#13

Anti-gentrification nelle città (Sud) Europee

Anti-gentrification in (Southern) European cities

Edited by Sandra Annunziata
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http://www.urbanisticatre.uniroma3.it/dipsu/

Progetto grafico / Nicola Vazzoler
Impaginazione / Giulio Cuccurullo

Data di pubblicazione: Roma, dicembre 2017

In copertina:
illustrazione ad opera dell'artista Antonia Santolaya,
approfondisci il progetto grafico del numero a p. 131

edito da   *con il supporto di*   *per informazioni*

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Anti-gentrification nelle città (Sud) Europee
Anti-gentrification in (Southern) European cities
a cura di / edited by Sandra Annunziata

Anti-gentrification, an anti-displacement urban (political) agenda

Anti-gentrification, ovvero una agenda (politica) urbana anti-esplusione

A cura di / Edited by Sandra Annunziata,
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This edition of the Quaderni focuses on *anti-gentrification* practices and challenges which have been on the rise in public debates in many cities of the European South in recent years. It presents a variety of practices carried out in several European cities and presented by activists and/or by academics who met and engaged in a collective dialogue on the topic[1]. In the first part of the Quaderni, activists highlight their experience of involvement in practices against evictions, austerity, commodification of urban space for touristic uses and speculation in various cities. In particular, they were asked to share[2], their experience, repertoire of practices and proposals for action. In the second part of the issue, scholars stress the theoretical epistemological challenges, spotlight the ambiguities, contradictions and conflicts that this subject presents. In some cases, the researchers locate themselves halfway between academia and activism, critically engaging in conversation with activists, or directly involved in housing protest and/or alternative housing policy design. The result is a polysemy of voices, a collective effort, that enrich our understanding of what it means to resist gentrification.

The noun *anti-gentrification* is here employed with different aims, as a general framework for describing the complex regime of expulsions taking place in European cities. This enables the authors to consider as anti-gentrification a broad range of different practices of resistances all sharing a common claim: the permanent access to urban space (and housing) for vulnerable and precarious social groups and communities, which would otherwise be expelled by (hard and soft) processes of urban transformation. This framework also substantiates the exercise of prefiguration, imagination and enactment of practical actions aimed at countervailing displacement and placing social solidarity at the centre of the urban agenda.

I must mention three distinctive traits pertaining to the line of research from which this issue of the *Quaderni* stem from[3]. The first aspect is that this work is aligned with a radical critical approach to gentrification, which assumes from the beginning the perspective of those being excluded and marginalized. I follow Marcuse in his claim: *"If the pain of displacement is not a central component of what we are dealing with in studying gentrification - indeed, is not what brings us to the subject in the first place - we are not just missing one factor in a multi-factorial equation; we are missing the central point that needs to be addressed." (2010: 187).* The second aspect is that I deliberately assume a position that lies in-between a particularistic approach to the study of the phenomena, that focuses on the specificities of each context

1_ *The authors of the essays took part in the workshop "Stay Put, a transnational dialogue for the creation of an anti-gentrification manual for South European cities" at the University of Roma Tre, Architecture Department, October 26-27 2016. I asked an additional paper to Andrej Holm due to his long lasting experience in anti-gentrification practices and housing policies in Berlin.*

2_ *All the papers of this journal have been subject to a blind peer review, however the activists paper are here presented without any claim of meeting academic paper standards.*

3_ *I am referring to the comparative research project Anti-gentrification policies and practices in Sothern European Cities. supported by a European Marie Curie IEF FP7-People-2013, grant id. 625691, and developed by the author in collaboration with Professor Loretta Lees at the University of Leicester.*

(Maloutas 2017) and a universalistic approach based on a critical understanding of the political economy of housing, with a tendency to extract and spotlight the regularities and the proportions that the phenomenon has assumed on a global scale (Lees et all 2015, 2016). The third aspect worth mentioning is that I choose to explore the anti-gentrification discourse and practices within a specific geographical context, the European cities, and in a specific time, the years that followed the economic crisis. European cities, particularly in the European south, display a complex regime of expulsion, that is legitimized and justified by a permanent austerity climate, as well as the rise of anti-displacement practices and discourses with explicit or implicit reference to gentrification processes (Annunziata and Lees, 2016). I thus deliberatively choose to add the reformist echoes of housing policies in Berlin (described by Holm) and anti-gentrification practices in London (in Ferreri) as a way to strengthen by contrast the singularity of the anti-gentrification discourse in Southern Europe.

Critical accounts to the process of *gentrification* have already highlighted the fact that to deal with this phenomenon equals examining its effects, namely the urban expulsion of fragile, vulnerable and low-income social groups. The terms of the anti-gentrification discourse and practices can be referred mainly to: a demand for prevention and, where necessary, for countering urban expulsion in all its forms – direct, indirect, exclusive (Marcuse 1985a) and symbolic (Janovshka 2016); the demand for possibly long-term and sustainable rents (Newman and Wyly 2006; Hartman 1984); an indiscriminate opportunity for all citizens to benefit from public urban assets. For a long time however, practices of resistance and alternatives have occupied a marginal space in the literature on gentrification. Lees and Ferreri (2016), starting from a set of anti-gentrification struggle in London, have updated the debate deepening our knowledge of the repertoire of practices and skills set in motion to counter the process of displacement.

Housing scholars argued that Southern and Northern European cities in some cases have displayed a set of 'endogenous factors' that have represented elements of inertia for gentrification processes, the so called *gentrification barriers* (Ley and Dobson 2008; see also Maloutas on Athens, Holm on Berlin and Sornado on Madrid in this issue). Among these barriers we can recognize: a relatively affordable housing system such as in the case of Berlin; the presence of public housing in central areas as well as rent regulations still in place, for instance in the historical centre of Madrid; the diffusion and the fragmentation of property all seen as factors of inertia to large development project. Moreover, it is also important to mention that in many South European cities the historically determined relation between social groups and urban space has led to a low level of residential segregation or to types of vertical segregation that intensify social diversity in urban areas (Barbati and Pisati 2015 for Italy, Leal 2010 for Spain, Maloutas and Karadimitriu 2001 for Greece).

Because of these factors, gentrification outside the paradigmatic cases in the

European North (such as London) initially presented itself at a slow pace and in a hybrid form, combined with other traits of urban change and described as *gentrification-like* processes (Janoschka et all 2014). However, urban policies in the last decades played an important role in boosting a process where it barely existed. Gentrification practices in South European cities have been described in relation to tourism development policies (Cocola Gant 2014); urban regeneration schemes that implies demolition of entire neighbourhoods (Arbaci, Tapada 2012, Dalgado 2011 and Portelli 2015 for Barcelona); redesign of public space and commercial plans implemented with the aim of enhancing central areas and related consumer practices (Janoschka and Sequera, 2015 for Madrid; Alexandri 2015 for Athens); sale policy of public housing in city centre (Herzfeld 2009).

Moreover, after the burst of the global financial crisis, European cities have been the epicentre of public debt crisis and have been transformed into experimental zones for testing forms of acute economic austerity that in turn have produced a set of necessary justifications for strengthening predatory practices of dispossession. This process is carried out through land-grabbing, privatizations, placement of collective and private assets on the financial market also by scaling up gentrification operators such as real estate funds and global corporations (Alexandri and Janoschka 2017). In this climate, the antibodies to gentrification are themselves at risk of being expelled: social centres, housing occupations and all those contexts that have traditionally nourished alternatives to the commodification of urban space and housing (Cattaneo and Martines 2016) have been evicted or are under eviction themselves. Consequently, the topic is at the centre of public debate, making it possible to question the specific responsibilities of policy decisions[4].

At the political heart of these considerations lies the fact that during the most acute phases of the gentrification processes, preventive measures have already failed and have proved to be inadequate. Policies designed to reinstate a balance between different groups living in a city would require huge collective effort, high levels of social solidarity and the implementation of highly unpopular measures for mitigating and regulating the market. However, after decades of disappearance from blind neoliberal political agendas, an orientation toward progressive housing policies is (timidly) arising as testified by the case of Berlin in this issue.

The anti-displacement paradigm is in fact not new in the field of progressive planning and housing policies and gentrification study (here the reference is owned to American scholars Marcuse 1985a, b and Hartman 1984). In 1984 Chester Hartman summed up with the slogan 'the right to stay put' a set of practices and policies for guaranteeing long-term enjoyment of housing for vulnerable social classes, one-parent households, single persons and ethnic minorities. For Hartman however the slogan 'stay put', a key word in the anti-gentrification discourse, is something more than 'to stay still in a place and resist expulsion'. A translation (e.g into Italian) of the expression conveys a sense of 'being aware', of observation and of critical interpretation of what is

4_ *See the Guardian on the topic "What is your city doing to resist gentrification?" https://www.theguardian. com/cities/2016/sep/9/city-resist-gentrification-displacement.*

happening in our surroundings. This slogan reinforces the concept that resistance does not imply stillness, on the contrary, it evokes action intentionally directed and the exercise of prefiguring a change (Saitta, 2015).

However, placed in the grip of unpopularity, anti-gentrification measures are destined to occupy the political space of radical incrementalism, a practice able to correct the targets and the main flaws in a system without however questioning its foundations [5]. On the contrary, the theoretical corpus of Hartman's progressive planning is built on active prevention of displacement, on the de-commodification of urban assets and on the right to use and access urban space. The handbook *Displacemnt how to fight it?* (Hartman, Keating and LeGates, 1982) outlines a set of actions to be carried out with the aim of blocking expulsion. The proposals for community based development presented in this text are valid assumptions still today: avoid demolition and privatization of public residential housing; build campaigns to raise awareness about speculative developments and capital-intensive projects (see Saitta for a critical account on the difference between gentrification and speculation); limit the change of use of property respecting neighbourhood's social composition; establish eviction-free zones and design alternative projects for urban regeneration. The papers in this issue comment several action in this sense: the referendum for a rent legislative proposal in Berlin (Holm), critically evaluate land use changes as for the case of the Stop Hotel in Madrid Lavapiés (Sorando), measures for mitigating tourism and for preserving low-income housing especially in historical city centres (Cocola Gant and Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible), The validity of this approach is also proven by the housing agenda presented by many anti-eviction platforms throughout Europe (Colau and Alemanì 2012; Osservatorio DESC 2013; European Action Coalition 2015) and by the repertoire of actions carried out by committees of citizens campaigning against the demolitions of council estate in London (see Ferreri commenting the realization of the Handbook Staying Put: An Anti-gentrification handbook for council estates in London, in this issue), or against demolition of historical buildings in Rome (Libera Repubblica di San Lorenzo in this issue).

A critical revision of the gentrification resistance practices (Annunziata and Rivas 2016) has enabled us to identify some of the recurring traits and skills placed at the core of a specific request for prevention (in the form of legislative reform of rent laws, new generation of public housing and housing allowances) as well as a heterogeneous set of practices and legal *bricolage* aimed at gaining time, or counter narratives that elaborate counterproposal against mainstream regeneration culture (see Left Hand Rotation in this issue). The common denominator of these practices seems to build awareness, an internationally and overtly oriented effort to stay put that strategically mobilizes visibility. However, in the current situation this is not the only form of resistance to processes of expulsion. In fact, a strategy of invisibility is equally plausible; informal practices in search of informal support networks are the most frequent practices of survival and everyday life resistance to the acuteness of processes of dispossession and destitution (Lees,

5_ This thesis is presented in Gallaher, 2015, who studied the conversion from lease agreements to ownership. According to Gallaher the practice of condo conversion contributes to the increase of opportunities for tenants to stay in their neighbourhoods. The text does not, however, focus on the issue of who can not afford ownership or who choses not to.

Annunziata and Rivas, 2017). From this perspective, a theory of resistances to gentrification can benefit from new studies considering the anti-displacement issue by examining not only cases of collective action but also the micro scale of everyday life and of practice of resistance that critically engage with diversity in gentrifying neighbourhoods (Manzo in this issue) and the formation of identities in postmodern society. We are all, no one excluded, involved. The question of what we can do about the phenomena concerns us more than we may realize.

Today increase of urban displacement due to the economic crisis, the emergence of a (new) housing crisis represent a turning point in the critical analysis of the phenomenon as well as in practices that mitigate it. It is not a coincidence that in the anti-eviction discourse, the topic of how to contrast displacement is central to practices of civil disobedience such as the anti--austerity and anti-auction movements in Greece (described by Katerini in this issue) the housing squatting movement in Rome (Caciagli and Grazioli in this issue). The prevention of homelessness is at the centre of measures implemented by the EU with the aim to combat poverty (European Commission 2015) and by cities dealing with old and new housing emergencies (Annunziata and Siatitsa on Rome and Athens in this issue).

Gentrifying urban spaces in European cities thus represent dynamic fields where new proposals for action can flourish. They are 'political' spaces where a constant renegotiation of social and spatial rights is at play. However, despite the effort to appear coherent and with a united agenda at the European level, anti-displacement practices are highly differentiated in their conceptualization of the problem as well as in their repertoire of actions. The framework provided by this special issue of *Quaderni* allows us to consider them together and to assess their potential to define the contents of a possible anti-displacement agenda tailored to the situations of emergency in the cities we inhabit.

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*Particolare del
progetto grafico
a cura di
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pubblicato a p. 131*

Anti-gentrification nelle città (Sud) Europee

Anti-gentrification in (Southern) European cities

>

- GRUPOS DE ASAMBLEAS
- SE NOS CONOCE POR OTROS NOMBRES
- SOMOS FRENO A LA GENTRIFICACIÓN

- SOMOS NO PARTIDO, SI POLÍTICA
-

Particolare del progetto grafico a cura di **Antonia Santolaya** *pubblicato a p. 131*

Le esperienze degli attivisti
The experience of activists

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1 – VISIBILIZAR CASAS VACIAS

2 – SEÑALAR A LOS BANCOS QUE HAN SIDO RESCATADOS

3. – GOBIERNO EN PROBLEMAS O QUE NO PUEDA DESINTERESARTE

4 – INTERÉS SOCIAL

APOYO MUTUO

WORK IN PROGRESS

The grabbing of private property and the struggle against auctions in Greece today

L'esproprio della proprietà privata e la lotta contro le aste in Grecia

@ *Tonia Katerini* |

Con questo contributo provo a descrivere un'esperienza di attivismo nata in Grecia negli anni recenti in cui sono direttamente coinvolta. In particolare mi concentrerò sul movimento anti-aste che è cresciuto in seguito alla crisi economica in risposta ad un processo diffuso di pignoramento di terre e beni di proprietà pubblica e privata a causa di debiti contratti con istituti di credito. Il pignoramento si presenta in Grecia come una pratica orizzontale di espropriazione che verrà descritta come una strategia di accumulazione che trova giustificazione nel discorso sull'austerità.

Introduction

This paper concerns the issue of indebtedness in Greece and the related anti-auction movement.

In recent years the country has been hit by four memorandums – or government bailouts – and a programme of austerity has ensued. This precarious and unstable situation has given rise to a diverse opposition movement, including groups opposed to the auction of properties. I am an activist belonging to this opposition movement and by writing this paper I seek to share my own personal experience of the challenge we face in Greece. I also

explain how we (as a movement) frame the relationship between housing and debt as a process which seizes land and property, as well as how we challenge this practice. During the last six years the Greek population has been confronted by a widespread process of property repossession which, in more general terms, equates to the seizure of both public and private (which this paper is particularly concerned about) land and property.

The name of the movement that I am part of is "*plestiriasmi-stop*". This organisation is firmly opposed to the repossession of private property and related auction in courts. In this paper I argue that the opposition movement makes an important contribution by facilitating public debate about the protection of homeownership, particularly as a fundamental human right within a property-owning society. Moreover, opposition groups provide support to those suffering from debt and demand that their debts be cancelled. This acts as a form of opposition to the post-neoliberal practice of using debt as a means of controlling people.

Housing and indebtedness in Greece

Access to housing: from family savings to forced indebtedness
Homeownership has a strong tradition in Greece. Historically, access to housing was relatively easy: family savings were invested in a construction sector that was extremely informal and comprised of small, family-owned building companies. The traditional Greek housing system enabled people to pay for and build their own homes which secured access to private property for a significant number of Greeks, as well as immigrants. Furthermore, this system compensated for (and/or justified) an almost complete lack of social housing, as well as the economic insecurity faced by many people due to unstable economic conditions. Significantly, since historically the prices of land and buildings were relatively stable or increasing, the act of investing family savings into one or more houses was considered a form of social security.

However, during the 1990's the traditional Greek housing system was transformed. Prior to this period only a very small minority of Greek people were aware of loans and so-called 'plastic' money (the credit card). This changed in the 1990's when people started to take out loans. In this regard, Greeks were won over by the aggressive marketing campaigns of banks. As a result, house prices rose and the profit made by banks increased from 20% in 1990, to 60% in 2000 and as high as 200% after Greece hosted the Olympic Games in 2004. Before the start of the crisis in 2009, a significant number of citizens were finding it extremely difficult to access the housing market without borrowing money. This left thousands of people with no choice but to enter the precarious state of indebtedness.

Implementation of austerity measures and the production of debt
The austerity policies imposed in Greece over recent years have severely impacted house prices. These policies have also indirectly contributed to a sharp increase in the number of indebted households (from 5% of all households in 2010 to 52% today). Another consequence of austerity is that a significant number of households became reliant on borrowed money to survive but consequently became over-indebted (and therefore they were unable to pay-off the debt). This had a direct impact on the economic stabi-

lity of the banking sector and provided justification for the current process of property seizure. Such a process can be seen as a corrupted form of wealth redistribution. In this sense, the financial wealth gained by the middle and lower middle classes in the last half of the twentieth-century has been snatched by financial institutions and powerful economic elites. Put simply, those in the upper echelons of the economy exploited the people and took advantage of the 'poor' profitability during the financial crisis. This process of exploitation was achieved through the implementation of legislative tools and austerity policies which took several forms and are highlighted below:

1. Tactics of manipulation through deleveraging. In this regard, banks which in the previous twenty years had promoted and offered all sorts of loans and 'plastic' money - thus inciting increased expectations of high living standards - asked for their money back to cover their capital deficiencies. This happened during a period in which property prices were falling. The result was negative equity between outstanding debts and the value of properties during a period in which austerity measures had already impacted personal incomes. This challenging situation made it impossible for many people to pay back their loans which in turn (after two months of non-payment) became "RED" (non-performing loans).

2. Introduction of a horizontal (direct and indirect) tax regime. The tax regime introduced as part of the first Greek bailout package had a direct impact on the cost of living as well as housing costs. Particularly damaging was the severe increase in VAT (value-added tax), which was even imposed on essential goods. In addition, this regime introduced indirect taxes on all private properties, even if the owners made no profit from them. The new system also ignored the market value of properties after the crisis. This led to horizontal private debts for the majority of citizens who found themselves without a job yet paying a mortgage.

3. A new legislative framework for the management of non-performing loans and the auctions of private property. This caused indebted people to fall into extreme poverty when deciding to give priority to loan repayments.

4. Conversion of the insurance system into a new taxation system without the appropriate reforms, which resulted in the loss of the reciprocity character that the system used to have.

The combination of these practices and legislative tools gave rise to the idea that indebted homeowners were the people who would pay for the financial crisis, thus leading to the seizure of properties. The impacts of this were not only significant socially – such as the increase in the number of working poor – but also in terms of the long-term effects on the housing system (mainly based on homeownership) and on land-use policies related to the organisation and transformation of the built environment. In a country such as Greece, which has a highly-dispersed population and fragmented ownership of the land, the tendency to centralise significant investments in large projects can definitely benefit from the concentration of property, land and critical public assets under one unified ownership authority.

ΚΑΝΕΝΑ ΣΠΙΤΙ ΣΤΑ ΧΕΡΙΑ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΙΤΗ

πλειστηριασμοί:

αφορούν όλους μας, μπορούμε να αντισταθούμε

λληλεγγύη

γ΄ έκδοση, Δεκέμβριος 2013

The birth of an anti-auction movement

Prior to the implementation of the second Greek bailout package private property was protected against debt-induced repossession by a law which was ratified in 2009. The law included three factors which established the conditions for whether a property could be seized: the income of the family, the amount of debt owed and the value of the property. Through this law around 90% of homeowners were protected. However, towards the end of 2013 this piece of legislation was repealed. The risk of people losing their home (and in some cases second home) triggered the growth of a large anti-auction movement. Consequently, in 2013 we started a public debate regarding this reform, organised assemblies and prepared people for the implementation of the new law. Our first step was the production of a 25-page leaflet containing vast amounts of information about debt; the policies of banks operating at a national and international level; the context in which the debt was created in the first place; and international action taken against bank repossessions and consequent evictions – particularly in the context of Spain which was already facing a similar problem to that of Greece.

From the beginning, our main purpose was to challenge and reverse the dominant idea that those suffering a heavy debt burden were personally responsible for their perilous situation and that consequently there was no need for a law protecting private property. In this regard, we made a small brochure called "Answers to the Seven Most Frequently Asked Questions About Debt". The brochure tried to subvert the main arguments concerning the banks, public interest and their connections with mortgage repayments. At the same time, we contacted all of the other opposition groups in Athens. This included collectives such as neighbourhood assemblies and solidarity initiatives which had proliferated after the crisis (Arampazi 2016). The intention was to create an alliance with a broad enough scope capable of challenging property seizures. This marked the beginning of the Stop Repossessions network which encompasses more than 40 different groups from across Greece (http://pleistiriasmoistop.blogspot.gr/).

As well as deconstructing the main narrative about indebtedness, we continue to offer legal support to those in need and organise meetings and demonstrations in different neighbourhoods and cities to give voice to the problem. However, the most effective form of action has been to challenge auctions directly in the courts. This has, since the beginning of our work, been a weekly intervention performed directly in courts in which auctions were taking place. In this sense, we are trying to stop the auction process by using our bodies (by being physically present in court), making noise, making videos, as well as picketing. Throughout these years we have managed to stop thousands of auctions. The movement has discussed many things (and is still discussing them) concerning the best means of action, types of interventions, the auctions which we should stop and the auctions which we should allow to go on (for example, in the cases of auction of companies which owe money to their workers we decided not to intervene). Because our actions occur directly in the courts we have not faced eviction and we have not engaged in anti-eviction resistance. Evictions are more common for tenants. Unfortunately, tenants are poorly organised in Greece and in general they do not resist evictions. Typically, they ask for more time to pay their outstanding rent or for support in moving out. Although the government is promising a form of protection for homeowners, recent research from the

Bank of Greece on the housing problem reveals that more than 900,000 families are at risk of homelessness due to 'red' loans, rent arrears and inadequate housing conditions.

In the years which followed the crisis other groups concerned about housing emerged. These organisations have a range of political approaches and the ways in which they assist indebted people varies. Their policies differ from class-oriented approaches which focus on the protection of the main family home of the poorest people in society, while others seek to protect all homeowners. The latter is our approach. We feel that we should not allow any auctions because this has led to the seizure of many Greek properties and the majority of Greek family homes by foreign capital.

In 2014 and 2015 an informal agreement between the Greek government and the banks established a form of suspension of repossessions concerning all 'first' homes (in other words, the house in which the individual or family is living in as their main home). However, at the end of 2015 this agreement ended. Currently, the only tool that Greeks have to protect the homes in which they live in is by going to the courts and following the procedures of the so-called 'Personal Bankruptcy Law' (law 3896/2010 that has since been revised by law 4316/2015) and asking the court for protection. As part of this process the court asks the household to allocate a significant part of the income towards covering living costs. The rest of their money and property assets go towards the repayment of the debt. This is, of course, a useful tool for many families. However, a significant number of people cannot access this protection for a number of reasons: i) the financial cost of appealing to the court; ii) the long and bureaucratic process; iii) the severe psychological distress associated with potentially losing your home. In this sense, it is a process which is extremely difficult to access for people lacking money. Furthermore, as part of this law, even if an individual does manage to protect their first home they are still at risk of losing other properties which may be an essential part of their life (for example, a holiday home or a family home that is rented out to boost a pension pot; a house passed on by grandparents to their grandchildren for them to live in; a store in which someone works in etc.).

The situation today
As mentioned above, the opposition movement has been relatively successful. However, our struggle against what we call a " generalized process of property grabbing" has not ended and the problem is far from being solved. The number of indebted people is growing (there has been a 13% increase in the past year) and we lack proper legislation to address the needs of Greek society – a community so crippled by austerity policies that families can rarely generate any surplus capital to pay back the debts which they owe. The *Troika* and other related international institutions have pressed the Greek government to find a way of stopping the anti-auction movement. Without property seizures – which effectively consists of taking property from individuals and giving it to financial institutions – the entire repossession plan fails. The Greek government tried to intimidate the opposition movement with the police and by arresting activists and sending them to court. This, however, did not stop us.

It is not a coincidence that a requirement of the latest Greek memorandum of May 2017 declared that the government should implement a new auction process. In this sense, instead of a public auction in court, the new process will be in the form of an electronic auction that will occur directly in the offices of the notaries. This creates a new situation which the movement must challenge and we are urgently trying to ban this top-down procedure. The opposition movement is currently developing ideas about how to tackle this procedural change. Our main argument is that this new method goes against basic human rights since it violates the principle of a transparent public process. We now want to increase our visibility and to include as many people as possible that are at risk of losing their homes. The opposition movement has also been strengthened through the creation of a broader alliance such as the United Initiative Against Auctions (http://noauctionsgr.blogspot.gr/). Our narrative and our target audience has been improved and widened by focusing our protest against all those responsible (such as the Greek government, banks, notaries etc.) for this terrible situation. Importantly, we are a member of an international alliance called 'The European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and the City' (https://housingnotprofit.org/en), and by being internationally connected we are able to share our experience and learn from similar movements from across Europe (see, for instance, our collective work titled Eviction Across Europe, 2015).

Today, more than 30% of Greek citizens are facing extreme poverty and are being deprived of their basic human rights. For many, homeownership is a means of security. Losing a property leads to a "naked life", as it has been accurately described by Giorgio Agamben. For this reason, the struggle against the seizure of private property is a struggle for social justice, dignity and life.

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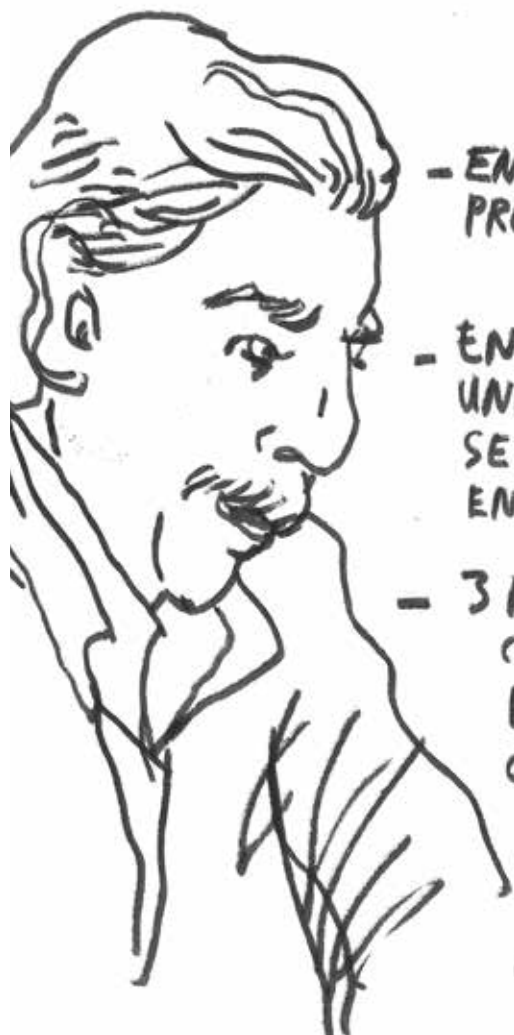
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- EN ITALIA NO HAY UNA POLÍTICA PUBLICA SE HA DEJADO TODO EN MANOS PRIVADAS

- 3 MILLONES DE PERSONAS CON PROBLEMAS PARA PAGAR FACTURAS O LA CASA

8000 FAMILIAS EN ROMA QUE SON EXPULSADAS DE LA CIUDAD

OCUPAMOS INCLUSO UNA CARCEL

Particolare del progetto grafico a cura di **Antonia Santolaya** *pubblicato a p. 131*

Pratiche a scala di quartiere.
La Libera Repubblica di San Lorenzo

Practices of resistance at neighbourhood scale. The case of Libera Repubblica of San Lorenzo

@ *La Libera Repubblica di San Lorenzo* |

 # Partecipazione |
 # Rigenerazione urbana |
 # Attivismo sociale |

 # Partecipation |
 # Urban regeneration |
 # Social activism |

With this paper as Libera Repubblica di San Lorenzo (LRSL), we will present the premises, motivations, and objectives that motivated its origins as an experience of self-government in San Lorenzo, Rome. We will present our engagement in practices of collective knowledge production such as the document "Volontà di sapere" drawn as an alternative response to the current local development plan (Progetto urbano San Lorenzo). The LRSL is, in fact, testimony of a violent, ongoing process of gentrification and displacement of local resident and historical business and a tendency toward the development of luxurious (and for temporary uses) apartments in San Lorenzo, a fraction of the city which is characterized by empty plot of land, ex-industrial and productive sites. The LRSL interpret the current urban policies and transformations as far away from any sort of social and cultural development for the area. What type of regeneration is possible under a regime that eradicate historical site and the materiality of historical memories? We believe that the territorial network of LRSL can be capable to ban and countervail the current trends by networking, valorisation of social practices, affirming the primacy of the common over private interest, claiming democratic public decision of the transformation of the city.

Come Libera Repubblica di San Lorenzo accogliamo con gioia questo invito come occasione di scambio e confronto e, ringraziando chi lo ha pensato e desiderato, proviamo a descrivere ciò che ci muove e come ci muoviamo insieme. La LRSL nasce in un quartiere in cui il fenomeno della *gentrification* opera da molto tempo, con ondate più o meno forti. È una rete, un mondo possibile, un'assemblea di autogoverno che si confronta con i grandi temi urbani, entrando nel merito di ognuno, costruendo pensiero e proposta. Ha un proprio inno e riconosce come sede il Nuovo Cinema Palazzo in Piazza dei Sanniti, occupato pacificamente nel 2011 da una moltitudine resistente al progetto di un Casinò per rivendicare il ripristino della tradizionale vocazione

culturale. Quando nacque nel 2013 la LRSL decise finalmente di percorrere la strada che il quartiere di San Lorenzo indicava, per lavorare finalmente insieme, in tanti e diversi, sul territorio che in tanti e tante si era contribuito a definire. Abbiamo preso molto sul serio le previsioni urbanistiche che ne anticipavano il futuro fisico. Abbiamo preso sul serio gli interventi urbani come le trasformazioni fisiche, anche puntuali, le demolizioni e le nuove costruzioni attuate in assenza di un progetto unitario e condiviso, che sia capace di restituire loro il senso e lo scopo. Abbiamo preso sul serio anche i fenomeni urbani apparentemente orfani, e invece figli di rendita e interesse privato, come l'innalzamento degli affitti dei locali e la sparizione del commercio locale. Abbiamo preso sul serio i movimenti di grandi operatori immobiliari come la ormai privatizzata Cassa Depositi e Prestiti che ha puntato lo sguardo sulla Ex Dogana[1] per una sua immediata valorizzazione immobiliare[2]. Abbiamo preso sul serio l'arroganza degli speculatori che privatizzano spazi di uso collettivo, perfino strade e parchi; che affittano in nero camere sovraffollate agli stessi studenti e migranti che poi denigrano; che preferiscono lasciare in stato di abbandono i loro beni, perché infine ogni proposta sia meglio del niente. Abbiamo preso sul serio l'adozione di delibere in nome della valorizzazione finanziaria che hanno come effetto lo sgombero di quelle associazioni culturali, di volontariato e centri sociali che nel tempo hanno saputo far rivivere negli usi e nelle attività, manutenendolo e migliorandolo, un patrimonio pubblico e privato altrimenti in disuso.

Anche per questi motivi la LRSL si è costituita, rivendicando poteri e autonomia sul proprio territorio. Nella Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza scrive: *"I cittadini e le cittadine di San Lorenzo, considerando l'incapacità del governo e delle istituzioni tutte a difendere i loro diritti, decidono di dichiarare in maniera solenne la volontà di sottrarsi al giogo del potere statuale della Repubblica Italiana e di proclamarsi Libera Repubblica di San Lorenzo".* Infatti l'ascolto di chi vive e abita il territorio, a dispetto della eventuale buona

1_ *Per saperne di più si rimanda agli articoli in bibliografia.*
2_ *Dopo l'uso intensivo per grandi eventi, i locali della Ex Dogana, prima pubblici, verranno demoliti per la gran parte, per ospitare uno studentato privato del gruppo alberghiero olandese https://www.thestudenthotel.com/*

volontà dell'amministrazione, sembra relegato a sistemi di comunicazione poco efficaci. La partecipazione, per come si è definita nel tempo, è relegata ad una mera informazione, a posteriori, delle decisioni sul territorio prese a monte e altrove. Inoltre, le trasformazioni urbane presenti nel quartiere testimoniano che le politiche urbane e i dispositivi edilizi attuativi sono pensati per evitare la processualità della pianificazione collocandosi immediatamente nell'azione. Ad esempio il Piano casa appena terminato, perpetrato nel tempo da giunte regionali di tutti i colori, è stato in realtà uno strumento ideato per stimolare un mercato immobiliare privato in difficoltà, senza però considerare utilità e bisogni del territorio e in barba alle progettualità dell'amministrazione stessa.

In questa condizione storica, con un apparato amministrativo debole se non contraddittorio su diversi livelli, le varie anime della LRSL sono, nelle differenze, unite dalla convinzione che l'autogoverno possa essere risposta ai bisogni urbani, sociali, dell'abitare e del vivere in comunità. La consapevolezza, ormai maturata negli anni, è quella di aderire ad un progetto che desidera gestire le risorse presenti sul territorio come Beni comuni, per sottrarle alla speculazione, allo sfruttamento, all'abbandono, e per orientarle invece verso usi benefici e collettivi.

Mai come in questi ultimi anni il quartiere di San Lorenzo è sotto attacco. È al centro delle polemiche urbane su movida e spaccio, mentre vive una stagione di grave pena dal punto di vista della manutenzione e della qualità urbana. In questi tempi la sua natura identitaria, anche fin troppo nostalgica, è giocata in senso reazionario, come ultimo baluardo contro il cambiamento – di qualsiasi segno, in effetti. Da questo punto di vista l'esperienza di contaminazione che il quartiere sperimenta nel quotidiano, lasciandosi attraversare da ingenti flussi legati alla mobilità nella città, costituisce una vera e propria minaccia. Si dimentica invece, selezionando memoria e realtà, che proprio

la chiusura geografica del quartiere, stretto tra Università La Sapienza, il Ci-
mitero del Verano, la ferrovia e le Mura aureliane, ha permesso che si svi-
luppasse una dimensione urbana minuta, e spazi pubblici ben definiti tali da
costituire luoghi di incontro, di lavoro, di studio, anche di conflitto. Dunque
la capacità di contaminarsi, di costituire un riferimento per la città, è l'occa-
sione che ne ha determinato salvezza e riproduzione. Non a caso il quartiere
è storicamente connotato come un luogo popolare di resistenza e di lotta,
ma anche di sperimentazione culturale, politica e sociale e, soprattutto, di
convivenza. In questo solco si possono riconoscere, ad esempio, le esperien-
ze del sindacalismo promosse dai lavoratori di ieri e di oggi; l'esperienza di
adattamento del proletariato; l'esperienza internazionalmente riconosciuta
della prima scuola di Maria Montessori a Via dei Marsi; l'esperienza trauma-
tica del bombardamento e il riscatto dal nazifascismo; e ancora, l'esperienza
delle lotte studentesche, delle donne, dell'associazionismo, dei centri sociali,
delle palestre popolari. Nel settantesimo anniversario del bombardamento,
il 18-19-20 Luglio 2013, abbiamo voluto segnalare nel quartiere, come segno
di riconoscimento, i luoghi dove sono avvenute esperienze significative ap-
ponendo targhe parlanti in ceramica.

Certo, l'attualità dei nostri giorni ha visto cambiare molte cose; non il desi-
derio di discutere, incontrarsi e agire il proprio destino. Lontani dalla pretesa
identitaria, quasi diritto di nascita, come premessa alla presa di parola sul
quartiere, nell'Assemblea sovrana la LRSL esprime un ricco ventaglio gene-
razionale tra abitanti, cittadini e cittadine, militanti dei centri sociali, geni-
tori e genitrici, studenti e studentesse e molto altro ancora. Si discutono
temi, presentando difficoltà e proposte per ogni caso, relativi alla cultura e
al divertimento, alla salute e alla produzione. Si è immaginato di costruire
una rete di commercianti contraddistinti da un "bollino" che ne attestasse
l'attività virtuosa, in cui ad esempio non si praticasse il gioco d'azzardo. E
ancora, di trovare il modo di rendere la Repubblica neo costituita libera da

sfratti, affitto in nero e sfruttamento. Si è proposto poi di mettere mano tutti insieme al Progetto Urbano San Lorenzo che, non ancora approvato dopo 6 anni, avrebbe potuto costituire uno spazio di regolamentazione dell'attività edilizia e di stimolo per la definizione di nuovi spazi verdi attrezzati, di cui il quartiere soffre la mancanza[3]. Sono nati così i "circoli" tematici: urbanistica e abitare, cultura e welfare, commercio e lavoro, verde e scuola, e infine, democrazia e autorganizzazione della LRSL. A questi gruppi si è affiancato nell'ultimo anno il lavoro del giornalino, *La Libera* [4], utile supporto fisico alla comunicazione delle tematiche su cui si decide di intervenire. I gruppi si incontrano con cadenza settimanale e ridefiniscono ogni volta gli argomenti da trattare; i report delle discussioni vengono fatti circolare. All'occorrenza, sono state disegnate mappe del quartiere, utili per rendere visibili e orientare le conoscenze di ognuno.

Il lavoro sul Progetto urbano ha prodotto poi un testo organico intitolato "La Volontà di Sapere[5]". Per scrivere questo testo, che da una parte costituisce il nostro manifesto, dall'altra dimostra le competenze dal basso in materia di trasformazione urbana (appunto, il "prendere sul serio") abbiamo studiato la proposta del Comune e fatto le nostre osservazioni. È stato importante chiarire che la riqualificazione del quartiere, per noi necessaria, non avrebbe dovuto passare attraverso progetti di speculazione edilizia, mascherati da rigenerazione urbana, che annientano l'equilibrio complessivo del territorio, già sottoposto a grandi pressioni, a scapito delle relazioni presenti e del tessuto sociale vivo e prezioso che connota il quartiere, ma anche fragile e raro. Piuttosto, l'azione pubblica nel quartiere avrebbe molto senso e importanza se orientata a migliorare l'esistente, sia dal punto di vista infrastrutturale, che culturale e sociale. Abbiamo discusso in vari incontri del nostro testo alla presenza di Franco Purini, Paolo Berdini e Mara Cossu, per confrontarci rispettivamente sui temi dell'architettura, dell'urbanistica e dell'ambiente. Negli ultimi anni, il processo di *gentrification*, che agisce a San Lorenzo attraverso l'espulsione degli abitanti e delle attività storiche e la messa a profitto di storie e relazioni, ha avuto forte impulso e si è reso sempre più evidente. Questo fenomeno è in effetti legato a una prassi, che è l'abbandono di spazi e luoghi. E ancora a una terza condizione, ovvero la mancanza di fondi e forze pubbliche per la manutenzione e la riqualificazione urbana. Il caso di San Lorenzo ben si presta dunque ad una trattazione critica del fenomeno di *gentrification*, quella per cui pratiche di ricambio sociale, produzione dell'abbandono, disinteresse delle istituzioni si auto rafforzano reciprocamente e preparano il terreno per l'ancoraggio del fenomeno stesso (Marcuse 1985; Slater 2011). Per questo attività ordinarie come la sostituzione di uno scivolo in un parco, sembrano essere divenute impossibili. Così, con il passare del tempo, gli spazi pubblici attrezzati si dequalificano, chiudono perfino (come la biblioteca comunale del quartiere) gli edifici invece, colpevolmente vuoti, vanno in rovina e diventano pericolosi.

Vale la pena porre l'attenzione su un nuovo strumento della *gentrification*: la demolizione di beni architettonici di interesse collettivo e conseguente cancellazione della memoria di cui sono testimonianza materiale. Ricordiamo a chi legge che San Lorenzo da Piano Regolatore Generale è propriamente "città storica"[6]; gli interventi ammessi sono finalizzati alla "valorizzazione delle qualità esistenti", per tendere alla "conservazione dei caratteri peculiari" e tipologici relativi al tessuto individuato. Il caso delle Ex Fonderie Bastianelli[7] tradisce queste premesse. Sono state demolite per costruire

3_ *Si pensi solo che il Cimitero del Verano è conteggiato tra gli standard urbanistici come verde urbano; di certo, nonostante la sua bellezza indiscussa, non viene usato dai bambini e le bambine del quartiere per goderne.*
4_ *Il pdf de La Libera è scaricabile dal sito della LRSL.*
5_ *Il pdf del testo è scaricabile dal sito della LRSL.*
6_ *Piano Regolatore del Comune di Roma, Norme Tecniche di Attuazione, Titolo II: Sistema Insediativo - Capo II: Città storica - Articolo 24 e Articolo 25.*
7_ *Sulle Ex Fonderie Bastianelli si consiglia di leggere:* http://www.dinamopress. it/news/le-ex-fonderie-bastianelli-come-vivere-sullorlo-del-precipizio; *e la rassegna:* http://www.liberarepubblicadisanlorenzo.it/ex-fonderie-bastianelli/

Fig.4_ *Vista dall'alto dell'area demolita dell'ex smorzo in Piazzale del Verano. Al tessuto-logistico produttivo in crisi si sostituiscono inesorabilmente miniappartamenti.*

miniappartamenti con un permesso del tutto irregolare. Il permesso fu prima annullato con una sentenza del TAR Lazio, ma solo a demolizione avvenuta, e poi accolto ma vincolato ad alcune condizionalità. Le Ex Fonderie sono oggi un baratro vertiginoso nel quartiere; dimostrano che quello che si sacrifica è un'idea di città, insieme alla vocazione produttiva e artigianale del quartiere. Quali politiche arrivano nei territori a supporto del miglioramento della qualità della vita di chi vi abita? Quali servizi sono pensati per la collettività? In questa direzione ci si muove solo per confermare il quartiere come polo di transito e di passaggio, di cui fare esperienza specifica e limitata per poi subito dimenticare. Il "quartiere ribelle", depurato dalla sua anima sociale, costituirà solo un simulacro vuoto di senso. Piuttosto, bisogna partire da un'analisi più profonda, per determinare le scelte amministrative verso la creazione di un modello di città basato su nuovi strumenti di democrazia diretta, per la riqualificazione culturale, sociale ed economica del territorio. Farsi forti di esperimenti e pratiche sul territorio che nulla hanno a che vedere con la vuota conservazione del passato come ideale identitario, ma che anzi sono immerse nel presente e partecipi nella costruzione del futuro. Come LRSL continueremo non solo a costruire reti e forme di resistenza sempre più larghe e forti, ma a praticare mutualismo e solidarietà, a pretendere giustizia sociale e cura del territorio, a costruire cultura e spazi di condivisione per respingere solitudine e arroganza. Riempiremo di attività e di vita collettiva gli spazi e le strade che gli interessi speculativi, pubblici e privati, vorrebbero silenti e vuoti. Tutti insieme continueremo a costruire questo progetto affinché le trasformazioni della città appartengano a chi la vive veramente.

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SE HIZO CREER QUE LOS DESAHUCIOS ERAN UN PROBLEMA DE EXCLUIDOS PERO YO SOY UN EJEMPLO DE QUE AFECTABA A LA CLASE MEDIA.

Particolare del progetto grafico a cura di **Antonia Santolaya** *pubblicato a p. 131*

La práctica visual como táctica contra-narrativa de la gentrificación

Visual practices as counter-narrative to gentrification

@ *Left Hand Rotation* |

The paper deals with visual actions that challenge the symbolic apparatus of gentrification, the so called 'soft' aspect of the process. The symbolic apparatus of gentrification processes is among the variable that let the process to be so pervasive in urban life and expand so much over the globe. Part of the problem of this 'soft' aspect of gentrification is that resembles a positive, organic process: the only possible alternatives to abandonment. It thus polarizes the discourse between abandonment and re-use and presents the process as inevitable. Discourses and actions that address the symbolic and aesthetic dimension of gentrification are rare. A contribute might come from the critical production of images and videos that allows collective reflections and results in the elaboration of counter narratives challenging the acritical acceptance of the "process of gentrification and displacement".

Quienes somos y nuestra aproximación a los medios audiovisuales

Escribimos como colectivo Left Hand Rotation (LHR), una entidad impersonal no asociada al individuo/autor y que no tiene un enfoque académico sino un enfoque de acción directa sobre el tema de los conflictos urbanos y de la gentrificación. Por esto, el articulo que proponemos está enfocado a contribuir al debate sobra practica anti-gentrificación desde un punto de vista práctico y de propuesta. Por lo tanto el colectivo Left Hand Rotation aborda cada acción bajo la consideración de que la comunidad de recepción no es un espectador, si no parte activa imprescindible en la transformación de la realidad social. La voluntad de las

comunidades de testimoniar su situación posibilita la articulación de la acción.

En cada una de las acciones del colectivo hay una fuerte consciencia de la importancia del registro audiovisual, tanto por su valor como captura en bruto, como por el potencial de cada clip de vídeo de convertirse en unidades de lenguaje cuya combinación y manipulación posibilita la transmisión de mensajes complejos a partir de detalles del cotidiano. La cámara no puede sino registrar el contexto específico en el que se sitúa. Es a través de esas capturas de lo local que el colectivo reflexiona sobre un sistema global complejo.

Determinadas líneas de acción dentro del colectivo ahondan en el poder reflexivo de la imagen manipulada, subvirtiendo la estética de productos audiovisuales *mass media*, como el video clip musical o el tráiler cinematográfico para la construcción de *no-ficciones discursivas*.

Esta es la dinámica de una serie de intervenciones en el espacio público, iniciadas por el colectivo bajo el nombre de Acciones Urbanas Absurdas.

El objetivo de las Acciones Urbanas Absurdas es atacar al sentido común que conduce a la asimilación de la ciudad como espacio de control, mediante la situación intervenida y la posterior manipulación del registro audiovisual de la acción, distintos planos discursivos del mismo dispositivo que pretende evidenciar los mecanismos que subyacen bajo la noción de espacio público, combatir el absurdo con el absurdo mediante la cadena: acción – registro – manipulación del registro - difusión. Sin embargo, en un ecosistema mediático cada vez más manipulado, la *imagen cruda* se presenta como una herramienta reveladora, capaz de modificar la forma preestablecida en que los conflictos se perciben.

En la imagen cruda hay un potencial de conocimiento. Las imágenes,

como medios de almacenamiento de información, contienen una carga de conocimiento latente mayor de la que podemos descodificar, pues el modelo es el que determina lo que vemos, y no el tipo de información que la imagen contiene. Así, aunque el acto de filmar sea selectivo y por lo tanto subjetivo, en la naturaleza del material de registro, del *video en bruto*, hay siempre un residuo de conocimiento objetivo del contexto filmado. No es una coincidencia que en los momentos previos a las grandes convocatorias de las movilizaciones sociales en Estambul y São Paulo las redes sociales se inundaran de comentarios que adviertían de la importancia del registro, alentando a los participantes a encender la cámara[1]. Horas después comienzaron a llegar las imágenes. Una ciudadanía emancipada de la tutela de los grandes medios de comunicación reconstruyó versiones de los hechos colectivas y poliédricas.

En este contexto de la ciudad como nuevo espacio simbólico del conflicto, dinámicas enfrentadas compiten por la conquista del espacio público a través del acto de filmar y sus consecuencias.

De un lado concebimos el registro como autodeterminación, donde el acceso a nuevas tecnología de la visibilización genera nuevos puntos de vista, y no sólo discursivos. Las cámaras *drones*, implantadas en pequeños vehículos aéreos no tripulados, planean sobre los manifestantes en Estambul, y nos devuelven una nueva mirada. Del otro lado, el registro como forma de control social, mediante el desarrollo de nuevas tecnologías preventivas invasivas. Cámaras de video-vigilancia, para las que no hay presunción de inocencia, fabrican una imagen donde cada comportamiento no regulado es sospechoso, en un contexto en el que el discurso del poder público se ve invadido por la semántica de la seguridad. La producción de imágenes significativas tiene un impacto real sobre el presente, y la capacidad de empoderar a cada uno de los modelos de sociedad en juego.

MUSEO DE LOS DESPLAZADOS.
El registro como práctica de resistencia.

Museo de los Desplazados es un proyecto colaborativo que se construye sobre el potencial del registro para generar conocimiento, salvaguardar la memoria colectiva y evidenciar que la realidad es mutable, insuficiente e inclasificable. Es una plataforma de colaboración que se ofrece como herramienta de reflexión colectiva sobre los conflictos asociados a los procesos de gentrificación.

Gentrificación (aburguesamiento, elitización) es el nombre que se da a determinados procesos de transformación urbana por los que zonas estratégicas de una ciudad aumentan artificialmente su valor, provocando el desplazamiento de la población económicamente vulnerable. Para este grupo la vivienda deja de ser accesible en el área revalorizada. Son progresivamente empujados hacia las periferias o zonas deprimidas, incapaces de seguir pagando por su derecho a la ciudad (Lefebvre 1968) (Harvey 2008).

El aparato material y simbólico de la gentrificación afecta especialmente a la memoria colectiva barrial, imposibilitando la reconstrucción del pasado, provocando la pérdida de la identidad local. Los desplazados son los afectados últimos por el proceso de gentrificación. Sin embargo, en su dimensión simbólica la gentrificación también provoca un desplazamiento de subjetividades, de formas de convivir, de formas de apropiar el espacio fragilizadas frente a la hegemonía cultural, y es interpretada como una expresión y parte de las múltiples prácticas biopolíticas que gestionan determinados modelos de conducta y civilidad neoliberal (Sequera y Janoschka, 2014) La gentrificación simbólica es especialmente visible en procesos impulsados por el turismo y/o la cultura, que aceleran la transformación de un barrio como enclave de consumo exclusivo y de producción cultural, llegando

incluso a ahogar la actividad residencial y los servicios de primera necesidad. La plataforma de colaboración Museo de los Desplazados identifica la forma de archivo, previa renuncia a su aspiración de definición totalitaria de los elementos y tipologías desplazadas, como herramienta de acercamiento y empatización hacia todo aquello que se pierde en procesos que, como el de la gentrificación, suponen la creación de espacios excluyentes y de segregación social. Frente a la creación de comunidades cerradas, proponemos el Museo de los Desplazados como una plataforma abierta, incompleta, en continuo proceso de desarrollo y necesariamente colectiva. Es en esa colectividad también dónde decidir si es éste un archivo de lo que hay que olvidar o recuperar.

El material generado en la plataforma confirma que no hay dos procesos de gentrificación iguales en su desarrollo. Proponemos trabajar desde lo local, desde la especificidad que estos procesos alcanzan en cada contexto, para identificar las herramientas que cada comunidad genera para abordar el conflicto global.

En este contexto, en esa especificidad, el registro audiovisual se convierte también en una herramienta de diagnóstico, de producción de conocimiento a través de la observación. La difusión abierta de los materiales de procedencia colectiva facilita el acercamiento a realidades locales de las que no tenemos vivencia directa.

La metodología de participación de la plataforma comienza con la voluntad de los individuos o comunidades afectadas de evidenciar su situación. De esta manera, colaboradores locales generan un material de registro necesariamente subjetivo, pero cargado de potencial conocimiento específico objetivo. Si bien se pide a los colaboradores una aportación textual que contextualice el caso a documentar, es imprescindible la aportación de material audiovisual: vídeo, fotografía, sonido, o cualquier otro tipo de representación audiovisual de la información. Las palabras tienen un relativamente pequeño "ancho de banda" como contenedoras de conocimiento en comparación con el exceso de información de la imagen, y es ese "conocimiento fílmico" (Palm 2011) el que finalmente conforma el archivo.

El colectivo Left Hand Rotation ha contribuido también a la plataforma generando material de registro y producción de piezas audiovisuales a través del proyecto/taller "*Gentrificación no es un nombre de señora*" [2].

La metodología utilizada en el taller conlleva en todos los casos una primera fase de análisis del contexto en contacto con agentes locales, una segunda fase de exposición de conceptos y debate con la comunidad local, y una última fase de intervención y registro del espacio urbano en conflicto. En ésta última fase se generan una serie de materiales audiovisuales y de registro en interrelación con los perfiles potencialmente en peligro de ser desplazados, en acciones que implican documentación de los procesos de gentrificación o acercamiento de la información a esos perfiles, en forma de documentales, mapas psicogeográficos, piezas de *no-ficción discursiva*, entre otros.

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Resisting tourism gentrification: the experience of grass-roots movements in Barcelona

Resistere alla gentrification turistica: le esperienze dei movimenti urbani a Barcellona

@ Agustin Cocola-Gant |
@ Daniel Pardo, ABTS |

Tourism gentrification |
Resistance |
Barcelona |
ABTS |

Tourism gentrification |
Resistenza |
Barcelona |
ABTS |

Questo paper esplora l'impatto del turismo a Barcellona e le modalità di resistenza al turismo messe in atto dall' Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible (ABTS) (Assemblea per un turismo sostenibile). Le pratiche di resistenza che presenteremo sono dovute al fatto che le politiche del turismo urbano a Barcellona si siano negli anni rivelate una forma di gentrification, che ha avuto come effetto diverse forme di espulsione. Due autori, un attivista e un ricercatore, discuteranno delle pratiche di ABTS contro Airbnb e alberghi, sostenendo che la prevalenza di destinazioni d'uso turistiche di beni immobili mini il diritto all'abitazione di residenti autoctoni, e pratiche di riappropriazione dello spazio pubblico per finalizzarlo a usi comunitari. ABTS ha avuto grande esposizione mediatica a livello locale, nazionale e internazionale, al punto che il governo cittadino ha riconosciuto l'assemblea come portatrice di un punto di vista civico e come interlocutore stabile in materia di sviluppo urbano. Il paper conclude con una riflessione sulla necessità di andare oltre il presente modello di sviluppo turistico verso un modello di de-crescita del turismo come approccio indispensabile per preservare le città storiche e garantire principi di giustizia spaziale come il diritto alla casa.

Introduction

The *Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible* (ABTS) is a grassroots organisation that emerged in Barcelona in 2015 when over 35 collectives from different neighbourhoods unified to resist against what was viewed as a critical threat undermining the right to the city: the growth of tourism. This paper explains why tourism plays a central role in the displacement of residents in Barcelona and shows the way in which the ABTS has responded to such a threat. The paper contributes to a better understanding of (anti)gentrification in Southern Europe (Annunziata & Lees 2016; Annunziata & Rivas 2018) and sheds light on the growing phenomenon of 'protest and resistance in the tourist city' (Colomb & Novy 2016).

The paper results from a collaboration between an academic (first author) and a member of the ABTS (second author)[1]. As a critical scholar having previously engaged with gentrification theory I was interested in exploring the impacts of tourism, particularly because social movements in Barcelona were claiming that a wave of speculation and displacement was triggered by visitors and tourism investors, rather than by middle class residents. I interviewed 42 residents and participated as an observer in various grass-roots organisations in the historic centre of Barcelona, including the ABTS. But this raises the issue of how academics become involved in gentrification struggles. I believe that our role as critical researchers should not simply involve describing how resistance takes place or participating in struggles as activists, but should also include collecting and producing data that can be used by those who are at risk of displacement. Admittedly, the findings of this research were very similar to what residents and the ABTS already knew. However, as social injustices are only visible if the facts are placed in evidence, the use of data to show how displacement was taking place became a crucial tool for political action. I published an open access report about how the growth of Airbnb and hotels were displacing communities[2]. The report received considerable media attention and was used by residents and the ABTS to exemplify with 'facts' the extent to which tourism was causing inequalities. This confronted the hegemonic view of city leaders for whom tourism was seen as being in the interests of all.

New crisis, more tourism

Protests against tourism in Barcelona are not a new phenomenon. On the contrary, protests emerged at the end of the 1990s. In the 1980s, tourism was identified as one of the main objectives for Barcelona's urban regeneration and, after the crisis of the 1990s, local authorities saw tourism as the 'easiest' way of attracting inward investment and consumers. Smith (2005) noted that the search for tourism growth in Barcelona was implemented by a neoliberal process of deregulation and urban entrepreneurialism and,

1_ *Hereafter the researcher will spoke in first person while the member of the assembly will spoke on behalf of the ABTS and so will spoke in third person.*
2_ *https://agustincocolagant. net/en/short-term-rentals-ho-tels-and-displacement/*

importantly, that such a process resulted in a situation in which the needs and satisfaction of tourists were prioritised over those of local residents. In this context of tourism growth, Degen (2004) and García and Claver (2003) observed that residents in the city centre were rebelling, particularly since the tendency was that "among those who use city services, visitors are proportionally on the increase" (García & Claver 2003, p.120).

The neoliberal answer to the post-2008 crisis has been the promotion of further tourism growth, but this time in a more dramatic way. In an example of Klein's *Shock Doctrine*, Barcelona City Council activated a new round of flexible policies which (i) relaxed the restrictions which had prevented the growth of hotels in the historic city; (ii) adapted planning regulations suited to the needs of tourism investors as well as the introduction of tax incentives; and (iii) licensed all forms of tourism-oriented commercial activities which resulted, for example, in pharmacies being displaced by tapas bars. In addition, airline companies were further subsidised to fly to Barcelona; the central government introduced less rigid labour regulations which allowed companies to offer cheaper services by undermining working conditions; and this period also witnessed the emergence of Airbnb.

It is in this context of unregulated tourism growth that the ABTS emerged. If at the turn of the century acts of rebellion by residents were only observed in the city centre (called the Ciutat Vella district), the growth of tourism has been paralleled by a burgeoning opposition movement. In fact, the ABTS is now formed of grassroots organisations from almost all of Barcelona's districts (see also Mansilla, in press). But why is tourism contested? The next section explores this question and discusses the reasons why tourism is seen as a threat that undermines the rights and needs of local residents.

Tourism, a displacing process
Recent research in urban studies highlights the way in which tourism may be seen as a form of gentrification (Cocola-Gant 2018; Gravari-Barbas & Guinand 2017). To understand this process, it is worth noting how the so-called 'new urban tourism' does not evolve in tourist precincts but rather in residential environments which previously lacked tourist infrastructures (Maitland 2010; Füller & Michel 2014; Quaglieri-Domínguez & Russo 2010). In a context of mass tourism such as in Barcelona, the expansion of tourism into residential areas precipitates pressure from tourism which poses significant risks for residents. In particular, it makes it increasingly difficult for them to consider some neighbourhoods as liveable places. This situation leads to a process of displacement in which residential spaces and facilities increasingly cater to the needs of visitors. Such a process affects housing dynamics as well as neighbourhood life.

Firstly, the growth of tourist accommodation – including both hotels and particularly holiday rentals – is directly linked to residential displacement. In central areas of Barcelona, as there is no space left for new developments, the opening of hotels tends to involve the conversion of residential apartment buildings into tourist facilities. There have been several cases in which residents were evicted from their homes so that hotels could be opened in their place. For instance, what is currently the SOHO Hotel in Barcelona was a residential building inhabited by more than 100 people. Instances of residents being directly displaced has also been documented during the creation of holiday rentals (Cocola-Gant 2016). However, there are other important

issues related to the growth of holiday rentals. The first is that it leads to a shortage of housing stock and a consequent increase in house prices. This makes it increasingly difficult for residents to find affordable accommodation. A second point to note is that a significant manifestation of tourism pressure occurs when residents have to share apartment buildings with visitors. The fact that apartment buildings combine both residential and tourist uses is the cause of cohabitation annoyances which for many has been the main reason behind their decision to move out of their homes.

Secondly, the impacts of tourism go beyond the housing market and affect residents at the neighbourhood scale. In other words, it causes daily disruptions which make places increasingly unliveable. Impacts on daily life include a lack of consumption facilities, loss of public space, mobility disruptions, noise and pollution. First, shops and services that residents need on a daily basis have been displaced by consumption services for visitors (Cocola-Gant 2015). This process also involves the substitution of family businesses for franchises. Second, retail change leads to the monopolisation of squares by terraces and bars which consequently prevents residents from using public spaces as gathering places for the community. Third, the large number of visitors and the use of bicycles, segways and other rental vehicles overcrowds public areas and makes it increasingly difficult for pedestrians to move around. This disruption affects the elderly and families with children in particular. Furthermore, the sizeable number of visitors saturates the public transport network and, at the same time, tourist coaches increase traffic congestion. Fourth, noise is a notable daily disruption. It is linked to low-cost tourism and 'party tourism' but also to the entire machinery of the leisure industry including ambulances, cleaning services using trucks and employing numerous workers, the delivery of supplies for restaurants early in the morning, people pulling noisy suitcases, music and so on. Finally, together with noise, pollution has increasingly become a public health issue. Pollution is caused

by the cruise industry, aeroplanes and tourist coaches, as well as by the emissions from restaurants. In relation to this, tourism also leads to a considerable increase in water consumption, energy consumption, use of construction materials and waste generation.

These changes undermine the quality of life of residents to such an extent that the most touristified areas are experiencing progressive population loss (López-Gay & Cocola-Gant 2016). Tourism, consequently, is experienced as a process of dispossession. Residents are displaced and substituted by a floating population of transient consumers which, in turn, undermine the sense of community and belonging.

In addition, tourism is contributing to other forms of inequality that are also contested by the ABTS. These are linked to precarious working conditions and high levels of exploitation and discrimination, as well as to the fact that tourism generates considerable costs that are paid for by taxpayers. In conclusion, the tourist industry mirrors other processes of capital accumulation since the benefits are enjoyed by private companies while the damages affect ordinary local people.

Resisting tourism: the experience of the ABTS[3]
The ABTS is a means of coordination for neighbourhood groups working on collective action against tourism and, in particular, against the Barcelona model of urban entrepreneurialism. Although the Barcelona model was first celebrated in the 1990s – primarily due to the creation of a number of facilities for collective consumption and a governance style from below – it turned into a neoliberal model of city governance in-line with the imperative agenda of interurban competition that has led to different forms of urban inequalities (Delgado 2007; Degen & García 2012). In this context, we are united by our shared criticisms of the official rhetoric which celebrates tourism growth as being inherently positive. Our organisation is an assembly which runs meetings and working groups set-up to complete specific tasks. In the summer of 2015 we explored the conflicts caused by tourism in each neighbourhood. The recognition of tourism-related conflicts was our first collective piece of work.

The main narratives and strategic vision of the ABTS is to prove that the current model of tourism growth is unsustainable. We oppose the city council's vision for tourism and suggest that the most basic answer to the current effects of tourism in Barcelona is a planned and regulated system of tourism de-growth. We argue that it is crucially important to reduce the number of visitors and tourist-oriented commercial activities if we are to achieve a fairer city, both socially and environmentally. While the city council suggests that a solution could be to spread tourism to other neighbourhoods so that central areas become less congested, we believe that such policies will merely expand and increase the problem rather than reducing it.

The ABTS carried out targeted mobilisations against the growth of tourism accommodation, including both hotels and holiday rentals. The report published by the researcher of this paper provided us with several examples in which people were displaced as a result of the opening of tourist accommodation. For instance, in January 2017 we 'occupied' the SOHO hotel for several hours which, as mentioned, was built after an investment fund displaced

3_ This section is written by Daniel Pardo on behalf of the ABTS. This explains why the author uses 'we' as a collective subject.

more than 100 residents that were living in the building. We organised a
march under the slogan "Mass tourism and speculation won't force us out"
which ended in the lobby of the hotel. More than 100 people were involved
in the march, including a musical band (figure 1).

In relation to holiday rentals and the right to housing, we organised two
#UNFairbnb actions. For example, members of the ABTS booked unlicensed
holiday apartments using the airbnb.com website. They were located in bui-
ldings in which all of the residents had been displaced. Once we were inside
the apartments we hung banners from the balconies while other members
took action on the street. The idea was to publicly denounce the expulsion
suffered by residents and to dismantle the social myth regarding Airbnb and
its false pretension of a collaborative economy. In this instance the proper-
ty owners were not simply increasing their incomes by renting their flats –
they were professional speculators and owned several apartment buildings
in which similar expulsion processes took place in order to accommodate
tourists. The *#UNFairbnb* actions received considerable media attention and
caused the city council to examine the properties, leading them to take ac-
tion against the owners (figures 2 and 3).

The ABTS also participates in the grassroots initiative Fem Plaça (http://fem-
placa.org). Fem Plaça – meaning 'square making' – is a spontaneous rally
in which residents 'occupy' a square for several hours in order to simply be
there, talk and play with their children. The intention is to enable people to
visualise the privatisation of public spaces and the effects this has on com-
munity life. Instead of demanding that local authorities implement reforms,
Fem Plaça organises community-led actions aimed at taking back control of
former residential spaces.

In July 2016, we organised the 1st Neighbourhood Forum on Tourism. Over
two days – and through public talks, workshops and debates – a great deal
of collective work was done in collaboration with experts and activists which
were invited from Venice, Mallorca, Camp de Tarragona and Malaga. Dozens
of people participated and highlighted the need to confront tourism at an
international level. This showed how the ABTS established itself as an im-
portant tool for reflection, debates, networking and proposals. The Forum
boosted the profile of the ABTS to a European scale and our members have
participated in recent mobilisations against the cruise industry in Venice; in
meetings aimed at responding to the touristification of Palma de Majorca;
and in the "Closing the Island: Reflection on Tourism De-growth" meeting
in Ibiza.

Concluding remarks
From the dialogue between academic research and activism, we provide an
account that strengthens current understandings of tourism as a process
of displacement. The acts of resistance used by the ABTS find legitimacy in
this framework. After two years of active resistance, we firmly believe that
the ABTS has helped to change certain things. In the last few years, public
opinion regarding the tourism industry in Barcelona has transformed. It has
shifted from an uncritical acceptance of the policies dictated by local elites
into a situation in which over 50% of the population wants to limit tourism
according to one local survey. We believe that the work of the ABTS and
other similar groups has played a crucial role in this change. The ABTS has a

strong influence on the local, national and international media and the city council now recognises the ABTS as a civic society organisation that needs to be heard. However, we also feel that this is not enough. Ultimately, the main factor in raising awareness of the negative consequences of mass tourism is its endless growth. Although the citizens of Barcelona are increasingly against tourism, the industry is still growing and more rapidly than ever. This growth is related to the number of people that visit Barcelona[4] but, in particular, to the liberalisation of the sector and the expansion of services and spaces which cater to tourists. We want to emphasise, consequently, that moving to a phase of tourism de-growth is a critical necessity if we truly want to protect our places and guarantee the right to the city.

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Particolare del progetto grafico a cura di **Antonia Santolaya** *pubblicato a p. 131*

Tra attivismo, analisi delle politiche e ricerca
Between activism, policy analysis and research

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Particolare del
progetto grafico
a cura di
Antonia Santolaya
pubblicato a p. 131

Attempts to prevent displacement: housing policies in time of austerity in Athens and Rome

Tentativi di prevenzione all'espulsione: politiche abitative in tempi di austerità ad Atene e Roma

@ Dimitra Siatitsa |
@ Sandra Annunziata |

Il paper analizza le principali politiche implementate negli ultimi anni in un regime di austerità economica rispettivamente in Italia e in Grecia con un focus su Roma e Atene. Una condizione prolungata di austerità ha assunto forme diverse e ha avuto impatti differenti nei due casi osservati. Entrambi i contesti si trovano però a dover affrontare una severa crisi abitativa che è stata trattata negli ultimi anni in chiave meramente emergenziale. Le autrici provano a decifrare quale spazio di riflessione per l'innovazione e per la prevenzione di situazioni di disagio abitativo estremo si sia creato nella presente congiuntura e quali le principali sfide queste città si trovano a dover affrontare in materia di abitazione.

Introduction

The scope of our paper is to analyse housing policies implemented after the crisis in relation with their potential to prevent housing deprivation, displacement and eviction. We will focus on Italy and Greece and on their capital cities, Rome and Athens, severely impacted by seven years of austerity policies and housing distress. Austerity assumes different forms and is impacting Italy and Greece in different ways. However, a common point for departure in this comparative paper is that these countries well exemplify the terms of the (new) housing crisis and the 'intensification' of a problem affecting many communities around Europe. Housing scholars seems to
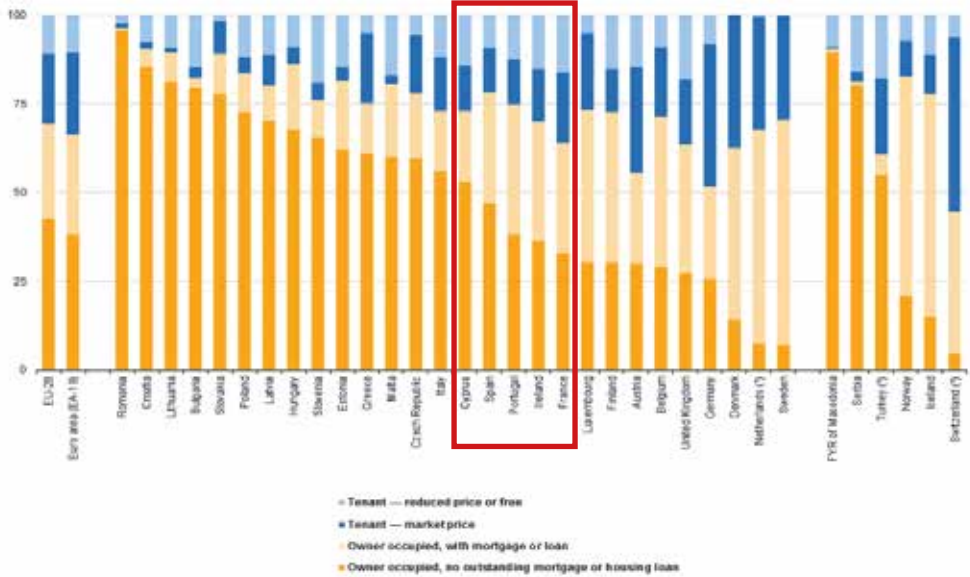
agree that the crucial point of the (new) housing crisis is not related to lack of supply, but rather to the erosive effects of impoverishment, unemployment and indebtedness that challenge access to housing and, even worst, threaten with eviction tenants in rental housing as well as homeowners with mortgages. Italy and Greece are among the European countries with traditionally high homeownership rates with moderate outstanding mortgages (Table 1). However, a generalized access to homeownership did not prevent the housing crisis to occur. A political economy of housing based on ownership reduced the capacity of the housing systems (characterized by low rate of public housing) to accommodate the new housing demands generated after the crisis (Savino 2015; Maloutas 2014; Satitsa 2016). In fact, among the most significant impact of the crisis, Italy and Greece are experiencing a severe housing distress and the increase of housing precariousness affecting a wider range of social groups: impoverished low middle classes, young precarious workers, elderly people and migrants adding new challenges to the chronic housing deficit. Moreover, emergency-style treatment of housing distress has become common practices (and threat) in the cities under study (Annunziata 2017a, Arapoglou et al. 2014).

Given these premises, the paper explores the most recent innovations in housing policies in Rome, Italy and Athens, Greece, assuming a specific focus on durable tenancy and housing stability considered to be fundamental components for the prevention of displacement (European Commission 2016). Also international studies on how to prevent eviction, displacement and homelessness have proven the importance of housing policies and prevention measures as a way to face the current increase of housing deprivation (FEANSA 2011, 2007).

Rome is a special case in the geography of the Italian housing crisis. It is the city with the larger number of eviction orders, the highest social housing demand, the richer public residential stock, the longer housing movement

	Greece	Italy	EU (28)
Population (2011) (1)	10,816,286	59,433,744	-
Housing stock (2011) (1)	6,384,353	28,863,604	-
Main residences (2011) (1)	4,122,088	24,501,477	-
Secondary or vacant (2011) (1)	35.2%	17.6%	-
Total ownership (2015) (2)	75,1	72,9	69,4
Ownership with mortgage (2015) (2)	14,1	16,8	26,9
Rent, market (2015) (2)	19,8	15,4	19,8
Rent, reduced or free (2015) (2)	5,1	11,7	10,9
Social rental housing % of total stock (2006) (3)	0%	5,3%	-
Social rental housing % of rental stock (2008) (3)	0%	28%	-
Total outstanding residential loans (mil, 2016) (4)	61,397	368,179	6,981,540
Residential loans as % of GDP (2016) (4)	34,9	22	47,1
Residential loans to disposable income ratio (2016) (4)	53,3%	32,6%	77,6% (2015)
Residential loans per capita (eur, 2016) (4)	6,893	7,268	16,838

in Europe and last but not least a city with a predominant role of Tenants Unions in housing discourses. The crisis in Rome has been instrumentally described as *housing emergence*[1] and normalized as a matter of housing crisis management. The current state of housing distress challenge not only the City and Housing Authority's capacity to meet the new demand, it is also calling for a changing paradigm in housing policies and in measures to prevent evictions.

Athens is by far the largest city in Greece inhabited by almost 50% of the population and consequently it is where social problems are expressed more harshly. Rapidly urbanised through processes of self-construction and self-promotion with little direct state intervention, Athens developed a dense multi-functional fabric and a particular structure of small-scale, fragmented and social dispersed ownership of land. Access to housing has been accommodated through individual quasi-commercialised processes and no public housing. Important urban movements have developed, mainly around issues of public spaces, but very little with a housing agenda. Housing problems emerged in recent years are related to acute income reduction, unemployment and general impoverishment. Greece records extremely high rates of housing cost overburden in all types of tenure[2], excessive over-indebtedness[3], housing precarity, inadequate conditions of living and energy poverty. A deep destabilisation of previous mechanisms for the access to housing has occurred, calling for - but also opening the way for - a new model in housing policy, nevertheless obstructed by the constant adjustment regime that the country is under.

The paper will discuss several measures implemented so far in the two cities and will compare two neighbouring countries that share some similarities in respect to housing regimes (e.g. homeowner's society, familial welfare), but also many differences in respect to proprietary structure and social conflicts. This will enable us to learn by differences and by different geographies as

1_ *The term was introduced by the regional law n.2/ 2000, which determined the state of emergency for those living in squats and evicted households have priority in the allocation of public housing.*
2_ *According to EUROSTAT (2015) Greece has the highest rates of housing cost overburden (40,9% while 11,3% EU28), reaching 95,8% for poor households (below 60% of median income).*
3_ *Over-indebtedness of households has culminated along with the rise in unemployment, non-serviced loans reached more than 40% in 2016 (from 4% in 2009). Households are also accumulating debts towards the public (due to over-taxation, inability to pay social security funds or utility companies).*

well as to challenge some of the assumptions that characterize the Southern European macro region in respect to housing.

Housing policy agendas in the two countries after the economic crisis

As a result of the global financial crisis, which in Italy and Greece was translated into a Sovereign Debt crisis with consequent implementation of austerity policies, housing distress is on the rise and it is mainly interpreted as a crisis of affordability, namely the impossibility to meet the cost of living (in any type of tenure, homeownership or market rented housing). As a way to cope with the situation, targeted and temporary measures have been implemented both in Italy and Greece. These attempts did not lead to a structural policy reform, they represent however the starting point for an enquiry on the premises upon which housing policies are implemented, their effects and potentials.

The case of Italy and Rome

In Italy the housing crisis is not new. However, rather than a structural crisis, it has been perceived and described as an emergency and temporary problem mainly related with affordability. This interpretation framed the measures implemented by the State in the recent years. These have been based on: temporary laws that protect indebted homeowners, emergency-style housing solution for those experiencing severe housing distress and eviction, special taxation regimes and incentives aimed at reducing the financial burden of property owners, targeted housing allowances for tenants. Among the countries that have the highest GDP/Public Debt ratio in Europe (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain) the rising indebtedness for access to housing is the main factor determining the features of the new housing crisis globally: crisis-induced mortgage insolvencies and repossessions (Rolk-in 2013). In Italy several factors have mitigated mortgage insolvency. Italian household's indebtedness rely less on mortgages, and private debt levels are low when compared with Eu average (Table 2).

This is related to the specific role of family networks in accessing housing where familial savings are mobilised as a part of long-term investment strategies. The stability of the mortgage system was also guaranteed by a direct act of the Parliament (the Law n. 3/2012) that allowed families who could no longer honour their debts to restructure the agreement.

The Italian housing distress is rather characterised by the skyrocketing of tenant's evictions due to rent arrears; a phenomenon that has become a national emergency. In the years following the crisis the demand for rent accommodation increased; at the same time also the number of eviction notices has grown and among the number of notices enforced, 88.8% were for rent arrears[4]. The issue has been a matter of National debate and in 2014 the Government approved a New National Housing Plan (NHP) which introduced a specific measure called the 'No fault' Eviction Fund. The fund foresaw a territorial agreement between the Prefect, the City, Tenants and Proprietary Unions and the allocation of financial aid to cover rent arrears and stop the evictions process. However, the criteria for the allocation of the fund reduced its capacity to prevent eviction. The main obstacle has been a reductive interpretation of the concept of "non-guilty" households, mainly those who lost a stable job as a result of the economic recession. Whilst precarious workers who lost their income-earning capacity during the crisis have been pushed aside. Beside, in 2015 the anti-eviction *moratoria,* possible under the current regional housing framework were ultimately suspended leaving tenants with limited protection[5].

The increase of evictions in Rome is resulted in a housing emergence, namely the system is not capable to absorb the new demand. Under the emergency regime the city has the duty to re-house evicted household in public housing in temporary accommodation (*Centri Assistenza Alloggiativa Temporanea,* CAAT). However, in recent year the cost and management of this policy tool has been part of a scandal about in the allocation costs of temporary accommodation[6]. After the scandal the City decided to move beyond temporary solutions, however the alternatives currently on the table do not seem sufficient to provide housing for those facing severe housing distress[7]. A proposed alternative is a targeted housing allowance (*Buono casa*) based on the concept of 'second opportunity'. The city is directly in charge of paying the owners who agree to sign a contract with households currently living in housing emergence, evicted or under eviction. The measure is challenging the potential 'social' use of private property and it is promising in the long run. However, for the moment very few contracts have been signed: private owners are sceptical both with the institutions and with evicted tenants (Annunziata 2018).

In 2014 an intense confrontation between the Regional governments, housing movements and Tenants Unions resulted in a Housing Emergency Plan (HEP) (Regional Decree 18/2014). The plan foresees the production of public housing for those waiting for the allocation of public housing, those currently living in temporary accommodation and those currently living in squats. The new housing stock is planned to be produced throughout self-rehabilitation programs, and the rehabilitation of existing public properties[8]. The confrontation with housing movements has however been severely undermined in recent years. The current political realm seems not recognizing anymore the added social value of autonomous and self-organized housing squats and it is severely criminalising the terrain where housing alternatives are produced.

4_ *Only in 2015 in Rome there were 10.263 eviction requests, among which 2.726 have been enforced. The figure increased +6.11 % in 2017 (Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs 2017).*
5_ *The Law 200/2003 allows anti-eviction moratoria for certain categories of «disadvantaged» tenants in areas suffering high levels of housing distress.*
6_ *The scandal burst in Rome in 2015 and concerned temporary accommodation for evicted people as well as the system of refugee's reception. In 2017 the Court has condemned 41 people for the exchange of graft for public contracts.*
7_ *A recent estimation of the housing demand foresees 16.000 requests for public housing (Source: Puccini 2016).*

8_ *For insides on the role of housing movements in offering feasible housing alternatives see Mudu, 2015 and Grazioli Cagagli in this issue.*

9_ *Suspension of auctions was initially introduced with a Ministerial Decree in 2009, and extended with law 3869/2011 until 2013. After the liberalisation banks had not followed an aggressive repossession policy, especially for first housing. Furthermore, auctions have been blocked by the constant mobilisation of citizens (stop-auctions movement) and due to prolonged abstention of lawyers and notaries (see Katerini in this issue).*

10_ *Law 3869/2010, Restructuring of loans of over-indebted individuals and other provisions (so called Katseli Law). It was revised by law 3996/2011, law 4128/2013, latest changes were introduced with the law 4346/2015.*

For example, the NHP, whilst providing the regulatory framework necessary to provide tax relief for property owners and prevent stagnation in real estate markets, criminalises alternatives through Article 5, which prohibits the city registration for those currently illegally living in squatted properties. This hinders their ability to lodge a request for public housing, to register for healthcare provision and register their children at local schools. Within this moralistic-austerity climate the city of Rome is currently experiencing the suspension of the HEP and of any confrontation with housing movements and unions. Therefore, the city is severely missing its duty in providing the necessary preventing measure as well as structural reform in the field.

The case of Greece and Athens

The economic recession and imposed austerity policies had important effects upon the Greek housing and property system, turning small-scale, fragmented and socially dispersed immobile assets from important resources in the family economy into a burden (Siatitsa 2015). The protection of first residence and small-scale patrimony has become central in the agenda due to the introduction of heavy property and income taxation. A moratorium on auctions (of first housing and any property up to 200.000 euro) for debt towards the banks was introduced unconditionally already in 2009.[9] Following that, an insolvency law for physical persons was introduced in 2010, allowing over indebted households to apply to courts for a rearrangement of debt according to their ability to repay.[10] With this measure, Greece has avoided the mass foreclosures and evictions experienced for example in Spain, nevertheless the issue of private debt remains crucial.

With the debt crisis a lot of pressure has been put for the liberalisation of this protective framework. The moratorium on auctions was definitely abolished at the end of 2014, the conditions for applying for the insolvency law are now much stricter, a secondary market of loan packages has been instituted, a system of electronic auctions is under way. The issue of private

debt in Greece is being dealt with analogies with the national public debt, by constantly postponing to the future a viable solution. In a way, households are found amongst the contradictory trends of protective -though precarious- measures on the one hand and a constant threat of eviction or losing one's assets on the other. Most importantly, they are found within a prolonged suffocating condition impeding the economic recovery, while making impossible any plans for the future (see Kaika and Lamarca 2016 about the socio-political effects of indebtedness).

Despite the crisis, visible homelessness did not increase dramatically due to responsive family, social and solidarity networks. However invisible forms of housing deprivation have culminated, gradually acquiring deep and permanent characteristics (Arapoglou et al. 2015). Answers are directed mainly to the most visible and extreme part of housing deprivation and exclusion, with provisional solutions restricted to the absolutely basic. Housing emergency needs have also increased due to migration and refugee flows, directed towards short-term, transitory solutions (refugee camps, hostels, apartment programme).

A tendency towards a residual, emergency system of poverty management is evident in the expansion of poverty alleviation measures (soup kitchens, social groceries etc.) and provisions for the homeless (night-shelters, day centres, social clinics and pharmacies). Although, at first developed as a spontaneous reaction to the crisis through citizens' solidarity networks, local governments and the third sector, these measure have been gradually consolidated into a "shadow" philanthropic social state mostly run by NGO's and funded, apart from state money, to an important extent by foundations (tycoons, philanthropic and international aid organisations), most of them relying on precarious resources (Arapoglou and Gounis 2015). Parallel to that, steps are being made to regulate this emerging field and set mechanisms of coordination and quality control, while Municipalities, despite their debilitation during the crisis, are also trying to develop local social welfare services.

In order to understand the policies implemented during the crisis to face housing problems in Greece, we have to take into account the complete absence of any policy framework or instrument for direct public intervention in housing. Historically state policies were mainly directed to the support of homeownership, while family networks, social ties and informal housing practices played an important role for access to housing. Since 2012, as part of the austerity reforms, the administration has been deprived of the only instrument of social housing policy, the Workers Housing Organisation (OEK in Greek).[11] Currently, direct public intervention in housing is restricted to targeted allowances (housing allowance for students and uninsured elderly, heating allowance) and tax incentives for homeowners (tax exemption for the first house).

A housing allowance for people living in extreme poverty[12] together with access to free electricity was introduced in 2015 (law 4320/2015)until the end of 2016. Budget constraints have not allowed for the continuation of the measure, although other significant -in terms of spending and paradigm shift- reforms in the welfare system have taken place during the last two years. The most important ones have been the introduction of a nation wide minimum income scheme since February 2017 and access to health for all, namely full coverage for uninsured people and migrants both for treatment

and medicine, since 2015. A housing benefit for tenants and mortgage holder is being designed and might be implemented from 2019 if funds are available.

Innovations are mainly pursued with schemes that would take advantage of Greece's particular housing and property structure, by using empty and underused existing building stock in the framework of a public policy that would mobilise small-scale owners towards a multi-purpose strategy to provide affordable housing, regenerate downgraded neighbourhoods or redirect the – stagnating - construction sector towards reuse/refurbishment and energy upgrading. The dispersed and in a large extend underused public immobile property -of low real estate interest- could be part of this scheme, that could also boost new models of social and solidarity economy locally. An interesting example in this direction has been the use of rented apartments from small owners for supported housing programmes either for the refugee relocation housing scheme[13] or for homeless support programmes (Housing and Reintegration programme, see Kourahanis 2017). Although implemented without a uniform regulatory framework, neither a long-term scope, it is an interesting experimentation that could set the basis for the development of low cost and supported rented housing.

Finally, it is important to mention the emergence in the last years of a new (for the Greek experience) housing movement. Namely, housing squats for refugees and migrants, especially in the centre of Athens, have multiplied covering the needs of hundreds of refugees, introducing an innovative practice within the solidarity movement. Together with the movement against auctions for debts they constitute a new field of political collective action that could potentially lead to the voicing of more elaborated housing claims.

Conclusion: opportunities and challenges in the observed context
As a conclusive remark we would like to explore what the cases can tell to each other, what we can learn, regarding housing policies in a time characterized by severe dispossession and housing exclusion. In Table 2 we summarize strengths/elements of stability, weaknesses and future trends deriving from the policies we have analysed in the two countries.

The strong predisposition to homeownership that characterizes both the Southern European countries under study, represents at the same time a strength and a weakness in terms of policy innovation. The proprietary regime strongly influenced policies in the field of homeownership protection, with a relative stable situation in Italy and a more burdensome one in Greece given the higher levels of over indebtedness. The protection of private property is thus at the core of the agenda, as a measure that will consequently prevent eviction and dispossession of homeowners (mortgage holders or not). In both countries, efforts to protect overburdened tenants are much more limited and ineffective. The introduction of a rent allowance in Greece was very short-term, while in Italy the 'No-fault eviction' fund remained mainly a rhetorical gesture, despite its significant potential as a prevention policy; it did not actually reach those in need since precarious labour was not recognised as a hardship situation.

Policy domains	Italy		Greece	
	strengths and element of stability	**weaknesses and future trends**	**strengths and element of stability**	**weaknesses and future trends**
Homeownership protection *Mortgages and taxation regimes*	> temporary laws that protect indebted homeowners > special taxation regimes and incentives aimed at reducing the financial burden of property owners > stability of the mortgage system	> new mortgage law is under discussion and will eventually introduce a threshold on insolvency after which bank repossession will occur. It is estimated that it will impact about 50.000 families.	> moratiorium of auctions until 2014 > personal insolvency law > first residence protected for about ⅔ of homeowners	> gradually liberalised and constantly under negotiation with lenders > high taxation on property (capital destruction and wealth extraction) for public debt repaiment
Tenants protections *Housing allowances*	> New National Housing Plan (NHP) (Law 27/2014) which introduced a specific measure called the 'no fault' eviction fund > Targeted housing allowance (Buono casa) based on the concept of 'second opportunity'.	> Suspention of anti-eviction moratoria (Law 200/2003) > Insufficient allocation for housing allowance, limited target > Increase in forced eviction for rent arrears > lack of trust from property owners toward public administration	> Humanitarian bill (l. 4325/2015) rent allowance (directly to the landowners) and free electricity for those in extreme poverty > Rent allowance for lower-middle classes designed for 2018	> Evictions for rent arrears are not documented > Law that makes eviction easier (express eviction) > (insufficient) housing allownaces for tenants, limited target
emergency accomodation and poverty management	> Emergency-style housing solution for those experiencing severe housing distress and eviction	>re-house evicted household in public housing in temporary accommodation (Centri Assistenza Alloggiativa Temporanea, CAAT) rented by the city	> expansion of poverty alleviation measures (soup kitchens, social groceries etc.) and provisions for the homeless (night-shelters, day centres, social clinics and pharmacies) > supported housing for refugees and homeless in rented apartments	> conteinment of extreme destitution > need for more structural reforms in housing support
public housing	>production/provision of social housing (re-furbisment, self-repair, acquisition) > Housing Emergency Plan (HEP) (Regional Decree 18/2014). The plan foresees the production of public housing	> lack of strategic vision, implementation case by case		> no public housing > discussions about the use of other type of public property for housing
housing movements	> historical housing movement as shock absorber	> criminalization of houisng squat and contraction of space for negotiations	>emerging movements against auctions and refugee squats	> prevalence of home-ownersip is strong > potential for more elaborated housing claims

The main difference however between the two cases is that the housing system in Italy is still managed by public housing authorities which do not exist anymore in Greece. Consequently, in the latter a set of regulations and competencies have been eradicated and partially substitute by philanthropic institution. It is thus difficult to imagine how a policy field that requires important public financial resources, administrative competences, but also societal support such as housing, can be developed under very strict austerity constraints. A very simple lesson in this respect is that whether non-functional, with management problems and slow in assimilating the required changes - the Italian housing authorities are still fundamental agents for the implementation of new housing schemes.

This is particularly true if we consider that, in both cases, the challenge is to increase the public housing supply by re-using and rehabilitating the unused stock, which requires strong management and competencies. In this respect the most significate innovation has been the Italian self-rehab program. In Greece the debate over the the re-use of empty property is still very premature (and very challenging) and is mainly oriented towards the need to prevent property concentration, reactivate the construction sector and develop a tool for urban upgrading, rather than targeting a long-term housing policy. The growing of an emergency system of poverty management and informal approaches towards housing is probably the most urgent issue. In Athens responses to the refugees' crisis (mainly in the form of emergency camps and new shelterization) has challenged the public housing discourse in general and represents a factor of stress over the already existing housing distress. In Rome the production of a housing emergency has been instrumental for the management of informality in past years, however this has led to an unsustainable situation. Both cases stress the need to go beyond emergency solutions, that only contribute to the containment of destitution and impoverishment, towards structural solutions.

Finally, we can detect innovative gestures that arise from the role of property owners in the provision of housing, such as in the case of second opportunity for evicted and marginal population. This approach takes advantage of the characteristics of the Southern European housing system, namely the particular property and urban structure. The current conjuncture challenges the stability of the housing system in the two proprietary societies we analysed, but at the same time generates potentials for important changes that might start from the consideration of the social value of property against dispossession and financialisation of housing.

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*Particolare del
progetto grafico
a cura di
Antonia Santolaya
pubblicato a p. 131*

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Berlin: anti-gentrification between protest and program

Berlino: anti-gentrification tra protesta e programma

Negli ultimi dieci anni Berlino è diventata la capitale della crisi abitativa tedesca. Cambiamenti demografici, strategie di investimento alterate e la battuta di arresto dello Stato nei confronti di politiche per l'abitare sociale non hanno avuto solo l'effetto di aumentare drasticamente il costo degli affitti ma hanno anche portato ad una crisi abitativa strutturale. La gentrification non è più solo un fenomeno che riguarda singoli quartieri ma è diventata una normalità per porzioni vaste dell'area urbana di Berlino dove movimenti sociali urbani e iniziative locali hanno combattuto il processo di gentrification per anni. Le loro proposte sono state integrate nelle strategie e politiche delle più recenti coalizione di governo cittadino (SPD, DIE LINKE, GREENS) formatesi in seguito al cambiamento di governo nel 2016. Il paper commenta questa fase di innovazione nelle politiche di housing a Berlino analizzandone le potenzialità e i limiti per una possibile politica della casa anti-displacement.

The Berlin housing crisis

Until a few years ago Berlin was considered to be among the most affordable European metropoles for housing. This was possible thanks to a high percentage rates of public and social housing stock, extensive construction activity, and substantial public funding programmes. All of these factor limited the profit expectations of private investors and guaranteed affordable rents in almost all parts of the city. The dynamics of gentrification were spatially confined to a few selected neighbourhoods of the East Berlin urban core.

However, in the last years Berlin has been transformed into a city with a structural housing crisis. Reasons for these changes lie in the population growth of the past decade, very limited new housing construction, and above all a neoliberal decimation of social housing. The privatisation of more than 200,000 public housing units into the hands of mainly financial funds (Uffer 2011), the termination of funding programmes for new social housing units, and the liberalisation of building and tenancy laws have transformed Berlin's housing market into an arena of profit expectations (Holm 2011). The growing gap between existing rent-controlled tenancy agreements and the realisable rent levels from new tenants, in particular, has resulted in enormous displacement pressures as owners are now able to generate significantly higher rental income from new tenants without any additional investments. Turning rental property into owner-occupied property, utilising refurbishment notifications and other reasons to ask for the enforcement of a faster eviction are all signifiers of an intensification of displacement pressures, which is caused by the rent gap. Incentives for modernisation and the danger of displacement are, by far, no longer restricted to clearly localised neighbourhoods. Gentrification has become the new urban norm for vast parts of the urban core and, over the past few years, has begun to affect quarters outside the usual geographical marker of the inner urban core, the S-Bahn Ring (Holm 2013).

Gentrification and displacement are thus part of this structural housing crisis. In total, more than 100,000 housing units are needed in order to supply every household in needs with proper accommodation. The supply deficit is even higher if we consider the amount of affordable housing[1], in this fraction 150,000 additional units would be necessary to accommodate low-income earners (Holm 2016). Due to the rapid closure of funding programmes for social housing, apartments with rent control and secure tenancies are particularly in short supply, consequently an increasing number of people are seeking accommodation but are almost entirely excluded from the market. The city-wide rent increase mean that every move of home (even into significantly smaller apartments) comes with higher financial pressure[2]. Many households are *too poor to be displaced* and try to compensate for these higher rents with over-occupation, subletting, and the reduction of other vital costs. Displacement from a neighbourhood in Berlin is accompanied by a displacement of one's living standards.

New wave of tenants' protests in Berlin

A wave of housing political protest emerged in response to these developments and displacement pressures. Since 2010, citizens started to actively mobilize for the access to housing and against displacement. In addition to the ongoing struggles of several former squats, we can distinguish several types of mobilisation: *interventionist street protests, neighbourhood initiatives, organised housing cooperatives,* and *subject-specific campaigns.*

Interventionist street protests originated in the protests against the controversial investment project MediaSpree, which intended to transform the banks of the River Spree into a landscape of concrete office buildings (Dohnke 2013). In this case a series of smaller, campaign-like protests have formed against luxury new-builds (Crossland 2009) and the temporary siting of international cultural projects in Berlin Kreuzberg (Kompatsiari 2017, p. 57; Vartanian 2012). The activities of these interventionist street protest

1_ *Affordability is defined in Berlin as the costs of an apartment not exceeding 30% of a household's net income.*
2_ *As a response to the housing market development, the number of house moves within Berlin decreased significantly between 2007 (350,000 internal moves) and 2015 (275,000 moves) despite rising population numbers (Amt für Statistik 2016).*

consisted in demonstrations, poster campaigns, the disruption of official events, as well as targeting buildings with paint bombs and stones. Far more specific and continuous are the activities of the group *Stop Evictions Berlin* which has organised protests against forced evictions since 2012. The group draws on a combination of self-organisation, public relations works, and civil disobedience to stop forced evictions[3]. The initiative's ability to mobilise is considerable, e.g. in February 2013 more than 1,000 people took part in a blockade of a forced eviction in Kreuzberg. Despite the fact that the eviction was eventually successful due to police deployment that lasted several hours, the Stop Eviction Berlin's position for future conflicts was strengthened by this event. Many landlords shying away from such sustained attention, and cancelled evictions before that the Stop Eviction Campaign would announce protest. The interventionist street protests primarily focus on a specific reason for mobilising and do not pursue any agenda of policy reform besides abstract demands ('No wholesale of the city', 'Rent is not for profit'). However, the activities against forced evictions, with their demand to the housing associations and the Social Welfare Office of suspending evictions, are an exceptions.

Neighbourhood initiatives and local associations have formed in approximately fifteen neighbourhoods of the urban core to critically observe the changes in their residential areas and to support neighbours in their arguments with landlords. Many of the neighbourhood initiatives document cases of displacement and changes to their neighbourhood on their websites[4]. The initiatives investigate not only the displacement of tenants but also the construction of new housing projects, increasing touristification, as well as the conversion of rental property into holiday lets[5]. A fairly new area of concern for these neighbourhood organizations is the defence of long-established local shops against displacement. Shops catering for day-to-day needs, in particular, often have to make way for catering businesses, small boutique shops, and flagship stores. In Kreuzberg, neighbourhood initiatives were successful in preventing the displacement of a grocer, a bakery, a bookstore and a florist. These local associations organized meetings with several hundred participants, petitions and demonstrations that successfully putted pressure on the owners and the local district to provide long-term security for the businesses. In addition to providing information in and for the neighbourhood, to being present in conflicts and making an often personal address to the owners, many initiatives also aim to confront local district policy. Arising from actual conflicts in the neighbourhood, these neighbourhood initiatives have created a series of demands to reform policy. Many initiatives, such as support the extension of protected neighbourhoods and demand a ban on holiday lets, as well as demanding the increased application of the municipal right to first refusal *Vorkaufsrecht* [6].

More than 100 organized housing groups have been set up city-wide to enforce their right to housing. Besides legal attempts to avert rent rises, refurbishment and the conversion of rental into owner-occupied property, many housing cooperatives went public and addressed specific political demands to the district administrations and the Local Government. While protests of housing groups has mainly remained fragmented, the tenant struggles were able to establish a series of demands for political reform in the ensuing public debate. In 2011/12, for instance several groups produced a joint catalogue of demands ('The dossier on rent policy') addressed to the state government

3_ *Around 6,000 forced evictions are pursued each year in Berlin. In particular, in city centre districts with their high rents for new tenants, landlords increasingly justify the termination of a tenancy agreement not only with rent arrears but with lesser causes such as 'contravention of house rules', 'obstruction of building work', or a 'breakdown in trust'. The courts and administration report that landlords far less often agree to out of court settlements and mutually agreed resolution. The higher the expectation of profit due to a change of tenant, the more uncompromising the owner's inclination to evict (Berner et al. 2015).*

4_ *Different grassroots mapping projects on displacement and gentrification:* http://www.wem-gehoert-kreuzberg.de/index.php/karte-verdraengungsprozesse, https://moabit.crowdmap.com/, http://www.bizim-kiez.de/blog/2015/06/24/karte-der-verdraengung-in-so36-map-of-displacement/

5_ *A survey of internet platforms such as Airbnb shows that around 25,000 apartments in central Berlin are used as holiday lets and are thus missing from an urgently needed supply of housing* (http://www.airbnbvsberlin.de/).

6 *Vorkaufsrecht is a special right to intervene into property transactions and to take properties into public hands.*

(http://mietendossier.blogsport.de/). Their demands included: a cap on re-furbishment, a stronger protection against conversion into ownership, the restriction of demolitions, and a re-communalisation of already privatised housing stock. Social housing tenants have, since 2012, organised a series of events and a conference to develop proposals for social housing reform (Hamann et al. 2016). The quality of the proposals and their underlying ideas was so advanced that the city administration appointed several spokesper-son of the housing groups to take part to an expert commission for social housing reform. While mobilising for a city-wide referendum on rents, a co-operation of numerous initiatives developed a legislative proposal ('Hous-ing supply bill') in order to fundamentally reform public and social housing (Braun 2015).

A number of more strongly institutionalised initiatives have become estab-lished in recent years as a further element of the new tenants' protests in Berlin. With subject-specific expertise and political dialogue, these institu-tionalised initiatives take the form of subject-specific campaigns and seek to influence different instruments of urban and housing policy. One of them is the *'Initiative: Thinking the City Anew'* which was formed by a circle of young architects, town planners, and cultural workers in 2011 as a broad alliance for re-orientating real estate policy in cooperation with different or-ganisations. The initiative's central demand is to utilise the development and allocation of public real estate in Berlin as an instrument for the promotion of social and cultural diversity. Following a decade of austerity and public real estate being routinely sold to the highest bidder, the initiative calls for a moratorium on sales, more transparency in real estate policy, and to restrict any future real estate allocations to land subject to hereditary leaseholds. The initiative convene a round table on real estate policy which has for many years provided a regular and consistent forum for discussion between these type of initiatives, the Berlin Senate, political parties, and organisations. In contrast to the otherwise usual means of participation, the initiative puts forward a committed goal (to develop guidelines for Berlin's real estate poli-cy) and sets the agenda. The concept of 'Transparent real estate' was adopt-ed by the Senate in 2014 and is directly based in the discussions of the round table (Initiative Stadt Neudenken 2014). The initiative *City from Below* also aims to influence urban policy in Berlin. Originating in the demand to obtain public real estate from the Federal State (the Dragonerareal in Kreuzberg) for municipal use, the initiative so far has developed a series of proposals on how municipal planning can be done with meaningful neighbourhood par-ticipation. It aims to develop a model of how the 'best ideas of self-organ-ised projects can be brought together with the best characteristics of munic-ipal housing supply' (https://stadtvonunten.de/). The initiative promotes a different construction policy in Berlin by way of public events, participation in various subject-specific political committees, and direct discussions with those politically responsible.

The city belongs to you:
from an election campaign motto to a coalition agreement
The economy of valorisation and the geographical expansion of gentrifica-tion have created new forms of housing protest in Berlin. Despite the largely fragmented form of individual struggles, collectivising the housing question has nonetheless contributed towards the politisation of housing and, with a series of reform proposals, has defined the political standards of housing for future governments.

Ahead of the election for the Berlin Parliament in September 2016, the future coalition partners had already developed closer cooperation with a series of tenants' initiatives. While the Greens and DIE LINKE as parties of the opposition coordinated aspects of their parliamentary work with social movements, the SPD was forced to cooperate with a successful petition for the first stage of the Rent Referendum. DIE LINKE introduced in their election campaign posters the slogan 'The city belongs to you' and tried to put that promise into practice after the election. During the coalition negotiations, individual emissaries of the parties were in discussion with tenant activists from housing groups, neighbourhood groups and subject specific campaigns. The latter were able to influence the goals of the coalition to the point of the phrasing specific passages of the government program. The opening towards an urban society, as promised during the election campaign, was initially realised, and the handwriting of the 'street' has become visible in the government programme. Under the heading 'Affordable housing for all', the new coalition's political goals for housing were detailed in more than ten pages of the coalition agreement (SPD; Die Linke; Bündnis 90/Die Grünen). The central demands of the urban political movements of recent years in respect to housing encompasses the following objectives and will likely influence the design of housing policy in the future.

Real estate policy. Until now real estate was mainly regarded as an instrument of debt liquidation and arranged accordingly by resorting to a policy of selling to the highest bidder. In future, the sustainable and strategic management of urban land should be pursued as a goal. Public land for housing construction should be solely given to state-owned housing associations, cooperatives and social housing associations. The allocation criteria for sales or lease agreements have to be shaped in such a manner that 30% to 50% of the inhabitable space created falls under rent controls and offers tenancy protection. For the establishment of new building sites, the model of cooperative site development will be applied in order to force private companies to offer at least 30% of the inhabitable space as rent controlled and tenancy protected units.

Social housing. The remaining housing stock of around 100,000 social housing units from earlier funding periods have to be protected from premature termination of their social aims and for the long term. A comprehensive reform also aims to reduce rent levels and to orientate them according to the tenants' income. Picking up the claim to municipalize the social housing stock pilot projects should be promoted with the acquisition of privately-owned social housing through residents' cooperatives.

Public housing. According to the conditions of the coalition agreement, the six state-owned housing associations with their approximately 300,000 units should, from now on, become the central pillar of social housing supply; 60% of the tenancy agreements for this stock should be given to households with low income (below the threshold for housing benefits, according with the certificate of eligibility for housing). Rent rises should be limited to 2% p.a. and the costs of refurbishment are only admissible up to 6% of the annual rent. With these agreements, the future government programme also took on board the demands of tenant initiatives such as *Tenants Forum Pankow* and the Rent Referendum.

Securing housing and protection against displacement. Another key area of

future housing policy lies in the more rigorous application of instruments based in tenancy and urban planning law to protect against displacement and to limit property speculation. The abuse of apartments as holiday lets and vacancies should be more strongly sanctioned than before (for instance by limiting or prohibit uses change). For future demolition permits, there should be regulations in place for appropriate replacement of housing. Furthermore, a charter to protect neighbourhoods, regulations for conversions, and municipal rights to take over private properties have to be extended and designed more effectively. Here, too, the demands of neighbourhood initiatives, support groups for those affected, and tenancy rights organisations have been adopted by the new Government Coalition.

Since the new coalition came into government in 2016, first steps have been taken in the realisation of a new housing policy. However, the realisation of many of these plans is delayed due to the slow moving wheels of the administration, initial tensions between the coalition partners, and the resistance of housing companies to put into practice new obligations. These difficulties demonstrate how important the work and the protests of a whole set of initiatives and grassroots movements are in seeding up processes of change and law reforms. Even under the conditions of a progressive government the following rule applies: only political pressure from below, the calling out of grievances and the highlighting of solutions can secure a solution for social housing supply.

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