralyse the psyche of the evictees. On such occasions, those ‘nail households’ were denied the right to legal representation and usually only the person served with a notice was allowed to attend. Whilst some notices were written in a legalistic and ‘objective’ tone, some were simply insulting, stigmatising and attacking the moral characters of the evictees, as the 9 forthright calls from one eviction notice sent to a senior displacee suggest;

[We] wish your household to stop being unrepentant! Stop speculating and wishing to get a better deal! Stop greedily asking for more money! Do not lose out on the last opportunity! Adjust your attitude! Think carefully! Weigh your loss and benefits! Treasure your legitimate interests! Agree on a resettlement package as soon as possible! (Personal document, April 2012)

The organisation of final eviction is usually a spectacle of terror. The exact dates were rarely communicated to the displacees. Kafkaesque accounts occur repeatedly in my fieldwork notes—life of evictees was dictated by the naked power of the bulldozer regime, deprived of any certainty. Like Josef Kafka, caught in the labyrinth of bureaucracy, the evictees knew the inevitability of forthcoming evictions. Unlike Kafka, they were not able to disengage with it and struggle for a certain degree of autonomy and control over time.

As Charles Tilly (2003, p. 237) points out, 'terror is a strategy rather than a creed'. Eviction of one family usually attracts many spectators. It turns the spectacle of evicting one individual family into a public, exemplary and pedagogical event. It conveys an important message to the audience, especially those to-be-displaced, that centralised violence is at the disposal of the eviction crew and the consequence will be the same if not worse than those evicted.

I met Mrs Wu, a homeless evictee, in a discreet location in order to bypass political surveillance. She compared the eviction of her family to a blitz. Although she was served with an eviction notice, the eviction crew never came on the specified date. As the Chinese New Year was approaching, she thought the eviction crew would be generous enough to allow her to have a peaceful new year under her own roof. With no further warnings, her family of 2 were removed on a cold rainy morning. To ensure they were at home, the eviction crew first sent up a janitor of her compound to check, by pretending to ask for some hot water. After this confirmation, the eviction crew sent up their own team. Only after hearing rumbles from machinery and the noises from people walking downstairs, Wu started to realise that eviction was happening. Her intuitive reaction was to check the situation outside the window. The appearance of the organised eviction came to her as a great shock. She recalled, 'there were hundreds of people, like a flood'. It was not a disorganised flood, however. According to her, the eviction crew were marching toward her home in clear formation as judged from the patterns of their dressing. The frontline was secured by low-rank officers in riot gear, followed by police in their uniforms, protecting the government officials and supporting professionals from public institutions (such as doctors, firemen, *chengguan*- street order maintaining officers and so on), with a defensive wall of officers in uniforms setting up the perimeter of the violence zone. Outside this perimeter gathered many spectators and onlookers, who were strictly instructed not to film or take any photos but only to watch the spectacle. As she recalled, an acquaintance wanted to film to help her gather evidence but officers surveilling the crowds confiscated the camera immediately.

The militarised organisation was described by her as 'Japanese troops sweeping a village', graphically resembling the representations of Japanese

invasion and the brutality of the Japanese troops in dramas. Wu told her son, who had a long lie in bed, to dress and pack a few valuables before the eviction crew arrived. However, it was too late. Soon, their door, made of steel, was knocked down by force. Officers in riot gear dragged out her son in his underwear. After a short time of pointless fighting, Wu was pulled downstairs. Their family possessions were packed and towed away without auditing and notary statement. At the time of the interview, the whereabouts of their family possessions remained a mystery. All they saved on that day was her son's school bag.

After begging, Wu and her son escaped from temporary house arrest and were able to stay with Wu's mother. However, for the following week, Wu and her son were under *de facto* house arrest. Surveillance of Wu cost her reputation in her natal community because of the slander against her as an outlaw. Her son was followed wherever he went. He once attempted to get rid of the surveillance team but was close to being killed in a car accident as a consequence. Wu commented that, 'they [the eviction crew] have a whole strategic plan to evict you, to control you and to challenge your moral bottom line. They are the elites of our society, but of the most vicious kind'.

Wu was certainly right. As powerful as forcible eviction is, it remains costly to teach the displacees to be docile and may undermine the legitimacy of the state in the end. More discreet forms of violence were routinely exercised to exploit the fear of the displacees. Sometimes, this entailed an indifference or connivance to reported crimes or on other occasions, the eviction crew created conditions ripe for crimes, or simply encouraged and instructed criminals to commit crimes with pardon and immunity. Mrs Zheng's family were among a few families who fought to stay. One day, she was tipped off by a migrant worker, working for the eviction crew, about the scheme of destroying her door and stealing her family belongings that night. Around midnight, the main door to their home was knocked down and things were taken away. She and her husband stayed on the second floor and dared not confront the thugs. They did not even bother to go to the police, as she believed that the police were part of the scheme.

Staged crimes were not rare during displacement. Many displacees reported 'strange' burglaries by thieves with 'professional ethics' who stole

nothing but only messed up everything in their homes. No one hurt, nothing stolen, nothing damaged. Frequent nuisances of this kind made it useless to seek help from the police, regardless if the police could be trusted at all. Staged crimes fuelled the fear of the displacees, confused them about their vulnerabilities to real crimes, and made it extremely difficult and eventually impossible to calculate and contain their fear rationally. Many displacees chose to leave to contain such an unbearable state of anxiety instead of holding out longer with their neighbours. As Herzfeld (2009, p. 263) comments in relation to similar eviction tactics in Rome, such intimidation is 'the most unobtrusive kind of violence—the violence of creeping corrosion of solidarity'.

No Fish Survives the Cleanest Water

The displacees' suspicion of the collusion of the penal apparatus with the eviction crew is not unfounded. After all, the entire apparatus was mobilised to directly pursue demolition as a political priority. The penal apparatus was an indispensable force in this. Judges, legal professionals and police officers were dispatched to the very frontline of displacement. Nevertheless, they were not there to empower and protect the displacees, but to teach the displacees to be compliant, to tell them what counts as rights, to repress disgruntled displacees and to maintain order.

Judge Lu (2005) from Pudong was sent to a neighbourhood to offer the displacees legal advice and mediate conflicts. She wrote a reflexive 'confession' afterwards that rationalises the suspension of law and at the same time ridicules her own profession. Published on the website of Pudong Court and disseminated for political study sessions organised by the Party, her comment perhaps is reflective of the attitude of the legal system. Justice ceases to be the *raison d'être* of the legal system;

The court defends social justice. Between efficiency and justice, the court prioritises justice ... But the government prioritises efficiency ... it is perfectly normal for the government to sacrifice justice for efficiency. *No fish can survive the cleanest water.* It is impractical to speed up work when strictly abiding by the law. Only when the land is cleared can the Expo pavilions be built. *No need to worry about the sacrifice of justice.*

The corrupted justice system also bred opportunities for some displacees. A few displacees, especially those well-connected, were able to bribe the eviction crew to secure their rights and negotiate for a better deal. In some cases, this was done by discretionary inclusion of ‘illegal’ building structures for additional compensation. In other cases, it was more discreet. Legitimate documents were magically produced to qualify the displaced families to additional money. Such practice further blurs the line between licit and illicit. In a sense, the displacees actively participated in the commodification of their citizenship, sustaining insensitive discourses that displacement is all about money and in the long run contributing to the production of legal abandonment of displacees elsewhere. For most displacees however, no such option was available, given their already precarious economic conditions. The only way for them to avoid unnecessary harm and to escape the domicile zone was to accept the offers and leave, foregoing injustice and violence they suffered in this Expo-induced domicile.

Ending Domicide?

In this chapter, I have tried to make sense of the warlike experiences of the Expo-induced domicile, which are characterised by temporal-spatial submission, and produced by abusive state power and excessive violence, unrestrained by law. The displacees’ testimonies above serve the purpose of describing the lived experiences of domicile and thereby problematising the construction of the Expo as positively showcasing China’s new-found place in the world, and challenging technical language used in current debates on *chaiqian* in China.

In examining the production of domicile experiences, I drew upon Agamben’s thesis on the state of exception and have argued that the zone of the Expo-induced domicile is another materialised space of exception, denying the rights of the displacees to legal representation, private property rights and basic human decency. Legitimacy of, and consent to, those exceptional practices were manufactured through discourses of nationalism and economic necessity and practices of social mobilisation. The logic resonates with the revolutionary tradition of Chinese politics.

At the core is the friends/enemies divide, which is translated into the execution of the Expo-induced displacement.

I have further looked into the agents, targets and triggers of exception. I identify the eviction crew as primary perpetrators whose routine, technocratic and discretionary decisions manipulate the friend/enemy boundary and dictate the life of the displacees. Insubordination to the authority of the eviction crew is a major trigger of naked life, although it may not be the intent of the displacees. Whilst some displacees may buy their way out, most had to carefully calculate and choose sides before crossing an elusive boundary of acceptability. However, the brutal reality is, as Green (1999) insightfully puts, that one does not know the boundary until one crosses it.

The empirical examples also show that various geographies play an active role in the production of naked life. The eviction crew dominated both public and private spaces. Members of the displaced families were under close scrutiny and their embeddedness in social institutions increased their vulnerabilities to exhortation. They were forced to persuade other members to give up their rights. Occasionally, incentives were offered to co-opt some members and create internal strife within the displaced families. To an extent, everyone within the domicile zone is capable of being implicated in the production of legal abandonment of others. Furthermore, defamation is also a crucial mechanism in denying the displacees' human rights and private property rights.

In view of these, the final question is then, where is the hope for change? To start with, I see the potential in using rudimentary vocabulary in talking about justice and morality (see Nielsen 1991). Much pain of the displacees can be avoided if the golden rule of ethics—do unto others as you would have them do unto you—is adopted. I am also more sympathetic than many critical scholars towards the efforts of pushing forward legal reforms (Shin 2013). Raising legal consciousness and demanding for legal rights and legal protection can be a liberating and empowering process, especially for those who have limited resources, and can be used as a stepping-stone to pursue changes that are more progressive. Moreover, in the context of China, where most overt resistances face a legitimacy crisis and the threat of repression, law provides the victimised a legitimate resource to constraint the power of the ruling elites.

However, we need to be mindful that legal project has its own limits. As Agamben teaches us, legal rights invite the domination of the state over individual life, which presents limited challenge to the state of exception. In addition, displacement is not a simple matter of legal rights, which are narrow and individualising. At issue here is a moral right to decent life, to a secure home, to control own time, and to unobstructed access to full citizenship. These are on a higher order. Moreover, solutions to the violation of legal rights are frequently narrowed down to economic parameters that work to sustain the domination of economic reasoning, to provide enabling conditions for the exercise of symbolic violence and somehow, to normalise the commodification of citizenship as a substitute for justice.

More progressive struggle to push forward is to struggle for the control over the very definition of necessity. Legal abandonment is underpinned by economic and political necessity. This is a necessity defined by the ruling elites' thirst for private gains, by the capitalist mode of production and by exchange value. Such fabricated, naturalised necessity constitutes the core of the dominant value system. The alternative definition of necessity must be re-grounded on human needs. Only in this way can we destroy rather than simply oppose the oppressive system.

Such change has a greater chance of success through collective effort. However, we must also appreciate the value of everyday and atomised forms of resistance that aim at practical, immediate changes. Resistance of this kind may not lead to fundamental change of hegemonic power relations, but it highlights unjust and oppressive relations and cultivates political consciousness for more radical changes. It is only with this mind that we can do justice to the act of squatting by a forcibly evicted couple from the Expo Park. Although no serious threat to the ruling regime, they have set an example to others on how to more proactively take control of their own fate rather than waiting for justice to be served in an unforeseeable future.

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Domicide and the Coalition: Austerity, Citizenship and Moralities of Forced Eviction in Inner London

Mel Nowicki

London as Home in the Post-Recession Era

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, social, political and economic decision-making in the UK (and across the Global North more widely) has been framed around a rhetoric of austerity. In the UK, the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition government, in office from 2010–15, justified severe public spending cuts as an unavoidable necessity in the face of an ever-expanding national deficit. This chapter explores both the impact of austerity culture on forced eviction and ‘domicide’ (the intentional destruction of home) (Porteous and Smith 2001) in relation to 2 key housing policies introduced in England and Wales¹ during

¹ The bedroom tax has thus far not been implemented in Northern Ireland. As of 2014, Scotland effectively ended the policy when Westminster granted Holyrood the power to set its own Discretionary Housing Payment caps. As a consequence, the Scottish government now covers the cost of all those in Scotland affected by the bedroom tax. Section 144 also only applies to England

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the Coalition administration. Firstly, the criminalisation of squatting in a residential building, introduced in September 2012, and secondly the removal of the spare room subsidy, more infamously known as the ‘bed-room tax’, introduced in April 2013, whereby social tenants deemed to have one or more spare bedrooms see a reduction in availability of housing benefit. I focus on London in particular as a key site of forced eviction, due to the extreme nature of the housing crisis that prevails in the capital.

In the midst of on-going calls for austerity measures in the UK in this post-recession landscape, London has remained a global economic powerhouse, home to the highest number of billionaires on the planet (The Sunday Times 2015) and generating more than a fifth of the total UK economy (London Councils 2015). Yet this story of rapid recovery and prevailing economic success is unlikely to ring true for the majority of London’s citizens. London is by far the richest region in the UK, and yet it is also the poorest and most unequal; 16 % of Londoners are in the poorest tenth of the country’s population, whilst 17 % are in the richest (Trust for London and New Policy Institute 2015). Indeed, in terms of economic disparity, London is the most unequal city in the entirety of the developed world (Dorling 2011).

Since the financial crisis, Londoners on middle as well as low incomes have been faced with a seemingly insurmountable double bind. The city’s soaring property prices (which have on average risen by 39 % since pre-recession levels) (Nationwide 2014), coupled with stagnating wages have meant that for Londoners, accessing and retaining a home in the capital has become increasingly difficult. Alongside accelerating house prices and wages that are failing to keep up with living costs, the provision of affordable housing continues to decline, drastically failing to keep up with demand. From 2010–13, only 7 boroughs (out of a total of 32) met their targets for affordable home-building, whilst 11 built less than half of their targeted numbers (Trust for London 2013). Demand for truly affordable social housing outstripping supply has become more and more pronounced in recent years. In the inner borough of Camden, for example, the waiting list for social housing exceeded 22,000 households

and Wales, as it has not been implementing in Northern Ireland. Squatting has been illegal in Scotland since the mid-nineteenth century.

in 2014 (Department for Communities and Local Government 2014), with an average 300 new applications received by Camden Council each month (London Borough of Camden 2014). In the same year, less than 1,000 social housing properties were allocated in the borough, highlighting the staggering disparity between demand and supply.

As securing and maintaining a home in London becomes increasingly unsustainable, forced eviction has inevitably become an overwhelming issue in the capital, with numerous high-profile cases of such evictions emerging. For example, 2013–14 saw the plight of the Focus E15 mums, a group of financially struggling single mothers, evicted from their hostel in Newham and told they would have to relocate to other parts of the country, many miles from family, friends and support networks (Ram 2014). Other infamous cases of the eviction *en-mass* of social housing estates, such as the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark (Lees 2014), further highlight the increasing precarisation of home for the city's lower-income residents.

It is against this backdrop of incredible unevenness that the Coalition government implemented a series of cutbacks to welfare and legislative changes that have a direct impact on housing and hard-wire forced eviction, both as an immediate and future threat, into the everyday lived experiences of London's low and no-income residents. I argue throughout this chapter that alterations in housing policy that have been framed as necessary austerity measures are not solely the outcomes of economic pragmatism. Rather, they are a set of policies that reflect an ever-expanding ideology that frames the forced eviction of those on low or no incomes as morally just.² In the UK, the political and legal landscapes that undermine low and no-income citizens do so through a specifically neoliberal framework that condemns those that do not conform to approved aspirations of individualism and the acquisition of capital. These 'under-performing citizens' are subsequently branded social scourges (Tyler 2013; Lees 2014).

² Such strategies draw interesting parallels with projects of forced eviction in the Global South. Scholars such as Datta highlight the ways in which the figure of the squatter, for example, is normalised as an exceptional, deviant body through legal structures that frame the squatter solely through a legal/illegal dichotomy that refuses to acknowledge informal settlements as home (Datta 2012).

The remainder of this chapter considers this moral framing of forced eviction in London in relation to 2 key case studies; the criminalisation of squatting in a residential building, and the bedroom tax.

In September 2012, Section 144 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act criminalised squatting in a residential building.³ This was the first legislative change relating to squatting in England and Wales to be implemented since the 2002 Land Registration Act eroded rights to adverse possession (Fox O'Mahony and Cobb 2008). According to the Ministry of Justice, the decision to implement Section 144 came about as a consequence of 'public concern about the harm that trespassers can cause' (Ministry of Justice 2012). Despite concerns during consultation from legal, charity and activist perspectives that the law would only result in the endangering of those that are already most vulnerable in society (in particular those who are street homeless), Section 144 passed through the parliamentary process quickly, with little opportunity for public debate or contestation (SQUASH 2013).

The second key case study discusses the domicidal consequences of the housing element of a complete and controversial overhaul of the UK welfare system undertaken by the Coalition via the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Officially branded the 'removal of the spare room subsidy', but better known in popular language as the 'bedroom tax', the policy applies to social tenants in receipt of housing benefit. As of April 2013, if a tenant is deemed to have one or more bedrooms deemed 'spare' under Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidelines, the amount of housing benefit they are able to receive is reduced accordingly (by 14 % for 1 spare bedroom, or 25 % for 2 or more). The DWP reasoned that the policy had been implemented to bring housing benefit claims in the social rented sector in line with private rented sector rates, and to make available larger social housing stock to help reduce the number of households living in overcrowded accommodation (DWP 2014a).

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the implications of these 2 policies through a two-fold interpretation of the concept of domicile. Firstly, the physical and material outcomes of domicile are highlighted in terms of forced eviction (or the threat of eviction). Secondly, domicile

³Section 144 does not apply to commercial properties.

and its consequences will also be assessed beyond physical experiences of forced eviction alone, arguing that domicide also has a wider socio-symbolic impact. This socio-symbolic domicide is outlined via an analysis of the 2 policies as modes of governance (Foucault 1991) that further embed an ideological rhetoric that suggests that such instances of forced eviction are morally just. These policies are, I argue, part of a wider social rhetoric that denotes that those on low or no incomes are abject, deviant citizens, struggling financially as a consequence of their individual moral degeneracy, rather than through any failure on the part of the state (Mau 2003; Tyler 2013). Such rhetoric that encourages disassociation and disgust towards these particular groups is in turn internalised in the public psyche as natural, a 'gut feeling', normalised as an instinctual reaction, rather than understood as a socio-political construct (Berlant 2005). Such ongoing and evolving affirmation of a moralistic link between poverty and deviance creates something of a perfect storm, laying a political groundwork that enables the emergence of domicidal policies, such as Section 144 and the bedroom tax.

Findings discussed throughout this chapter are based on qualitative research conducted by myself during 2014–15, involving in-depth interviews with a range of participants across inner London boroughs.⁴ Participants included social tenants affected by the bedroom tax, squatters impacted by Section 144, housing activists, housing solicitors, housing association and charity employees. This multi-stakeholder approach enabled a strong understanding of the varied perspectives on the policies' impact on everyday home-making practices among the city's lowest-income residents.

The chapter concludes with a broader consideration of the recent historical context of British policy-making around the home and the way in which this has enabled a domicidal culture that legitimises the forced eviction of low or no-income citizens. In particular, I explore how domicidal policies such as the criminalisation of squatting and the bedroom tax have been enabled through an ideological coupling of the home and citizenry. This is particularly prominent in the fervent

⁴Research was conducted in Camden, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, Lambeth, Southwark, Haringey, Islington and Wandsworth.

promotion, particularly since the 1980s, of homeownership as the ideal form of tenure (Blandy and Hunter 2013; Hodgkinson et al. 2013). Such homeownership-as-aspirational rhetoric has been shaped in tandem within a binary discourse that heavily implies that those who do not, or cannot, realistically aspire to be homeowners, have ‘failed’ as citizens and are therefore undeserving of welfare support due to their deviant status. This neoliberal positioning of ‘good’ citizens as individual homeowners therefore enables policies that enact the intentional home-destruction of non-normative populations. As a consequence, the forced eviction of citizens whose home-making practices are marginal or state-dependent are framed as morally just sanctions that punish the undeserving and ultimately reaffirms neoliberal ideals that champion homeownership aspiration and deride all other forms of tenure.

Domicide

This chapter explores forced eviction in London in the austerity era through the typological lens of domicide. Domicide, meaning the intentional destruction of home, is a concept first outlined by Porteous and Smith (2001). Citing a wide range of instances of domicide across the globe, Porteous and Smith highlight the myriad circumstances and scales at which home is deliberately destroyed in the pursuit of specific goals, usually entailing financial and/or political power gains. The authors reference instances of domicide as disparate as displacement through war and ethnic resettlement (occurrences they refer to as ‘extreme’ domicide), to smaller scale (or ‘everyday’) enactments, such as a damming project in British Columbia that resulted in the submergence of several towns in the region.

Domicide, as defined and discussed by Porteous and Smith, provides a highly valuable contribution to understanding the politics of home destruction and has in recent years been explored as a concept by scholars in contexts as varied as post-conflict Bosnia (Ó Tuathail and Dahlman 2006) and globalised Shanghai (Shao 2013). However, whilst this chapter will discuss Coalition government housing policy in relation to Porteous

and Smith's original conceptualisation of domicide as the destruction of, or displacement from, the material home, it should be noted that my own use of domicide aims to extend the term to consider the impact of home destruction in relation to its socio-symbolic, as well as material, implications. Whilst the traumatic emotional and wider political implications of the physical demolition of, or forced eviction from, the home should not be underestimated, it remains necessary to extend domicide as a term in order to consider the ways in which home can be also be deliberately destroyed socially and symbolically, as I have previously argued (Nowicki 2014). Clearly, home is more than bricks and mortar. It is also a site of the geographical and geopolitical imaginative, a site that conjures intense emotion (Blunt and Dowling 2006) and one that bears a highly political role (Blunt and Varley 2004; Brickell 2012). Such politicisation of the home can be expressed in a multitude of ways, from the establishment and conduct of repressive gender roles (Brickell 2012) to the stigmatisation of class and income groups on the basis of housing tenure. In addition, whilst discussions of the bedroom tax or the criminalisation of squatting cannot occur without an acknowledgement and understanding of the very material nature of the threat of forced eviction, to focus on the physical destruction of home alone would be to miss an integral issue. The social destruction of home is a key method of governance by which to embed particular social profiles and normative understandings of citizenship within a population. Whilst loss of the material has a visible and immediate impact upon the individual, it is these socio-symbolic implications of domicidal policies that are highly pertinent in illuminating broader political tactics and psycho-social embedded understandings of particular social groups. In the case of the 2 housing policies discussed in this chapter, these understandings are framed through a social profiling binary according to 'self-sufficient/deserving' citizens versus 'welfare-dependent/undeserving' citizens and the subsequent moral justification for policies that incite the forced eviction of the latter. It is these wider socio-symbolic impacts that may give rise to better understanding of the long-term implications of the 2 policies and their place within wider governance structures that demonise particular populations in order to reap strategic political gains.

Section 144 and the Bedroom Tax: Austerity Pragmatism or Social Profiling?

I begin a critique of the criminalisation of squatting and the bedroom tax by highlighting the contradictory nature of the 2 policies, which implicates them as not being devised solely as a consequence of necessary economic pragmatism, but rather as ideological enactments. Both policies were implemented under the rhetorical banner of improving fairness across all housing tenures. Section 144 was said to be established in order to further protect landlords from the threat of unauthorised occupation and property vandalism, and the bedroom tax to bring social rents ‘in line with the private rented sector’ (DWP 2014). Both policies are however bizarrely contradictory in terms of their supposed goals versus the reality of the housing crisis in London.

The criminalisation of squatting purports to protect landlords of residential buildings from squatters. However, this legislation has been implemented against the backdrop of a city that has become extremely unaffordable even for those on middle incomes. A city that has seen instances of rough-sleeping rise 77 % between 2010–14 (Crisis 2015) and accounts for over a quarter of all rough-sleeping in England (Department for Communities and Local Government 2015). A city that contains 59,313 empty dwellings, 21,852 of which are empty long-term (Davies 2014). To criminalise those who are attempting to make use of empty space in a ludicrously expensive city therefore appears a strange form of justice.

The removal of squatters from empty property is also likely to lead to an increase in the number of people claiming housing benefit, as it is logical to surmise that former squatters will have little choice but to move into social or private rented accommodation they are unable to afford without state support. This is a particularly counter-intuitive outcome when we consider that shortly after Section 144 was implemented the bedroom tax and the Welfare Reform Act (2012) as a whole were designed explicitly to reduce the number of citizens in receipt of welfare support.

The bedroom tax was implemented both as a measure for reducing welfare deficit and as a response to the issue of overcrowding in the social rented sector. However, despite an original estimate that the policy would

save £480 million in the year 2013–14 (Tunstall 2013), only £373 million was ultimately saved, £107 million less than expected (DWP 2014). If we also consider that the DWP also allocated an extra £55 million to local authorities in Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)⁵ in order to reduce the shortfall in rent payments created by the bedroom tax, then this amounts to an even larger gap (of over £160 million) in savings between the original government estimate and reality.

The policy's impact on reducing overcrowding was also highly limited, as the structure of housing stock in this tenure means that there is very little smaller social housing to downsize to. Indeed, a report by the DWP themselves found that only 4.5 % of affected households had downsized within the social rented sector as a consequence of the bedroom tax (DWP 2014).

Both policies appear to have had made little contribution to abetting the housing crisis running rampant through London, resulting instead in a severe reduction in home-making capacity, choice and autonomy for those affected. Both policies inevitably affect the poorest Londoners, whose scope for choice and capacity for affordable home-making were already severely incapacitated before the introduction of the bedroom tax and Section 144 by rising house prices and the impact of stagnating wages and high unemployment rates in the aftermath of recession (Gregg and Wadsworth 2010).

I therefore argue that Section 144 and the bedroom tax are not solely pragmatic attempts to resolve an on-going housing crisis. Rather, they exist as part of a wider neoliberal ideology that condemns those that do not fit the normative model of the individual, market-engaged neoliberal. Instead, they are defined as abject, deviant citizens, undeserving of what government affords them. The experiences of forced eviction (and the threat of eviction) faced by squatters and social tenants affected by the bedroom tax are about more than removing people from empty or under-occupied buildings as a method of deficit reduction and fairness across tenures. They are strategies of governmentality that rely on the

⁵ Funding allocated by central government to local authorities to help struggling tenants meet their housing costs.

destruction of the homes and home-making capacities of particular social and economic classes in order to meet political and ideological ends. They are both a product and an enabler of an ongoing and historical process of embedding in public psyche an affectation and common sense of 'truth' (Berlant 2005) that the poor no longer 'belong' in London and are a threat to the living standards of the 'deserving' middle classes, as the following section will demonstrate.

Socio-Symbolic Domicide

Section 144

Section 144, as a change in law that ensures the physical removal of squatters, is clearly aligned with Porteous and Smith's original typology of 'everyday' domicile that sees the destruction of, or displacement from, the home as a result of political or corporate agendas on a relatively small scale (2001). What is also integral to the domicidal nature of Section 144, however, is the way in which it legally structures a criminal/victim binary; the squatter rendered a figure that the law-abiding property-owner should see as a threat. The criminalisation of squatting legally frames long-standing assumptions around squatters and squatting as a tactical avoidance of contributing to society, a form of theft in which deviant, abject figures take advantage of the financial rewards (in the form of property) hard-earned by their victims (economically aspiring citizens). The squatter as a contentious figure is certainly not a new narrative in the UK, with anti-squatting media campaigns during the 1970s and 90s in particular stirring public hysteria and entrenching associations of squatting with drug abuse, crime and other anti-social behaviour (Platt 1999). However, the criminalisation of squatting has been effective in the further debasement of squatting as a legitimate home-making practice; with Section 144 further encouraging a separation of the figure of the squatter from that of the vulnerable homeless person (Reeve 2015).

Indeed, the Conservative MP Mike Weatherley, an instrumental figure in bringing about the implementation of Section 144, garnered support through consolidating the notion that squatting should be categorised

separately from homelessness, as made resolutely clear in a speech he made shortly before Section 144 was passed;

I wish to dispel the myth, once and for all, that squatters and homeless people are one and the same ... In my experience, squatters do not fit the profile of the kind of vulnerable people that we should be looking out for ... They run rings around the law. And what these professional squatters lack in respect for other people's property, they make up for in guile and tenacity. They are organised and frequently menacing. (Weatherley 2011)

By dismissing any link between squatting and vulnerability as 'myth', and portraying squatters as guileful property thieves, Weatherley's campaign very consciously encouraged the implementation of the law as a means of protecting the hard-working homeowner from such deviant figures; a perception that squatters themselves admit they have found difficult to distance themselves from. One of my participants, Grace,⁶ squatting in a long-abandoned commercial property in an inner London borough, felt highly resentful that she had to make constant contact with the owner of the property, promising the landlord that she and her housemates would leave without attempting to contest an eviction notice once one had been issued (the squat, being a commercial property, is not subject to Section 144). Many squatters that I interviewed spoke of a sense of resentment due to continuously having to prove themselves as 'good squatters' who were not seeking to take advantage and dupe landlords into lengthy court battles. One participant, Lara, felt particularly perturbed by this constant demand for self-justification as she felt her actions as a squatter should ultimately not be of anyone else's concern. She asserted that all she was guilty of was making use of a long-abandoned building in an extremely expensive city overwhelmed by a lack of affordable housing.

Such expectations that squatters need to portray themselves as 'good' in order to be accepted as creating a viable home appears to be so entrenched within the public psyche that some squatters themselves appear to also frame squatting in this way. One participant who had squatted during the 1990s spoke of a need for 'responsible squatting',

⁶The names of all participants have been changed in order to preserve anonymity.

stating that when she had squatted, she had ensured she always paid bills and council tax on the property, commenting that many squatters today disrespect and mistreat property; 'they don't treat it as a home, therefore people think badly of them.' Caldeira has referred to this behaviour as the 'dilemma of classification' (2001), whereby those that are socially demonised replicate the same language and rhetoric when referring to one another. This aligns with a long-standing Foucauldian theoretical framing that highlights government utilisation of 'technologies of the self' that promote self-classification and self-regulation, and thus self-denigration and the justification of prejudice (Foucault 1991; Rose 1999).

The implementation of Section 144 has cemented this understanding of squatters as rogue citizens, both in the wider public psyche and internally within and among demonised groups, rendering the task of securing and maintaining an appropriate homespace an even more insurmountable task. When asked if she had seen a marked difference in the ability to find and maintain a suitable home since Section 144 had been implemented, Grace said that the effect of the law change had been immediate. Whereas previously it had been simple enough to travel around London and scope out empty properties, now most are deemed off-limits by squatters, for fear of prosecution. Indeed, during a meeting I attended about the housing crisis, a long-standing volunteer at a squatter's advice service in London commented that the phone had been 'deafeningly silent', as so fewer people were successfully able to find appropriate and safe places to squat in the capital.

The threat, not only of forced eviction but also of potential imprisonment and fining, appears to have truly altered the capacity of squatting to provide alternative, autonomous housing in an increasingly unaffordable city. As well as increasing the threat of domicide for squatters via physical forced eviction, Section 144 has also resulted in the entrenchment of a wider and more long-term socio-symbolic domicide through cementing the figure of the squatter as a deviant criminal. This, in effect, has led to the steady destruction of squatting as a home-making culture in London, and further reduced affordable living options for London's poorest in a city that has already reached unsustainable and unprecedented levels of unaffordability.

The Bedroom Tax

The domicidal home-un-making implications of the bedroom tax are, in contrast, more subtle and less legislatively direct than in the case of Section 144. Unlike Section 144, the bedroom tax does not necessarily forcibly remove those affected from their homes. Rather, the policy imposes reductions in rent that can be claimed in housing benefit for social tenants deemed to have 'spare bedrooms'. However, the bedroom tax provides fertile ground for both physical and socio-symbolic domicile in subtle and multi-faceted ways. Although, in theory, the most logical manner in which to avoid the penalty is to downsize to smaller social housing, the reality has proved far different. According to figures released under the Freedom of Information Act, only 6 % of social housing tenants affected by the bedroom tax have downsized (amounting to around 30,000 households) (BBC 2014). One reason for this is likely due to the lack of smaller housing stock available in the social housing sector. Figures obtained by *The Independent* revealed that for 96 % of tenants affected there would be no appropriate social housing stock available to re-house them (The Independent 2013). This, in effect, means that the majority of tenants willing to move would have little choice but to relocate into the private-rented sector which, particularly in London, is vastly more expensive than social renting. This potential movement into the private-rented sector as a consequence of the bedroom tax leads to a further precarisation of the home due to reduced tenancy lengths in the private-rented sector, associated moving costs (deposit, rent in advance, removal van costs, and so on) and an increase in unaffordability. Tenants in London who are willing to move are therefore faced with limited options; move into the private-rented sector and likely be unable to cover all rent costs via housing benefit (the exact same problem they had left their original homes to avoid), or leave London to live in cheaper private-rented accommodation, leaving behind familiar neighbourhoods, jobs, children's schools, nearby family and all the other components that, for many, amount to a sense of home and belonging.

For social tenants affected by the bedroom tax who do not downsize, there looms an overwhelming threat of financial struggle and subsequent

increase in precarious living due to the prospect of rising rent arrears leading to eviction. Tenants affected who do not downsize, or are unable to cover their reduction in housing benefit via other means, are likely to fall into rent arrears; indeed, 28% of tenants affected by the bedroom tax have fallen into arrears for the first time ever (BBC 2014), inevitably increasing the risk that tenants unable to control spiralling arrears will face forced eviction.

At first glance, however, it would appear that not all is lost, and that social landlords are mitigating the threat of forced eviction. All of the housing association welfare support officers interviewed for the purposes of this research stated that they were doing their utmost to ensure that tenants were not evicted, namely, by helping them to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), and by setting up debt repayment in instalments manageable for the tenant. All stated that these methods had so far seen relative success across the city, with 1 small housing association informing me in winter 2014 that they had only evicted 1 tenant affected by the bedroom tax so far, and that the tenant had had ongoing issues with rent payment before the policy had been introduced. However, the concern remains that the full impact of the bedroom tax has yet to be felt. One participant, the primary solicitor for a major housing charity, remains extremely concerned that the reason there have been so few bedroom tax-related evictions thus far is because tenants have not built up enough arrears to warrant landlords to seek and enact possession orders. He predicts that the eviction of tenants in arrears due to the bedroom tax could increase rapidly in the coming months and years as tenants slip further and further into debt. This ongoing threat of forced eviction is compounded further by a £40 million reduction in DHP allocations for local councils in 2015–16 (DWP 2015), and housing associations seeing further cuts to their funding (Power 2014).

Lack of appropriate social housing stock and the high risk of rent arrears due to tenants being unable to make up the shortfall in rent suggest a future rise in forced evictions for social tenants affected by the policy. However, there are also deeply concerning socio-symbolic factors that lie at its heart. The bedroom tax remains inherently problematic in terms of the way in which it reduces the home to stock, its residents to be swapped and shifted from house to house, from borough to borough, from city to

city for the purported purpose of austerity. Nowhere in Coalition housing policy does there appear to be recognition that a dwelling provided by welfare is as much a home as one that has been purchased by an individual on the free market. A recent report published by the University of York Centre for Housing revealed, perhaps unsurprisingly, that for social tenants affected, the bedroom tax did not necessarily trigger a decision to move. Many tenants interviewed had resided in the same home for many years, had been raised, and raised their own children, in the local area. Home for them is a site of family history, of belonging, of security in the familiarity of the surroundings they had lived in and around for decades (Rugg and Kellaher 2014). As one of my own participants, Jane, stated emphatically when asked why she had not considered moving to avoid the policy, 'it's [her flat] not just bricks and mortar, it's my home!' For Jane, a social tenant who has been living in her current inner London housing association flat for the past 20 years, the bedroom tax has fundamentally failed to acknowledge that the bonds and sense of ownership that can be felt towards the home does not necessarily vary according to tenure. As she remarked, 'just because I don't own it, it doesn't mean it's not mine.' Jane felt that through reducing the home to a material site, the government had completely disempowered her sense of having a right to her home, her autonomy dismantled through an inherently neoliberal rhetoric strongly advanced by the Coalition government that social tenants have fundamentally less right to their homes than owner-occupiers. As with the repercussions of Section 144, the bedroom tax enacts a form of domicide that has clear socio-symbolic as well as material implications. Increasingly for the social tenant impacted by the bedroom tax, home has become a negative site of financial woe and social disempowerment, with eviction due to rent arrears an ever-growing threat, and an on-going rhetoric that labels social tenants as socially parasitical further disempowering their right to home. Indeed, several participants spoke of feeling a sense of shame and guilt in being social tenants, that their tenure status meant that they were somehow undeserving of their homes. As with squatting, this implies a 'dilemma of classification' (Caldeira 2001); that the production and implementation of the 'good' versus 'deviant' citizen has been so fervently entrenched in neoliberal agenda-setting that social tenants have come to define themselves within these same classifications.

Through the bedroom tax, therefore, domicide is being enacted through a disconnection of home as a site of autonomy and personal control—if you do not own your home, then you do not deserve to be there. The bedroom tax particularly characterises such rhetoric of the undeserving nature of the social tenant in relation to space; implying that the social tenant is taking up too much of it when they have ‘done nothing’ to earn such purported luxuries as a second bedroom. The bedroom tax is therefore a stark reminder from the Coalition government that social tenants are subject to the whims of governance and political discourse that determines the type of home they are ‘deserving’ of.

The final section of the chapter further develops the concept of ‘deserving’ versus ‘undeserving’ citizenry and considers how domicidal policies such as Section 144 and the bedroom tax have been enabled through a decades-long tradition of the social disempowerment of the poor through their portrayal as maligned, undeserving figures of abjection (Tyler 2013).

Enabling Domicide: Homeownership-as-Aspirational Rhetoric, 1979–Present

This chapter has so far outlined the domicidal (both physical and socio-symbolic) nature of 2 major policy changes related to housing in the UK implemented by the 2010-15 Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition’. However, in order to truly understand the scope and impact of the domicidal nature of these policies, it is tantamount that they are considered within a recent historical context; past political stratagems and modes of governance having developed a strong relationship between citizenry and tenure that enable such policies to come into being.

Through viewing Section 144 and the bedroom tax as policies that exist as a result of connected social histories and political decision-making processes over the past several decades, we can better understand the ways in which the forced evictions of particular social groups over others come to be not only accepted within a democratic society, but also actively lauded. I suggest that the domicide that has occurred through the implementation of the policies has been enabled by particular stratagems of governance that have moulded the idea of what home should and should

not look like; namely that normalised constructions of home have in recent decades emphasised homeownership and property-as-equity as the pinnacle of home-making aspirations.

Particularly since the 1980s and the emergence of a truly neoliberal political stance in the UK, homeownership has been consistently shaped by discourse that explicitly promotes it as the ideal home-making practice over all other tenure types (Lowe et al. 2012). Across several decades, and by both politically right and left-leaning governments, citizens have been encouraged to believe that to own one's home is to provide the ultimate security for one's self and one's family and is therefore one of the predominant characteristics of a 'good' citizen (Flint 2003). The encouragement of British citizens to aspire to this particular discourse of home is exemplified by one of Margaret Thatcher's flagship policies, the 'Right to Buy' scheme. During the 1980s in the UK, the Thatcher government, through this scheme, encouraged council tenants to purchase their homes for a fraction of their market value. This policy consciously encouraged particular styles of housing consumption over others, strongly promoting homeownership over council tenancy as a means of ethical citizenship (Flint 2003; Blandy and Hunter 2013). The 'Right to Buy' scheme allowed for the weaving of 'particular values and ideals into the languages, contractual arrangements, practical incentives and general ethos of everyday life, including the life of home purchase' (Smith 2011, p. 255).

Such neoliberal methods that have embedded homeownership aspiration as a naturalised public ethos have been continually promoted since the 1980s. Indeed, as of 2013, the Coalition encouraged further 'Right to Buy' purchases by increasing the maximum discount to tenants (Wilson 2014). This was extended further in spring 2015 by then-Prime Minister David Cameron, who pledged to include housing association properties within the remit of 'Right to Buy' (Conservative Party 2015).

The irony of such huge financial incentivisation to breathe new life into the scheme in the midst of a supposedly austerity-driven government that is sanctioning social tenants for having 'spare rooms', implies a highly conscious desire to retain the concept that homeownership is the most commendable tenure. This conscious re-assertion of a

homeownership-as-aspirational rhetoric is exemplified further in a 2013 speech by (then-Mayor of London) Boris Johnson. Johnson's use of language when referring to Thatcher and the 'Right to Buy' scheme was entrenched in continued assumptions of property ownership as the pinnacle of home-making, stating that 'she [Thatcher] had introduced millions to the satisfaction of owning their own home', and that it is integral to British society that 'her great mission of a property-owning democracy' be maintained (Johnson 2013).

The re-emergence of 'Right to Buy' as a key Coalition policy complemented the government's drive to amplify individualistic and anti-welfare sentiment in relation to the home as a logical response to the economic recession. However, homeownership-as-aspirational rhetoric is far from a politically right-leaning concept alone, with Labour in recent decades adopting an almost identical discourse that prioritises the homeownership citizen above all others. Indeed, the Blair government(s) (1997–2007) actively pursued the discourse established by the Conservatives with a troubling binary-orientated approach that provided much of the foreground to current public affectations that frame social tenants and other non-homeowners as societal deviants (Tyler 2013). As Tyler deftly notes in her excellent psychosocial account of British social abjection, the dawning of the Blairite centre-left and the reinvention of the traditionally working-class Labour party into 'New Labour', saw the emergence of 'a new era in class relations in Britain, an era in which 'the council estate' would come to mark the moral boundaries of the nation-state' (Tyler 2013, p. 160). Alongside supporting the firmly entrenched notion that homeownership represents the pinnacle of good citizenry, the Blair administration remodelled social housing as the setting for social immorality, with poverty and welfare dependency rebranded a social choice, rather than an economic condition. This, now well-cemented, figuration of the council estate as a site of moral decay further justified the increasing encroachment of privatisation into the social housing sector through private finance initiatives (PFIs) and the urban regeneration of estates, where 'regeneration' can be translated as the mass eviction and/or out-pricing of social tenants to make way for luxury development plans (Lees 2014; Campkin 2013; Dyer et al. 2014).

Therefore, even the political party attributed with the creation of social housing and the welfare state have long embraced the figure of the 'good citizen' as one who is property-owning and equity focused, a stance, which shows no sign of abetting. Indeed, the Labour party in opposition, led by Ed Miliband, promised during their 2015 election campaign to 'help people get on the housing ladder' (The Labour Party 2015), failing to express commitment to increasing social and truly affordable housing numbers or quality. Such continued cross-party commitment to investing in boosting owner-occupation in a time of supposed austerity further elucidates the fact that policies such as Section 144 and the bedroom tax that disempower the home-making capacities of particular groups are decisions that are deeply founded in ideological, as well as economic, decision-making.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed forced eviction and domicide in London in relation to 2 major housing policies implemented by the UK Coalition government (2010–15), Section 144 and the bedroom tax. The ways in which these policies further entrench a normalising culture that depicts those on low or no incomes as degenerate citizens undeserving of state support are, I have argued, the prominent and long-term domicidal effects of neoliberal modes of governance. Finally, I considered the cultural and historical context of fervent homeownership promotion that has enabled such domicidal policies to occur.

In conclusion, I argue that Section 144 and the bedroom tax should not be seen solely as pragmatic austerity solutions in the wake of recession, but rather as distinctly ideological decisions that form part of a wider culture of affect in the UK that understands society's lowest earners as being poor on account of their own individual failings. Conservative and Labour governments alike have long distanced themselves from the welfare state first established in the aftermath of the Second World War; instead promoting an individualistic state model that values housing as equity rather than home. Such binary depictions of 'good homeowners' versus 'bad social tenants/squatters' have enabled domicidal policies that

hard-wire forced eviction, such as Section 144 and the bedroom tax, to be established, framed as the morally just sanctioning of deviants non-conforming with the standardised neoliberal model of citizenry. Under the guise of dogmatic austerity policies, and despite clear evidence that their implementation have resulted in little, if any, financial gains, the policies have been successful only in furthering such assumptions and perceptions.

In London in particular, those on low or no incomes are being driven from a city that has become entirely unaffordable for them. However, government policies continue to target the city's poorest, and those unable to meet housing costs or find suitable social housing in London are instead told to move to other parts of the country (BBC 2012). Particularly in light of the 2015 election of the first Conservative majority government in the UK for 18 years, it remains an extremely concerning likelihood that domicidal measures in the name of austerity will see the numbers of Londoners vulnerable to forced eviction continue to swell in the years to come.

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Bailiffs at the Door: Work, Power, and Resistance in Eviction Enforcement

Alexander G. Baker

‘Give us a kiss’ says the short man in a stab-proof vest stood in the doorway, puckering up to camera, jokingly. Moments later, he shouts ‘can I have a police officer please?’ Then starts invoking, ‘section ten. He’s impeding me, section ten.’ The police on the scene draw closer. ‘It ain’t clear what’s going on’ says the man filming, and starts trying to negotiate the precise details of a judge’s decision with the police. The volume rises, and a cacophony of voices fills the scene, until all players are shouting. This brief moment is taken from over 45 minutes of footage uploaded in three parts to [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) of an eviction in Broomhill area of Hucknall, Nottingham, UK (‘Bring the Banksters to Justice’ online video 08/27/2013). The man lurching for a kiss in the doorway is a bailiff, an appointed court official carrying out a writ of possession for Nottingham County court. The ‘section ten’ being invoked is most likely section ten

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of the Criminal Law Act—obstruction of court officers executing process for possession against unauthorised occupiers. The video is one of what appear to be hundreds uploaded to YouTube by anti-debt and eviction resistance activists, often filmed by people facing eviction arguing on their doorstep about legal minutiae of cases with the agents of the state and the court system. The lurch from the abstraction of the law to the often-crude physical reality of its enforcement is jarring. How does a piece of paper—a writ of eviction—transform into the material stuff of eviction; broken locks, household objects piled up on the pavement, displaced people? What work is done to make paper into property?

This chapter is an introduction to some aspects of forced eviction that have previously been overlooked and an intervention into the way academics think about forced eviction. Academic accounts of evictions have traditionally explored their function as a weapon of policing or accumulation or through dispossession and displacement. Studies of displacement in housing emphasise, rightly: the structural and economic factors behind *why* evictions happen; the political economic dynamics driving them; and ultimately, where the evicted end up. I argue, however, that we also need to focus on the *'how'* of evictions. Namely, researchers need to think more about the kinds of individuals, agencies and processes engaged in displacing people from their homes. From studying the tactics and technologies used, to understanding their impact on the very meanings of home and eviction, this chapter looks to the actors and enforcement practices implicated in the un-making of home.

In Anglophone research, civilian eviction practices and agencies responsible for conducting forced evictions have most commonly been subsumed by geographers researching life in precarious housing and witnessing eviction as part of a longer process of displacement. Emphasis tends to fall on the broad role of these agencies and the kinds of power they exercise in disciplining housing practices and urban regulation. The work of legal geographers such as (Blomley, 2003), or sociologies of securitisation and gentrification (Atkinson 2004), for instance, highlights the structural relationship between economy, law and violence. Studies focusing, meanwhile, on the military and paramilitary destruction of home as well as ethnic cleansing emphasise questions of military ethics, accountability and imaginaries (Bailliet 2007; Coward 2006; Weizman 2006; Weizman et al. 2010). In writing on the practices of the

squatter clearance program of the Hong Kong Police, the anthropologist Alan Smart (2002) astutely notes an absence of any clear academic narratives or debate regarding the role of specialised enforcement agencies in eviction practices. Over a decade on from his claim there is still little to show in the form of studies of the physical and 'front line' agents of eviction. This lack of research is further compounded by the different approaches, legalities, practices and agencies conducting activities we might consider evictions, making comparison between agencies at the ground-level vexing. For example, at the level of eviction practices, what does the bulldozing of a Palestinian house in East Jerusalem share in common with an eviction of Roma families in the south of France, the Anti Land invasion Unit of Cape Town's Police force, or Court Bailiffs enforcing a court order in Nottingham? Radically different bureaucratic, institutional and political doctrines and models appear to be at work. I contend that by closely studying specialised eviction enforcement in specific contexts, we can overcome some of these obstacles and begin to see how intimate eviction practices 'on the doorstep' resonate with other fields of policing and enforcement work, as well as reflecting larger movements in the nature of labour and spatial power.

As this chapter argues, this is made possible by a shift in perspective; while there may be a strong ethical and practical imperative to view evictions from the perspective of the evicted, there is an equally compelling strategic imperative to start looking at evictions from the perspective of those enforcing them, to ask questions about the experiences of eviction enforcers and the people who make decisions about evictions. There is a pressing need to move away from an image of eviction enforcement as an automaton or golem of polemical legend, towards one of enforcers as active agents in the creation and reproduction of spatial power. In this process, we must also acknowledge the privileged and ambiguous position of social scientists that experience comparative financial security and institutional approval in relation to people experiencing forms of social abjection and housing precarity. As critiques of gentrification studies emphasise, academics tend to move through and pass over with troubling ease and self-confidence, the spatial conflicts we research (Schlichtman and Patch 2014). However, by the same token, academics are also permitted the small luxury of asking questions of the law, of power and of political technologies. The usefulness of academic work in

unmasking some of the internal logic and justification of eviction is twofold: first, it provides a basis for intellectual reflection upon the perspectives and social role of eviction enforcers; and second, it helps to open up elements of eviction that tend to be esoteric or obscured to public and activist engagement and knowledge.

In this chapter I explore 3 constitutive elements of eviction practices that are relevant to not only my case study research, but that are also salient to other global studies of forced eviction. These 3 elements represent points of contact between eviction work and research into other kinds of security work or enforcement practice, as well as a starting point for investigative work and debate into eviction enforcement. The first, eviction *work*, concerns the way eviction specialists and professionals experience eviction as part of the process of work that routinises eviction practices and encounters with evictees. The second element concerns the technological aspect of eviction: the use of emotional, or more properly, *affective power* in the process of managing and evicting the body of the resident-occupier. The third and final category is the role of *resistance* in shaping and preceding eviction practices and the institutions that deploy them. In this chapter, I will outline these key elements using illustrative data from an ongoing research project into eviction practice in English cities. In particular, I draw from detailed individual semi-structured interviews conducted in 2014 at a court, with a bailiff and bailiff manager responsible for conducting residential evictions, and a number of interviews with private and social landlords. This was part of a wider case study of eviction practices in a post-industrial city in the north of England.

Bailiffs in England and Wales

In England and Wales,¹ the 2 main court-appointed bodies that can conduct legal evictions are High Court Enforcement Officers and county court bailiffs. Bailiffs in possession of a writ are the only persons allowed

¹The English/Welsh and Scottish legal systems are substantially different; in Scotland the Sheriffs Court also provides enforcement, which is done solely through them. There are also numerous differences in land law and housing law: for instance, Trespass also falls under statute rather than common law. For these significant legal differences the focus here is on the English and Welsh system.

to access residential and commercial properties to conduct evictions under the 1977 Protection from Eviction act.

County court bailiffs are, as the name would suggest, based in the county courts, and their legality is established in the County Courts Act of 1984 (that replaced the 1959 act). Each court has its bailiff team, overseen by the court manager, and has a bailiff manager (effectively the 'head bailiff'), supervising them, throughout an administratively divided region (The bailiff manager I interviewed oversaw a team of 11 bailiffs through at least 2 cities and 3 major towns, as well as a large rural area). The powers of a county court Bailiff with a writ of eviction include the right to force entry, with a locksmith, and transfer the property to the owner. Though they have powers of arrest in certain circumstances, such as obstruction, they tend to rely on the police to use or oversee the deployment of reasonable force for removal. County court bailiffs are also responsible for the seizure of goods in payment of debts, taxes and other legal costs. Importantly, county court bailiffs are civil servants and employees of HM Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS), generally salaried at about £19,000–23,000 a year (National Careers Service 12/02/2015). It is the county court bailiffs I expand upon in this chapter, as they represent the 'everyday' face of eviction enforcement in the UK, handling the vast majority of cases and writs.

High Court Enforcement Officers (HCEOs) are not public employees, but private individuals appointed by a court, who charge a fee for enforcement services from the landlord, and they can take on cases transferred to the High Court under Section 42 of the County Courts Act, which applies to debts over £600 as well as evictions. The plaintiff must apply for both the writ of repossession and the transfer at the county court level, with the transfer awarded once the court has found in favour of the plaintiff. The transfer carries a fee (currently set at around £200), and there is some significant debate as to whether it is the responsibility of the county court to notify the tenant of the eviction date, or of the HCEO to do so (Backhouse 27/01/2014). Many, if not most, High Court Enforcement firms believe it is the responsibility of the county court to issue notification. Under a 2004 statutory (de)regulation, High Court Enforcement Officers can now accept writs from anywhere in the country. Most HCEO firms tend to offer a guidance service for plaintiffs throughout the transfer

process, meaning that many high court writs are issued when a firm is already in place to provide access. HCEOs have greater rights of access for debt collection, can use reasonable force to remove a tenant or occupier, and are generally more substantially resourced and faster at enforcing writs than at the county court level. HCEOs are not numerous, but instead are an individual based within a firm who holds responsibility for overseeing enforcement. They recruit from a broader pool of certificated bailiffs, registered with the county court and usually employed by a specific enforcement firm, or contracted in from other firms to perform specific evictions. The firms themselves are represented by an industry body, the High Court Enforcement Association, which lists roughly 60 registered HCEOs active in England and Wales ('Directory of High Court Enforcement Officers' 15/12/2014—this number reflects the previous status of HCEOs as officers attached to a local court circuit). HCEO firms network more broadly with the debt and security industry, in many cases attending award ceremonies for the industry and actively marketing themselves. HCEOs tend to be the prominent media-savvy face of the eviction industry, and there are, at least, 2 television shows currently aired in the UK about HCEO activities. They are often not distinguished, in mass media discourse, from County Court bailiffs. Though they are restricted from dealing in certain kinds of business (especially financial services including credit and debt purchasing) HCEO firms tend to offer a broad range of additional security services such as private surveillance and investigation; for instance of employees suspected of feigning illness and errant partners, as well as common law evictions of travellers and trespassers.

Eviction Work and Space

The first key aspect of enforcement research: How can we examine eviction, and processes of dispossession and displacement, as a kind of *work*? Eviction as a process occurs as part of a quotidian and routine kind of waged activity. In this sense, I am not following a political-economic debate about the class position of bailiffs, but an ethnographic and sociological examination of the workplace cultures of security, following those found in police and border studies. The work of Steven Herbert (1997), Dick Hobbs et al. (2005), Alex Hall (2012) and others in numerous fields of enforcement work have

all emphasised the significant role of routine and its attendant factors—boredom, alienation, bureaucracy and experience that ground the security worker in their job and give their actions justification and meaning.

The legal evictions I researched started their formal existence as a court writ, which was in itself issued at the end of a process of varying length that led to a hearing. This hearing should not be mistaken for a thoughtful scene of deliberation and consideration, but is instead a quick process; a district judge reviews the case and decides whether to award possession. Socio-legal researchers' hearings have painted a bleak picture of the process:

[in some courts] 60 cases must be decided in 3 hours ... In practice where tenants do turn up, more time will be spent on the case, leaving less time for those where the tenant does not. (Hunter et al. 2008)

Judges retain a substantial amount of personal discretion over how cases are heard. Interviews with district judges conducted by Cowan and Hitchings (2007) have shown how judges attach 'worthiness' to tenants and landlords that carry strong notions of neoliberal subjectivity:

[district judge] I look to see to what extent the tenant has helped him or herself or is able to help him or herself and, if they are able to help themselves and do absolutely nothing to help themselves, then I don't see why the court should help them, frankly. (Cowan and Hitchings 2007)

These attitudes reflect notions of personal responsibility and a neoliberal taxonomy of the urban poor, dividing between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' subjects of the securitised welfare state through micro-divisions of gender, race and class that permeate Coalition and Conservative political discourse and rhetoric in the UK (Slater 2014).² This does not necessarily mean a tendency to straightforwardly and punitively award possession to a landlord is widespread; indeed less than one third of all repossession proceedings make it through to the final enforcement (MoJ Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics Quarterly, October—December

² English judges tend to come from a predominantly white British and male background as well as having access to the substantial legal training and experience and identity necessary to achieve the office. The 2011 Lords Constitution Select Committee report into Judicial appointments found that out of the 444 District Judges active at the county courts level, 21 were considered 'Black and Minority Ethnic' in the report, and 113 were women.

2014). However, it does mean that hegemonic social discourse plays a significant role in repossession cases as the ‘letter of the law’. English county courts are in a constant state of turnover, hearing and assessing large numbers of cases on a daily and weekly basis. The local social housing organisation that made use of the courts had a tendency to ‘block’ cases on a single day (usually a Thursday) to minimise the workload and make the process of attending court more efficient—sometimes up to 60 or 80 cases could be heard in a week (according to ‘Jen’, a Senior Rent Arrears Recovery Officer interviewed). The bailiff team itself shared an open-plan office with a number of other court services, and a major paper-filing system. To the outsider the court office is a troubling flow of files, paperwork and writs, and while most current repossession cases are handled through an online system called Possession Claims Online (PCOL), Paperwork, in particular having the correct writ to deliver and enforce, structured the daily routine and frustrations of the bailiffs:

I think a lot of stress [comes from] if I come in and we cannot get stuff done in court. But most of my stress is in the office here. You’re coming in and you’ve got to hunt for warrants and stuff like that, which is quite normal ‘cause we’ve got that many people dealing with warrants.’ (Interview, Bailiff Manager)

I’ll ... pick a day when I’m going to serve the eviction notice, which is 14 days prior to when I’m actually gonna perform the eviction. So for example, if it was the first of the month I was going to deliver it, I would say, right, I’m gonna set that eviction for the 15th, so I would then grid reference all the warrants so I know exactly where they are and how they’ll pan out together, and then I’ll allocate a time and a date to them, so again, for the example of the 15th, I’ll set them half an hour apart, so if I’ve got three, I might do the first one at 11 o’clock, the second one at 11:30, and the third one at 12 o’clock. (Interview, Bailiff)

The bailiffs experienced evictions alongside aspects of their job, and they slotted them in to a particular kind of routine that combined both a mapping of the city and a scheduling of the times of other debt collections, repossessions and writ notifications. They are also required to keep an activity log of the day that records events and the outcome of each action. The working day itself starts early; the interviews I was conducting happened at 7:30 in the morning, and the bailiffs would have their writs

ready by 10:30, when they would leave the court office and head out into the city. The bailiffs would be attached to 'patches' of the city, which were frequently rotated; this was done in order to stop them getting 'comfortable' and bored, but also to increase the efficiency of debt collections:

The bailiffs are on their areas for a certain length of time, then they move on. It's a risk control for me because they cannot get comfortable and things cannot happen. And it stops the boredom as well. To be perfectly honest, I've seen it where a bailiff has been to a house 5 days, and he's never got any response. He's never got anything back from the defendant, if you put another one in with a different character, he starts to get a bit of rapport and gets the warrant and gets feedback and payment. Every court I've gone to does it exactly the same, I think. (Interview, Bailiff Manager)

In his work on bureaucratic territoriality in the LAPD, Steve Herbert observed how the perpetuation of bureaucratic structures shaped the relationship that law enforcement officers had to urban spaces and crime scenes (1997, pp. 76–7). When engaging with the way that eviction enforcement is conducted, it is necessary to think much more deeply about how these bureaucratic structures and the territoriality of the city intertwine, particularly how they might interrogate or reproduce notions of 'territorial stigma' as conceptualised by Loic Wacquant (2007), where certain neighbourhoods and areas are given specific identities. County court bailiffs only had 5 days of formal training along with a refresher course once a year, and largely relied on previous experience for much of their interpersonal engagement when enforcing writs. The daily experience of debt and writ enforcement was expressed as an important factor shaping how bailiffs experienced the areas in which they conducted evictions and other kinds of work. 'Areas' therefore became understood as a site of learning and experience;

I also think a lot of training comes from my experience, so having done this a while and having worked in the roughest parts of the city, I tend to have been there, seen it, done that. (Interview, Bailiff)

They've all been round the areas, they've all done the areas. You get a hard area like Benford [pseudonym] where you've got to work a little bit harder because you've got people who are just digging their feet in and they don't want to move, but I think it's the way you approach it. (Interview, Bailiff Manager)

‘Hard’ or ‘tough’ areas were a recurring reference point of interviews with both bailiffs and housing managers; ‘Benford’ was not just a suburb, but a well-known working class estate in the city with a high proportion of social housing, and the subject of numerous academic case studies. The bailiff manager adopted the area as a symbolic reference point to explain the nature of on-the-job experience. Work, and the bureaucratic structure of the courts, clearly shapes how eviction enforcers understand the spaces and neighbourhoods they worked in, and how they developed skills. Dick Hobbs et al. have noted in their study of nightclub door security in Manchester how ‘seemingly arbitrary decisions’ of enforcement ‘were actually grounded in a fierce enacted logic stemming from the personal experiences that constitute the occupational culture’ (Hobbs 2005, p. 125).

This needs to be considered as part of the intuitive politics of eviction enforcement: How the rhythms and routines of bailiff work form and inform experience-based decision-making. How these rhythms intersect with the personal and social histories behind them, and more precisely, how the disruption of these rhythms and routines leads to the development of new forms of practice. The cultural theorist, Lauren Berlant has described intuition in terms of the encounter between affect and the historical. Building on Henri Lefebvre’s ‘rythmanalysis’, which examines the cadences, routines and patterns of everyday life, Berlant sees intuition as a means by which continuity is preserved and understood following perceived ruptures. ‘To change one’s intuition’, argues Berlant, ‘is to challenge the habituated processing of affective responses to what one encounters in the world. In this kind of situation a process will eventually appear monumentally as formed as episode, event, or epoch.’ (Berlant 2008, p. 6). Learned habit, on-the-job training and intuitive practice in eviction produces sets of emotional tools that are tested and tried in the process of eviction.

Affective Power

Affect, and affective power, is a contested and often messy concept in geographical literature. As its simplest; talking about affective power enables a perspectival shift that allows the author to account for the fuzzy

boundary between emotion, the body and space. As Emma Hutchinson has written in a recent article on emotions in security practice, ‘emotions have a history and a future. Indeed, particular emotional dispositions can be passed down, helping to form and reform social and communal connections’ (2013, p. 128), chiming with the way Berlant thinks about the intuitive in relation to history. This not only shapes the culture of the workplace, but also the cultural and emotional significance of the home. The home is a significant site of social reproduction, what Cindi Katz (2001) has termed the ‘fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life’, which exists in a relation with formal kinds of production, but also structures and shapes the workforce, significantly along gendered and racialised lines (Dalla Costa and James 1973; Ferguson 2008). This labour is facilitated through kinds of emotional attachment that ground forms of care (for children, partners and parents) in social interaction, and the positive cultural associations of the home often obscure tensions that inhere in the social reproduction of the home (Brickell 2012). In the UK, the home, and particularly home-ownership, has been constructed across several generations of hegemonic political and social discourse as a major status symbol and object of desire, as well as a significant source of financial security for owner-occupiers. Equally, the loss of the home, and housing precarity, inspire clear feelings of depression and desperation, and the removal of social housing can have enormous psychological and social impacts. People evicted from their homes have been shown to be more likely to experience longer periods of homelessness (Crane and Warnes 2000). In his work on expulsion from public housing, Slater contends that ‘an involuntary change of home, like bereavement, can be a devastating disruption of the meaning of life for the person or family affected’ (2013, p. 387). The home as an ambiguous space of both attachment and alienation might be described in the terms which the critical philosopher of race Sara Ahmed gives to a ‘happy object’—a set of relations and goals that are seen as key to happiness, even when they are not in practice (2010, p. 26). Even though they may not always be physically violent or aggressive, forcible evictions from housing are often, for lack of any better terms, a dismemberment of social reproductive affective relationships. They deprive the evictee of the immediate means and strategies they use to reproduce themselves, and sever the social relations that

housing, and the home, sustain. As such, eviction work often involves the breaking of emotional ties and an encounter between the law, force and intimate relations.

In interviews, a strong emphasis was placed on being able to ‘talk’ across all aspects of the job:

Bailiff Manager: One of the questions I’ve always been asked is ‘Have you ever been assaulted?’ Touch wood [he taps the table], all the time I’ve worked in this job, I’ve never been assaulted yet, because I can talk to people.

Researcher: *What does talking to people involve?*

Bailiff Manager: I can talk to people, I can come to their level, I know how they ... I know the problems they’ve got. (Interview, Bailiff Manager)

Body language was also significant:

I try to coach people with their body language, and their tone and explain to them that obviously words are 10 % of what people hear—tone, body language, that’s the overriding factor in times of high stress, so it’s important that we maintain a safe but open posture, it’s important that we maintain a moderated tone, and we don’t let emotions rise up and cloud what we’re doing. (Interview, Bailiff)

There is a need to consider the affective and emotional power of eviction as a significant element of the process and outcomes of eviction. Here, I want to consider the ways that affective power functions as a *technology of eviction*. This power described by the bailiff is the instrumentalised second-guessing of the affective disposition of the person being evicted. Experience of previous evictions and enforcement actions, and forms of strategic empathy, all came into play in shaping how this power was used.

While the moderation of threat and tone in fields of commercial enforcement have been central to the concept of emotional labour since Arlie Russell Hochschild’s groundbreaking work in *The Managed Heart* (2012, p. 141), it is only more recently that debt enforcement has been expanded on as a field of affective manipulation and power. Joe Deville’s (2015) work in *Lived Economies of Default*, on ‘affective captation’ in

escalation processes, has provided useful ways to think about the long-term strategies of debt collection as a form of affective management. Deville has shown how there is an expanding industry of emotional-material technologies involved in prioritising rent over other debts in an increasingly predatory debt-based economy in which the gap between cost of living and real pay is ‘plugged’ by indebtedness. Bailiffs arrive at the doorstep to conduct an eviction at the end of a process of engagement and persuasion with the tenant of varying duration and intensity. All of the housing associations interviewed used some form of formal escalation arrangement in arrears recovery, some following schemes similar to those used in the commercial debt sector, and there was a tendency to network this with formal and informal knowledge and data about tenants (for instance if they had a history of violence or a criminal record). In the city the bailiffs were active in, the local housing association used specialist rent arrears recovery officers who emphasised persistent engagement, both face-to-face and over the phone, with tenants in rent arrears. As a result, the arrival of the bailiff was not the first point of contact with the social tenant but a continuation of an ongoing process by the housing association and the courts to recover arrears from the defendant. Bailiffs enter into this form of affective micro-management, and they paid close attention to body language and tone. This involved both a kind of self-monitoring and a form of intuitive surveillance to test the emotional disposition of the tenant:

you see clenching of fists, and that’s an early indicator, you can see a slight, almost vibration on them, their colour changes, so they’ll go redder as they’re starting to ... their breathing gets a little bit harder, their pupils dilate a bit more ... *you can just tell* [emphasis my own]. (Interview, Bailiff)

The choice of these words—‘you can just tell’—reflect an inability to articulate an intuitive decision-making process for identifying and anticipating potential violence. While the bailiff is trying to present emotional monitoring as a kind of alternative to physical force, he is also beginning to describe the intuitive practices and forms of strategic empathy that trigger physical action when attending an eviction, and might be cause to call for assistance. In her work on detention centre security staff, Alex

Hall has termed a similar process ‘bodywatching’, a continuous monitoring of the body of the subject of disciplinary power for slight signs and ‘tells’ of potential resistance to the normative disciplinary order: ‘The term “body” designated a dual importance’ within the system of the detention centre—both as a referent for the internal bureaucratic system that needed to be tracked, detained, and deported, but also ‘the body that might betray itself and provide some clues of a man’s intent. It was this body that the officers were trained to observe and scrutinise’ (Hall 2012, pp. 35–6). Bodywatching is an attempt at monitoring the emotional and affective disposition of the subject of disciplinary power, and appears linked to what Didier Fassin, building on the work of Louis Althusser, terms the ‘embodied memory’ of ideology; seemingly reflexive or immunological responses to the exercise of particular kinds of power, such as police stop-and-search routines: ‘before we even have time to think, the body remembers’ (2013, p. 9). These intuitive reactions are important in bringing preconceptions about the body to the fore. The bailiff responsible for the training course at the court expressed anxieties about bailiffs who ‘don’t have control of their emotions and agendas against certain groups’, such as women or ethnic minorities, emphasising that they had been ‘phased out’. The bailiff saw emotion as a field of apolitical or post-political activity from which racial and gendered prejudices and antagonisms could be extirpated.

The practices of affective power that articulate themselves on the doorstep in the process of removing the tenant from the property, are situated within the context of a larger process of affective management and economies of debt. How eviction enforcement staff manage their own emotions in the short and long term are essential to understanding how eviction enforcement takes place and is justifiable to those who conduct it. How successful practices of affective management and bodywatching are, whether they do in fact deflect or defer forms of physical violence, and what the counter-strategies and bargaining tools used to preserve the home, are equally as essential. This leads to the final thematic of eviction enforcement I want to highlight in this chapter; how the resistance of those evicted shapes the manner in which eviction is undertaken.

Resistance

Resistance imprints upon the way evictions are conducted and orchestrated. When county courts in the UK talk about ‘risk’, resistance becomes ‘bundled in’ to other discourses around safety, security and anticipation. Risk refers both to accidental or unintentional threats and dangers (for instance, asbestos), but also ambiguous obstacles to enforcement, such as guard dogs or modified structures, and outright forms of non-cooperation and violence, as well as verbal abuse. The English courts use a Risk Indicator System to flag up risks to the bailiff and any attendant parties; risks are usually indicated by the plaintiff (in case of eviction by the landlord), and the bailiff team acts on this information; even when the threat of risk might be imagined. Changes in the way that the job was conducted had altered in response to the growth in rates of eviction and the perceived sense of risk that has brought. Since 2008, repossession claims by landlords in England and Wales have undergone a series of spikes. After accounting for the success rate of claims, subsequent suspension of court order and stayed warrants, landlord repossession actions attended by county court bailiffs increased to reach a peak of 41,965 in 2014—the highest since records started in 2000 and reflecting a steady rise from 2010 onwards (UK Ministry of Justice 2014).

If a risk was indicated, the court would contact the necessary agencies, such as the Fire service, NHS Mental Health services, animal handlers, or other social care workers, and request their presence at the eviction. There was a sentiment in court that since 2008 an increase in risks and ‘a sense of risk’ significantly changed the occupational culture. There are a number of factors influencing this—the Tribunals and Courts act of 2007, as well as the introduction of Mortgage pre-action Protocol. The arrival of new management at the court, had their role to play in bringing in new management practices and forms of access for the public, such as a forms of additional legal advice for the public and new strategies for staff interaction for logging risk. This reorganisation around risk is one example of how the courts were understood to have been reshaped towards a more distributed model of eviction management by the bailiffs. An element of

how risk and risk management were seen to have developed in relation to an increase in forms of non-co-operation and resistance:

I've been here 6 years—How has it changed over time? I think we're more risk aware, we're much less ... I think when I first joined, a lot of ex-police officers were bailiffs and they were very ... a lot of bravado—'Oh, we don't need help, I'll do this, I'll do that I don't care I'll take on the world.' I think now we realise the world's changing, it's becoming more dangerous out there, people are becoming more desperate, and we realise, that we know we can't operate by ourselves. (Interview, Bailiff)

It was clear that many, if not most, forms of 'risk' are also forms of resistance to eviction, acts that make conducting an eviction frustrating or difficult. The informal practices of eviction, knowing the areas, and learning to control emotions, are shaped by the way the people respond to being displaced, or having their goods repossessed. 'Resistance comes first,' argues Foucault, 'and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance' (1997, p. 173). Importantly, Foucault's concept of resistance carries no specific value judgment about the function of resistance itself—resistance is not treated as an unqualified good that it is in some forms of polemical writing, but as an eternal presence in power relations: 'Resistances do not derive from a few heterogeneous principles,' Foucault argues, 'but neither are they a lure or a promise that is of necessity betrayed. They are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite' (1990, p. 96).

However, by focusing on the micro-political elements of resistance (as Foucault does), it is easy to underestimate the role of larger social cleavages in structuring resistance. Evictions are irreducibly a point of class conflict between property owner and the dispossessed occupier. In the UK, resistance to eviction 'on the doorstep' is linking up with formal modes of organisation and practice. Some of these are limited in their outlook; 'pseudolegal' organisations and modes of argument, such as the 'Freemen on the Land' movement, rely on forms of legal argument that have little standing in the courts, nevertheless, they have become more prominent and attracted the attention of the private and public enforcement sectors (Carter 20/02/2014). There are also efforts from the historical liberal,

anarchist and Marxist left that emphasise a class-based politics and position themselves explicitly as working class urban social movements opposed to neoliberal forms of dispossession and displacement; renters' networks across London and solidarity organisations in the rest of the UK are increasingly active in responding to evictions. Videos, such as the one filmed in Nottingham, abound online through a myriad of eviction resistance and anti-debt groups. Anti-eviction and housing campaigns have also emerged that resemble and actively network with those found across Europe, but also in the Global South, such as the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* in Spain and *Abahlali base Mjondolo* in South Africa. Social movements against eviction such as these have also provoked dramatic shifts and counter-movements in eviction practices which form public policing 'events' in their own right. The recent police actions over the squatter occupation of the Aylesbury estate in South London saw the development of siege-like conditions as Southwark Council erected a costly and weighty fence to keep occupiers out (Marshall 31/03/2015). Imogen Tyler has claimed that large-scale evictions, such as that of the traveller families and their supporters at Dale Farm in Sussex, are powerful orchestrated media events and a symbolic and material enactment of state racism and the violent exclusion of 'abject' social groups (2013, p. 131). Such actions often involve policing and security agencies with a long history of involvement in high-profile and politically charged evictions, such as the Metropolitan Police Force's Territorial Support Group, and the HCEO firm UKEvict, who have conducted many evictions of environmental and student protestors, squatters, and were present at Dale Farm. How forms of more organised resistance to eviction might change and alter specific eviction tactics in the UK, and what the significance of these movements have on a larger scale of eviction practice, is an ever more pressing question.

Unravelling Eviction Enforcement

Eviction enforcement is a substantial and largely unexplored area of research that needs to connect to a large-scale political economy of housing and debt, and critiques of wider security culture and practice. It is somewhat surprising, given the proliferation of critical studies of private

security, police, and public space and investigations of border controls, that eviction strategies are not a greater point of discussion for both housing and security researchers. The 3 key areas identified here present important pathways for researchers to examine eviction enforcement and, though they are by no means the only routes and areas in which eviction process can be critiqued, they represent significant signposts for a future understanding of eviction power, in particular:

1. How the relationship between everyday routine, territoriality and spatial imaginaries shapes the conduct of eviction. These are classic fields of geographical research, which spatial enforcement plays a pivotal role in shaping, and they clearly have a structuring effect on the intuitive responses and practices that emerge in eviction work. The bureaucratic and workplace cultures of eviction enforcement work need to be uncovered and examined in order to better understand how 'doorstep' eviction practices become institutionalised.
2. How technologies of eviction are used. These are not simply physical and legal technologies, legal powers, self-defence and specialist support; they can also be forms of learned response and emotional capture passed on and distributed through experience and formal training.
3. How these practices are shaped by the resistance encountered in the field. Strategies of enforcement in any field change and alter over time in response to forms of insubordination, retaliation or stubbornness. However, they might also undergo large-scale reconstitutions as mass social movements emerge from smaller individual struggles, and take on public political value.

There remain substantive questions to ask of all 3 of these areas: How do practices alter, but also get disseminated and shared by agencies and individuals, across geographies of inequality (of gender, race, class, sexuality and infrastructure)? Likewise in relation to core/periphery dynamics in the UK, but also global movements of capital? How do they change and mutate with scale—do mass evictions use different technologies and practices? At core, these are simple questions regarding the development of a disciplinary institution across time and space. Any interrogation of the development of institutions of eviction would also need to map

the global networks of economic and political power that strategies of eviction and resistance use to develop. In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the incursion of military and security economies into everyday life and public policing, particularly in relation to the war on terror (Coaffee and Wood 2006; Graham 2010; Balko 2014). Equally, policing strategies have been seen to transfer between states, following urban social movements (Wood 2014). The entry of military imaginaries into the enforcement of a private economy in domestic space is a key point of current and future conflicts around the neoliberal home. The home as a site of strategic and tactical importance will shape how eviction practices develop in the future, and the increasing entry of private security firms, such as G4S and Serco, into fields, such as asylum seeker housing (Grayson 2014) and court services under government privatisation schemes (Travis and Williams 02/04/2012), will play their part.

Admittedly, this process of inquiry is easier said than done; in conducting this research it has become clear that eviction practitioners are highly aware of their public image, and eviction retains a social stigma around it, primarily for the evicted, but also for evictors (who are also tax and debt collectors—one interviewee remarked that he didn't attend certain restaurants because 'I don't want spit in my food'). Add to this the often-enclosed cultures of private security and policing in which enforcement firms and specialists are embedded, or have a career history in, and you have the makings of a classic 'hard to access' research population. The data here remains deeply limited by the levels of access I was able to achieve; eviction enforcers are understandably wary of participating in social research into eviction practices given the public image they have. However, access to law enforcement cultures for research and inquiry is in itself a valuable social goal, as it holds these agencies to account and opens them to public scrutiny and debate. This should not be done in the misguided spirit of making evictions more 'humane'. Evictions are not a 'natural law' that stand apart eternally, needing to be meliorated, but social phenomena demanded by the contemporary economy of property and space. The aim of any research into the making of evictions should serve a movement towards a model of housing justice in which they are no longer necessary to the production of the economy. It is with this in mind that we should examine the practices of eviction enforcement.

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Home Eviction, Grassroots Organisations and Citizen Empowerment in Spain

Antònia Casellas and Eduard Sala

Introduction

In 2007, at the peak of the housing bubble, Mohammed Aziz, a Moroccan immigrant living with his family in a working-class neighborhood in the metropolitan area of Barcelona bought a flat for a value of €190,000. He took a 33-year mortgage of €138,000 from Catalunya Caixa, a bank that in 2013 would be bailed out and nationalized by the Spanish government. Aziz's mortgage included the right of the bank to reclaim the entire debt for failure to pay any part of the principal or interest, and provided for an annual default interest rate of 18.75 per cent. Aziz managed to make 10 payments, but delays in payment triggered an automatic increase in

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the interest rate from 4.75 % to 18.75 %. A year later, in 2008, being unemployed, Aziz stopped paying his instalments. By 2009, the bank initiated foreclosure proceedings, seeking recovery of the total principal, plus €41,902 in interest and costs. In July 2010, a local court auctioned and awarded the bank the house for just €90,000—less than 50 % of its assessed value. In Spain, homeowners remain liable even after the bank has repossessed the property. Due to this policy, in January 2011 Aziz and his family were evicted and he was left with the remainder of the debt, leaving the bank with the option to claim on his salary.

In 2013, the European Court of Justice, in the sentence C-415/11, ruled that the Spanish Mortgage Law infringed the European Union's 1993 Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts (93/13EEC) directive on consumer protection. The sentence was the result of a claim initiated by a lawyer who, being the son of Aziz's friend, worked for free. The sentence was based on the fact that the bank had initiated foreclosure proceedings after just one failure to pay an instalment and provided for an abusive default interest rate (García 2013). The ruling has since applied to all eviction cases, but does not work retroactively.

Encapsulated by the common motto of the time *el ladrillo nunca baja* (the brick never drops), the financial crisis was closely related to the previous Spanish real estate boom, which had created a general perception that houses were a solid investment that would always provide positive returns on investment. Investment in housing was portrayed as the best savings option for ordinary citizens who did not have capital or lacked the skills to invest in the financial market. This was underscored by the fact that Spain is a country of homeowners with a very small private and public rental market, which public policy further reinforced. In 2007, Spain's rental share was only 11 % versus the EU average of 29 % (Ortega et al. 2011). On the other hand, while homeownership rates were in Spain significantly higher than other European countries to begin with, they continued to grow despite the crisis, fueled by recurrent encouragement by developers and politicians. Homeownership grew from 77.8 % in 1990 to 83.2 % in 2004, and reached 85 % by 2011 (Andrews and Caldea Sánchez 2011). In the EU-28 countries, 70.6 % of the population lived in owner-occupied dwellings by 2012 (Eurostat 2013). Furthermore, Spain also suffered from an endemic lack of social

housing policy direction, which contributed not only to a shortage in the provision of social housing but also gave priority to owner-occupation over rental (Alberdi 2014).

Spain's housing bubble grew parallel to the country's economic growth and immigration trends. From 1995 to 2007, after a period of long economic growth, Spain became more in line with the EU's economic indicators and was ranked as the eighth largest economy in the world and one of the most dynamic economies in Europe. Per capita gross domestic product (GDP) increased substantially, from less than €8,000 per capita (calculated at purchasing power parity in euros at 2005 prices) before accession to the EC in 1985, to €23,000 per capita by 2005, which was equivalent to 99 % of the average income of the EU (EP 2006). Nevertheless, even in the context of economic growth, Spain had to contend with a continued structural unemployment, reaching 8 % unemployment rate in 2007 (INE 2015). The number of jobs in the Spanish economy had remained at around 13 million, from the 1960s to early 1990s. The numbers grew to 20.6 million in 2007, but this increase of 58.5 % ran parallel to the country's demographic growth, in which migration played a key role (INE 2015). From 2000 to 2009, the foreign-born population in Spain almost quadrupled, growing from 1.5 million to more than 6.5 million. Labor-force participation rates of immigrants were higher than the general population, partly because 60 % of immigrants were in the 20–44 age group, compared with the 34.7 % of the general population (Aranjo 2013).

When in 2008 Spanish GDP began to fall, unemployment started to rise at a rapid rate, reaching up to 25 % of the total population and more than 54 % of people under 25 years old by 2012. As a result of the economic meltdown and with people's capital locked into houses, home evictions rose dramatically in a relatively short period of time. While in 2006, Spain had 17,622 foreclosures, by 2009, the number had increased to 93,282 (Méndez Gutiérrez del Valle et al. 2014). The government prioritized national economic stability and debt repayment, leaving those evicted, many of whom were unemployed, migrants and/or working class, shaken by the economic downturn and feeling abandoned. It was in this context that the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH, or Platform for People Affected by the Mortgage) became a unique

mechanism of support for a broad range of citizens facing home eviction (Cano and Etxezarreta 2014). Created by local housing activists in February 2009 in Barcelona, the PAH is a grassroots movement with the unique goal of defending the rights of citizens who are facing home eviction. The PAH agenda includes 3 main objectives: (1) stop evictions; (2) allow mortgage debt to be settled by repossession of the property—as Spanish law considers mortgage debt a personal debt; and (3) transform empty housing held by financial institutions into social housing.

The chapter explores why and how the PAH has been able to empower the Spanish mortgage victims into activists with social transformative potential within the analytical frame of the ‘right to the city.’ It is also policy-oriented in that it seeks to draw lessons from the emerging strategies of protest, organization and empowerment of the grassroots movement (Sousa Santos de 2010). We first frame Spain’s housing crisis as a result of the neoliberal ideology pointing out key specificities of the Spanish context. This is followed by an analysis of the empowerment strategy developed by the PAH in Barcelona. The chapter argues that the origin and empowerment capability of the PAH is the result of a combination of factors, including: (1) the contextual seeds of Barcelona’s historical grassroots movements; (2) the creation of a sophisticated grassroots organizational and territorial structure with an issue centered; (3) the development of a new narrative of housing rights and explanations for the crisis; and finally (4) the generation of individual empowerment through collective action. The paper illustrates the significance of grassroots organizations in providing responses to the housing crisis.

The research is based on an ethnographic approach that included fieldwork observing the Barcelona PAH weekly meetings and direct participation in actions from June 2014 to May 2015. It also extended to 8 in-depth interviews with individuals initially affected by eviction who have become activists through the grassroots movement. Fieldwork notes from conferences and meetings organised by the PAH are part of the primary data we draw upon. Secondary sources include the analysis of pamphlets, brochures and website information provided by the PAH, as well as academic and press articles. Casual conversations with individuals facing home eviction have also been a valuable source of information.

Contextualizing the Housing Crisis in Spain

In the Spanish Constitution, Article 47 establishes not only that all Spaniards have the right to enjoy adequate and decent housing, but also that public powers should regulate land use in order to prevent speculation and that citizens should be the beneficiaries of the surplus generated by urban planning policies. Although this article is listed under the Fundamental Rights and Duties Title of the Spanish Constitution, housing in Spain, as in most other countries, remains a commodity subject to the laws of the market.

Lefebvre (1972, 1991) and Harvey (2008, 2012) posit that investment in real estate follows a different structure than investment in industry and commerce. Because both types of investment are not synchronized, investors shift capital from one to the other in order to maximize profits and overcome barriers. Occasionally the real estate becomes dominant and transforms the built environment into both a force of production and as an object of consumption.

In Spain, the collapse of the construction bubble showed us how dependent the country's economy had become on the housing market. This dependence is illuminated by the fact that, from 1998 to 2005, Spain built an average of almost 600,000 housing units per year. That is as many units as Germany, France and Britain combined built in the same period (Rodríguez 2007). Moreover, real estate development (and its circuit of capital accumulation) in Spain did not escape the peculiarities of late capitalism. It followed trends common to other countries—a dramatic increase in property values, expansion of urban space, and dubious financial and mortgage practices (Aalbers and Christophers 2014; Keil 2010).

Nevertheless, there was some specificity that made the Spanish case both more complex and different from that in other countries. A key factor that fueled the housing bubble in Spain was the long and dramatic increase in the price of housing. European countries, such as the UK and Ireland experienced a rapid escalation in house prices from the mid-to-late 1990s onwards (Martin 2011). Nevertheless, the scale of this increase makes Spain somewhat unique. According to the European Commission's Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs

(2013), from 1997–2007 Spain enjoyed an 11-year period of housing market appreciation, unusually long and intense by historical and cross-country standards. During this period, house prices grew on average by 11.4 % per year, generating an accumulated growth of 232 %.

Simultaneously, Spain experienced a substantial re-allocation of capital and resources from industry and manufacturing into housing development. The historical migration of capital investment into real estate within the Spanish economy could be traced to de-industrialisation in the 1970s (Moreno and Vázquez Montalbán 1991) and to the crash of the technology bubble in 2000 and the 2007 crisis. Simultaneously, expected urban redevelopment gains have also incentivized investments in economic development strategies such as technology parks (Casellas 2015).

The housing boom translated into a continual increase of homeowners. However, when looking at long-term trends, homeownership has not been historically a trend. In 1950, the housing market in Spain was roughly equally divided between rental and ownership, with rental units being slightly ahead at 51 % of total housing stock. An increasing tendency toward homeownership could be explained as the result of public housing policies. Changes in housing laws in this direction can be traced to the early democratic period (post-1975). Beginning in 1978, Spanish legislation favored ownership over renting by creating different sets of tax advantages for buyers, while, simultaneously, insecurity in renting laws jeopardized the renting market (Colau and Alemany 2013). In 1985, a renting law liberalized prices, introducing a 5-year contract that did not satisfy landowners or tenants—as it increased insecurity for tenants while the 5-year period was considered too long by landowners. In this sense, historical housing policy in Spain is partly responsible for the lack of rental units (Rodríguez 2007). Krueckeberg (1999) develops a similar argument in his analysis of the US housing market, asserting that in the USA, since colonial times, property requirements for suffrage and tax policies privileged ownership and punished tenancy. As a result, in American public policy, as in Spain, it had a deliberate bias favoring property owners and harming renters, which in turn increased homeownership.

In Spain, since the approval of the 1978 Democratic Constitution, and the development of neoliberal economic policies, there was growing

entrepreneurialism and the development of new financialization schemes. There was also a rescaling of the state resulting from decentralization policies that played a crucial role in the urbanization of land (Coq-Huelva 2013). Urban policy deregulation and social de-legitimization of planning incentivized the construction of major real estate developments (Burriel 2011). While the general land laws remained in the hands of the central government, its implementation incentivized the exercise of discretionary power at the local scale. The Land Regime and Rating Act law of 1998, popularly known in Spain as *la ley del todo urbanizable* (the urbanize everything law) transferred to the regions and local bodies control concerning urban planning, the procedures for changing land designation and the taxation of urban undeveloped land. The key point of the Act was that it opened the option to change land designation and zoning regulations from non-urban into urban if a plan for infrastructure was presented to the local council. This created an enormous incentive for real estate speculation. Foreseen gains for real estate developers were extraordinary, as despite the continued growth of urban land availability, the cost of land rose in the period 1997–2006 at a rate equivalent to the price of housing (Rodríguez 2007). The rent-gap potential incentivized private real-estate firms and credit institutions to participate through loans and direct involvement into real estate schemes (Sánchez 2008).

A significant part of the political and institutional corruption that surfaced in Spain in the second decade of the twenty-first century showed a direct link between land development and public financed infrastructure, with political actors reaping financial and political rewards at different territorial scales (Darias et al. 2012). Corruption trials have taken place based on allegations that a large number of high-profile public figures from local, regional and national scales took bribes in return for approving developer planning applications (Manso 2014). In 2012, Transparency International estimated that 1,000 corruption investigations were under way across the country, most involving charges that public officials took advantage of the economic and real estate boom to enrich them. The highest profile case was the charges against Inaki Urdangarin, the son-in-law of King Juan Carlos. This has generated a widespread perception among Spain's public of generalized corruption in the country (Transparency International 2014).

Finally, the Spanish property market boom (and crash) cannot be dissociated from urban processes undergone in other capitalist economies in the neoliberal world. Some factors that help explain the housing bubble in Spain were common to other countries as well. These include continuously falling real mortgage rates, increasing long-term mortgage loans, banking practices that incentivized mortgages and consumption credits, and the treatment of housing as an investment and speculative asset. As in the USA and UK, these elements contributed to the perception of a general growth of wealth in Spain. According to Sornette and Woodard (2009), quoted by Martin (2011), the housing bubble was part of an unprecedented process of debt-financed wealth creation and consumption that bore little relation to real economic growth and fundamentals, but that citizens perceived as manifestation of a new normal state of affairs. In the minds of many Spanish homebuyers, house price appreciation would help to generate their wealth and, eventually and when necessary, financing and refinancing could permit sustainable access to a family's capital. The collapse of the economy proved those assumptions wrong. When families faced home eviction, the PAH turned to be the only organisation able to provide help. The following sections analyze the emergence and features of this grassroots movement.

The Seeds of Barcelona's Grassroots Movements

Barcelona has a strong history of highly-articulated urban grassroots movements. Historically, Spain is a country with a weak welfare state, with the Catholic Church having played a dominant role, both as owner of educational and social facilities, as well as provider of needed services. Often the poorest segments of society perceived the church as self-righteous (Kaplan 1992) and as imposing the values of the business elite (Hughes 1992). As a counter balance, in Barcelona as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, unions and worker organizations developed highly sophisticated recreational and educational alternative services, which lasted until the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 (Fabre and Huertas 2000; Voltes 1995).

During the Franco Dictatorship (1939–1975), Barcelona as one of the few industrialized areas of Spain, attracted large waves of internal migrants from the rest of the country. This demographic growth had effects on the city's urban fabric, as lack of effective urban planning regulations and real estate speculation generated large working-class neighbourhoods without basic infrastructure and services (Casellas 2009). Between 1955 and 1975, the city gained 709,757 new households (Gomà and Rosetti 1999). By 1970, the population of Barcelona reached 1,745,142 inhabitants, an increase of 61 % since 1940. Population density was double than that proposed in the approved planning documents. Social segregation and urban conflict accompanied this unplanned urban growth (Huertas and Andreu 1996). The many urban deficiencies in the new densely-built neighborhood of Barcelona and its metropolitan area contributed to the emergence of grassroots urban organizations demanding basic services and infrastructure (FAVB 2010). Eventually, these urban grassroots movements became more articulate and sophisticated as they gained the support of clandestine political parties who identified housing and neighborhoods grassroots claims as an important venue for political protest (Alabart 1981; Martí 1981).

Grassroots protests in Barcelona emerged again as a powerful demonstration of citizens' discontent at the turn of the twenty-first century. Within the context of the crisis, street protests and demonstrations were organized in order to defend labor rights, jobs and social services, which progressively were jeopardized due to cuts in public expenditure in compliance with the European Union deficit reduction strategies. The most visible and powerful demonstrations symbolizing social discontent in the country were organized by the *Indignados* (the Outraged) in 2011, around a single claim: *Democracia Real Ya* (Real Democracy Now). This movement, known as Indignados or the 15M (due to its 15th of May date of origin), appropriated symbolic urban space such as the downtown Plaça Catalunya in Barcelona. Taking its name from Stéphane Hessel's book, *Engagez-vous!* (2011), the Indignados articulated their message against the corruption of the system into its political, economic and social organizations. Different from the traditional urban social movements, such as the ones studied by Castells in the 1970s, which had mainly socially specific articulated urban demands (Castells 1977), the Indignados pointed

to the need for large social transformation (Freixa & Nofre 2013). As in the case of Greece, people defied leaders, traditional political parties and trade unions and sought direct democracy (Leontidou 2012).

The re-appropriation of symbolic public space and the use of social networks as a means of organized effective protest used by the Indignados were already evident in the unfolding of previous protests in Spain linked to the housing crisis (Haro Barba and Sampedro Blanco 2011). Prior to the 2008 meltdown, unrest around housing claims in Barcelona had already begun. From 2003 onward, there were grassroots movements organized around protesting the dramatic inflation in housing prices and lack of affordability for working and middle class people, especially the way this affected the younger generations (Colau and Alemany 2012). Ada Colau, a grassroots leader of Barcelona's housing movement was elected Mayor of Barcelona in June 2015. She rose to prominence in the *V de Vivienda* (V is for Housing), a grassroots movement originated in the city in 2006. The movement focused on lobbying for a group of political actions to improve effective access to housing. Among other measures it called for: (1) a moratorium on the implementation of urban plans that were not guided by general interest, embodied in effective citizen participation; (2) transparency concerning the right of access to housing; (3) measures to stop urban environmental degradation and gentrification; (4) construction of public housing to meet the demand of population excluded from the market; (5) priority given to the rehabilitation of empty homes instead of new urban redevelopments; (6) accountability of the financial system and banks regarding their responsibility for the high and unsustainable levels of households indebtedness; and (7) tax measures to effectively criminalize property speculation (V de Vivienda 2014).

Different demonstrations on Barcelona's streets took place during 2006.¹ In the Fall of 2006 in Madrid, following a massive spontaneous street-sitting protest, many groups against the precarious housing condition joined Barcelona's 'V is for Housing' movement. The movement grew fast, and by 2007 it combined the strength of different local assemblies mobilized in 14 Spanish cities (Leal 2007). In the fall of 2007, a highly professional video called for new collective action campaigns

¹ See (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=507YixKuXjE>).

around the lack of housing. The audio on the YouTube video asserted that²:

On October 6, 2007, we will set a new world record, thousands of people shouting at once: you will not have a home in your fucking life.

The ‘V is for Housing’ organizers employed sophisticated social media networks and campaign strategies. They used wiki platforms to gather and organize protesters, direct action such as camping in an IKEA store, and videos calling for collective protests. The movement remained active until the crisis transformed their claims from access to affordable housing to defense of mortgage victims. Members of ‘V is for Housing’ became directly involved in the creation of PAH on the 22nd February 2009 (Colau and Alemany 2012).

Sophisticated Grassroots Organizational and Territorial Structure

By 2015, there were 226 PAHs in Spain, 72 of them in Catalonia. The turning point in the expansion of the PAH from Barcelona to the rest of Catalonia and Spain took place in 2011, with the Indignados movement. With a sophisticated appropriation of symbolic urban and virtual spaces, the Indignados focused on the need for accountability and made housing one of the key points of discussion, creating the conditions to share and transfer experiences among different social movements. The slogan ‘Real Democracy Now’ pointed to a large political and social transformation in which home eviction became a symbol of the ills of the entire economic and political system that they wanted to transform.

The objective of the PAH has been to gain visibility and maximum support by engaging people at different levels in the defense of a unique issue: the rights of forcibly evicted citizens. Within this overarching remit, the PAH agenda has 3 points: stopping evictions; allowing mortgage debt

² See (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN0lJ7ZF_M).

to be settled by repossession of the property; and transforming empty housing held by financial institutions into social housing.

Despite ideological affinity with political parties, such as Podemos, closely related to the Indignados, the platform has made a constant effort to be independent. The PAH's emphasis on remaining centered on its goal and avoiding cooption by political parties or organizations has been a constant, and it has been maintained even after its founder entered the political arena. On May 2014, Ada Colau, the most visible face of the PAH, as one of its charismatic founders and the spokesperson of the platform since its creation on February 2009, left the platform to become directly involved in local politics. She led a new political party to run for Barcelona's Mayor's Office in the 24th of May 2015 local elections. Surprising the traditional political parties and many political analysts, she was elected Mayor of Barcelona.

The ethnographic fieldwork undertaken for this research has identified a recurrent attempt by the leading members of the PAH to stop any reference, support or identification with political options, including the one of Colau. In several gatherings and assemblies, individuals in charge of maintaining the internet social network stated that it was not allowed for PAH members to send any information not strictly related to the PAH's goal. This prohibition acted as a clear sign to maintain the platform independent of any political debate or support. The effort to remain independent does not mean that the platform operates in isolation. The PAH articulates their strategy with the help of professionals and members of other grassroots social movements. For instance, Tatiana Guerrero, spokesperson for the Alliance against Energy Poverty and a collaborator of PAH, acts as a team member in providing basic information to newcomers. Numerous professionals from the legal, political, academic and social spheres also collaborate, many of them anonymously.

Despite territorial expansion, decentralization has been maintained as a key component of the platform. Local meetings' organization include: to collect case profiles; organize weekly welcome and information meetings; prepare and perform collective civic actions and disobedience campaigns; and, organize general assemblies. Barcelona's PAH has communication, legal, social work and gender commissions; each one specialized in a specific area. The commissions have been developed as new needs are identified. For instance, the gender commission was created as a result

of identifying gender violence as a major problem resulting from the psychological distress generated by home eviction. The coordination at a higher territorial scale takes place through the shared information and discussions on campaigns and the design of future strategies for action. There is a monthly PAH's gathering in each of the 17 Autonomous Regions of Spain (EU NUTS II level) and 3 times a year a coordination meeting takes place at the national level.

The Development of a New Narrative of Housing Rights and Crisis

As the housing mortgage crisis kept growing and home evictions increased across the country, the dominant narrative developed by national and local politicians was that the housing crisis resulted because 'people have lived beyond their means.' This straightforward message was transmitted and reinforced by experts. For instance, current Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy conveyed the idea that citizens had been irresponsible by asserting that 'It is not good to live beyond the possibilities permanently' (Agencias 2012). Similarly, in an intervention in the Spanish Parliament, the Minister of Labour and Social Security, Fátima Báñez, generalized the responsibility by stressing that 'Spain has lived long beyond their capability' (Europa Press 2012). Business leaders followed the same line of argument asserting that 'the first step is to realize that we have lived far beyond our means' (Rodés 2011). Economic analysts emphasized the same argument with claims like 'We have lived beyond our possibilities' (Abadía 2013). The message, amplified by a broad range of opinion leaders initially created a narrative consensus among most of the population.

The process of socialization of guilt (see Tranche 2013) had the key support of the media. Analysts and social groups argue that in order to understand this alliance it is necessary to consider that in Spain, as in Greece, large banks (BBVA, BSCH, La Caixa) have financial control of the main newspapers, television and radio channels that are interlinked with political parties and other businesses interests. For instance, Grupo Prisa, which controls a vast media conglomerate, is supported by BSCH, while Vocento, a multimedia group with a conservative ideology, is under the financial control of the BBVA. Other relationships between large

media groups and the banking system are found in Grupo Planeta, Banco Sabadell and Grupo Godó (Durán 2008; Alerta Solidaria 2012).

Given the standard message of the media, one of the great achievements of PAH was to introduce a change in the collective imagination of the people affected by home evictions. The message moved from 'you have lived beyond your means', and as a result, 'you are guilty of your own situation'; to 'you have been the victim of a scam', and as a result, you are not the guilty one, but a victim of an unjust situation. This change in narrative helped to generate a shift in the mindset of citizens. The strength of self-esteem together with the awareness that they have been unfairly treated generated the willingness of people to fight for their housing rights.

A turning point in media visibility took place in February 2013, with the appearance on major Spanish TV networks of Ada Colau, then the spokesperson of the PAH. Colau defended a popular legislative initiative (ILP) before the Commission of Economy and Competitiveness of the Spanish Parliament. As an opening to her talk, in which she enumerated the long list of unjust banking practices, which included unfair appraisals, unfair terms and the ignorance by those who signed the mortgages of the consequences they could have, she asserted 'It seems important to explain how this scam has taken place.' She further complained that the banking lobby was presenting their narrative as experts to the commission, emphasizing that:

[In this Parliamentary Commission] It is given credit to alleged experts, such as the representative of banks. I have not thrown a shoe to him because I understood that I should remain here. This man is a criminal, not an expert, and as such should you treat him. If people who have plunged us into misery say that the repossession of property is not the solution to mortgage debt, then, it is. [...] It is not true that this is going to sink the system. The system already has sunk due to mismanagement. (Colau 2013)

After a long and articulate presentation that lasted around 40 minutes, the president of the commission asked her to withdraw the critique of the banking expert. She simply replied 'No, I will not do it.' The following day, Spanish newspapers, TV and radio media highlighted this event. Unintentionally, the news generated the interest of the population about

her arguments, and for the first time provided broad media coverage to the grassroots organization.

The PAH's alternative narrative succeeded in empowering the average citizen by changing the concept of 'living beyond one's means,' to the PAH's 'we are all mortgage victims.' This strategy shifted positions from the *socialization of guilt* to the *socialization of activism for housing rights*, calling for accountability, collective support of affected individuals and new legal regulations for housing. The PAH has been effective in broadening not only the understanding of those facing forced evictions, but also for society as a whole in highlighting how the Spanish Mortgage Law is abusive, unfair and an anomaly in Europe. Moreover, the PAH has shown how it is in the interests of the general population to push for new legislation while also defending the individuals and families that suffer the effects of the law. The new argument is that the crisis is not the result of poor individual decision-making driven by irresponsible consumption, but by political and financial elites' neoliberal policies.

Individual Empowerment Through Collective Action

The PAH does not provide individual counseling or help. Against the prevailing discourse of traditional aid agencies, PAH's members emphasize that they differentiate between empowerment and charity. PAH's spokesperson interviewed for this research emphasizes that the goal is not to promote welfarism, but rather to generate a network of empowerment of people who would help themselves and each other. As a result, information and individual cases are addressed in an assembly in which answers to individual matters take place through collective information exchange.

The Process of Empowerment

'Nobody can solve your case better than you,' captures in a nutshell the strategy of the PAH. It is one of the first sentences newcomers to the grassroots movement heard in the welcome assembly meetings that take

place every Monday. The PAH's self-empowerment strategy through collective action is also captured by another one of its slogans: 'Everybody could help, and everybody could be helped.' Mortgage holders who have gained experience become the informants in the assembly sessions. The individual experience thus learned is transmitted to others.

The capacity to empower victims of home eviction is mirrored by the sentence: 'I am the PAH,' a powerful motto of the grassroots organisation. The analysis of the printed material and primary data shows that the PAH strategy helps to empower victims of home eviction by creating a sense of identity, empathy and solidarity. Individuals feel empowered just by the logo of the PAH on the paper forms that they present to the banks in their negotiations over foreclosures. They assert that the logo clearly communicates that they have the support and information provided by the PAH, and this becomes an effective tool in the negotiations with banks, which realize that the counterpart is informed and supported by an organisation. One of the interviewed activists asserts:

Information gives me strength, and instead of being left in a corner, waiting to see what the bank says, I gave myself strength, I know what is going to happen, until where I can go, I know that I am entitled to ask things to the bank (33 years old).

In the same line of argument, a 41-year old activist, claims that being supported by the PAH, 'in handling your case, bankers immediately become aware that you are not alone and afraid.' Initially, the general mood of PAH newcomers is a sense of personal guilt and social shame blended with feelings of inferiority and loneliness. Referring to the newcomers and reflecting on her own experience, one of the members of PAH with a year in the grassroots organisation argues:

I see them arriving here like me, crying, because the first time you get here you just cry. They [the banks] told you that they are going to take your house and you come here feeling terribly bad, broken. So when I see people coming as I do, I approach them and I talk to them and I tell them not to cry, that it is possible [to fight], that it would take more or less time, but ultimately it will be solved (64 years old).

Remembering her first experience with the PAH, an activist on her mid-30s recalls:

I felt tiny, vulnerable, like a doormat [...] I arrived here wrecked. And in a year I'm someone else, [...] there are people who unfortunately are also going through the same as me, which are very sad but at the same time it is comforting because you realize that you are not alone. Here there are people who appreciate you, who support you; this is like a big family (37 years old).

The individuals that had managed to improve or solve their particular cases feel committed to the organisation, and deploy time and effort to the collective endeavor. They perceive individual success as a collective success of the PAH. Furthermore, the sense of personal empowerment goes beyond the housing threat. The success in avoiding home eviction and being able to reach an agreement with the bank reinforces self-esteem and a sense of purpose.

Now I'm committed with the struggle here because I remember myself when I arrived with my wife, and how I felt; and I see myself in people who are new every Monday and speak of the same situation. Will I leave because they have solved my problem? Because yes, they have solved it. Apart from my personal struggle, PAH has helped me a lot. Am I going to go and leave people in the lurch? No, I'm still here, advising people and helping them (63 years old).

The PAH carries out support activities in different fields including advice on legal matters, the process of negotiation with the banks and access to social resources, but it also pays special attention to addressing emotional distress. Over time the association realized that the problems linked to home eviction extend not only to economic but also to physical and mental health problems, affecting the family and social relationships of members. The grassroots infrastructure thus covers tangible as well as intangible needs. The collective advice in an assembly setting not only helps to learn valuable information and strategies, as many cases are similar, but also generates empathy, and provides coping strategies and hope, as newcomers realize that cases could get solved.

The PAH applies pre-figurative strategies, in which providing a model and experience of direct positive engagement plays a key role. Direct observation and participation in actions reveal that there is a conscious effort to inform those present in each meeting of recent good news. People are invited to personally inform the group of a positive step in their personal struggle, and humor is a recurrent tool to generate an optimistic approach to the challenges faced in the process.

Strategies of Action

The field research reveals that collective direct actions are among the most empowering strategies used to fight evictions. Collective direct actions include trying to fiscally stop a home eviction to collectively perform protest actions in the banks. In this endeavor, the use of social networks has been crucial in coordinating campaigns, and helping the movement not only to become visible to the broad society, but also to organise themselves internally in a very efficient and timely manner.

The STOP Evictions Campaign is one of the collective actions that have had a significant impact on the media. It is a direct action consisting of a group wearing green shirts with PAH identification appearing before the door of the family that should be evicted. Slogans shouted by PAH members include sentences such as: *Este deshaucio lo vamos a parar* (This eviction is going to be stopped) or *Si se puede* (Yes, we can). The goal is to prevent the execution of the eviction.

To me the actions is what gets me, what makes me grow, ‘come on Juan, that we can, that we are going to get it,’ it was when we went to the actions to other banks—referring in support of someone else-. [...] I was going to many actions, I was getting strong ..., and it is not that I turned violent or anything like that! (63 years old).

Motions to councils constitute another campaign in the fight against evictions. This action consists of proposals presented to the city councils by members of the PAH, encouraging public bodies to join PAH’s goals by carrying out social policies needed to provide guidance and resources to those citizens who solicit help from the public administration.

A third campaign takes place under the slogan *Que se sepa: este banco estafa, engaña y echa a la gente de su casa* (Let it be known: this bank scams, deceives and expels people from their home). The bank campaign is directly addressed to damage the corporate image of bank's branches that evicted or plans to evict people and/or do not want to negotiate with those being evicted. It includes lining the branch windows with posters and stickers, occupying its premises, and interfering with their day-to-day operations by opening bank accounts with 1 euro, and so on. Another member of the PAH emphasizes:

To occupy the bank to support a colleague to achieve what is right for every citizen, to have a house. To prepare campaigns, to do action, screaming, fighting until my colleague gets what s/he needs, this is reassuring to everyone. When we are able to stop an eviction this is so comforting, so encouraging. You feel useful (37 years old).

A fourth campaign, initiated in March 2013, was an action of public denunciation or *escraches* (unmaskings) of individual politicians outside their homes. It was a direct form of action that had, as a goal, to gather in protest in front of the private residences of Spanish politicians. It generated critical remarks from some media, and the Secretary General of the People's Party (PP), which had, at that time, absolute majority in the Spanish Parliament, María Dolores de Cospedal, unsuccessfully attempted to criminalize its methods labeling them of 'pure Nazi acts' (Manetto 2013).

Despite attempts to criminalize the movement, the PAH is perceived by the general population as a peaceful movement and commands overwhelming popular support. This is illustrated through its Peoples Law Initiative (ILP) to the Spanish Congress—demanding changes in the mortgage law to settle debt by repossession of the property—which collected 1.4 million signatures in 2013. The ILP was a campaign drafted by lawyers and members of the civil society who collaborated with the organisation anonymously and on a voluntary basis, and was one of the most successful actions in creating general awareness of evictions among Spanish society.

Finally, the last and most problematic campaign is what the PAH labels the Social Work Campaign. The purpose is the re-appropriation of empty homes in the hands of financial institutions resulting from foreclosures

and then to reallocate these houses to displaced evicted families. Within this frame, PAH asserts that they recover the social function of an empty house to ensure that a family has a place to live, exacerbate pressure on financial institutions to accept mortgage debt to be settled by repossession of the property, and forces the government to adopt all necessary measures to guarantee the right to housing. By 2015, PAH has provided housing by this means to 2,500 individuals.

Concluding Remarks

Despite its limited success in influencing Spanish legislation and despite the political establishments' attempts to criminalize its methods, the PAH commands overwhelming popular support and empowers mortgage and home eviction victims. Although the political context of austerity policy imposed on Spain by the EU and international institutions, and a conservative majority in the Spanish parliament made it extremely difficult for their claims to succeed, the PAH movement originated in Barcelona proved to be resilient, and it has developed sophisticated activist strategies while extending its organisation to the rest of Spain.

In this chapter we have argued that the contextual seeds of Barcelona's grassroots urban movements are key factors to explain the PAH's resilience, namely: the creation of a sophisticated organisational and territorial structure with an issue-centered emphasis; the development of a new narrative of housing rights and crisis; and finally the generation of individual empowerment through collective action.

Strategic alliances with professionals and social movements, together with a new soft leadership model articulated in open assemblies have provided a space of confidence and mutual emotional support to evicted citizens. Sharing knowledge and tools has generated the means for the empowerment of individuals and families with mortgage problems, transforming feelings of defeat and guilt into strength for social activism. Furthermore, by engaging broad segments of society into the housing cause, the PAH has been able to convert the mortgage crisis into a political issue with transformative potential. Its spokesperson became Major

of Barcelona in spring 2015. Going back to the early period, an activist recalls:

But they came from the Garraf Platform, Baix Penedès, Anoia, Barcelona, and some from Girona, and we got together and managed to stop the eviction. And that's when I said to myself: Now we are invincible, we have already stopped three evictions (44 years old).

Time will tell how successful these strategies will be in the long term and whether they will be able to sustain them in the face of continued austerity measures.

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Zwangsräumungen in Berlin: Towards an Historical Geography of Dispossession*

Alexander Vasudevan

“The dwelling of our time does not exist yet”. Yet it does exist without doubt: 100 people have to “live” in an old horse stable, 12 people have to call one room home! That is the housing of our day!

—Programme of the *Proletarischen Bauausstellung*, 1931

Introduction

In the early hours of February 14, 2013, a police operation to forcibly evict a family living in a flat on Lausitzer Straße in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg began. A series of barricades was erected by officers to cordon off the street. A special bomb disposal team was called in to secure the area while a helicopter flew overhead to coordinate an operation, which was, in turn, supported by a team of over 400 riot police. At the same time, hundreds of protesters had formed a sit-down blockade in front of Lausitzer Straße 8 to resist the eviction of the Gülbol family. Many others were prevented from entering the street by the police and were forced to watch the operation from behind the barricades (Novak, 2013, p. 33; Rank, 2013).

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The Gülbol family had lived at Lausitzer Straße 8 since 1976. In 1999, Ali Gülbol, moved out of his parents' flat into another 122 m² apartment in the same building where he lived with his wife and 2 children. The flat was in poor condition and Ali was forced to renovate it. Walls were torn down, new appliances were installed; the entire flat had to be re-wired. In exchange for his work, Ali came to a verbal agreement with his landlord. His rent would not be raised until he had paid off the costs of renovating the flat, which amounted to over 20,000 euros. Unfortunately, Ali's landlord, who was the owner of the entire apartment block, foreclosed on the property in 2006 and the new owner immediately (and illegally) served notice to all tenants that they were to move out within 14 days (Kopietz, 2013; Novak 2014, p. 34).

While this was an attempt to intimidate the house's tenants, a tactic familiar to many Berlin residents, the new owner ultimately raised the rent by almost 100 euros per month. The Gülbols refused to pay the hike citing the verbal agreement that they had with the previous owner. Ali Gülbol decided to take the matter to court despite the fact that the previous owner of the block was now suffering from dementia and could no longer recall the original verbal agreement that he had made with the Gülbols. The court sided with the new owner and the family was ordered to pay over 40 months' worth of rent increases, a total that came to over 3,500 euros. They eventually did so. By that point, however, they had already been served an eviction notice. As he later recalled, Ali Gülbol was unaware that he had to pay the amount within 2 months of being ordered to do so (Novak, 2013, p. 34–35).

The Gülbols appealed the notice and while they were able to stall the process, the court ruled once again in favour of the landlord. As a result, the Gülbols were expected to leave their flat by the end of August 2012. They chose to remain and were able to raise public awareness of their plight through a newly formed eviction resistance movement in Berlin (Novak 2014, p. 31; see Vasudevan 2015). In October 2012, an unsuccessful attempt was made to evict the family. A blockade had been set up by protesters, which prevented the bailiff from gaining access to the building. A second attempt fell through in December 2012.

The massive police operation on February 14, 2013 was part of the third attempt to forcibly evict the Gülbol family. In this case, the eviction was successful. The hundreds of protesters who had camped in front of the

house were set upon by the police as the 9 am deadline approached. Many were brutally beaten and pepper-sprayed. What the protesters did not realise, however, was that the bailiff was already in the house. A few hours earlier, the police had smashed a fence and door on neighbouring Wiener Straße gaining access to the house's courtyard while bypassing the protesters altogether. The bailiff was dressed as an officer with a vest and cap and, shortly before the deadline, she received the keys to the flat from Ali Gülbol (Rank 2013). The protests continued for much of the day. In the end, a number of protesters and police officers were injured: 10 arrests were made.

The brutal eviction of the Gülbol family—aided by a large and carefully organised police operation—has become something of an iconic moment within a much wider geography of dispossession. The recent history of Berlin is, after all, a story indelibly marked by the ongoing neo-liberal transformation of the city. As a number of scholars have recently argued, urban regeneration and neighbourhood gentrification in Berlin has precipitated the widespread displacement of residents no longer able to afford rents that have risen by over 25 % since 2003. In many inner-city neighbourhoods, the increases in rent have been much higher (Holm 2006, 2014a, b; Rada 1997; Uffer 2014; Vasudevan 2015).

The impact of rent hikes also coincided with changes to state benefits—most notably the Hartz IV reforms (2002–5)—which, in practical terms, meant that full rents were no longer covered by benefits because income thresholds, according to new regulations, exceeded the cost of accommodation. Many tenants soon fell into arrears, which was used by owners as a pretext for terminating lease agreements and issuing eviction notices. Between 2009 and 2012, for example, the Berlin Courts recorded on average 6,000 evictions a year although housing experts have argued that an equally large number of evictions have gone unreported. Whatever the case, over 5 % of all house moves in Berlin during 2011 were a result of evictions, forced or otherwise (Holm 2014b, pp. 10, 11).

It is against this backdrop that the Gülbol eviction, in the first instance, must be understood. Yet, it is also emblematic of a much wider austerity urbanism that has emerged in the cities of the global North in the wake of a worldwide financial crisis. This is an urbanism characterised, on the one hand, by new forms of social inequality and heightened housing insecurity and shaped, on the other hand, by longstanding struggles over

property rights, accumulation strategies and speculative land interests (see Delclós 2013; Novak 2014; Peck 2012; Romanos 2014; Vasudevan 2013). It is, moreover, an urbanism marked by ‘new logics of expulsion’ that have become central to a revanchist and increasingly financialised form of late capitalism. At stake here are new ‘predatory formations’ that have condemned a growing number of people to misery and prompted many to seek alternative forms of housing and shelter (Sassen 2014, p. 215; see Desmond 2012, 2016; Beswick et al. 2016; Purser 2016; Vasudevan 2015).

It is the recent publication of Matthew Desmond’s *Eviction: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (2016) that has, perhaps more than anything else, brought these dynamics into sharp relief. Desmond’s harrowing account of destitution and housing insecurity in Milwaukee places particular emphasis on ‘the social drama of eviction’ (Purser 2016, p. 396). For Desmond, eviction remains ‘the most understudied process affecting the lives of the urban poor’ despite its key role in the reproduction of advanced urban marginality (2012, p. 90; Wacquant 2008). Millions of Americans, according to Desmond, are evicted every year because they are unable to pay their rent. Drawing on extensive ethnographic research, *Evicted* follows the lives of 8 families ‘swept up in the process of eviction’ (2016, p. 5). It retraces a geography of distressed neighbourhoods, trailer parks, homeless shelters and abandoned houses. It also draws attention to the febrile networks of kin and friendship that poor families often rely on and introduces the reader to the large cast of characters—landlords, housing inspectors, child-protection investigators, police officers, welfare-case managers, bosses, judges—who all wield the power to sabotage a family’s tenuous sense of normality (Katz 2016).

Desmond’s detailed and compassionate account of housing insecurity in the USA has brought new and much-needed attention to the significance (and frequency) of tenant evictions within impoverished communities across the USA. Yet, for many poorer tenants in the USA, as well as other cities in the Global North, high levels of residential mobility (enforced or otherwise) are nothing new. In the remainder of this chapter, I seek to append a sympathetic corrective to Desmond’s work and draw renewed attention to the relationship between the logics of capitalist urbanisation and a more expansive history of housing inequality in Berlin.

The chapter thus focuses on how crises of capital *became* crises of dwelling and how ordinary Berliners have responded to what Friedrich Engels (1995 [1872]) once described as the ‘housing question’. For Engels, this was always a question that *connected* housing to wider socio-spatial injustices. While he was writing with the shock cities of early industrialisation in mind, these are developments that have only intensified over the past century or so, taking in cities in both the Global North and South.

It is in this context that this chapter zooms in on the history of evictions and other forms of displacement in Berlin with a view to forging an empirically grounded approach to the geographical study of housing precarity. The chapter does so in 2 ways. It first provides an overview of the contemporary logics of forced eviction (*Zwangsräumung*) in Berlin focusing on *how* evictions take place and the various arrangements, materialities and practices that they depend on (see Baker in this collection; Purser 2016). Second, the chapter re-positions the relationship between forced evictions and struggles over housing within a much longer history of dispossession, insecurity and resistance. The chapter focuses on 2 examples focusing in particular on riots over forced evictions in the 1860s and 1870s and the emergence of tenant-organising and rent strikes during the 1920s and 1930s. The chapter concludes by offering some general observations about the need to spatialise *and* historicise the study of forced evictions and expulsions. It foregrounds development of an approach that seeks to re-centre recent geographical debates about the city as an historical site of dispossession and violence, dissent and subversion.

Zwangsräumungen in Berlin

In a forced eviction in Germany, a tenant is issued a court order on behalf of their landlord. The tenant is legally required to vacate their home within a given period. If they choose not to do so, a bailiff with, in many cases, the full assistance of the police, forcibly expels them. While the brutal and seemingly arbitrary nature of forced expulsions is often highlighted, evictions are, in fact, part of a complex and lengthy legal process that can take upwards of a year (Berner et al. 2015, p. 7; Stenberg et al. 2011, p. 49).

The main basis for a forced eviction is the termination of a tenancy. This can be done in 3 different ways: (1) when the tenancy expires; (2) when the terms of an open-ended tenancy are breached or; (3) when a landlord requires a property for their own use. As a recent study of forced evictions in Berlin has argued, the most likely reason for the termination of a tenancy is when a tenant has fallen behind in their rent payments (Berner et al. 2015, p. 7; see also Stenberg et al. 2011, p. 41).

There are, moreover, 2 types of terminations in Germany: an extraordinary immediate termination (*außerordentliche fristlose Kündigung*) and an ordinary timely termination (*ordnungsgemäße Kündigung*). The latter involves a notice period of at least 3 months, though this is dependent on the length of the tenure. In an immediate termination, no such protection applies. Tenancies can be terminated on the spot when a tenant has not paid their rent for 2 consecutive months or, alternatively, when they are behind more than 2 months in terms of the overall balance of payments. The German Federal Court has also ruled, in this context, that, where rent arrears amount to a sufficiently large part of the rent for a given month, any additional arrears would also serve as a legitimate cause for termination (Berner et al., 2015, p. 7–8; see Az. VIII ZR 107/12 at <http://openjur.de/u/566242.html>). Tenancies can, of course, be terminated for a host of other reasons from disturbing neighbours to breaking other terms of the original agreement. Tenants are able to stop an eviction by paying any arrears in full within 2 months of receiving notice. They are only able, however, to do this once within a period of 2 years (Stenberg et al. 2011, p. 49).

If a tenant is unwilling to move, a landlord will usually go to court to remove them. Should their case be successful, they will obtain a court order, which allows them to contract a bailiff to carry out the eviction. The court order is valid for 30 years. The bailiff is responsible for letting the tenant know at least 3 weeks in advance of the scheduled eviction. They need to specify the exact date and time and clarify how the eviction will be carried out. In many forced evictions, items that belong to the tenant are left behind. The landlord is obliged to store these items for a period of 2 months. If they are not claimed, the landlord is free to dispose of them as they please. Alternatively, the tenant may choose for the items to be sold to cover any outstanding arrears as well as the procedural costs of the eviction (Berner et al. 2015, p. 9; Stenberg et al. 2011, p. 50).

In 2013, the city of Berlin passed a new law in order to cut the upfront costs of an eviction that had been traditionally absorbed by the landlord. According to the new law, a landlord would no longer have to move items into storage. They could instead choose to change the locks and after a month, they were legally entitled to dispose of any remaining items. Whatever the case may be, the costs of a forced eviction were the responsibility, in the end, of the tenant and could amount to anything upwards of 6,000 euros. The new streamlined eviction process was much cheaper costing roughly 400–500 euros (see Maierhofer 2011).

As in the case of the Gülbol family, many recent evictions have been characterised by intense resistance on the part of tenant(s) and their supporters. This has produced an action repertoire of barricades, blockades and sit-ins, the aim of which has been to prevent bailiffs from gaining access to properties. In these circumstances, a bailiff is, according to § 758 of the German Civil Code, within his or her rights to request police assistance in order to carry out the eviction. As a result, the police in Berlin, Hamburg and elsewhere in Germany has become a decisive and often brutal agent within the complex logistical arrangements and protocols that are responsible for displacing people from their homes (Berner et al. 2015, p. 9).

While anecdotal evidence suggests that forced evictions have increased in recent years, Federal and Municipal governments in Germany do not provide statistics on forced evictions. As Berner et al. have argued, despite growing resistance, the work of bailiffs has gone largely unnoticed though they are at pains to show that it is possible to construct a provisional picture of numbers through court records (2015, p. 15). In Berlin, courts are obliged to report data on upcoming evictions due to rent arrears as well as the stipulated deadlines for enforcement by bailiffs (*Räumungsmittelung*). This data does not encompass moves that are made by tenants in advance of their eviction nor does it report on evictions carried out on behalf of landlords who require a property for their own use.

Whatever the case, between 2009 and 2012 approximately 9,000 court orders for eviction were issued in Berlin while the number of deadlines set by bailiffs rose from 5,000 to 7,000 in the same period. According to Berner et al., those affected by eviction reflect a wider *precarisation*

of housing in Berlin and are not limited to any single grouping though low-income households remain disproportionately affected. Spatially, the distribution of evictions is uneven with particular concentrations in low-income neighbourhoods such as Lichtenberg (Berner et al. 2015, p. 17). It is estimated that roughly 80 % of all forced evictions take place within the private rented sector though the social housing sector has itself been responsible for over 5,000 evictions (20 %) in the same period (Berner et al. 2015, p. 18).

In a forensic dissection of the wider social and economic geographies at stake here, Berner et al. (2015) have concluded that there are a number of intersecting dynamics that have shaped the recent rise in forced evictions in Berlin. Expulsions have been driven in part, they argue, by speculation, neighbourhood gentrification and rising house prices, which have placed additional pressures on a dwindling stock of affordable housing. These are, moreover, tendencies that have been exacerbated by the State and, if anything, forced evictions in Berlin are a *co-product* of market forces and the decisions made by a range of state actors (Job Centres and Housing Associations) set within an increasingly revanchist legal landscape (Berner et al. 2015, p. 94).

Job Centres in Berlin have, in particular, become key sites within a new precarious geography characterised by the rolling-back of social services as part of a wider neoliberalisation of municipal governance. In this context, a new focus on benefit cost reduction, coupled with Hartz IV reforms, has meant that many benefit recipients in Berlin now pay rents that are in excess of the limits set out by Hartz IV. A refusal by Job Centres to provide full support has caused many tenants to fall behind in their payments and accrue arrears that often lead to eviction. The same tenants are often unable to secure any additional support from a wider state system that is overwhelmed, underfunded and understaffed. As a result, the costs, pressures and responsibilities of securing housing have shifted to the residents themselves, despite a legal obligation by the State to provide help (Stenberg et al. 2011, p. 52).

It is perhaps unsurprising that, against a backdrop of growing residential mobility and rising forced evictions, a new social geography of inequality, insecurity and marginality has emerged in Berlin in recent years. In many inner-city neighbourhoods, market conditions have led

to above-average increases in rent. At the same time, a shrinking pool of affordable housing has been largely confined to a series of neighbourhoods on the city's outskirts where low-income residents are now facing a new cycle of displacements and evictions and a crisis in state provisioning. Some scholars have even talked of the 'banlieuification' of Berlin and the growing disparities between wealth and poverty in the city (see Holm 2016).¹ Yet, housing insecurity in Berlin is, in the end, nothing new. While forced evictions have become an increasingly visible feature of the contemporary urban landscape, the elementary brutalities of displacement and dispossession must also be seen, as the remainder of this chapter shows, within a much broader historical geography of capitalist urbanisation. The routinised drama of eviction may, in other words, have become an increasingly paradigmatic site for the production of advanced forms of urban marginality. In the case of Berlin, however, this is a process rooted in the city's history. This chapter thus calls for an optic that *connects* the disagreeable materialities of forced evictions with a more expansive narrative of urban development, dispossession and resistance (see Vasudevan 2015, p. 4).

The "Housing Question" in Berlin

According to the Marxist Geographer David Harvey, cities have perhaps become the key site for a variety of spatial struggles which, for Harvey, speak to the 'intimate connection between the development of capitalism and urbanisation' (2008, p. 24). It is around the question of housing, Harvey argues, that many of these struggles are organised. 'Capital,' he writes, 'represents itself in the form of a physical landscape created in its own image, created as use values to enhance the progressive accumulation of capital.' Not only is surplus value generated, according to Harvey, through the production of housing but it is also pumped into the housing sector through a process he refers to as 'capital switching' (1989, p. 83, 71). As Harvey argues, there exists both a 'primary' circuit

¹ The recent attempt by city officials in Berlin to clamp down on holiday lets (Air BnB) should be seen in this context.

of capital that encompasses the production of goods and services and a 'secondary' circuit of capital marked by the production and reproduction of the built environment, including housing. For Harvey, the secondary circuit serves as an 'overflow tank' into which surplus over accumulated capital can be switched in the event of a crisis that prevents it from being profitably reinvested in the primary circuit. Capital is effectively parked, in this way, until such time as the conditions of over accumulation have eased or there is an overinvestment in the built environment (see Aalbers and Christophers 2014, p. 379; Harvey 1982, 1985).

While the architecture of Harvey's argument may sound forbiddingly abstract, it is in housing and the built form more generally, that these abstractions are most visible and most material. For many Berliners, it was the social life of the tenement block (*Mietskaserne*) that came to anatomise the iniquities of capitalist accumulation. Rapid urbanisation in the years after the founding of the German Reich in 1871 inaugurated the first *Gründerzeit* as a major period of socio-spatial transformation in which Berlin was reimagined as the new imperial capital and as a major industrial metropolis (Hansen, 1995: 385). Overcrowding, poor housing and inadequate infrastructure only confirmed the city's status as a symbol of unfettered urban development. Statistically speaking, by 1871, over 162,000 residents in Berlin were living in 1-room dwellings that, on average, housed over 7 people. In 1900, 43 % of households lived in dwellings consisting of a single room, and 28 % in 2-room dwellings; in 1925, over 70,000 Berliners still lived in dilapidated cellars (Hegemann 1979 [1930], pp. 337, 463). While, in 1910, the average number of residents per building was 8 in London, it was 5 in Philadelphia, 9 in Chicago, 20 in New York, 38 in Paris and 78 in Berlin (Hegemann 1979 [1930], p. 19; Eberstadt 1920, p. 6). Many buildings were without basic sanitary arrangements and, in 1918, the Reich Statistical Office found that nearly a third of small dwellings lacked a kitchen and a toilet (McElligott 2001, p. 70). In 1905, infant mortality in the working-class neighbourhood of Wedding remained a staggering 43 % (Jelavich 1993, p. 12).

The ultimate origins of Berlin's housing crisis can be traced back, as Werner Hegemann's (1979 [1930]) monumental political history of architecture and housing in Berlin argues, to the emergence of rental barracks (*Mietskasernen*) in the late eighteenth century that established the

city's reputation for creative destruction and uneven urban development. Nevertheless, it was the rapid development of the city in the second half of the nineteenth century, which ultimately confirmed the privileged position of landlords and speculators over planners, social commentators, reformers and scientists in the city. In a well-known history of the German working-class, the German Marxist and co-founder of the Spartacist League, Otto Rühle, argued that this was largely the product of a political system that guaranteed that at least half of all city councillors in Berlin were registered landlords. For Rühle, a majority political block was, in this way, secured whose 'interest in high rents and land prices, rent-seeking and controlled expansion ran against the wider public interest.' 'It was overcrowding and growing demand that was responsible for their profits', Rühle continued, 'and they were, unsurprisingly, the main focus of their housing policy. The result was the [Berlin] tenement house' (1930, p. 382).

If there is much to recommend in this view, other commentators including Hegemann himself, have singled out the Hobrecht plan of 1862 as a key moment in the transformation of Berlin in the nineteenth century (Bernet 2004; Ladd 1990). As the extension plan for the city of Berlin—drawn up by, a then inexperienced engineer, James Hobrecht—focused on the circulation of traffic and future development outside the built-up core of the city. The final result was a vast and regularised grid of city blocks that were linked to existing roads and property lines. State officials attempted to regulate the acquisition of land where streets were planned but the plan did not provide any provision as Brian Ladd (1990) has argued, for controlling 'what was or not built on the privately owned land that the streets traversed' (81). A land speculation boom ensued as landowners sought to maximise windfall profits. The result was the typical Berlin *Mietskaserne*, a large block that was traditionally 5 stories high, extended to the back of the lot, and was only broken up by a series of tiny courtyards that could be as small as 5.3 m × 5.3 m, the minimum necessary to comply with fire regulations.² Poor living conditions, disease and overcrowding were commonplace.

²The minimum size requirements of courtyards corresponded to the turning radius of the fire department's wagons (see Ladd 1990, p. 81).

By the early 1860s, protest against housing scarcity and forced evictions had also become a regular occurrence in many districts of Berlin. As a new crisis in housing intensified in the immediate wake of the Hobrecht plan, landlords exploited the opportunity with many capping tenancy agreements at 3 months, others demanded that tenants pay a third of their annual rent in advance (a practice that was known as '*quartaliter pranumerando*'). Almost half (49.6 %) of all renters in the city were thus forced to move as thousands of families poured onto city streets with all their possessions. Protests soon erupted and, in June 1863, the planned eviction of a Kreuzberg barkeeper, led to a series of violent riots across the neighbourhood (see Lindenberger 1984). What became known as the 'Moritzplatz-Krawalle' began as a local barkeeper on Oranienstraße was issued with an eviction notice because he had illegally installed an iron stove in his bar. In response, he placed a large placard in the window of his establishment that drew attention to the terms of his imminent eviction (Kowalczyk 1992, p. 240). Crowds soon gathered in front of the bar and within hours an angry mob had attacked and vandalized the nearby home of the landlord. Riots broke out and it was only in the early hours of the morning that the police were able to take control of the local neighbourhood. Over the following days, further violent confrontations with the police took place as barricades were erected across Kreuzberg (Lindenberger 1984, pp. 46–48). The police responded by issuing a series of curfews and closing a number of city gates in order to prevent protesters from escaping. After 4 days of rioting, the police were finally able to quell the violence. In total, over 426 residents were arrested and dozens were seriously injured. The city was also forced to set up a special committee to oversee and settle disputes over rent while a conservative newspaper, *Die Neue preussische Kreuzzeitung*, warned of the rise of a 'new form of social protest' in response to the 'housing question' (see Lindenberger 1984).³

There were, however, few immediate solutions to the 'housing question', which, if anything, only gained wider significance in the decades that followed. The victory of the Prussian military in the Franco-Prussian war and the founding of the German Reich in 1871, coupled

³ *Die Neue preussische Kreuzzeitung*, 3.7.1863.

with Hobrecht's earlier extension plan, led to a new crisis characterised by widespread speculation and predatory rent-seeking. Of course, rent-seeking, as David Harvey, reminds us is nothing more than a polite and rather neutral-sounding way of describing what he has often referred to as 'accumulation by dispossession' (2014, p. 133). For many Berliners in the early 1870s, dispossession and displacement were everyday matters of fact as affordable homes disappeared in a frenzied cycle of panic buying and rising rents (see Nitsche et al. 1981; Geist and Kürvers 1984, p. 121). Between 1871 and 1873, the return on rental income in Berlin rose by over 190 % while many residents were forced to pay rents that had doubled or tripled in the same period. At the same time, attempts to re-absorb capital surpluses found material form in a boom that transformed the numerous fields and meadows that surrounded the city into building plots and construction sites.

By April 1872, there were over 15,000 residents in Berlin who were homeless (Glatzer 1993, p. 80). Many responded to the housing crisis through a repertoire of informal makeshift strategies. This included the practice of '*Trockenwohnen*' where tenants moved in and out of brand new buildings as the mortar set in exchange for nominal rents.⁴ Others became 'hot bedders' ('*Schlafleute*') in which they paid rent for a place to sleep—often in shifts—in vastly overcrowded apartments. Others still, occupied and used vacant buildings (the first squatted buildings in Berlin were in April 1872 on Zionskirchstraße and Mohrenstraße), stables, empty carts, abandoned railway carriages and summerhouses as temporary emergency shelters (Rada 1991, p. 152). Some families even opted to camp out on newly paved streets (Kowalczyk 1992, p. 244). At the same time, a series of precarious squatter settlements were set up on the remaining open fields outside the gates of the city, most notably around the Halle and Kottbuser gates in the south and the Frankfurter and Landsberger gates to the east (Poling 2014, p. 258). By March 1872, over 80 shacks had sprung up on the Rixdorfer Feld while the 'Freistadt Barackia' that appeared outside the Kottbuser gate housed approximately

⁴The predicament of Berlin's '*Trockenwohner*' at the turn of the twentieth century featured prominently in Hans Fallada's posthumous novel *Ein Mann will nach oben* (1953).

150 families (Bernstein 1907, p. 230; Lange 1976, p. 133).⁵ There were a number of smaller encampments as well.

It was the eviction of a carpenter from an apartment on Blumenstraße in the district of Friedrichshain on the July 25, 1872 that brought the tensions surrounding Berlin's housing crisis into sharp relief.⁶ As the *Neuer Social-Demokrat*, the newspaper of the General German Workers' Association, reported, 'for the next 3 days, Berlin was in an almost uninterrupted state of revolt.'⁷ Large crowds gathered across Friedrichshain and were soon attacking police with stones and other missiles. The protests lasted long into the evening and, while the next day began quietly, the eviction and destruction of a squatter settlement near the Frankfurter gate precipitated a new wave of resistance as barricades were erected in Friedrichshain and large crowds once again attacked police. As the protests stretched into a third day, local military units were put on standby. The homes of a number of landlords were, in turn, offered police protection, which only exacerbated tensions and led to further violent confrontation between local residents and armed police units. It was only as the day came to an end that the police were able to contain the unrest as the protests dispersed with the same abruptness that they had begun.⁸ Upwards of 150 protesters were wounded during the 3 days of rioting while an additional 102 police officers were injured. Of the 100 protesters that were eventually arrested and charged, approximately 30 were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for breaching the peace (Kowalczyk 1992, p. 247).

If the Blumenstraße riots represented a brief and violent response to the housing question, they did not lead to a sustained episode of contentious claim-making (see Tilly and Tarrow 2006). The period after the

⁵The same story ran in a number of local newspapers, see *Spenersche Zeitung*, 17.5.1872; *Vossische Zeitung*, 18.5.1872, Beilage; *Kreuzzeitung*, 22.5.1872; also see *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14.7.1872, Beilage.

⁶According to the *Neuer Social-Demokrat*, it was widely reported that the eviction of the tenant, a Herr Harstark, was based on outstanding rent payments to the landlord. His 3-year contract expired on October 1, 1872 and he had regularly paid his rent *quartaliter prannumerando*. The real reason for the eviction, it would seem, was that the fact that Harstark was sub-letting part of the apartment (see Nitsche et al. 1981, p. 46).

⁷*Neuer Social-Demokrat*, 1.8.1872.

⁸*Neuer Social-Demokrat*, 31.7 and 2.8.

riots was characterised, if anything, by further repression and deepening immiseration. The incoming Berlin police president, Guido von Madai, insisted, in August 1872, that the remaining squatter settlements outside the city gates of Berlin were to be evacuated and destroyed by the middle of September. Any inhabitant who was unable to secure alternative shelter was to be re-housed in a workhouse for the homeless.⁹ Despite representations from the squatters, the encampments were cleared, and in many cases, brutally dismantled by the police (Weipert 2013, p. 39; Geist and Kürvers 1984, p. 120). By the end of September, only a few shacks remained while hundreds if not thousands of Berliners were once again homeless, many of whom were unwilling to take shelter in workhouses. There were numerous suicides and, for a large number of city inhabitants, the situation only worsened as the traditional October 1 moving date approached. In Berlin, tenants typically moved at the beginning of April and October and, in 1872, over 53 % of the city's renters were forced to find a new residence as city streets were once again full of families pushing carts with all of their possessions, an image that was later captured to great effect by the local artist, Heinrich Zille.

The housing crisis of the early 1870s reached a peak in 1873 though the structural conditions that were responsible for the uneven geographical development of Berlin were largely unresolved. Overcrowding and poor housing conditions remained a constant in the period that led up to the outbreak of the First World War, and in the Weimar Era that followed (Silverman 1970). While Article 155 of the Weimar constitution of August 11, 1919, promised suitable housing for every German, existing iniquities were largely untouched by the war as landlords exploited a new crisis in housing through rent rises and further speculation (Rada 1991, pp. 169–170). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that new tenant organisations gained widespread popularity across Berlin and that local neighbourhood committees and councils developed a repertoire of contention that challenged the authority of landlords.

Tenants campaigned, in particular, for deductions in rents to cover basic repairs while eviction resistance networks were established in order to protect residents against arbitrary expulsions. *Die Rote Fahne*, the main

⁹ Spenersche Zeitung, 24.8.1872; Vossische Zeitung, 8.28, 1872.

organ of the revolutionary Spartacist League and the Communist Party of Germany, was already reporting by the end of 1918 that ‘an appeal had gone out to tenants living in the northern suburbs to resist any increases in their rent and to organise against evictions.’¹⁰ It was new legislation on the regulation of rents that proved decisive in radicalising the tenants’ movement across Berlin. What became known as the ‘Reich Tenants’ Law’ (*Reichsmietengesetz*) was proposed as an expansion of existing provisions that were put in place during the war under which rents were capped. By the end of 1920, new draft legislation would have made it possible for rent increases upwards of two hundred percent. Tenants responded with a wave of protests and, on April 1, 1921, thousands in the city, and elsewhere in Germany, began a rent strike.¹¹ The strikers demanded control over the administration of rents, the seizure of vacant properties and the immediate restoration of homes in need of repair (Hermann 1925).

While local actions yielded mixed results, the strikers were successful in introducing rent controls that were passed into law in April 1922 and which, in the case of Berlin, existed in a revised form until 1988. Two others laws were introduced in the same period. The 1923 ‘Housing Shortage Law’ (*Reichswohnungsmangelgesetz*) required landlords to advertise all vacancies. It empowered local authorities to seize large apartments and fill them to ‘capacity’ while a system of compulsory renting was introduced that empowered authorities to requisition space for homeless families (Silverman 1970, p. 118). A ‘Tenant Protection Law’ (*Mieterschutzgesetz*) also came into effect in 1923. The new law transferred the issuing of eviction notices to the courts and provided clear guidelines for the termination of tenancies. The law was intended as a temporary measure until new housing construction had relieved a growing shortage in housing. The legislation—in modified form—is still in use today.

The tenant movement’s immediate success was short-lived, however, as the onset of hyperflation by the end of 1922 neutralised the effectiveness of the new law. What did survive, however, was an action repertoire

¹⁰ *Die Rote Fahne*, 28.12.1918.

¹¹ While the strikers boasted that over 250,000 Berliners were involved in the action, many scholars believe that a nationwide estimate of 300,000 strikers is a more plausible figure (see Rada 1991, p. 174).

that produced local geographies of engagement and solidarity embedded within city neighbourhoods that would prove useful as a new wave of protest descended on the city in the early 1930s. The economic collapse of 1929 triggered widespread unemployment. Decreasing wages and new taxes on basic consumer goods exacerbated, in turn, a cost of living crisis that left many Berliners facing eviction (Nitsche et al. 1981, p. 160).

Tenants responded through a new direct action campaign that was launched at an assembly on Swinemünder Straße, only a few doors down from one of the first squatted houses in Berlin originally occupied during an earlier wave of protests in 1872. On July 27, 1932, 14 houses on Swinemünder Straße, representing over 300 families, agreed to go on a rent strike at the beginning of August. They were fighting for a 30 % reduction in their rents and were soon joined by others houses in the districts of Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg (Rada 1991, pp. 174–175). Tenants living in a former jail on the Molkenmarkt began their own strike on September 1. Over 110 families lived in the ‘Wanzenburg’ (‘bed bug castle’) in cells that were as small as 2 m × 4.5 m. The tenants demanded a 50 % reduction in their rents and the immediate renovation of the building. The landlord responded by issuing eviction notices and a bailiff was ordered to expel tenants on the morning of September 14. A large crowd gathered in the courtyard of the building and prevented the bailiff from carrying out the evictions.¹² Despite a campaign of intimidation by the landlord, they eventually agreed to subsidise a programme of renovations and to lower rents by 40–42 %. Any outstanding rent payments were waived and the strike ended less than a month after it began.

The repertoire deployed during the strike only emboldened housing activists across Berlin who came together at a large conference at the end of September 1932 in which over 1,000 delegates attended (Rada 1991, p. 177). At the same time, new strikes were declared in a number of houses including one on Köpenicker Straße 34/35, which soon became a key symbol of the wider movement. Of the block’s 63 households, 58 joined the strike adopting similar demands to their comrades in the ‘Wanzenburg’. *Die Rote Fahne* reported that the house’s 160 residents were limited to the use of 6 working toilets while a number of children

¹² *Vossische Zeitung*, 14.9.1932.

suffered from acute tuberculosis. The local tenant's assembly set up a stall in the courtyard where they 'scientifically' displayed the various cockroaches, beetles and bedbugs that they had collected from the house.¹³

The tenants were successful in securing an amnesty for outstanding rents, a withdrawal of planned evictions and a commitment from the landlord to undertake much needed renovations. They were unable, however, to reduce their rent by more than 10 % and remained determined to continue striking. Neighbourhood demonstrations and other initiatives were organised as the citywide movement expanded. New tactics were, in turn, devised in response to forced evictions and growing police violence. A popular tactic involved re-occupying apartments in the immediate aftermath of an eviction once the bailiffs and police units had left, as landlords were legally required to submit an application in order to carry out a new eviction and this could take at least 8 weeks to process (Kowalczyk 1992, pp. 251–252). Other evicted tenants set up large squatter encampments on the outskirts of the city in garden allotments, a subject that was a feature of Bertolt Brecht's 1931 film, *Kuhle Wampe*. By the early 1930s, makeshift shacks and huts on the city's allotments were already housing roughly 120,000 of Berlin's residents or roughly 2.8 % of the city's population (Urban 2013, p. 221).¹⁴

On December 29, 1932, the tenants at Ackerstraße 132, Berlin's largest tenement block, voted almost unanimously to go on strike. The final outcome of the strike nevertheless remains unclear, as the *Die Rote Fahne* had been banned in the aftermath of the February 1933 Reichstag fire. As a number of historians have argued, despite the efforts of the *Die Rote Fahne* to record and document the rise of housing activism in Berlin, it has remained a challenge to reconstruct the full history of rent strikes in the final years of the Weimar Republic (see Kowalczyk 1992). There is plenty of evidence to support the view that the strikes took in thousands of apartment blocks across the city. In the neighbourhood surrounding the Stettiner Bahnhof (now known as Nordbahnhof), over 312 blocks and 14,615 tenants were known to be on strike in October 1932 and it

¹³ *Die Rote Fahne*, 1.10.1932.

¹⁴ Figure quoted from *Lokalanzeiger*, 12.08.1933. As Florian Urban has recently argued, it is now clear that during the interwar period, the "vast majority of Berlin's approximately 103,000 garden plots were permanently inhabited" (2013, p. 230).

is entirely plausible that, across the city, over 3,000 houses were actively striking by late 1932.¹⁵ The tenant movement came to an abrupt end, however, as the seizure of power by the Nazis in the wake of elections in March 1933 led to a violent crackdown on left-wing activists, many of whom had been active in rent strikes and eviction resistance networks alongside other alternative youth groups (Weipert 2013).¹⁶

Conclusions

The struggle over housing in Berlin has a long and complex history. This is a history of urban development and capitalist accumulation closely allied to repeated crises of housing in the city in which the drama of displacement and dispossession represented, for many Berliners, a routine horizon of experience. At the same time, such crises were also widely understood as a source of political contestation and resistance that opened up space for changes in the city, however fragile and precarious. Riots, informal settlements and rents strikes are only one part of this broader history. After the Second World War, for example, a new generation of activists, architects and planners began to challenge the official course of urban development in the Western half of the city. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, it was squatters—first in the West, later in the former East—whose actions increasingly constituted the political ;other; to creative destruction and accumulation-by-dispossession (Vasudevan 2015). While squatters and other housing activists were able to cultivate and sustain an alternative urban infrastructure in Berlin, their activities were often seen as a major obstacle to be both pacified and proscribed. The authorities forcibly cleared many squatted spaces and surviving housing projects remain under constant threat.

The recent emergence of new oppositional movements in Berlin from struggles over refugee rights to protests over gentrification, rising rents and forced evictions show that these histories can still speak to other

¹⁵ *Die Rote Fahne*, 30.10.1932.

¹⁶ There were, however, factions in the NSDAP that did offer a modicum of support to the rent strikes especially in Berlin though these initiatives ended as they seized power in 1933.

ways of thinking about and inhabiting the city that offer a meaningful, wide-ranging alternative to the predations of capital. In his groundbreaking book on evictions and the reproduction of urban poverty, Matthew Desmond argues that we simply ‘didn’t know how immense this problem was.’ ‘For years’, he argues, ‘social scientists, journalists and policymakers all but ignored eviction’ (2016, p. 295). While the relative dearth of work of scholarly attention has been noted in the American context that forms the basis of Desmond’s argument, there is danger that we overlook the rich archive of practices through which many city-dwellers have responded to the violence of forced evictions.¹⁷ As this chapter has shown, the history of housing inequality in Berlin is a history of violent dispossession rooted in a complex matrix of discourses, objects and practices. However, it is equally a history of resistance and struggle and for many residents living in the city, an enduring source of adaptation, invention and solidarity especially in the face of widening inequalities and rapidly changing social geographies (Holm 2016). Further research on forced evictions is, in this context, urgently needed to not only address the short-term and long-term consequences of displacement but to highlight the possibilities for challenging the effects of uneven geographical development.

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¹⁷This chapter is a preliminary introduction to a much larger archival project that seeks to reconstruct the historical experience of eviction and displacement in Berlin.

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