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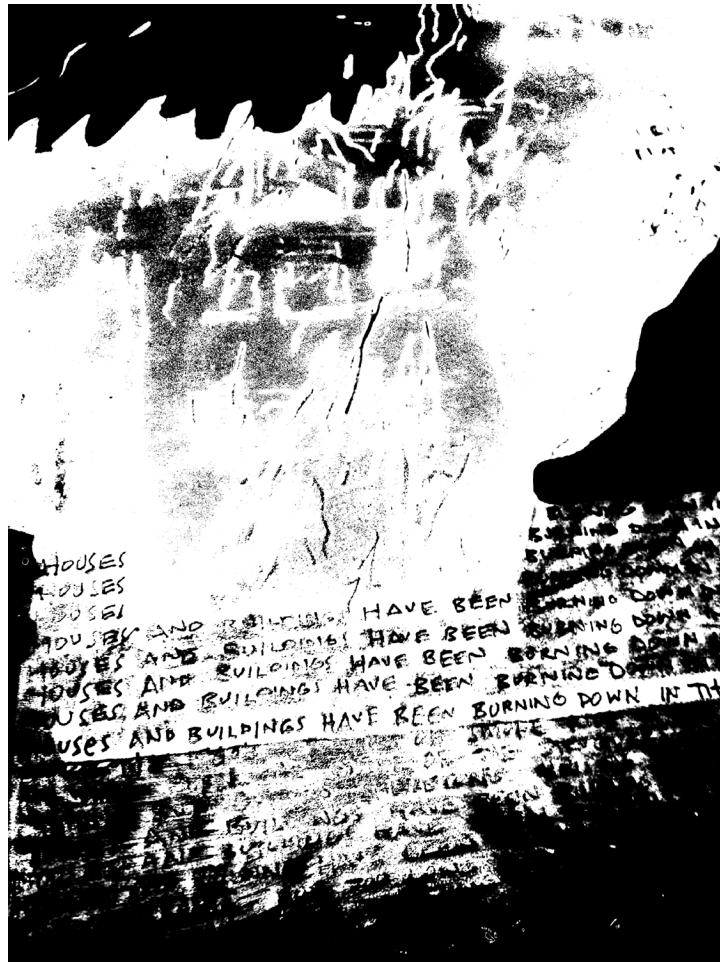
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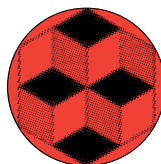ORGANIZED 2016 • AT UCLA LUSKIN

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HOUSING JUSTICE IN UNEQUAL CITIES

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Acknowledgements

HOUSING JUSTICE IN UNEQUAL CITIES
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Making and Unmaking Property Regimes

Beyond Financialization

Towards Abolitionism

Where You Live Matters

"Hill District Fire"
Eden McNutt

Artist Statement

This image is from a series I made of Pittsburgh memories and experiences that made a significant impression on me. That city is very dear to me, I grew up there and the geography of it is in my body. I was driving through the Hill District neighborhood once when I was a young man. Pittsburgh is very hilly, and homes and buildings are often seemingly defying gravity, sometimes smashed up against hillsides. I could see that an old building was burning violently, the flames and smoke rising up. Part of me was screaming inside watching this happen.

Many years ago, the Hill District was the entry point for many different immigrant communities as they came to the city for the steel industry and a new life. As folks did better financially, they often moved further away from it. At one point, the Hill District was like the Harlem of Pittsburgh, full of thriving businesses and produced an incredible number of great writers, artists, and jazz musicians. August Wilson, Romare Bearden, Art Blakey, Billy Eckstine, Ahmad Jamal, George Benson just to name a few.

In the 60's, the city made some poor urban planning decisions that led to a large swath of it being bulldozed over for new development. That was like cutting a limb off of the community. Afterwards, there were riots when Martin Luther King and Malcolm X were assassinated, and many buildings burned at that time. That neighborhood, as have many in that city, has been neglected and left in survival mode for so long. Buildings like that continue to age and burn, leaving the neighborhood even more of a skeleton of what was once a thriving, vibrant hub for African-American life. But folks are still trying to keep it alive.

— *Eden McNutt*

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An Introduction

In This Section

Housing Justice: Towards a Field of Inquiry

Ananya Roy, University of California, Los Angeles

On a rain-drenched winter evening in Los Angeles earlier this year, a few hundred people gathered in the Freedom Room of the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) to mark the inauguration of a global research network titled *Housing Justice in Unequal Cities*. Housed at the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at the University of California, Los Angeles, the network brings together movement-based and university-based scholars to build a shared field of inquiry focused on housing justice. For the Institute, now in its third year, LA CAN, embedded in Skid Row and leading the city's most vital struggles over space, place, and human rights, has been a teacher and guide. The inauguration of the research network could not have taken place anywhere else (Figure 1).

We were reminded that evening of some enduring principles that must guide any endeavor concerned with housing justice. These include the following: that housing justice must be situated in the long struggle for freedom on occupied, colonized, and stolen land; that such a framework is inevitably global, connecting Skid Row in Los Angeles to the indebted and evicted in Spain and Greece, to black women's resistance in Brazil, to the rights asserted by squatters in India and South Africa; that the logic of such global interconnections must be understood as racial capitalism and its multiple but related articulations of colonialism and imperialism; and most important, that the theorization of such lived histories takes place in poor people's movements rather than in the rarefied realms of academia (Figure 2).

Guided by these principles, we share a preliminary vision of housing justice as a field of inquiry in this collection of writings. Such a vision joins other collective efforts, notably the recently launched *Radical Housing Journal*, to produce forms of scholarship that can take full account of the structural processes of housing precarity as well as the ceaseless and complex contestations through which

rights to housing are conceptualized, claimed, and consolidated. Here are a few propositions to consider for this expanded realm of scholarship.

1.   From the housing crisis to housing justice

In cities across the world, one of the most visible manifestations of social and political inequality is the divide between the housing landscapes of the wealthy and the housing crisis experienced by marginalized communities. But the present historical conjuncture is also marked by an extraordinary proliferation of housing movements, policy experiments, and alternative housing models. Old ideas, from rent control to community land trusts, have new lives. Collective action and urban insurgencies, from eviction blockades to rent strikes, reclaim housing and create new protagonists of social change, for example, tenants or shack-dwellers or mortgage affected people. Such movements often transform the conceptual underpinnings of liberal democracy, notably notions of property and personhood. They turn cities into political actors, insisting on policies of regulation and redistribution, such as the expropriation of housing monopolized by large landlords and global banks. As a field of inquiry, housing justice scholarship roots research and analysis in the work of these movements, building theory from nodes of struggle, be it the Mariachi rent strike of Los Angeles or the eviction blockades on the South Side of Chicago. In her reflections on collaborative research in Cape Town, South Africa, Sophie Oldfield thus acknowledges movement leaders who insisted that she frame her research on housing conditions as a "problematic of housing justice," one grounded in "hard daily struggle."

In the *Housing Justice in Unequal Cities* network, and in this volume, we pinpoint key dimensions of crisis, from racial segregation to the financialization of housing to the criminalization of poverty. But we are especially concerned with what it means to cast these processes in the framework of housing justice. In her recent report on "Access to Justice for the Right to Housing," United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha, insists that "violations of the right to housing are as much failures in the administration of justice as they are failures of housing programmes."[1] We interpret this emphasis on justice as a call to move beyond the analysis of housing markets as bounded

1   *Farha 2019: 3.*

Figure 1
Photo by Les Dunseith/UCLA Luskin

institutions. Instead, the housing question must be understood in relation to juridico-political structures, from the legal order of property to state violence and surveillance. Critical legal geography, such as that mobilized by Nicholas Blomley, is thus a crucial component of this field of inquiry. So are the elaborate diagrams of power of the "stalker state" meticulously developed by Hamid Khan and his colleagues at the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition. The juridico-political is also biopolitical, as Melissa García-Lamarca and Maria Kaika, urge us to consider. Mortgages, they insist, are not only market tools but also intimate relationships that bind bodies and lives to global financial markets and enmesh them in practices of speculation, debt, and calculation.

In her influential work on justice, feminist philosopher, Nancy Fraser asks a profound question: "Who counts as a subject of justice?"[2] The shift in emphasis from the housing crisis to housing justice entails similar questions of embodiment and representation, or what Fraser calls "misframing." Thus, Tracy Jeanne Rosenthal of the L.A. Tenants Union insists that, in the United States, there is "a tenant's rights crisis," not a housing crisis. By tenants she refers to not only renters but also the unhoused, all those who do not control their housing. She argues that "when we call this crisis a housing crisis, it benefits the people who design housing, who build housing, who profit from housing, not the people who live in it." Such reframings enable new public meanings and public acts. Take for example the forms of development and finance described by Gilda Haas that redistribute ownership and interrupt the extraction of rents. Or take for example, the activists in Chicago whose efforts, as described by Toussaint Losier, reinscribe foreclosed and bank-owned vacant properties as "unidentified public housing."

2. Property regimes are colonial regimes

It is commonplace to identify the housing crisis of the present historical conjuncture as a problem of neoliberalization. But as the housing crisis must be reframed, so too must the lineages and futures of capitalism be recast. It is thus that Desiree Fields and Elora Raymond present the financialization of housing in the United States not as a neoliberal force but rather as the long-standing "production of racial difference" that uses "Black and indigenous spaces as frontiers for new rounds of capital accumulation." These, they argue are the "settler

2   Fraser 2009: 281.

colonial roots" of the contemporary contours of housing finance. Indeed, the Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network seeks to situate the housing question in racial capitalism and its logics of dispossession and subordination. Without imposing a uniquely American conceptualization of race, we seek a global understanding of segregation and banishment, exclusion and expulsion, processes that remain inadequately explained in the canons of political economy.

At stake is the reconceptualization of property regimes as colonial regimes. Blomley reminds us that the law is a fiction, often consolidating settler-colonial occupation by establishing title to unceded indigenous lands. Indeed, as Brenna Bhandar and K-Sue Park have each shown, the space of the settler-colony has been a zone of experimentation for modern property law.[3] New property logics, such as title by registration, and new commodity forms, such as foreclosure, made possible the violent appropriation of Native lands and set into motion the ongoing dispossession that is evident in contemporary processes of displacement. If we are to take up the question of land as a part of housing justice, for example in the case of community land trusts discussed by James DeFilippis, then such deep-rooted ideologies of ownership and tenure have to be confronted and challenged.

The call for decommodification—of housing, of land—must also be understood in relation to the long histories of colonialism and imperialism. Accompanying the diagnosis of the housing crisis as a problem of neoliberalization, is often the mantra of a Lefebvrian "right to the city" and its attendant meanings of decommodification. But as Toussaint Losier shows in his careful genealogy of poor people's movements in Chicago and Cape Town, decommodification can be alternatively rooted in anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles. This vision of decommodification is one of liberation and connection, one that is able, as Keisha-Khan Perry notes, to find a shared terrain of struggle across poor and policed neighborhoods in Los Angeles, New York, and Salvador da Bahia. Here, property and personhood—the dispossession of each—are tightly linked. The racial abstractions of property of which Bhandar and other legal scholars write find embodiment in what Perry describes as the "lives and experiences of Black women...lying in pools of blood, cramped in overcrowded jails and prisons." If there is a horizon of decommodification, then it emerges as Perry also emphasizes through Black women's resistance.

Our insistence that property regimes are colonial regimes leads us to an abolitionist framework of housing justice. As Rahim Kurwa shows, the study of housing in the United States requires close attention to how systems of policing and punishment produce racial residential segregation, or what he calls "carceral segregation." In my own scholarship, I have termed these processes of exclusion and expulsion racial banishment. The antonym of racial banishment is not integration; rather, it is liberation. It is, as Kurwa argues, abolitionism.

The Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin, inspired by LA CAN, by Ruth Wilson Gilmore, by Robin D.G. Kelley, has insisted on casting housing justice as a "freedom dream," Kelley's felicitious phrase.[4] As a freedom dream, abolitionism is not an endpoint. It is not a convenient formula for reparations. Abolitionism is hard daily struggle, grounded in the black radical imagination and its critique of racial capitalism.

3. Housing justice demands research justice

In an interview in 2007 with Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now!* that aired after his death in 2009, Augusto Boal discusses the meaning of solidarity in relation

3 *Bhandar 2015; Park 2016.*

4 *Kelley 2003.*

to the radical democratic practice of the Theater of the Oppressed. In particular, he tells of a play he had staged in northeast Brazil. The actors, dressed as peasants, called for uprising, for blood to be spilled in order to save the land. When one of the peasants asked Boal and his colleagues to join them in armed insurrection, to take their stage rifles and actually fight for the land, Boal had to admit that they were merely actors, masquerading as peasants. Reflecting on the incident, Boal quotes Che Guevara and argues that to be in solidarity is to take the same risks as the oppressed (https://www.democracynow.org/2009/5/6/augusto_boal_founder_of_the_theater).

Boal's reflection reminds us of the stark limits of solidarity. The Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network does not make any pretense of solidarity with communities on the frontlines of housing struggle. But it does strive towards research justice.

Research justice starts from the premise that knowledge matters. In his analysis of housing movements, Tony Roshan Samara draws attention to forms of "historical organizing, organizing that understands itself as part of a project to transform historic forms of injustice." He is especially interested in translocal formations that build power across territories and spaces. For him, long-term success rests on how well movements "can collect, produce, and use knowledge." Indeed, as Colin McFarlane has noted, the global interconnections of housing justice movements make for "critical geographies of urban learning."[5]

Research justice is concerned with the accumulation of knowledge for the purpose of structural transformation. Research justice is the refusal to participate in the dispossession of knowledge.

We draw inspiration for research justice from the work of housing justice movements and collectives that critique modes of data collection and analysis that deepen the exploitation of marginalized communities and exhaust community members and contribute to stigma.[6] Such critiques not only expose extractive research but also often also bear "a manifesto for ethical research," as in the research guidelines provided by scholars and activists working in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside or the feminist and decolonial methodologies that undergird the work of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project.[7] Our inaugural conference thus commenced with an accountability agreement drawn up by Terra Graziani and Hilary Malson, one that insists that housing scholarship be accountable to the unhoused and precariously housed. It is this accounting, this accounting for, that Sophie Oldfield foregrounds in her reflections on collaborative research. Indeed, as Erin Goodling argues, it is urgently necessary to make housing justice research relevant to people without housing. Such "homework" often leads scholars to the study of power, as in Goodling's analysis of Business Improvement Districts as distinctive regimes of property and police. Above all, it makes us fiercely attentive to the fact that we are, as Erin McElroy points out, "living in a time in which eviction data itself has bizarrely become a commodity."

In this collection of essays, and in the broader scope of the Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network, we adopt a transnational approach to research justice. Building on ongoing debates in urban studies, we insist on thinking from the global South. Following Comaroff and Comaroff, we interpret the global South not as a geographical location but rather as a distinctive vantage point shaped by historical relationships of subordination.[8] For the purposes of housing justice, a key part of this vantage point is the politics of the urban majority that in turn leads to a recasting of housing as a political problem. From land reforms to the constitutional right to housing, the global South has much to teach us about

5   *McFarlane 2011: 153.*

6   *Aiello et al. 2018; Boilevin et al. 2018.*

7   *Boilevin et al. 2018; Maharawal and McElroy 2018.*

8   *Comaroff and Comaroff 2012.*

postcolonial aspiration and possibility. As with other aspects of our scholarly agenda, our commitment to think from the global South is concerned, as Erin McElroy argues, with connection rather than comparison. She calls for a connected approach that can map "chains of global property" as well as "materialize future resistance." It is our wager that public universities in the postcolonial democracies of the global South have been doing such work with more rigor than the elite universities of the global North. In their reflection on the work of the African Centre for Cities, Sue Parnell and Edgar Pieterse call this "translational global praxis": research and theory practices that are embedded in, and responsive to, Africa's urban problems and policies, as well as to "multiple publics."[9]

9   *Parnell and Pieterse 2016: 236.*

Quite a bit of housing scholarship oriented towards policy advocacy seeks to influence those in power. This is the public sphere that matters. The Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network has a different orientation. We seek to learn from, and think from, the frontlines of contestation and mobilization. It is our contention that the most significant ideas of housing justice have come, and will come, from such sites of struggle. As Keisha-Khan Perry reminds us, "where you live matters." These are the foundations of a new field of inquiry. ▪

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Research Justice

In This Section

In Everyday City Housing Struggles: Experiments in Collaborative Research

Sophie Oldfield, University of Cape Town

Introduction

I start this essay with a moment where a home truth hit hard in my own housing research. On a damp and chilly Cape Town winter's evening, in an informal settlement community forum meeting, held in a school classroom, the Chairman of the forum challenged me with a question. He pointedly asked: "Will you run away like all the university-based researchers we've met before you?"

The Chairman's question had two parts. I had come to him and the Committee to ask permission to do research in the settlement on their housing struggles. His question challenged me to account for my research, to explain how my questions were relevant to the settlement's struggles. But, the question was as much an invocation "to not run away," to account for what I would write, and how and for whom, to ensure that, at a minimum, the forum would have access to my findings. Underlying both these questions lay a deeper provocation. In the language of this project on housing in unequal cities, the Chairman rightly insisted that I frame my research on his housing conditions as a problematic of housing justice. He demanded that I be explicit about the relationship of my analysis to the settlement and their hard daily struggle, to frame my research beyond the metrics of the university and scholarly debate. His challenge questioned the ways in which I would locate my work in the settlement's fight with the city over their legality, in the area's struggle for secure land, in settlement family struggles to build a decent place to live, in their aspiration for formal homes on the edge of the city of Cape Town. These layered provocations have stayed with me, shaping my thinking and approach to urban research and its practice.

Questions like this confront researchers across South African cities all the time, asked in varied forms by ordinary people and activists, by movements and

NGOs, and by the state.[1] Collective and institutional provocations, they reflect a critique and challenge that cuts to the heart of the South African university's mission, its purpose as a public research institution. Universities here are under scrutiny, accused of upholding and reinforcing the status quo, of perpetuating harsh inequalities, and forms of injustice that painfully fracture our society. Highlighted powerfully by post-2015 student mobilisation for decolonialization, such demands challenge the university to rethink its epistemological foundations, and its practice, to reimagine and build public ways of learning and researching. Although this mobilization is in part contextual, embedded in the particularities of our grossly unequal society, it also resonates across the globe, shaping scholarly and public debates across sites, fields and disciplines.[2] These debates reflect a demand that as researchers we "think ourselves not apart from the world, but rather deeply and irrevocably caught up in all its contradictory entanglements."[3]

In immersing ourselves in community-based housing struggles, in settlements, in their engagements and struggles with the city, in entangling ourselves in these fraught spaces and 'wicked problems,' the project of research becomes collaborative and collective. In doing so, we can, as feminist geographer Richa Nagar argues, engage with how processes of knowledge make a shift when we collaborate, when we "turn our theoretical goals from a 'northern' (university) academic project to the struggles of those with whom we collaborate."[4] This is work that Geraldine Pratt usefully conceptualizes as "always productively compromised."[5] Theory in collaborative practice, she suggests, is "open to other geographies and histories. It puts the world together differently, erasing some lines on our taken-for-granted maps and bringing other borders into view."[6] The foundation for an epistemological and political critique, it insists that we reimagine and rework the relationships at the heart of our research practice; and, in doing so, we reconsider the ways in which and for whom we build theory.

This is the approach I (and many colleagues here in South Africa) have committed to in our work on urban political questions like housing justice. In always-varied ways and rhythms, in its productively compromised nature, collaborative work offers ways to refigure the university project. It is an approach to theory and research practice that, as Edgar Pieterse suggests, "demands contamination; it demands immersion into profoundly fraught and contested spaces of power and control."[7] Through it, we can "disorient" and "reorient" ourselves "by starting with the everyday struggles of urban dwellers."[8] In the body of this essay below, I share stories of varied experiments with collaborative partnerships in housing research, my attempts "to stay and not run," so to speak.

Experiments in collaborative research

Working with community organizations, social movements and activists, we can think the problematic of housing justice and city politics "otherwise." This is my experience, something I know deep down, a political commitment that shapes my work. But, the "how" and "with whom" of partnership work are critical, and experimenting with varied types of partners and forms of collaboration have been central to my research journey and thinking.

I started working, for instance, with a one-person NGO, directed by a creative, inspired activist. For three years, I brought students in my urban geography class to a township neighborhood, to map and survey in collaboration with this NGO and its partner organization in the area. The NGO's projects on housing and work in the neighborhood were rooted in this place with its strong anti-apartheid housing activism history, a context which had shaped the Director's

1   *See Oldfield et al., 2004; Oldfield and Patel, 2016.*

2   *See, for instance, in African Studies, Francis Nyamnjoh's invocation for engaging popular epistemologies (2012, p. 18) and in Sociology, Sitas's argument for social scientists working 'in dialogue with ordinary people and their organisations' (2004, p.23).*

3   *Pieterse 2014: 23.*

4   *Nagar 2002; Nagar 2013; Sangtins and Nagar 2006.*

5   *Pratt 2012.*

6   *Pratt 2012: xxxiv.*

7   *Pieterse 2014: 23.*

8   *Peake 2016: 225.*

own and older residents' personal experience as activists in the past. Metaphorically, perhaps, this project, might be best imagined as "my toe dipped into the water," a testing of possible approaches. The partnership was limited, built in thickly entangled ways around the director, her vision, her history, and her personality. There were many productive compromises in this collaboration, which at the time I was in no position to challenge. But it was a start.

Towards the tail end of this work together, a social movement, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, emerged and grew rapidly in Cape Town, reacting to and organising against cost-recovery, eviction and democratic-era dispossession in the early 2000s. Shaping a growing politics about neoliberal exclusion and access to services, I approached campaign leaders with a colleague to discuss our interest in research on their activism. They were suspicious of our academic motives, and our intent and demanded upfront that our research prove useful to the Campaign's struggles. Through this interaction we began slowly working together. We started with a report on the Campaign, a process, which led to a broader discussion within the Campaign on how research might relate to the unceasing everyday work of activism: the mix of figuring out and strategizing that activists and ordinary people do to mobilize on neighborhood issues, in and against city policies, to work together as a movement, with few resources. A baptism, so-to-speak, this work led to building the Community Research Group, a two-year partnership with activists in the Campaign, which supported neighborhood-based research, and worked with eight community organizations linked to the Campaign. Although ultimately the Community Research Group fell short of our initial objectives, and was not long lasting, Campaign activists and I worked together to combine university research methodologies with activist questions, to build and generate data, evidence and narrative to work together in a deliberative political space.

As Pratt suggests, collaborative work is "always productively compromised," in this case our collaboration became caught up in internal Campaign politics, in the limits of and contestation over resources, in the realities of my and my activist partners' own limits, despite our ambitious intent. But through the Campaign and in the Community Research Group, I met two neighborhood Civic leaders, women running a community organisation in a township neighbourhood. We worked together on a research project through the Community Research Group. This process developed into a more intimate collaboration with the Civic, a neighborhood-based organization, which since the mid-1980s represented and mobilized public housing tenants in engagements with the City.[9] Activists from the Civic were desperate to make their housing struggles visible to the city. So many families - their own, their neighbours - persisted in backyard shacks, informal structures scattered across the front and back yards of the apartheid-era public housing. How could they draw the City's attention to their housing needs? With this question as a start, we began an initial project, bringing my urban geography students on board to research with Civic activists and community workers living conditions in backyard shacks. This body of data and narrative, a mix of maps and stories of the hard realities of backyard living, we hoped would make clear the extent of the housing crisis in the neighbourhood.

The addition of my students helped us work and deploy our survey at scale. Started tentatively, we developed our process. We completed the first project and then committed to another semester of work together, and then another. Our research projects shifted in relation to Civic activism, to neighbourhood mobilising, our partners' everyday work in the neighbourhood. From backyards and overcrowded public housing, the focus of our research changed when the Civic organised a land occupation, a more direct, concrete and material, attempt

9   *See, for instance, Oldfield and Stokke* (2007) *and Mayekiso* (1996).

to address homelessness in the neighbourhood, an act that the city responded to violently, tearing the down the settlement and interdicting the city. Nonetheless the settlement rebuilt, it persisted. Our research tracked the security residents found in mobilising, in building homes. The partnership became a space in which together we slowly and incrementally imagined and experimented with different ways to collaborate, to work together on research linked to activism, to teach students together, to produce publications.[10] In this combination of teaching, research and activism, in this twisting together of our everyday work, we moved back and forth between the university and neighbourhood, through projects, across the years. The Civic work was the Chairperson's passion, her vocation and calling, every day and night; the partnership was our collective project, my passion. It became a forge in which I figured out a way to teach, to learn, to think the city. As importantly, it became a way I found to navigate the university, to try in small ways to shift teaching practices and to reimagine research.

Eventually we reached the limits of a student-driven model of collaboration, on the one hand, and, met the hard edge of a rapidly violent turn in the neighbourhood, on the other. My partners could no longer take the risk of continuing the public part of our work together. Our annual research projects work drew to a close. But, today, this decade plus of experimenting shapes the core of my research and teaching approach, shaping at the present time in a mix of projects that track and engage in questions of housing (in)justice. I teach and research with a mix of partners, collaboratively building research that tracks the complexities of housing, the contradictions of housing policy, and lived experience of housing processes, twenty-five years into South African democracy.[11] Projects track state-funded housing initiatives, particularly the ways in which they produce uncertainty for ordinary urbanites that aspire to, and become, homeowners. In ordinary city dwellers, and in their movements and mobilization for decent and dignified housing, how do they encounter the state and its bureaucratic, technological, and socio-material processes? In what ways do these encounters shape uncertainty and its temporalities on the short and long term? In analysing the contingent and often surprising encounters evident in housing projects, and by examining the struggles and after-lives of ordinary people and their families, and community organizations and movements in these contexts, this research work challenges reductionist assumptions that formality leads to security of homes, making visible the underbelly of the South African state's 'delivery' of three million homes after apartheid. This research is built with partners engaged in a mix of Cape Town-based debate, struggle and practice around housing and land access.

Conclusion

To reflect on my response to that long-ago question "will I run away," I have shared a diversity of experiments in collaboration. Through these pathways and partnerships, I have engaged in varied ways with individuals, organizations and movements organizing against housing injustice. Not a formula, recipe or model, a list of best practice, collaborative research builds on commitment and capacity to work and engage as individuals, and organisations across contexts and institutions, in complex political terrain. These research practices are shaped in the particularities and passions of associations and involvements. They take root in particular struggles, in my and my partner's lives and energies, in a shifting terrain of mobilisation, policy, and governance.

In this textured and layered approach, we can imagine research as a process of experimenting, of learning when things don't work, of building conversations

10 For a fuller discussion of these projects, the process, and the movement and politics, which framed this period, see, for instance, Oldfield and Stokke 2007, Oldfield 2008, 2015.

11 The partnerships have included collaborations with People's Environmental Planning (http://pep.org.za), in 2018 the Ruo Emoh Neighbourhood Committee and the South African SDI Alliance, in 2019 the Hazeldean Community Committee; in 2018-19 with UBU (Ubuhlebakhaubuhle, http://www.ubu.bz) and their partners, the Sweet Home Farm Committee; in 2018-9 with the the Eastridge Community Committee in Mitchell's Plain and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign. The research has been completed with Anna Selmeczi and Ademola Omoegun, African Centre for Cities, and with students in the MPhil in Southern Urbanism at the University of Cape Town (https://www.africancentreforcities.net/programme/mphil-southern-urbanism/) and the Masters in Critical Urbanisms at the University of Basel (https://criticalurbanisms.philhist.unibas.ch).

and relationships in hard circumstances, in the ordinary work of everyday city building and living. At the heart of this work are relationships, built on respect and trust, nurtured with care, embedded in parallel commitments. In this work, we can find and build a vocabulary, a language through which we are able to move back and forth, resonant with and inspired in housing struggles. In sum, collaborative research centers scholarship in the publics with whom we engage and argue. In the writing of this partnership work, this complex "us," we can conceptualise in the always-productively compromised contexts in which we work together. Through it we can inhabit our differences—as Pratt suggests— and sometimes rework them, in the incremental steps of research and teaching, in long-term commitments and everyday city inspirations found in collaboration. ▪

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Housing, Cartographic, and Data Justice as Fields of Inquiry: A Connected Approach to Mapping Displacement

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In order to think about housing justice as a field of inquiry, we must consider cartographic and data justice as entangled fields. Drawing upon ongoing work of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project—a critical cartography, data analysis, and digital humanities project that I cofounded in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2013 (and which has since grown chapters in Los Angeles and New York City and connections in Romania)—I specifically push for an approach to housing, data, and cartographic justice that foregrounds the materiality of their connections. In what follows, I first introduce how a connected approach can supplement comparative work in mapping housing justice. I then theorize data and housing justice together, troubling the moment in which eviction data itself has become commodified. Lastly, I introduce the work of the AEMP, focusing on how we have sought to make connected maps of evictions and resistance.

A Connected Approach

While important work in urban studies has established comparativity as a means of furthering inquiry into uneven processes of racial dispossession across various scales, here I want to pivot from comparison to connection. This isn't to deny the rich history of comparative work, or to refuse it; on the contrary, comparativity has done—and continues to do—a great deal to further housing, data, and cartographic justice. Rather, I question what it might be to think comparativity alongside connectivity.[1] Sanjay Subrahmanyam , for instance, has observed that comparative approaches to traditional area studies might render false reductions, and that a connected approach might be more fruitful. Meanwhile, Lisa Lowe has foregrounded "intimacy" as an analytic for theorizing connections between spaces often elided in historical inquiry—spaces brought together not only through colonial and racial violence, but also through the work of revolutionary future-making.[2] Similarly, Karen Barad has pushed "entanglement" as a methodological intervention, looking at the enfolding of particular

1   *Subrahmanyam 1997.*

2   *Lowe 2015.*

spatiotemporalities into each other that might otherwise be simply mapped as separate.[3] These interventions in part get at what I mean by a connected approach to thinking housing, data, and cartography.

Importantly, a connected approach also remains tethered to spaces of community organizing and knowledge production, building solidarities. But also, a connected approach maps global flows of capital and real estate speculation. These are connected to uneven property histories, all racial, all accumulative. But how to map this? And how not to?

The contemporary moment is, after all, rich in comparative mapping projects made both to hinder and support housing justice struggles. On one hand, real estate speculators and technocapitalists map new real estate geographies, likening one space to another in order to inhere value. For instance, in the San Francisco Bay Area, speculators employ toponymy to render neighborhoods such as San Francisco's Latinx Mission as the "the Quad," home to a new genre of human—in this case Silicon Valley "Quadsters," who replace poor and working-class tenants of color. In this way, San Francisco "becomes" a Silicon Valley campus-like geography. Meanwhile, San Francisco's Digital Reality data company has remapped West Oakland as Silicon Valley's new "frontier," invoking colonial language in order to make the historically Black and working-class neighborhood more marketable. In these cases, the arrival of tech not only incites real estate mapping, but also leads to the production of big data, algorithmic governance, and data colonialism —what I elsewhere describe as "techno-imperialism."[4] Techno-imperialism relies upon the accumulation of data points, which are then used to map racial capitalist futures. We see this in predictive policing, but also in property technology (proptech) and what Desiree Fields describes as automatic landlordism.[5]

Even beyond the Bay Area, there are cities such as Cluj, Romania, now gaining fame for having become the "new" Silicon Valley of Europe. While aspirations of Western recognition in Romania go back to the Enlightenment, and were most notably amplified in interwar fascist times, they are now recoded in the Siliconizing present. As in the Bay Area, Siliconization gives way to new contexts of land and housing speculation in Cluj, producing racial dispossession. And yet, just as Cluj is not Silicon Valley, neither is San Francisco nor West Oakland.[6] While speculators may render cheap comparisons, how do we think about comparativity more ethically? How might a connected approach reveal the global capital tethering these spaces, while also highlighting the racial property histories upon which they sit?

For instance, Cluj boasts a call center for Invitation Homes, the US's largest landlord of single-family homes (a subsidiary of the Blackstone Group, per post-2008 property financialization). There, exploited workers staff nightshifts, powering Invitation Home's proptech platform, Yardi. While exploited workers are often paid more than their neighbors, and while they may indeed be contributing to contexts of tech-induced gentrification locally, they are far from the Quadsters of the gentrifying Mission. A comparative approach illuminates this, but a connected approach goes further, mapping nodes and connections within chains of global property, aspirational culture, and tech capital in order to materialize future resistance.

Data Justice

While comparative toponymical strategies of mapping one space as the clone of another in order to abet capitalist interest is not new, today it transpires in

3 *Barad 2017.*

4 *Lynch 2019, McElroy 2019a.*

5 *Fields 2017.*

6 *McElroy 2019b; McElroy and Werth 2019.*

the same moment that putatively anti-displacement mapping is also crafting strange comparisons. Most notably, sociologist Matthew Desmond has created the Eviction Lab, aimed at mapping evictions across the US, ranking cities based upon eviction count. Without fully reproducing the critiques made of Desmond's project, it is worth noting that the Princeton University-based Eviction Lab, in producing a "god trick" level of objectivity in mapping displacement, has severely undercounted evictions in numerous contexts.[7] His data, rather than produced with housing justice groups on the ground, has attempted to absorb local groups' data, such as that of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, Tenants Together, JustFix NYC, Vida Urbana, and more. When groups refused to hand their data over due to questionable ethics, he and his team resorted to purchasing data from the American Information Research Services, a big data real estate entity that specializes in "tenant screening." In this way, the Eviction Lab participates in a form of poverty research that emboldens the real estate industry and data capitalism, rather than housing or data justice.

Further, by engaging in comparative mapping of evictions and eviction rates, and by attempting to universalize methods of data collection and analysis, as well as prescriptions, the Eviction Lab reproduces cartographic injustice. For instance, his data undercounts eviction rates that local groups have collected, from Portland to the entire state of California. Yet community groups have gone about raising thousands of dollars to fund Desmond's trips to their cities, so that he can tell them about the problems that they do or do not face. This practice is severely disconnected from on-the-ground struggles and analytics, meanwhile placing various locales in comparison with each other under false data and pretenses. While there is merit in comparative mapping, and while even the AEMP engages in comparative practices, it is important to connect such practices to local struggles, refraining from universalizing methods.

Yet what I want to think through here is that it has become clear that we are living in a time in which eviction data itself has bizarrely become a commodity, and in which comparative methods may, when divorced from local politics, work against housing, data, and cartographic justice. On one hand, groups such as the Eviction Lab coopt local data and map false comparisons. On the other, speculators scribe maps, compile data, and render spatial transpositions with the explicit aim of accruing profit. Dispossession, in both cases, results from the accumulation of data—aligned with what Guarav Jashnani et al. describe as dispossession by accumulation, supplementing David Harvey's well-known inverse.[8] Given this, it becomes increasingly important to center housing, data, and cartographic justice, fields connected to local contexts and empirics.

In these economies of dispossession, it seems especially important that eviction mapping projects pay heed to what Jodi Byrd et al. describe as *grounded relationalities*, attentive to the ongoing violence of settler colonialism on land, but also arguably in data.[9] A grounded approach defies the logics of the twin concepts of appropriation and expropriation, or what Byrd et al. term "propriation." How can we keep eviction data from becoming propriated? At the same time, how might we, in their words, build "capacities for relationality outside the logics of propriation make it possible to handle incommensurate demands for justice?"[10] Further, how can land, maps, and data "serve as an ontological condition for a different concept of the political that refuses conquest, doctrines of discovery, and the propriations of the propertied self?" How might we refrain from the often uncritical, liberal lens of "open data," recognizing that some data does indeed need to be protected, cared for, and kept out of the hands of those who would use it to propriate? These are but some of the questions that we at the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project wrestle with as we create data and maps connected to

7   Aiello et al. 2018; Haraway 1988.

8   Jashnani et al., 2017.

9   Byrd et al., 2018.

10 Byrd et al., 2018: 11.

and grounded in housing justice imperatives, collectives, and networks. In what follows, I describe how the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project crafts a connected approach to housing, data, and cartographic justice, highlighting two maps.

Narratives of Displacement and Resistance

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project emerged in a context of heightened evictions in the San Francisco Bay Area, during a 2013 moment when real estate speculators began speculating upon the future worth of rental housing vacated of current tenants. These practices are far from new, and in many ways, in the Bay Area, this trend of the "Tech Boom 2.0" was an update of the prior Dot Com Boom era. Also recoded were practices of using limited liability companies (LLCs) to flip formerly rent-controlled units through the Ellis Act. The Ellis Act is a 1985 California state law that permits landlords of rent-controlled buildings to exit the rental market by evicting tenants for no fault of their own. While it was used with gusto during the Dot Com Boom, after the bubble burst, usage petered out. Racial dispossession ballooned during the subprime mortgage crisis through foreclosure, and it became prevalent again during Tech 2.0, largely through both "fault" and "no fault" evictions. During this period, we found Black and Latinx residents to have been disproportionately displaced and policed.[11] This demographic is inverse to those moving to the Bay Area to work in the tech industry (and engage in data colonialism)—Rosdail's Quadsters.

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project has made it a priority to map these evictions, but also to research the shell companies and owners behind them. We have made network maps of serial evictor investment companies such as Urban Green, which operate through an array of LLCs. In this way, our research connects evictions to the actors behind them. We have also created tools and web pages in which tenants can look up particular addresses and discover eviction histories, using digital technology as leverage in anti-eviction fights. This map of Urban Green's connections, for instance, charts LLC evictions but also the financial and political connections of the investment company.

One of the first Ellis Act struggles that I got involved was that of my friend, Benito Santiago. Benito, a senior Filipino housing activist, educator, dancer, and drummer received an Ellis Act eviction notice by Pineapple Boy LLC in 2013. "I thought it was a joke!" Benito described at his first Eviction Free San Francisco (EFSF) meeting, unsure as to who his new corporate landlord really was. Like many evictees, Benito had been paying his rent on time for years to an aging landlord, who then sold the building to an anonymous shell company that then promptly issued an eviction notice.

By linking of assessor-recorder data, eviction data, and property ownership data, the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project was able to figure out that Pineapple Boy was really a front for Michael Harrison, cofounder of Vanguard Real Estate—the largest real estate company in the Mission. We found that Harrison had already evicted tenants from two other buildings, and that he was a member of numerous real estate associations. With this information, Benito and ESFS organized a series of demonstrations at Vanguard. It was during the fourth demonstration that Vanguard realtors pushed us out of the office so forcefully that the company feared legal retaliation, and thereby rescinded the eviction. Wary that the building might go back on the market, Benito began working with the local Community Land Trust, which soon bought the building and took it off the market for good. Thus, through a combination of community-based research and direct action, Benito and his co-tenants were able to remain housed.

11 *Ramírez 2019.*

Urban Green Investments
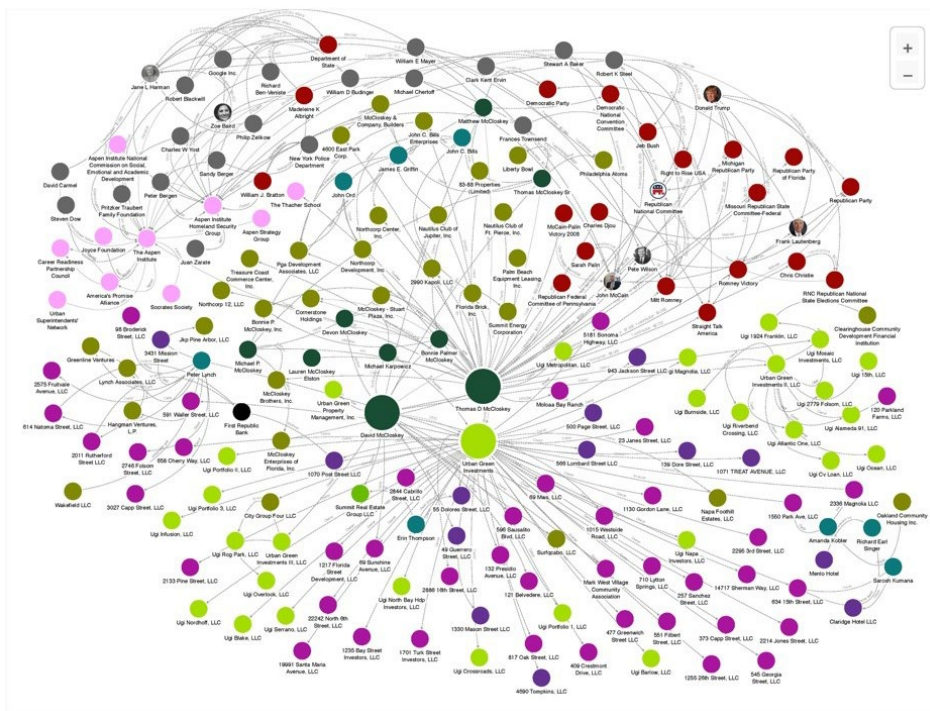
Key

Dark Green	McCloskeys
Neon Green	Urban Green Companies
Brown/ Green	Investment Wings
Dark Purple	Evicted Properties
Light Purple	Properties Purchased with Shell Companies
Red	Political Party CWontributions/Affiliations
Pink	Think Tanks/School Funded
Grey	Institute Affiliations
Blue	Business Partners
Black	Banks

Urban Green Investments is a real estate investment company based out of San Francisco, and directly responsible for numerous evictions. This map, by the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, details Urban Green's chain of speculation, directly linking to the Republican Party, and tied up with shell companies across the country. Urban Green is run by David McCloskey and Thomas McCloskey. Read more here: https://www.antievictionmap.com/evictors#/david-mccloskey-urban-green/

Figure 1. Urban Green Investments, by the AEMP (https://www.antieviction-map.com/urban-green-web)

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, in addition to mapping the financial connections undergirding Pineapple Boy and other corporate landlords, worked with Benito to create an interactive media piece in order to connect his eviction fight with others. In collaboration with our friends with the Land of Opportunity media collective in New Orleans, we created the Drupal-based "We Are Here: Stories of Displacement and Resistance." The base-layer is a video in which Benito narrates his story—refusing totalizing narratives of loss. Embedded in the base-layer is an eviction map, as well as other videos featuring connected housing struggles. In this way, viewers can create a "bread crumb" trail as they traverse stories and data. Benito worked as an organizer in many of these connected fights, helping other tenants fight evictions, embodying knowledge from his own struggle.

Benito's organizing inheres connections and solidarities, something the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project sought to reflect back in "We Are Here." How can we ethically build upon this, mapping resistance across scales? For instance, in the case of Invitation Homes, how might we map the post-foreclosure rise of the Wall Street landlord in the United States, Spain, and beyond as connected to the exploitation of call center workers in gentrifying Cluj? How might doing so help chart new modes of anti-capitalist future-making? For instance, in 2015, members of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project in San Francisco, and members of the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH) in New York City and

12 *Vasquez 2018.*

Figure 2. We Are Here: Stories of Displacement and Resistance, by the AEMP (https://www.antievictionmap. com/blog/land-of-opportunity)

Barcelona demonstrated in parallel against Blackstone. This protest brought together local anti-eviction struggles into a larger fight against global capital. In this sense, it built upon anticolonial notions of non-alignment, as well as Black Panther Party notions of "revolutionary intercommunalism."[12] How might new maps instantiate similar multi-scalar solidarities, connections, and entanglements, foregrounding housing, data, and cartographic justice as interconnected fields of inquiry and action? The Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network is an apt space to think through this, connecting struggles in local, uneven cities in order to form new solidarities and futures. ▪

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Towards a Praxis of Housing Justice: Provocations for Reflection and Action

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This essay is an expansion and reflection on a participatory exercise conducted at the 2019 Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Launch Conference.

Roughly 50 years ago, Paulo Freire introduced the world to his revolutionary idea: a pedagogy of the oppressed. He conceptualized his pedagogy through the framework of praxis: "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it."[1] We offer this concept of praxis as a starting point for thinking through housing justice as a critical research agenda, but we want to expand a bit on his definition, particularly in thinking through how researchers - in all of our expansive diversity - might contribute to bringing about a world where the fundamental human right to housing is upheld. Though Freire's words continue to reverberate within the walls of critical classrooms today, the core concern of his book was to elucidate how people systematically kept out of such spaces cultivate their own collective power. Knowing that many researchers are often embedded within and benefit from oppressive systems, we ask: what is to be done? What might it mean to develop scholarship in the context of systemic, ongoing, and unequal violations of human rights? What might a meaningful praxis of research justice look like?

Provocation

For Freire, and for us, praxis is an ongoing, iterative process of reflection and action. But as participants in this network, we'd like to add to this conversation an element of provocation. Provocation here means we have not accepted an absolute definition of housing justice work; it means we are still asking, still evolving as we go; it means anyone doing this work of housing justice must be constantly interrogating their role as an individual and as a contributor to collective movement work.

[1]   Freire 1970 [1968]: 51.

In this piece, we are not laying out the praxis of the network, but rather, we're calling it into question.

So, we start by asking, what *is* housing justice for this network? And how do we as researchers with at least one foot firmly rooted in academia play a role? How can we repair for past harms in university-community partnerships *and* forge new paths of change going forward? *Will this network reproduce extractive and damaging research practices, or will it take seriously the opportunity to actively repair?*

For us, praxis is grounding our thoughts in the present struggle in Los Angeles, closely analyzing its contours to better understand its actual causes, and foregrounding these findings in our varied research agendas. To take one pressing example, one dominant local issue is the growing number of unhoused people. The 2019 Homelessness Count for Greater Los Angeles revealed what was plain to all who live here: the unhoused population has skyrocketed, growing by 16% in the city in a single year. Their total point-in-time count of residents living with homelessness was 36,300 in the City of Los Angeles and 58,936 in Los Angeles County.[2] And it is likely that numbers like these are an undercount of the actual number of unhoused people.[3] Concerningly, Black Angelenos are disproportionately represented among the homeless population in the city, with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority recently reporting that Black people represented 40% of the county's homeless population, despite comprising only 9% of the county's population.[4] This damning data illuminates the direct link between structural racism and housing injustice, and yet the mainstream conversation overlooks how the disproportionate rate of Black people experiencing homelessness today is only the latest iteration of anti-Blackness in Southern California's history of housing. In the early 20th century, racially-restrictive covenants and redlining legally contained Black people to residing in South Central Los Angeles.[5] Black families attempting to move into the city's Westside neighborhoods in the 1950s were greeted with bombs and burning crosses.[6] The dissolution of public housing dismantled poor Black communities, years-long waiting lists for Section 8 vouchers shut many Black people out of accessing affordable public housing, and continuing discrimination pushes Black voucher holders and non-voucher holders alike to the fringes of metropolitan regions, including Los Angeles.[7]

By grounding our work deeply, we can see that the housing crisis is not only a crisis of housing, and it is certainly not one that a simple solution of supply and demand can fix. Rather, it is one manifestation of many interconnected struggles of systemic, racialized marginalization. Like many people, we draw inspiration from remarks given by Audre Lorde at Howard University: "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives."[8] Yet although they are less well remembered, the following lines in her speech are significant for researchers working towards housing justice: "Malcolm knew this. Martin Luther King, Jr. knew this. **Our struggles are particular, but we are not alone.**" It is clear to us that the struggle in Los Angeles is interwoven with structural racism, but you, our collaborators and co-conspirators, are working towards housing justice in other unequal cities from Johannesburg to Jerusalem. Structural racism shapes space in all of these cities, but along different lines and different histories. Identifying the structural inequalities in any place is a vital precursor to doing housing justice work. Being firmly rooted in working against injustice in a particular place can help us all draw connections and see patterns of oppression that span difference.

2   LAHSA 2019.

3   Boone 2019.

4   LAHSA 2018.

5   Gibbons 2018.

6   *Los Angeles Times* 1952, Robertson 1952.

7   Kurwa 2015, Roy 2019.

8   Lorde 1982.

Reflection and Action

For us, praxis is grounding our work in the present struggles in Los Angeles, but for you, it may mean something different. There are no prescriptions for a meaningful praxis, save ongoing provocation, reflection, and action with yourself to navigate your own positionality where you are situated and discern your own best course of action.[9]

As co-authors, we differ in some significant ways and are aligned in others. As graduate students, our temporary inhabitation of academia's exclusive halls is facilitated in part by varying privileges of race and class. As non-natives of Los Angeles, our firm commitments to grassroots organizing here stems from previous and ongoing work in anti-eviction and police abolition movements elsewhere. For Terra Graziani, who comes from just as much a tenants' rights and anti-racist organizing background as an academic one, the work more-so starts with organizing. She approaches the Network as a useful contribution towards building collective power and as a meaningful, if fraught, practice in producing knowledge with and by and for grassroots movements. For Hilary, her return to the university, and commitment to working within it, stems from a fragile belief that the classrooms of professional planning programs are crucial nodes in struggles for spatial justice.[10] By centering planning's complicity with colonial processes, and the field's ongoing utility as a mechanism of dispossession in settler states, she aims to underscore the stakes for students as they engage with a profession oriented toward the disciplining of space.[11]

While shifting accountability away from the university lingers in both of our minds, Ruth Wilson Gilmore offers some guidance on the critical role that research, scholarship, and education can play in liberation movements. In her piece "Forgotten Places and the Seeds of Grassroots Planning," she writes, "scholars can make a difference: not because we have technical expertise (although that matters) but rather because we have the precious opportunity to think in cross-cutting ways, and to find both promising continuities and productive breaks in the mix of people, histories, political and economic forces, and landscapes that make up forgotten places."[12]

We framed our conference presentation in that spirit: to make valuable use of attendees' limited time together and to engage one another on what is clearly a global struggle for housing justice. To create a space for critical reflection on undertaking this work, we posed several questions of pedagogy and praxis, allowing attendees to reflect on the various and collective worlds that they were bringing to the space.

- How do we, as a group of largely academics, recognize our relative power and work to redistribute it to those we are in solidarity with? Or, to start, how do we be in solidarity with?

- Who do we want this Network to be accountable to, and how do we do the heavy lifting to get there?

- What does research justice mean to us as a network?

- What different forms of knowledge are we privileging in this work? In a room with perhaps a range of politics and backgrounds, how can we engage and push one another as we work collectively towards housing justice?

9 Graziani and Shi 2019, Pulido 2008: 362.

10 Soja 2010.

11 Harris 2004, Porter 2018, Dozier 2018.

12 Gilmore 2008.

- How can our work as academic researchers take its cues from the work that's being done on the ground, instead of invalidating or replacing it?

- How can the Network nurture the next generation of housing justice scholars?

To attempt to answer these questions together, we then invited attendees to contribute to a set of community agreements by responding to the following prompts: this work is accountable to _____ and we identify experts as_____. Their responses were:

This work is accountable to _____
• Tenants
• Each other
• Collectives
• Original custodians of the land
• Residents of informal settlements
• Students
• Poor people
• Organized groups of people of color
• Squatters

We identify experts as _____
• People with lived experience
• People who demand accessibility
• People grounded in the community where the work happens
• A humble resource
• People with a record of taking action
• Tenants
• People who can symbolize out what is happening

13 Gilmore 2011: 258.

Taking our guidance from practices learned in movement spaces, we facilitated this participatory setting of community agreements for conference attendees so that we might collectively, as Gilmore suggests, "direct our energy and resources as workers toward the goal of freedom."[13] And indeed, this set of community agreements established a framework for the many conversations that would unfold throughout the weekend. We hope that provocations and participatory exercises, like the ones we discussed here, support researchers concerned with housing justice to discern their own praxis of research justice. ▪

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Embracing the Academic-Activist Tension – It's OK to Yell, Scream, Be Exasperated and Embrace Our Shared Humanity

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Introduction

What am I doing here? If I really care about social justice, shouldn't I be out on the front lines? I have asked myself these questions almost every day since I have been in graduate school. I came to the academy from activism, and the tension between these two parts of myself is real, anxiety-inducing, and at times also quite productive. Ultimately, it keeps me honest. Grounded. I have come to adopt what Michael Katz professed is true; there are more ways of doing activism than we often imagine.[1]

The collection of organizations, individuals, and ideas that comprise the Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network reflects similar dynamics at a larger scale: the need to negotiate scholarly endeavors with a tenacious pursuit of housing justice. The academic-activist tensions necessarily present in this endeavor should not be diluted by pleas for cohesion. These tensions invite critical debate among divergent viewpoints that can be harnessed into creative approaches to complex social problems. This debate is necessary and critical to all involved. It fuels the potential for catharsis, identifying new, unpredictable unimagined solutions.

1   *Chowkwanyun 2017.*

Like many passionate young people, I began my career as a community organizer. First, stepping into the world of local left politics in Southern Arizona in 2008. I would soon find myself disillusioned with political organizations and wanting more of my activism. I decided to take a leap of faith in what many warned me would be the end of my very short-lived political career to work with a group of "too radical" educators, all accomplished academics in their own right, against a statewide ban on Mexican American Studies. This particular fight is close to my heart. It is a fight that is the result of centuries of anti-Mexican sentiment in a state where the political power is concentrated within a

diminishing white majority struggling to hold on to power in a state with quickly shifting demographics.

The Arizona State Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2281, Arizona's ban on ethnic studies programs in K-12 public schools, on May 11, 2010. The now-overturned HB 2281 was a sister bill to Senate Bill (SB) 1070, largely known as Arizona's Paper's Please law. The ban prohibited schools from teaching courses that, "1. Promote the overthrow of the United States government; 2. Promote resentment toward a race or class of people; 3. Are designated primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group, and/or; 4. Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals."[2] While the state touted a "post-racial" or "colorblind" argument emphasizing that students should be treated as "as individuals," educators recognized it as a targeted attack on a highly successful program with an unheard-of graduation and college admission rates of students of color.[3] My role as one of the founders and staff members of the Save Ethnic Studies organization was threefold. I was responsible for fundraising for filing fees, hiring and supervising legal interns and other staff, and communicating with the media. You see, the teachers I worked with understood that this fight was not solely going down in the courtroom. They understood this fight was happening at multiple levels and that it was as important to win in the political arena and the court of public opinion as it was to win in the courts. And here is where I first experienced my first foray into the tensions between academics and activists. Many interpreted the fact that we were sending the teachers and our lawyer to speak at events as fame-seeking or opportunism on their part. They felt that we should let the research speak for itself or let the students take the lead, which led to allegations of manipulating students. What many don't take into account and never really appreciated was that even though the trial would take seven years to conclude our strategy made it impossible for anybody seeking election as a progressive from school board up to the governor's race to do so and be successful supporting an anti-ethnic studies position. Success in the courtroom contributed to the birth of new programs throughout the state by allowing academics to re-legitimizing what the State's right-wing politicians had delegitimized. Ultimately, those academics who were uncomfortable with the feeling that their work was being politicized and placing them at risk could return to saying in public what they said in private, ethnic studies is a powerful elixir to what is wrong in public education. Once again, teachers and academics could create space for an innovative curriculum that conservatives found unacceptable, un-American but most importantly, un-white.

At the same time, as an activist, I remember the possessiveness I felt for our students, our teachers, and the movement at-large. We constantly got requests from graduate students and professors at University's writing dissertations, chapters, and journal articles on our struggle. The teachers and our lawyer who had all straddled the activist academic line themselves were very gracious and obliged. They provided people with data, interviews, transcripts, and anything else requested of them. I didn't understand it at the time, but now I understand that while I focused on the political side of the struggle, they recognized that academic documentation of the struggle was also a pivotal part of legitimizing this fight for justice and this research would also make its way back into the fight in the courtroom. At the end of the day, it is the path that has led me into my current career as an activist scholar focused on issues of housing justice.

The Activist Scholar

In this conversation and our network in general, the actors are important. First up is the activist scholar. These academics attempt to serve as bridges between

2   *A.R.S. § 15-112.*

3   *Fernandez and Hammer 2012.*

the academy and communities. In this way, these scholars are already constantly navigating tensions between themselves and other academics that do not see a role for activism in scholarship. They work to hold the academic apparatus accountable to communities by seeking to minimize the damage done in the extractive work of data collection and attempting to ensure reciprocity. At the same time, activist scholars are navigating the demands placed upon them by an exacting and onerous ivory tower. These demands are often an overwhelming hardship for scholars committed to activist scholarship but especially for women and people of color who often fail to meet them because the work they do for institutions and communities is made invisible by the reward system in the academy which Merton identified as a high stakes credit economy.[4] At the same time, it should not be lost that many scholars have built successful careers of working with marginalized communities without any attempt to give anything back in return thus breeding legitimate distrust of academics within these communities.

Self-serving narratives of scientific objectivity and history of retribution for activism keeps activist scholars at bay. In the United States, a very public firing by the University of California of Dr. Angela Davis in the 1970s for her membership in black nationalist organizations like the Black Panthers and leftist political organizations like the Communist Party of America is a premier example.[5] However, censorship and retribution for work that is committed at its core to tenets of social justice in and outside of the classroom or research lab continue on a global scale. In recent years, several women of color in the United States have come under fire for comments on race. Sociologists Saida Grundy and Zandria Robinson were among those targeted for their work and public comments on race.[6] In Australia, Dr. Roz Ward the co-founder of a network working in Australian schools to create a more inclusive and safer environment for homosexual, intersex, and gender diverse communities also came under fire for comments on racial issues there.[7] And of course, there have been mass firings of academics in Turkey in order to repress political dissent.[8] This should not deter efforts to expanded activists' and scholars' efforts around social justice issues. Every act of academic oppression needs to be exposed and challenged. This is only possible when individuals stand up and fight for justice, demand justice, and refuse to stand down when the need for innovative and new strategies must challenge the orthodoxy. This is the great potential of a global housing justice network of organizations, individuals, and ideas dedicated to highlighting the worldwide struggles of the global poor to obtain access to permanent safe housing.

The Scholar-Activist

Now, let's talk about the scholar-activist. Often, activist scholar and scholar-activist are used interchangeably as terms that mean academics whose work has a political or social justice-oriented agenda and practical implications. However, I would like to use this term for the activists that lead organizations and movements. They may or may not have advanced academic degrees; however, they do not come to this work concerned primarily with knowledge production. They come to this work because of personal need and desire for change. They are protective of their communities and because they have been burned by university professors and Ph.D. student that parachute in and break off all communication and relationship with the community after the data has been extracted from the community. They recognize this as an extractive and violent act against their community. Therefore, some especially vulnerable and often approached communities have implemented community Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and research review boards in order to be able to decide if and how research can/should be conducted in their communities.[9] An IRB is an oversight committee

4   *Merton 1968.*

5   *Davis 1974.*

6   *Jaschik 2015.*

7   *Sparrow 2016.*

8   *Human Rights Watch 2018.*

9   *Grignon 2007.*

tasked with approving and monitoring research that involves human research participants to ensure proper and ethical treatment.[10]

The scholar activist understands that research can be harnessed as a useful tool. It can elucidate social puzzles and translate their struggles into the language of policymakers. They cautiously come into university-community relationships because they see them as potentially mutually beneficial. Therefore, scholar-activists push for reciprocity and are actively involved in the production of white papers, policy briefs, and academic articles that will frame the way their issues are discussed and understood by decision-makers and society at-large. More importantly, however, is the importance of 'activist knowledge' itself that challenge dominant political ideas.[11] Activists contribute to the development of new theory and concepts through their direct involvement in social movements. This comes directly for them the fact that activists are more likely to experience the difficulties associated with their issues much more directly than academics or other experts interested in the topic. This knowledge is then used directly in the framing of issues and contribute to shifting political ideation and ideology.[12]

Conclusion

The creation of a global network of individuals, organizations, and ideas whether they are academic or activist that are focused on housing justice in increasingly unequal cities is promising for many reasons, one of which is the tension that is often produced when they share intellectual space. This tension can be harnessed into creative solutions for complex social problems by fostering spaces of negotiation that create a productive tension. This network can create these spaces of negation through conferences and collaborative intellectual projects. Keeping in mind that reciprocity is important and that our work needs to have real-world tangible results for those we aim to empower. ▪

10 *Bankert and Amdur 2006.*

11 *Eyerman 1991; Snow et al., 1986.*

12 *Snow et al., 1986.*

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Movement Histories
and Theories

In This Section

101 Notes on the LA Tenants Union (You Can't Do Politics Alone)

Tracy Jeanne Rosenthal, LA Tenants Union

1. First of all, there is no housing crisis.

2. Housing is not in crisis.

3. Housing needs no trauma counselors.

4. Housing needs no lawyers. Housing needs no comrades or friends. Housing needs no representatives. Housing needs no organizers.

5. When we call this crisis a housing crisis, it benefits the people who design housing, who build housing, who profit from housing, not the people who live in it.

6. It encourages us to think in abstractions, in numbers, in interchangeable "units," and not about people, or about power.

7. We don't have a housing crisis. We have a tenants' rights crisis.

8. In the LA Tenants Union, the subject of our work is not housing. It's the tenant.

9. A tenant can be harassed, evicted, displaced, broke, undocumented, fed up, or organized. A tenant can be in kindergarten, can be a teacher, or a teacher on strike.

10. A tenant can be incarcerated or houseless.

11. In LATU we define a tenant as more than a renter. A tenant is anyone who doesn't control their own housing.

12. In LATU, we frame our work around humans, not housing.

13. Humans, unlike housing, have race, gender, families, history.

14. Humans, unlike housing, have power.

15. We started the LATU in 2015, with a single meeting in Hollywood.

16. We have since expanded to ten local chapters, which meet twice a month across the city, and have now organized dozens of tenants' associations, some with hundreds of members.

17. The LATU is a member-funded union. We are not a non-profit. We receive no funding except from dues, which average $5 a month.

18. We are an all-volunteer effort.

19. This is how we got started:

20. In 2012, School of Echoes, a group of people, diverse in age, race, and organizing experience, figured out that what we all had in common was living in neighborhoods undergoing a process often euphemized as "change."

21. The abstraction of this process allowed some to call it natural, inevitable, and even: good.

22. I'm talking about gentrification, whose definition in 2012 seemed to be written by the people it benefited.

23. Together, School of Echoes wanted to redefine gentrification not as a natural process, but as—to use Ursula K. Le Guinn's phrase—a "human power," produced by humans, by actors, agents, and targets.

24. So, we spent a few years listening: to STAY in Echo Park, where a gang injunction meant youth of color could be jailed just for sitting together outside;

25. to residents of Frogtown, where a new public park arrived right after half of neighborhood properties had changed hands in three years;

26. to Needle Exchange in Hollywood, whose outreach operations had to keep up with stepped up encampment sweeps;

27. to Union de Vecinos, who fought against Clinton's Hope VI, which meant the demolition of more than nine hundred public apartments from Boyle Heights, and their replacement with a few hundred so-called "affordable" ones, which the residents couldn't even afford.

28. We heard: city governments expanding their tax bases not their services, nonprofits negotiating the terms of defeat, lawyers offering individualistic advice, and tenants who didn't know their rights and thought there was nothing they could do.

29. We came to understand gentrification as purposeful and produced. We defined gentrification as "displacement and replacement of the poor for profit."

30. But we didn't just want to analyze gentrification, we wanted to stop it.

31. We recognized that the solidarity amongst gentrification's beneficiaries—the police, landlords, developers, government representatives of the real estate state—meant we needed to build equal solidarity for ourselves.

32. In other words, we knew we couldn't fight gentrification alone.

33. Focusing our work on tenants rather than housing, becoming tenant organizers not housing activists, has fundamentally shaped our participants, our strategies, and our goals.

34. We asked: In a city where more than half of Los Angeles speaks a language other than English at home, how will we build solidarity across language differences?

35. We asked: Gentrification most impacts the most vulnerable in our city, so how do we make the most vulnerable the most powerful in our movement?

36. We asked: How do we respect tenants by treating them as experts on their own experiences?

37. We asked: How will we make the LA Tenants Union a place where you learn you are not alone?

38. Here are some answers we came up with:

39. LATU operates under the principle of language justice, by which we mean everyone has the right to speak and be understood in the language they are most comfortable with.

40. The language justice committee performs simultaneous interpretation at each of our meetings—interpretation of Spanish for English speakers and interpretation of English for Spanish speakers—meaning our space attempts to privilege bilingual speakers, and no one language over another.

41. LATU is a horizontal movement: we build up from tenants' associations in buildings, to local chapters in neighborhoods, to our union which spans the city.

42. But we want our members and our leadership to reflect the people most impacted by the tenants' rights crisis. Which means horizontality can't just be flat. In other words, horizontality can't be color-blind, gender-blind, or difference-blind.

43. In LATU, tenants talk, strategize, and deal with individual crises—an eviction notice, a leaking roof, a deportation threat, a landlord with a pickax—but also learn how those individual crises are part of, caused by, and contribute to, a collective one.

44. We teach each other the rights we have to defend our homes—rent control, the warranty of habitability—but also our rights to organize and protest.

45. We practice and build solidarity across language, geography, and individual buildings.

46. LATU is not a service organization; it is a movement.

47. The movement's role is not to solve the housing crisis, it's to win tenants more rights, to build so much power amongst tenants that we make demands not requests.

48. Only tenants will win tenants the right, as urban scholar Chester Hartman put it, to stay put.

49. When we reenvision the housing crisis as a tenants' rights crisis, we understand why the crisis seems to be permanent, a feature not a bug since the 1920s, and why what we call solutions—affordability covenants that expire, subsidies like Section 8 that no landlord will accept—seem only to fail.

50. When you call this crisis a housing crisis, you misunderstand the problem as one of production—the so-called "shortage"—and not of distribution. There are two vacant investor-owned homes for every houseless person in the country; cities overbuild luxury housing to appease investors, and the rents for working people do not decline despite that glut.

51. But you have heard it a million times and will hear it a million more: there is a housing crisis, and we will build our way out of it.

52. From Gavin Newsom's "Marshall Plan" to Ben Carson's embrace of deregulation, this supply-side, build-baby-build strategy follows what gets promoted as economic common sense.

53. But we understand supply-side policy as an attempt to govern housing without governance, to get people out of politics. To benefit the people who profit from housing, not the people who live in it.

54. We should hear in supply-side policy the echoes of "blight" designations and "slum clearance" projects, through which a focus on buildings rather than people allowed for their mass displacement.

55. There is no a shortage of housing except for poor and working people, which the market has never and will never provide.

56. As public housing advocate Catherine Bauer said in 1935: the situation is permanent.

57. As with housing crisis, here too we need to reconceptualize: Landlords don't provide housing, they extract rent from housing. Developers don't provide housing, they speculate on housing.

58. YIMBYs are not housing activists, but real-estate-development activists.

59. Remember: Housing justice is a struggle not a debate. As in any battle, there are sides.

60. Rather than ask why there aren't enough affordable houses, we should ask why any home gets to be unaffordable.

61. The pre-condition for tenant justice is public control over the cost of private housing. Tenant justice is public control over all housing.

62. But how will we get this control?

63. It will not given to us by the people who build, flip, and bet on housing, or who use it like a bank.

64. It will not be given to us by our representatives, with their penchant for kickbacks.

65. It will not be bestowed on us by Zuckerberg's charity.

66. Control over the cost of housing will not come from nonprofit "Affordable Housing" development or Section 8 subsidies.

67. Remember: "Affordable" is still the opposite of public.

68. When CA governor Gavin Newsom calls his plan for housing incentives a "Marshall Plan," we shouldn't ignore the Cold War–era anticommunism within the metaphor.

69. Because from the perspective of tenants' rights, we don't just need to control the market, we need to kick it the fuck out of our lives.

70. We need to stop looking to landlords, developers, planners, and economists to solve a problem whose insolubility protects their interests.

71. Instead, we need to look to each other, to respect the expertise gained through struggle. In LATU, the solution looks like:

72. The Exposition Tenants Association from South LA brought their protest to the mansion of their evictor, pointing out there would be enough room for all of them inside.

73. Standing at his door, we remember eviction is personal. When we mobilize, we don't shy away from making the fight against eviction personal too.

74. As with the transfer of wealth from South LA to Orange County, one neighborhood's wealth isn't an accident, but predicated on the subjugation and exploitation of another.

75. Rent is the mortgage on a landlord's second house, is the guarantor of generational assets, is the corporate income stream, is rolled into a financialized security and offered up to hedge funds as a bond.

76. The Hillside Villa Tenants Association focused citywide attention on the expiration of "Affordable Housing" covenants. "Affordable Housing," the city, state, and county's preferred policy solution to the crisis, uses incentives or subsidies as a trade-off for rent limits, which have an expiration date. Across LA, their expiration now threatens to displace thousands of residents.

77. Calling for the eminent domain of their building subsized with zero interest loans, Hillside Villa's regular actions exposed the scam of public investment for private gain and the lie of affordability itself.

78. The Mariachi Crossing Tenants Association in Boyle Heights, determined to meet weekly and act together, continued a rent strike for almost twelve months, inspired campouts at their landlord's house, received more national press than we can count, and eventually won LATU's first collective-bargaining agreement, which controls rent increases and secures the right to renegotiate.

79. As a tactic, rent strikes demonstrate the underlying force of our union: Even when we have no laws to protect us as tenants, we still have each other.

80. Though they are not supported by City Council members, though they're discouraged by the Housing Department and limited by court decisions, rent strikes sometimes get the goods.

81. There's more:

82. The Burlington Unidos Tenants Association, the largest rent strike in LA history.

83. #FuckYourFlips: a viral media campaign that encouraged interventions in the local processes of flipping and predation—tearing down those "cash for your houses" signs.

84. Monthly general meetings, our education spaces, which have held focused workshops on new techniques of evictions such as Tenants In Common; on the role of policing and ICE in gentrification; on strategies for legal and extralegal direct action.

85. We refuse to see our homes as quantifiable or interchangeable abstractions. We recognize them as interlocking sites of oppression and exploitation, but also of trust, community, and power.

86. We are tenants' rights organizers not housing activists.

87. In other words, we care more about people than the housing they live in.

88. I'd like you to consider how close we are to winning, to housing as a right. To the basic need of shelter met for all.

89. What things would have to change for us to get there? Perhaps more importantly, where will this work take place? What will the room look like? Who will get a chance to speak? What kind of food will they serve?

90. I'm biased, I know, but I think that place is the LA Tenants Union.

91. Right now, we are working on growing. We want a local chapter for every neighborhood council, to take back the energy wasted in political participation without power.

92. We are working on balancing long-term thinking and strategy with the urgency of impeding evictions.

93. We are working on keeping people involved no matter how their cases are resolved, working to distribute power through associations, locals, committees, and the union.

94. We have initiated a monthly call between autonomous tenants' unions across the country, establishing the ATUN network to share analysis, tactics, and strategy.

95. We are beginning a practice of occupations to greet the sheriffs when they arrive.

96. We are organizing multiple buildings owned by the same landlord.

97. And we are planning the baby steps before a general rent strike.

98. I invite everyone to join us. If you're not in LA, another autonomous tenant union will do.

99. Defeat is not inevitable.

100. We make the community by defending it.

101. You cannot, under any circumstances, do politics alone. ▪

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Towards a "People's Housing Authority": Human Rights, Decommodification and Community Control in the Praxis of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign

Toussaint Losier, University of Massachusetts, Amherst,

Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign

On June 17, 2011, the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, a grassroots organization committed to enforcing housing as a human right, publicly announced its occupation of a formerly foreclosed and abandoned home on Chicago's Southside. For more than two years, the property had been left vacant and unsecured by Deutsche Bank, one of the four top banks responsible for foreclosures in America's second city. According to neighbors, there had been little done by the bank to stop its metal pipes, copper wiring and other material from being scrapped. With the neighbor's support, campaign organizers had repaired the damage done by vandals, such that it might be habitable for a family in need.[1]

"This is it," campaign volunteer Martha Biggs had reportedly said when she first learned of the home takeover plans, "this is where we can make our statement about the human right to housing."[2] After more than six weeks of work, the campaign was ready to announce that Biggs, a homeless mother of four, was going to be moving into the once vacant and bank owned property—a bold action designed to shed light on the human consequences of the nation's ongoing mortgage foreclosure crisis.

"While this is just one house and one family," explained the group's press release, "[the campaign] hopes to inspire other community groups to reclaim land and housing in their own communities, and to think critically about how this crisis is part of a recurring cycle of displacement and dis-empowerment. [Campaign members] also want to force the city to get serious and act—hopefully to work with the community members impacted by foreclosure, eviction, and unemployment, and to stop diverting millions of dollars of public resources to institutions who are not invested in those communities—at the same time

1   *Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign 2011a.*

2   *Austen 2013.*

claiming that there is no revenue to fund public housing, schools, clinics or job programs. Martha Biggs has committed to fighting for this house and her new community, and while it may be just one property, it's also a long hoped for home for her family."[3]

The Campaign's public reclamation of this home would be well covered in the evening news, as well as subsequent news articles, academic studies, and public interest documentaries. This was for good reason, as this family's story put a human face on some of the mortgage foreclosure crisis' most vexing contradictions. A former resident of the city's notorious Cabrini Green housing development, Biggs had lost her access to public housing after being evicted by the housing authority for drug possession. For a while the family had simply occupied a vacant Cabrini Green unit. After saving up enough to rent an apartment, Biggs and her children moved into an apartment on Chicago's gritty West Side, only to be left homeless and sleeping in their minivan after that building went into foreclosure. For a moment, the Biggs family and its path from homelessness to home occupation was the public face of the nation's foreclosure crisis.[4]

In contrast, hardly any attention was paid to the two-story home now under occupation—attention that shed even more light on the links between public resources and private finance. Purchased at the front edge of the 2004-06 housing bubble, the modest, redbrick Victorian was supposed to serve as an income property. Like tens of thousands of other homes purchased during this period, its apartment units were to have been rented to former public housing residents who would be receiving rental assistance vouchers through the Section 8 program. Since the start of the Great Recession of 2007-8, waves of home mortgage foreclosures have swept through the city, hitting its poor and working class Black and Latino neighborhoods with what one writer described as an "unevenness that can seem fiendishly unjust."[5] Far from the city's iconic skyline, more than 62,000 properties sit abandoned, more than two-thirds of them concentrated in the largely Black neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West side. Although it remains to be seen exactly how many, it is clear that many of them were supposed to have met an increased demand for rental units following the forced relocation of public housing residents and the demolition of the city's notorious high-rise project buildings. Perhaps more so than in any other city in the country, it is in Chicago where the privatization of public housing shaped both the landscape of the mortgage foreclosure crisis as well as the political framework of those who sought to resist it.[6]

Although it would gain public notoriety for its intervention in the foreclosure crisis, the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign got its start in Cabrini-Green in 2009. More than two years after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the overwhelmingly poor, Black residents of this 70-acre development were now facing the prospects of being pushed to the outskirts of the city. Several high-rise public housing buildings had already been demolished. City officials were encouraging long-time residents to take rental voucher to relocate to heavily segregated neighborhoods, to the city's inner-ring suburbs or out-of-state. While a class action lawsuit prevented the wholesale demolition of the complex, CHA officials were increasingly turning from the carrot of vouchers and gift cards to the stick of eviction threats to bleed Cabrini-Green of its last remaining residents.[7]

For decades, Cabrini-Green significance lay in its close proximity to some of Chicago's richest and most influential neighborhoods. Since the early 1970s, resident activism had successfully beaten back efforts by downtown corporations and city officials to remove the roughly 14,000, overwhelmingly Black, increasingly poor residents and secure the area for upscale development. Instead of

3 *Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign 2011a.*

4 *Gottesdeiner 2013.*

5   *Austen 2013: 24.*

6 *Terry 2011; Roy 2015.*

7 *Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign 2009.*

demolition, the development would first suffer from official neglect. As a result, Cabrini-Green's population declined by the thousands as officials routinely failed to maintain building and provide adequate security, choosing instead to take hundreds of units out of service, particularly the top floors of buildings.[8] While the development deteriorated, the abandonment provided opportunities for otherwise homeless families like the Biggs to "live off the lease" by occupying vacant units and the high-rise buildings essentially serving as a "de facto shelter system," particularly during Chicago's bitterly cold winter months.[9]

In 1996, a key shift in federal policy eliminating a rule mandating that each public housing apartment unit demolished had to be replaced by another provided officials with an opportunity to make good on these earlier efforts. Written into federal law two years later, this rule change made it far easier for local officials to destroy public housing without adhering to the prior one-to-one replacement rule. Overseeing the worst public housing stock in the country, Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) officials quickly signaled that this policy shift would be used to eliminate Cabrini-Green and other development while shifting as many residents as possible onto the private rental market with rental vouchers. In response, some resident leaders and their allied organisations formed the Coalition to Protect Public Housing (CPPH), a citywide partnership between those in public housing and some seventy supporting community, civic, and religious organisations. Over the next eight years, this broad coalition would employ rigorous research, popular education, public demonstrations, and even civil disobedience to inform residents about the city's plans and push the city's improve and preserve, rather than demolish, its large stock of public housing.[10]

Over the next few years, the CPPH faced various obstacles in pursuing its mission of protecting public housing. Chicago officials not only formulated plans to demolish more than a third of its public housing, but they also outmaneuvered CPPH in securing support for its "Plan for Transformation" from the elected resident leadership. Under this plan, key sites would be targeted for demolitions, with both replacement public housing and new, upscale condominium apartments to be built through the public-private partnership of mixed-income development. Once outmaneuvered by CHA officials, the public housing leaders in CPPH found themselves increasingly isolated, unable to mobilize a mass base of residents, bring new supporters into their coalition, or even secure grants from the same non-profit foundations that had previously helped to fund it. Stymied by the turn away from public housing at the local and national levels, CPPH had by 2009 turned to a human rights framework, international law, and human rights mechanisms like the UN Special Rapporteur, in an attempt to push back against the city's demolition plans.

Unable to gain much traction through these mechanisms, CPPH organizers turned to the example of South Africa's Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign which for several years had been successful fighting back against a similar policy of housing privatization, linked in part to preparations for the 2010 World Cup. By chance, they seized on the example of Lenise Forrest, a 19-year resident of Cabrini's rowhouse apartment units, who had been given a one-week eviction notice. When she explained her situation to other residents, they made plans to do a South Africa-style eviction blockade on the morning of her eviction. Bearing signs that read, "The Rich got bailed out we won't get put out" and "Housing is a Human Right," local activists mobilized several dozen residents, housing rights activists, and outside supporters for a rally and press conference for the morning of the eviction.

8   *Austen 2018.*

9   *Kalven 2001.*

10   *Wright 2006.*

"As we all know, these are trying times in America," said Fleming to the morning's crowd. "Unemployment is almost at an all-time high. People are finding it hard to find work in this country. If you cannot find work you cannot maintain an income. If you cannot maintain an income, you cannot pay rent. Should the punishment be homelessness? We don't think so. So we as residents of the city of Chicago and Cabrini-Green have come together to say this will be the last eviction, there will be no more evictions. We're against any eviction of poor people in our city and our country."[11] With no police and county sheriffs in sight, Fleming and other activists with CPPH called the eviction blockade a success and the birth of a Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign.[12]

Yet, residents struggled to organize themselves as city officials once again outmaneuvered them. On January 4, 2010, the day after the end of the annual holiday eviction moratorium, a full complement of the sheriff's eviction unit put Ms. Forrest out on the street, and boarded up her apartment unit, with a Chicago police detail stationed outside of her front door. Over the next week, rumor spread that at least fourteen other families had been evicted.[13] A packed mass meeting called to address these developments turned up more than fifty eviction cases, all with upcoming court dates. Yet, a follow up meeting was delayed for weeks as local churches and community organisations repeatedly denied Cabrini-Green activists requests for a meeting space and officials barred them from going door-to-door to pass out flyers in CHA buildings. Even the elected leadership of Cabrini's Local Advisory Committee was slow to offer its assistance, despite the fact that the CAEC had been conceived of as an LAC organizing project.[14]

In spite of these obstacles, those in CAEC continued to press forward with regular outreach to Cabrini-Green residents and coordinating tenants' rights workshops for those facing eviction. Time and again, they found residents who were facing eviction because housing officials had misplaced their paperwork or found a pretext to invoke the federal "one strike" rule that made any arrest associated with their public housing unit, even those that did not result in a criminal conviction, as grounds for an eviction.[15] As CHA continued to push out more Cabrini-Green residents to various parts of the city and suburbs, the CAEC increasingly found itself pulled away from the development. Activists not only followed former public housing residents now scattered throughout the city, but also increasingly sought to contend with an expanding mortgage foreclosure crisis that was leaving unemployed tenants and homeowners facing eviction.

In May 2010, thirty-one families in 1230 N. Larrabee, one of Cabrini-Green's last high-rise apartment building, received 30-day eviction notices from the CHA. Rather than improving conditions in the building and moving in families on the city's long waiting list for affordable housing, CHA officials had determined that with only a quarter of the apartments occupied, an emergency building closure was the safest option for those remaining families. Following the CAEC's mobilization of building residents and a legal motion by lawyers for the Cabrini-Green LAC, the CHA rescinded its eviction complaint. Yet, it continued to pressure the last remaining tenants to move out, emptying the building in just two months and clearing the way for demolition.[16]

Six months later, the CAEC once again failed to block the CHA's efforts to displace the last remaining families at 1230 N. Burling, the development's last high-rise. By this date, much of the CAEC's organizing had shifted away from Cabrini-Green, towards the spiraling mortgage foreclosure crisis entangling more than 3,000 Chicago area families a month. While many of those entangled were homeowners, most were tenants, including former public housing residents. In

11 *Peery 2010a.*

12 ibid.

13 *Peery 2010b.*

14 ibid.

15 *Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign 2011b.*

16 *Cottrell 2010.*

the wake of its failure in Cabrini-Green, campaign activists essentially followed the very base of people it had attempted to block evictions into some of the neighborhoods hard hit by the housing crisis. In October 2010, for instance, CAEC drew on this experience to demand and win a month-long moratorium on evictions from foreclosed homes.

As the organization's vision shifted from simply preserving public housing to enforcing the human right to housing more generally, it hosted a visit by activists with Take Back the Land (TBtL), a Miami-based group already attracting public attention for placing homeless families in vacant, foreclosed homes and building a national network modeled on the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign.[17] While most within the CAEC remained adamant that the ongoing mortgage foreclosure crisis was premised on the privation of public housing begun under the "Plan for Transformation" and similar policies, dialogue with TBtL and other groups prompted local activists to shift their frame of analysis and field of action to foreclosed and vacant properties, now referred to internally as "unidentified public housing."

Amidst this protracted strategic reorientation, the CAEC's heterodox mix of public housing residents, student activists, Trotskyist cadres, and anarchist militants repeatedly turned to "Fighting Foreclosure in South Africa," a 2009 open letter written by the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign to U.S. activists. Published in the U.S. months prior to the visit of Ashraf Cassiem, one of the core leaders of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, this two and a half page document briefly summarised the emergence of and resistance to the ANC's neoliberal order. Here, the CAEC framed its actions within two principles: first, poor people should not cede control of their communities to NGOs, politicians, and development bureaucrats, and, second, fundamental resources like land and housing had to be decommodified.

"We break the government's laws in order not to break our own (moral) laws," it read. "We oppose the authorities because we never gave them the authority to steal, buy and sell our land. Combined these are battles for a new emancipatory structure where we are not stakeholders but people; where land is for everyone and where resources are shared rather than fought over."[18]

In addition to these principles, this letter offered four brief points gleaned from the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign's past nine years of struggle. Throughout 2010, this document would serve as an essential reference point for the organization's development. In strategy sessions and general meetings, participants returned to it as a reflection of the sort of principled activism they should emulate. Rather than prescribing the actions that should be carried out, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign's open letter offered an analytical framework through which to assess the ongoing crisis and particular mistakes to avoid that drew on the lessons of the South African example:

- Beware of all those in power—even those who seem like they are on your side.

- Beware of money, especially NGO money, which seeks to pacify and prevent direct action.

- Beware of media, even alternative media written by the middle class on behalf of the poor. Create your own media.

17 *Rameau 2010.*

18 *WCAEC 2009.*

- Beware of leaders, even your own. No one can lead without you. Leaders are like forks and knives. They are the tools of the community and exist to be led by the communities

When you build your "Take Back Our Land! Take Back Our Houses!" movement, build from below. Build democratically. Build alternative and autonomous ways of living within your community while fighting for what is yours. Build your own school of thought (WCAEC, 2009).

It is worth noting that this document makes only a brief mention of the 2004 and 2009 "No Land! No House! No Vote!" campaigns, but instead reiterated key aspects of non-collaboration, particularly local autonomy, direct decision making, and independent, working class politics. Rather than taking an election boycott as a litmus test for militancy, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign's open letter directly attended to the goals of independent thought, community control, working class self-determination.

In early 2011, key leaders from the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign as well as from Abahlali baseMjondolo, a South African shack dwellers movement, visited Chicago, engaging many of those in what was becoming a multiracial and multiclass coalition.[19] Ultimately, however, the open letter's guidelines on how to avoid the problems that might befall a militant, bottom-up organization would serve as the most profound influence as the CAEC sought to ground its organizing in poor neighborhoods across the city. Being able to draw on these sort of guidelines would be crucial as the CAEC was in the midst of its own transition from operating as an upstart organizing project of the Cabrini-Green Local Advisory Council to an independent organization broadly concerned with the human right to housing.

In February 2011, lawyers active with the CAEC successfully defended Roberta Rendle, a Cabrini-Green tenant, against an attempted an eviction by the CHA following the arrest of two suspects in her apartment as a "one-strike" violation of its good-conduct lease provisions.[20] In some sense, this legal victory was the culmination of nearly a year and a half of open opposition to evictions in Cabrini Green. Yet, rather than serving as the foundation for broader challenge to CHA policy, particularly around the destruction of public housing, this focus on public housing, with only a few exceptions, moved off of the CAEC's radar as had fully shifted to the ongoing foreclosure crisis and particularly some 62,000 properties left abandoned, more than two-thirds of them concentrated in the largely Black neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West side.[21]

Against this backdrop, the CAEC emerged as "a radical urban homesteader movement," working amidst this blight and devastation. Some families they helped to keep in their homes, reviewing their legal papers, accompanying them to court, and physically blocking evictions when necessary. What's more, the organization was also 'taking over' dozens of empty homes, making repairs to them and then moving in homeless families, an action justified by loophole in the state's trespassing laws. "The beautiful thing about the home takeovers is that they capitalize on the isolation and abandonment of these neighborhoods."[22] Here, at the city's margins, these actions were depicted as a fulfillment of the basic human right to shelter and a 'do it yourself' process of neighborhood revitalization, a reliance on the law's grey areas and a militant form of civil disobedience.

In the face of this activism, the Biggs' family's occupation would come under threat. After its offers of "cash for keys" to move out were refused, Deutsche Bank moved forward with eviction efforts. Initially, the Anti-Eviction Campaign

19 *Tolsi 2010.*

20 *CBS Chicago 2011; Chicago Sun-Times 2011.*

21 *CAEC 2011c.*

22 *Austen 2013.*

23 *Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign 2014.*

was successful in blocking sheriff's efforts to push out the Biggs. In turn, Deutsche Bank pivoted, selling the property to small owner at a steep discount—with the expectation that he would be responsible for removing the Biggs. Forced to relocate after a second eviction, the Chicago Anti-Eviction has since adapted the Community Land Trust to its organizing model, applying an established legal mechanism to attain greater security of tenure for working class, poor, and formerly homeless families. Working with a coalition of local community organizations and private partners to pilot a land trust that acquires, rehabs, and puts back onto the market blighted homes in neighborhoods with a high volume of vacant homes.

While this approach has moved the campaign away from its recent engagement with often illegal, direct action tactics, this land trust has allowed it to broaden the geographical and thematic scope of its work by addressing not simply housing and blight, but also gentrification and affordability. Through unique access to the Federal Housing Finance Authority's Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative (NSI), which has since 2015 targeted the Chicagoland area as having one of the nation's highest levels of vacant properties, the Campaign—and through it, the land trust, has been able to secure legal title to distressed properties in key neighborhoods at price points significantly below the market value. By securing unique access to the Federal Housing Finance Authority's Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative (NSI), the land trust has, by selling or renting to own these properties, sought to protect against a post-crisis rise in property values and subsequent displacement in historically Black neighborhoods.[24] At the same time, the rehab of these distressed and vacant homes has allowed the campaign to continue building on its roots in public housing by training and employing its members in the rehab of these homes. Over the past year, these efforts to ground recovery efforts in the principle of community ownership has spread from the South and West sides of Chicago to several of the city's South suburbs.[25]

Even more recently, the campaign has turned its attention to explicitly to questions of public policy in a way that has brought its work full circle back to its origins in places like Cabrini Green. By partnering with public housing residents' groups in other parts of the country, for example in Charlottesville, VA, the campaign has guided them as they have sought to intervene in ongoing efforts to address vacancy and blight in their developments. In place of efforts to privatize public housing, these groups have demanded that empty units be rehabbed. With the campaign's help, these groups are drawing on Section 3 of the 1968 Housing and Urban Development Act to demand resident inclusion in these rehab efforts. Much like its land trust work, this intervention allows participants to gain valuable skills as well as access to well-paying work that would help them to find more reliable work in the future.[26]

While still in its infancy, these community organizing and public policy approaches reflect the campaign's commitment to protect public housing, with those who lived in one of the nation's most publicly maligned development advocating for a collective recommitment to the provision of safe and affordable public housing for our poorest residents and in a manner controlled by them—a people's housing authority. ▪

24 *PolicyLink 2017.*

25 *Belanger 2019.*

26 *Gold 2018.*

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Translocal Productions of Knowledge and Power

Tony Roshan Samara, Urban Habitat, Right to the City Alliance

The long-term success of social movements depends on how well they can collect, produce, and use knowledge. This is particularly true of movements that struggle against historical forms of injustice, which more often than not, lack the conventional resources of money, political influence, and institutional power. My goal here is to explore the relationship of social movements to knowledge in the context of a growing tenant and housing justice movement in California that has emerged around an acute housing crisis, and is also expressing a need for deeper, structural change in how we view land and housing.

The way we build a movement that can fight for power at transformative scales is to center the growth of local grassroots organizing, build strong operational and political relationships between these efforts, and from those relationships generate new ways of knowing and acting. Done well, this approach can lead to more effective forms of collective action that link long-term vision with a strategy for realizing that vision. The result is a form of historical organizing—organizing that understands itself as part of a project to transform historic forms of injustice—that can alter the political trajectory of a society.

For this article, I'll draw from the experiences and lessons learned from our work at the Right to the City Alliance (RTTC) and its national Homes for All campaign (HFA) over the past eight years, as well as with my own work in the Bay Area and as part of the statewide tenant movement in California over the past five. The RTTC is a national housing and urban justice alliance founded in 2007, and Homes for All is our national housing justice campaign, started in 2011. Currently, HFA has about 72 member organizations spread across 40 cities and 25 states that bring an explicit race, class, and gender framework to the housing movement.

The past few years have seen a significant growth in tenant organizing across California, including the spread of the tenant movement to smaller cities and suburbs that are often very different politically from the progressive urban centers most people around the country probably associate with the state. Organizing—and supporting—grassroots campaigns for rent control and other tenant protection policies in these places presents a major challenge and opportunity for a movement that has, until very recently, struggled for wider support. The work of building and sustaining local organizations, and linking these organizations across the state through durable regional and statewide movement networks, is the most important long-term task of the housing justice movement.

The spread of the housing crisis, and community responses to it, have brought together relatively progressive places with longstanding tenant movements and those where residents are forming new organizations, and where the political climate is often hostile to working class people and people of color. It has also made it necessary to confront different experiences and understandings of the housing crisis, possible solutions, strategy that are rooted in the needs and analysis of local organizing efforts but that by definition raise questions that go beyond individual campaigns, short-term tactics, and legislative/policy fights.

These are challenges that push us to ask how we produce, use, and circulate the information, data, and knowledge that we need to build power, whether that's in the form of actions against a particular landlord, a policy fight at city council, a ballot fight, or the more general and long term work of movement building. And a fundamental question when we talk about the relationship between how we build power and how we produce and use knowledge is: how do we organize?

1. Begin conceptually.

The RTTC/HFA approach to movement organizing is to build horizontally, or translocally. This is a strategic reorientation since the early days of the alliance, when there was more of an emphasis on a line that ran from local to the national/federal. The older approach reflected, in part, an adaptation to how bigger institutional players like funders, policy institutes, and other centrist non-profits understand social change: you aggregate a critical mass of people and make a push for change in legislation or appropriations at the state and federal levels.

This approach didn't yield much for Right to the City and its members and, more importantly, sapped energy from a growing movement. Why? Because it didn't speak to the crisis in a meaningful way for people living it, it steered local organizers and members into processes that they had little to no control over, and it did not contribute significantly to local power building efforts. As a strategy, it was inattentive to the importance of place, to the actual territorial communities where millions of working class people and people of color actually lived. As a result, the national strategy and local work pulled in opposite directions.

Over time, as the Homes for All campaign began to germinate, Right to the City—through its membership and staff—began to develop a different analysis that was grounded in both a deep understanding of community landscapes, and of where the actual and potential power of our movement really lies. The result of this is what we call translocalism, or the translocal approach to movement building from the bottom up. Translocalism harnesses the collective power of geographically dispersed organizations and movements, grows at a pace and scale that is set by the current capacity of the network and its members, and develops a collectively determined vision to guide strategy.

In 2011 HFA was launched as a campaign to put this emerging theory into practice. The focus was on a strategy of bringing local organizations across the country together through translocal committees and national assemblies to guide the development of movement strategy and implementation. In distinction from the older approach, the Homes for All strategy sees legislative change as a consequence rather than as a goal of movement building. The real goal of our movement is to remain in, reclaim, and rebuild our neighborhoods, communities, and cities. That requires a great deal more than good policy.

This is a fundamentally different project from simply changing laws. Building the power to govern happens, first, through creating and deepening operational relationships between locally-oriented organizing groups. These are bases that we can connect to each other across territory as a means of defending, retaking and taking territory, changing the political landscape, including the culture, in the process. At the same time, the territory that movements defend and liberate, and the political spaces created through translocal movement building, require that we practice and improve our capacity to govern those territories and spaces. Our assembly model, borrowing from many traditions and movements is an intentional strategy to practice this skill.

In 2014 RTC and Homes for All released *Rise of the Renter Nation*, which was the first report to grow out of this new strategic orientation, the first formal presentation of knowledge that it had produced. What this meant was that, from the language, to way the report was written and edited, to the analysis it offered, the report was the result of that translocal approach to producing knowledge. And that in turn depended upon the preexistence of translocal networks that included, most importantly, our member organizations, but also key resource allies from the policy and academic worlds.

On language — we wanted language that was analytical and accessible to our movement, and that also brought our analysis, developed by our membership, to a wider audience.

On writing and editing — we had an advisory committee that included representatives from base building organizations (themselves organized into translocal committees), research allies, and RTC staff. Writing by committee is not easy but we understood this was the best way to ensure the report reflected our analysis and was politically useful.

On analysis — This aspect is crucial for us for two reasons:

First, the report offered an important and in many ways marginalized position in 2014: that the housing crisis was not over and that the heart of the housing crisis was a renter crisis in low-income and Black and Brown communities. Based on what our members knew, the crisis was just getting worse. Further, if renters are the core of the crisis they are also the core of the solution. A follow up report, *The Rise of the Corporate Landlord*, made similar interventions related to the rise of real estate speculation in the rental market.

Second, the focus on local power building and a reaffirmation of the frame of the city or the local is an essential strategic orientation for left movements. This view gained popular support after the 2016 election and bore national fruit in the 2018 elections. We do not claim that we were first to do this or even the only ones doing it at the time, but it was and remains a defining feature of our work since the changes we made in 2011. For us the rapid spread of local movements for rent control over the past five years, and the catalyst these have been

for statewide movements, has been important feedback on the strengths of our analysis, even as it has created new challenges.

2. How does the need for information/knowledge appear in social movements?

The operational production and deployment of knowledge is what movements need in the moment and which over time lay the foundation for building power over the long term. Social movements are actually very good at producing knowledge but often struggle to capture, organize, and share it beyond the context of its immediate place and utility. We often rely on journalists and researchers to collect information and present it to us or to a wider audience. These become the repositories of a lot of the knowledge about our work. And the dynamic that we often talk about in this exchange is that something is lost in the process. It serves a purpose, just not the purpose of our movements. The problem this poses becomes clear as movements begin to scale up.

There are two aspects to information/knowledge that I want to draw attention to here, realizing there are probably others that I am leaving unaddressed. The first is actionable intelligence, or applied knowledge: information (data, experience, insight) that a group needs immediately for a specific campaign. Here are some examples from my own experiences:

- I get an email or text: I need eviction stats for this city for a meeting next week, can you get them?

- Council member X is repeating landlord talking point Y. Can we put out something that challenges this?

- Who owns this building and where do they live?

- Our council is pursuing a non-binding mediation program for landlords and tenants as a response to our campaign for rent control. We know these programs are shit but I need data. Does anyone have any studies we can use?

Many, if not most, of these requests I can't answer, and so in the past I would turn to my own slowly expanding network of partners, allies, and comrades, and I think the same is true for others who receive these types of requests as well.

The second aspect is reaching larger audiences to shift opinion and deepening the collective knowledge of movement themselves. These are distinct processes that should be considered separately, but for now I will combine them under the banner of changing the ideological terrain.

Media is a good example of the first process. We talk a lot about how to attract media attention to our work as a way of bringing visibility to a campaign and shifting public opinion. We also know that what often comes out, while it may bring some attention to our fight, does not represent our political framing or even provide basic knowledge about our movement. So, while media exposure brings some benefits and is a necessary component of building power, it cannot be our primary vehicle for ideological struggle in the public sphere.

On the other process, we do produce and reproduce our own knowledge (through popular education materials, democracy schools, assemblies, and informal networks that share accumulated knowledge). This is not yet coordinated

movement-wide across California, so there is some unevenness in terms of the ideological terrain, and this represents both a challenge and an opportunity for movement growth. The 2019 legislative session, for example, represented substantial progress but also revealed an underdeveloped strategic orientation to state policy fights. That underdevelopment, in turn, reflects the absence of a unifying ideological orientation to these fights and their place in the broader work of movement building.

So, reflecting on my experience, our ability to produce and share knowledge at a scale that is structurally transformative, or that opens the possibility of structural transformation, is still very limited. And as our movement grows this becomes a fundamental structural challenge for us.

3. 4 examples of the translocal production of knowledge:

I want to close with four examples that illustrate the potential to meet this challenge by laying the groundwork for the long-term strategic goal of shaping the political landscape.

- Regional Tenant Organizing network Bay Area (RTO). The RTO was formed in 2015 by Causa Justa :: Just Cause, Faith in Action, and Urban Habitat, in response to the increase in organizing around the region and the recognition that landlords were organizing regionally. Its formation represented a movement-oriented intervention based on where the movement was, where it could go, and what infrastructure was needed to support it going forward. Today it has over 25 member organizations spread across seven counties. RTO principles require that membership and its steering committee be majority base-building organizations, and its mission a transformative one, rooted in the belief that, "housing is a human right, and that the housing crisis results from treating land and housing as profit-generating commodities."

  While the RTO has provided direct support to local campaigns and facilitated local organizations engaging with state level campaigns, it central mission is to support the creation and expansion of tenant movement power at the local and regional levels, leaving decisions about campaigns to members. It accomplishes this through an application of translocal organizing, particularly through supporting information/resource sharing, peer to peer training, regional coordination, and the development of a movement identity. In the past two years, a substantial amount of work has involved engagement with state level campaigns.

- Renter assemblies. Homes for All began holding national assemblies in 2016 and has been intentionally drawing inspiration and lessons for these from movements with experience using assemblies as spaces of governance. Assemblies are more than meetings and gatherings, they are places to "make action plans, decisions, and political commitments." The goal of these assemblies is not just to recognize the value of us being together and building those vital human connections despite the vast distances that separate our member organizations. It is that, and it is also a way that the accumulated knowledge of organized local communities can be brought together, shared, discussed and debated, and used to develop a long term national movement strategy that is implemented locally and translocally.

Since 2016, the California tenant movement has held two statewide assemblies (both in 2017), and in 2019 has held, as of this writing, one northern California regional assembly with another planned for the south, and will hold a statewide assembly in October. These assemblies are also moving in the direction of being places where organizations from across regions and the state engage in discussion, analysis, long term visioning and strategy, and decision making.

- Reports. Over the past few years we have seen a number of movement generated or movement affiliated research reports that represent an effort to put useful data and framing in the hands of organizers and to contest the dominance of economists and centrist policy institutions in talking about our issues. This is one important way that we can engage with audiences beyond our base and movement allies, while hopefully remaining useful to them locally.

  These have primarily tactical value in advancing the longer goal of changing the terms of debate. To serve that purpose, they must be embedded in organizing strategies developed by grassroots leadership. This embedding allows them to be explicitly political instruments, which I would argue is what they need to be if they are to have movement utility.

- Proposition 10. This is as an example of unintended consequences of local and regional power building. The smoke has yet to clear in terms of the long-term consequences of this campaign but I want to draw attention to the fact that Proposition 10 came to be because of widespread local organizing over years AND because of regional and statewide, movement centered translocal network building. That created the foundation that made a statewide ballot fight possible or even conceivable. And the existence of that foundation is important to ensuring that the loss of a single campaign isn't necessarily a loss for the movement. Because of this foundation, it is possible that even a loss can move us forward.

  To take the most obvious and immediate example, Proposition 10 brought the issue of rent control to millions of people, in places where we are not currently strong. It didn't do so on our terms but it expanded the political space and now we have an opportunity to move into that space. If we can organize at that scale.

The way we build a movement that can contest power at transformative scales, where we can make housing justice a norm, in policy and practice, is to center local grassroots organizing, build strong operational and political relationships between these movements, and from those relationships generate new ways of knowing. ▪

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Making and Unmaking Property Regimes

In This Section

Law and Property Relations: Contesting the "Outlaw" Zone

Nicholas Blomley and the Right to Remain Collective; Simon Fraser University

1) Introduction

A group of academics, students, and tenants have been engaged for the past two years on a creative and highly participatory activist research project, called the Right to Remain (R2R),[1] located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DES), a powerful, and powerfully marginalized community. The project is a collaboration between scholars and the SRO-Collaborative (SRO-C),[2] a grass roots organization that seeks to mobilize and support the rights of residents in the highly vulnerable privately owned Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels in the DES. SROs are the housing of last resort for the urban poor in Vancouver. Many are in very poor condition, and run by predatory and sometimes violent slumlords and their managers.

Tenant researchers, trained in research methods, have completed a series of interviews with hotel residents on their living conditions. We're at a very early stage in this, but I (Nick Blomley) would like to make some preliminary observations, learning from these findings. I am not speaking for the project, or the SRO-C: these are my own preliminary observations and thoughts, drawing from the interviews.

This work of the SRO-C is important in its own right, and needs to be affirmed and recognized. The bravery of the respondents is also to be celebrated. The Right to Remain collaboration is also instructive in addressing the conference themes of housing justice and precarity in unequal cities. The project offers many insights, but for my purposes, it is the workings of property law, particularly landlord-tenant law, and its role in producing geographies of precarity, that are central.

1   http://www.righttoremain.ca

2   https://dtescollaborative.org

Some members of the R2R team (photo: Wendy Pedersen)

The valuable international framing of the Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network also invites us to think about such relations in a comparative and postcolonial sense, learning from and learning with subaltern and marginalized perspectives. The tendency in property scholarship is to focus on the privileged, rather than the periphery. But given that this is where most of us live, we need to ask: what can we learn from the "margins"?[3]

2) Illegality

The most immediate lesson we learn from the R2R interview data from residents in SROs is that property relations are highly irregular. Hotels are poorly regulated, and landlord actions are extralegal or simply illegal, departing from prevailing residential tenancy legislation. Illegal evictions, or threats of evictions, appear widespread. Illegal entries by landlord or managers are common. Housing conditions are often problematic, with endemic problems such as a lack of heat, black mold, broken elevators, poor water conditions, and pests. Two large hotels have been condemned, due to unsafe conditions. Tenants are often unwilling to complain, due to possible backlash, or are unaware that they may actually have certain rights.[4]

The temptation is to treat this irregular situation as a state of exception, a departure from a legal, formal condition. This presumes a clear divide between the legal and the illegal. This echoes a wider problematic discourse that treats poor neighborhoods like the Downtown Eastside including its housing conditions, as a space of criminality, deviance and exception. They are imagined as outlaw zones. However, we can learn from the "margins" of the global South, and the "margins" of the Downtown Eastside, to challenge this distinction, and the pernicious work that such a geographic imaginary does.

3) The legal as fiction

Ananya Roy urges us to think of the formal and legal "as fictions, as moments of fixture in otherwise volatile, ambiguous, and uncertain systems of planning. In other words, informality exists at the very heart of the state."[5] This is clearly evident in the Downtown Eastside. Informality exists at the very heart of the

3   *Van der Walt 2009.*

4   *See also Fleming et al. 2019.*

5   *Roy 2009.*

Canadian state, particularly in regards to the workings of property. The legally sanctioned rights of hotel owners to evict and exact rent may, in fact, be something of a "fiction." Most immediately, the title to the hotels, like all titles in British Columbia, are legally uncertain, given that they are located on unceded indigenous lands. Colonial resettlement in British Columbia entailed the massive remaking of legal space, with the destruction and denial of indigenous ways of relating to land. Colonial title, with all that flows from it, is thus uncertain.

This is not simply a rhetorical claim: rather it is recognized as such by the legal system itself.[6] Yet even such forms of recognition rest on the underlying fiction that the Crown maintains underlying title. As indigenous scholar John Borrows notes, the presumption of Crown radical title restates the deeply racialized trope of terra nullius: "In some other contexts, this would be called stealing—at the least, it would be considered dishonest to say you own something when it previously belonged to someone else."[7] Such colonial logics that sustain the fiction of title in SROs are doubly ironic, given that many indigenous people are forced into this housing of last resort through the workings of colonial dispossession. The R2R researchers have also revealed that many of these hotels were owned or managed by Japanese Canadians. Their property, including the hotels, were illegally seized by the state in the 1940s in another act of racialized dispossession.[8]

4) Informality as regulation

Informality, however, can become a political resource, shaping power relations within the already hierarchical relations between landlord and tenant. Drawing from the Indian experience, Roy again asks to think of informality as a form of regulation.

> "Deregulation indicates a calculated informality, one that involves purposive action and planning, and one where the seeming withdrawal of regulatory power creates a logic of resource allocation, accumulation, and authority. It is in this sense that **informality, while a system of deregulation, can be thought of as a mode of regulation**. And this is something quite distinct from the failure of planning or the absence of the state."[9]

This is relevant in the heart of Vancouver. As noted, many City regulations regarding SROs in Vancouver are unenforced, or underenforced. For example, the City has not exerted its legal powers to repair SROs—most of them over a hundred years old, and in poor repair—and bill the owner.

There are reasons for this. But more importantly for our purposes, we can again use it to challenge the legal/illegal binary. **"Illegal"** conditions (e.g. housing conditions) are often a response to the deliberate decision by the City to **not** enforce its own laws. Crucially, the **non-enforcement** of law is not the same as the **absence** of law. It is a form of regulation by absence, that empowers landlords.

5) Rent

Most importantly, it supercharges an already highly extractive property relation, realized through rent. Harvey reminds us that rent is not an efficient neoclassical rationing device. Rather, it is a "transfer payment [usually between poor people and rich people, I would add] realized through the monopoly power over land and resources, conferred by the institution of private property."[10]

6 Calder v British Columbia (AG) [1973] SCR 313, [1973] 4 WWR 1

7 *Borrows (forthcoming)*.

8 *Eric and Stanger-Ross 2017.*

9 *Ibid. at 83*

10 *Harvey 1974.*

However, we should also note that rent is a legal, as well as a financial relationship. Common law conceptions of property are a mix of modern concepts of contract and much older models. Rent" derives from feudal conceptions of land, in which the obligation of the tenant to perform "rent service" (in cash or service) was integral to the tenurial relationship between landlord and tenant.

Slumlords and managers in some hotels use rent as a form of regulation, charging it in a highly variable way so as to reward or benefit certain tenants in order to build quasi-feudal networks of obligation and control.

More importantly, the deregulated absence of state enforcement ensures that unscrupulous slumlords can extract rent, while paying minimal maintenance costs, producing an extractive form of capitalism. As one of our respondents noted: "it seems like it doesn't really matter about our quality of living ... we are just an income to them." Importantly, rents have actually increased significantly over time. The non-enforcement of law should be thought of as an exercise of state power, that confers extractive property rights on landlords.[11]

6) Legal Illegality

Relations between landlords and tenants are not simply economic relations, therefore. They are also legal relations, particularly property relations. Property is not simply a relation between people and things. It is "simply the word used to describe particular concentrations of power over things,"[12] operative between differently placed people, creating complex relations of dependence, sovereignty, and privilege.[13]

This is evident in landlord-tenant property relations in the SRO. More importantly, it is clear that evictions, or the threat of eviction, as well as overt violence against tenants are widespread, creating a culture of fear and intimidation. Eviction threats are techniques used to silence tenants into compliance with their own exploitation or neglect, as this quote from a tenant suggests:

> "I think what it is for a fact that nobody wants to make complaints because of the fact ... if I am going to complain about this ... they are going to get the feeling that they are a problem, more of a headache, and let's get rid of them."

Many of these are landlord actions are formally illegal, departing from prevailing landlord-tenant regulations. However, I want to argue that they are not simply exceptions from the law, but can be thought of as extensions from the organizing logic that structures property relations in the private rental market. Although illegal, in other words, they are not alegal.[14]

Modern landlord tenant law is a regulatory overlay that provides minimal protections for tenants from the prevailing logic of a property relationship between landlords and tenants, which is predicated on a sharp power gradient, in which the tenant has only highly conditional and legally precarious use of a space. The theory behind a tenancy, is that it grants the tenant a limited right of exclusive possession for a designated period. However, this is a conditional and fragile arrangement. In law, the landlord has only granted the right of exclusive possession under certain terms, retaining an interest in the property called a reversion. It is this that makes the eviction (the "recovery of possession") possible.

11 Mulvaney and Singer 2017.

12 Gray and Gray 2009.

13 Blomley 2019.

14 Lindahl 2013.

Relatively recent regulations partly modify the relational terms under which exclusive possession can be enforced by landlords. It was only recently that a Vancouver landlord could evict without cause, and had the right to seize the tenant's property for nonpayment of rent, or even evict the tenant themselves, without going through a legal process. This overlay sustains the prevailing power relation, but modifies it only slightly: "The underlying presumption is that the owner is entitled to exclusive possession of his or her property, absent a valid counter-argument. Anyone who wishes to resist eviction has to prove a right that can withstand the owner's strong claim to exclusive possession."[15]

Landlord-tenant relations in Downtown Eastside hotels are often illegal relative to this regulatory overlay, but by forcibly enacting naked forms of highly territorialized forms of exclusive possession, they could be said to be enacting what Gray and Gray term a longstanding model of property as "socially constituted fact."[16] From this more pragmatic view, control over land is traditionally understood as 'the quantum of property which a person has in land ... measured by his ability to vindicate his sovereign control over territorial space."[17] Hotel owners thus sustain and enact the legal violence endemic to private law under settler capitalism. This zero-sum logic of sovereign expulsion is evident in the words of the informant who noted that "[The landlord] tried to force his way into my room. He said that it is his hotel and he can come into my room anytime he wants."

8) Why and how does this matter?

Law, I have argued, is central to the predatory and violent conditions of SRO housing in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Law is either present through its absence, or through its "alegal" manifestations. The apparent "legality" of property certainty and title is far from clear-cut. Framing poor people's housing as outlaw housing, a zone of rampant illegality, misses this crucial point. The "outlaw" is a product of law, not its negation.

Why does this matter? Gautam Bhan encourages us to think of urban politics as a means by which "particular kinds of urban practices and actors are framed as 'illegal' relative to others and what work such framing does."[18] Framing SRO housing as outlaw housing does pernicious and invidious work. Most immediately, rather than seeing law as central to the predatory and violent relations to be found in hotels, we secure law as a site of redemption and purity. Law's hands appear clean. Secondly, if outlaw housing is beyond the pale, then it must be irredeemable. It can't be fixed. We must leave it to the outlaws. Finally, outlaw housing must be produced by outlaw people—especially the people who live who live in the land of the outlaw. Poor people produce poor housing.

However, complicating the legal/illegal divide raises questions regarding legal strategies. To be clear, it is important to name landlord actions as illegal, and insisting that current landlord tenant law be applied. It is also important to insist that standards of maintenance laws be enforced. The SRO-C is heavily invested in the use of law. This is as it should be. But the danger is that this becomes a form of non-reformist reform, that does not challenge the ground rules that structure capitalist property relations. As the SRO-C knows, it is sometimes necessary to push **with** law, but also push **through** it when necessary. ▪

15 *Van Der Walt 2009.*

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"Move Along": Making Housing Justice Research Relevant to People Without Housing

Erin Goodling, University of Oregon

Houseless people often sleep, rest, eat, and perform other daily functions in public space. Yet, people are rarely able to conduct such life-sustaining activities in any one place with regularity: when police, private security guards, parks employees, vigilante group members, and others utter the words "move along," people begin packing their belongings. Weekly and even daily sweeps—evictions—from public spaces are one of the most defining and traumatizing things about being unsheltered in the US. Part of a much larger process of the privatization of public space, sweeps cause houseless people to lose their survival gear, identification, medicines, and treasured mementos. Sweeps also generate fines and citations that create additional barriers to becoming housed. Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing and Human Rights, recently asserted that the level of criminalization of the poor in the US is unprecedented elsewhere in the world.[1] Over the last three decades, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have become a driving force behind the proliferation of sweeps.[2] Funded by local property assessments, BIDs are state-sponsored private entities that play a growing role in managing public space. Unpacking BIDs is one key piece to understanding, as Staeheli and Mitchell put it, "*how* particular private interests prevail in public space"—the places where houseless people so often make their homes.[3] Properly conceptualizing BIDs is also crucial for understanding what constitutes legitimate activity, and by whom, on publicly-owned property—and for organizing for more just cities.

In using the word "houseless" rather than homeless, I take cues from the houseless-led, Portland, Oregon-based activist group, Right 2 Survive (R2S), which I have worked closely with since 2013. R2S asserts that home is where the heart is, and just because someone lacks stable shelter does not mean they lack a heart. The goal of the Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network is to build housing justice as a field of inquiry, in service to movements around the world. How

1   *COH-SF n.d.; Gee 2018; Herring 2019.*

2   *Berkeley Law Center 2018.*

3   *Staeheli and Mitchell 2008:47.*

might this network ensure that research contributes to housing justice not only for tenants, but also for the 2.5 to 3.5 million people who are neither renters nor homeowners in the US in a given year?

Indeed, HJUC researchers are already using frames that take an expansive view of housing justice, such as racialized and gendered experiences of state-sponsored violence, in deep historical context; policing and surveillance; property regimes; de-commodified, alternative models of shelter; and cooperative economic development strategies.[4] The HJUC network is putting such scholarship into conversation with research on evictions, affordable housing, financialization of housing, subsidized housing programs, residential displacement, tenants' rights movements, and other key topics that explicitly center housing and tenants.[5] To expand the ways in which housing justice research can be relevant to movements led by and for houseless people—those who, by definition, lack housing—I take cues from grassroots houseless leaders to assert that the privatization of public space is an imperative topic of inquiry. In this essay, I focus in particular on BIDs.

Research on the privatization of public space is not new.[6] Yet, although BIDs are one of the main targets of grassroots houseless rights groups' organizing, a relatively small handful of scholars have explicitly investigated the relationship between BIDs and the policing of houseless people.[7] As I explain here, there remain many unresolved BID-related questions—*including how they are expanding into non-commercial spaces, with serious implications for houseless and tenants' rights groups alike*. BIDs are just one area of inquiry through which researchers may be able to provide analytical support to housing justice movement groups, particularly those on the front lines of fights for housing justice for houseless people.

In what follows, I outline three reasons that housing justice researchers should be more attentive to BIDs, as one important manifestation of larger privatizing forces that destabilize houseless people: BIDs are a driving force behind the criminalization of houseless people; BIDs are expanding into non-commercial and business spaces; and grassroots groups are asking researchers for support. I end by suggesting some empirical questions in need of further investigation.

In advocating for expanded BID-focused investigations, I draw on six years of ongoing collaborative research with the Portland, Oregon-based grassroots group, R2S. Headed by houseless and formerly-houseless people, R2S is a leader of the self-run houseless community (e.g., tent city, tiny house village) movement in the US, as well as environmental justice organizing for houseless people. I also draw on a year of ongoing close work with the Bay Area-based Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP). WRAP is an alliance of nine grassroots groups in Oregon, California, and Colorado, including R2S, Los Angeles Community Action Network, and Denver Homeless Out Loud, and is at the forefront of research to support local organizing against Business Improvement Districts and for the "right to rest" for houseless people. WRAP, in particular, is keen to engage with housing justice researchers and others around BIDs and, more broadly, the policing of houseless people and privatization of public space.[8]

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4   *Bhan 2019; Blomley 2003; Heynen 2018; Perry 2004; Pulido and De Lara 2018.*

5   *DeFilippis 2004; García-Lamarca and Kaika 2016; Lens 2015; Losier n.d.; Maharawal and McElroy 2018; Oldfield and Greyling 2015, among many others.*

6   *There is a long tradition of research addressing the privatization of public space and the spatial politics of homelessness (e.g., Dooling, 2009; Mitchell, 1997, 2003, 2011; Mitchell & Heynen, 2009; Murphy, 2009; Smith, 1996; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2008; Ward, 2006, 2007). Some are also addressing efforts of houseless communities to appropriate public space for its use value (e.g., Goodling, forthcoming, under review; Herring, 2014; Herring & Lutz, 2015; Rameau, 2013; Sparks, 2010, 2017; Speer, 2016, 2017).*

7   *e.g., Berkeley Law Center, 2018; COH-SF, nd; Sleiman and Lippert, 2010; Mitchell and Staeheli, 2006; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2008.*

8   *For more on Right 2 Survive, go to www.right2survive.org. For more on the Western Regional Advocacy Project and its members, go to www.wraphome.org. Much of the BID-focused analysis outlined here comes out of WRAP's nine-plus years of activist-research and organizing. This essay is also informed by five years of my own involvement in anti-displacement research and tenant organizing work in the Portland area, including participatory action research on culturally-specific experiences of eviction and creation of the* Oregon Tenant Power Handbook *with the Community Alliance of Tenants (www.oregoncat.org).*

BIDs and the criminalization of houseless people. BIDs are one key mechanism by which the local state sanctions the policing and criminalization of houseless people living in commercial areas and beyond.[9]

At root of the proliferation of BIDs is a contradiction: downtown redevelopment produces, at the same time as it is hindered by, houselessness.[10] In other words, as relatively inexpensive housing stock and single-room occupancy hotels are destroyed to make way for new construction, expensive apartments and condominiums proliferate; rents rise, and public toilets and drop-in services close; and the number of people living unsheltered—and unwanted—grows. Beginning in the 1980s, as houselessness was becoming more widespread, a growing number of cities turned to BIDs (also known as Enhanced Service districts, Community Benefit Districts, etc.) to "manage" swelling houseless populations. Today there are over a thousand BIDs in US cities, covering just a few to over 200 blocks each.[11]

In classic neoliberal form, BIDs collect mandatory fees from property owners in a given area, in large part to fund private security companies—many of which employ armed guards—that police houseless people with little public oversite. Mitchell and Staeheli explain how BIDs epitomize the neoliberalization of the city:

> "Formerly public property is turned into pseudo-private space...a compromise accomplished by changing how public *property* is regulated—and by whom. This result is, perhaps, even more important than if [property] had been fully privatized. For it transforms the very nature of what is public. It transforms the meaning and practices—the regime— of property such that the very expectation that there is a public good is undermined."[12]

The key word here is *regulated*: BIDs enable private entities to facilely regulate and manage public space and those seeking to use it, with money funneled through the public tax system. In San Francisco alone, BIDs collectively assessed property owners for $15,917,778 in FY 2018-19, including public property holders. Furthermore, start-up grants for new BIDs come from local governments. In some cities, there is no public process to establish a BID; elected officials simply approve its formation.[13]

Particularly egregious are the direct lines of communication between BIDs and police departments, allowing them to share information about and control houseless people living in the BID. In Portland, Oregon, one BID's contracted private security firm pays the Portland Police Bureau directly to provide an additional four police officers to patrol the downtown area; the BID's contractor even has sway over which officers are assigned to the district, and oversees their work. BIDs are also a driving force behind laws that police the lives of houseless people. They have successfully lobbied for hundreds of laws and ordinances across the US that prohibit panhandling, sitting, lying, and erecting tents on sidewalks; providing food in public parks; and sleeping in private vehicles.[14] Mitchell and Staeheli summarize the harmful ways in which BID-style governance impacts houseless people: "The homeless become pariah, at once a symbol of all that is wrong with the public sphere and an ongoing hindrance to redevelopment and the good it brings in the form of increased property values. By turning over responsibility for maintaining and regulating public property to a private organization, the homeless find they have been even further stripped of any right to the city."[15]

9   To understand the impact of BIDs on houseless people, it is also necessary to recognize the rollback of federal funding for public housing that began four decades ago as part of the same neoliberal project and a main catalyst for modern-day mass homelessness. Between 1978 and 1983, the federal government cut spending on public housing (*primarily via the HUD Low/ Moderate-Income Housing Budget Authority*) by 77 percent. These cuts exacerbated racialized poverty and contributed to the immiseration and instability of houseless and precariously housed people; Black and Native people have been hit hardest (*Mitchell, 2011; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Center for Social Innovation, 2018; WRAP, 2010*).

10   *Staeheli and Mitchell 2008.*

11   *Ward 2006, 2007; WRAP 2019.*

12   *Mitchell and Staeheli 2006:165.*

13   *WRAP 2019.*

14   *Berkeley Law Center 2018; WRAP 2019; see also Mitchell & Heynen 2009, Staeheli and Mitchell 2008.*

15   *Mitchell and Staeheli 2006:165-66.*

BIDs on the move. Much less explored in scholarly conversations is a new trend: anti-houseless actors in a growing number of non-business/commercial spaces, too, are beginning to turn to BIDs to police and exclude houseless people. Over the last six years, I have worked with R2S on activist-research focused on the environmental politics of homelessness.[16] This line of inquiry often takes us out of commercial spaces where BIDs have historically operated, and into residential, green, and industrial spaces, where a growing number of houseless people seek refuge from the extreme policing of central cities. In 2018, we began to systematically investigate the ways in which environmental hazards (e.g., soil pollution, fire, rodents, water contamination) impact houseless people and spawn collective action across the US. We have found that in green spaces, industrial areas, brownfields, and various margins of the city, the local state frequently uses ostensible concerns about public health, hygiene, and environmental justice to publicly rationalize evictions.[17] Sweeps occur through a patchwork of policies and informal practices, carried out by police officers, security guards, public works and transportation department staff, parks and recreation employees, natural resource agency workers, contracted cleanup crews (including inmates), vigilante groups, and others. De-stabilizing as they are, environmental justice-oriented discourses and the sweeps they rationalize are somewhat less formidable than the state-sanctioned policies in support of quasi-private policing that occurs in commercial-area BIDs, where millions of dollars collected through tax rolls pay for an organized system of patrols explicitly designed to exclude houseless people.

But a disturbing development has recently transpired: as a growing number of houseless people move out of commercial areas controlled by BIDs and into residential, industrial, and green spaces, *the BID model has also begun to migrate into these spaces*. In San Francisco, the Dogpatch and Northwest Potrero Hill Green Benefit District was recently established, and the Mission Dolores Green Benefit District is under development—both encompassing acres of public green space, as well as some interstitial spaces such as under overpasses. And in Portland, just this year a new BID formed, controlling 263 blocks of historically industrial and now some mixed-use space. Disturbingly, one Portland neighborhood vigilante group is taking inspiration from this new BID, and has recently begun discussing ways to mobilize local businesses and residents to turn a primarily *residential* area into a BID. While there is still much to uncover about such BID-related policy mobilities within cities, one thing is clear: the BID model, mediated by the local state, is a property regime that entails private entities fundamentally controlling public space with public money through violent exclusion of houseless people, with very little public oversite—and it is on the move.

Research in support of grassroots organizing. BIDs account for a major source of instability for houseless people in the US, and their extension into green, residential, and industrial spaces should be alarming for anyone concerned about housing justice. Expanding research on the privatization of public space and the ever-growing role of BIDs in policing the lives of houseless people today is crucial for a housing justice research network to be relevant to housed and houseless people alike.

Despite the incredible power amassed by BID actors, WRAP and its member groups have had some successes pushing back, with the support of committed (activist-)researchers.[18] In San Francisco, for instance, WRAP was instrumental in passing the 2018 Proposition C ballot initiative, expected to raise $300 million a year for houseless programs by taxing big businesses. And in Denver and Los Angeles, WRAP groups drove recent settlement agreements that help defend basic property and human rights of houseless people.[19] In my own work with

16 *Goodling, 2019, forthcoming.*

17 *Goodling, under review; see also Speer 2016. This builds on and complicates work that articulates how, in green spaces, environmental tropes deeming land "too pristine" for human habitation serve to justify evicting people (Dooling 2009, Mokos 2017), and how, in residential areas, rhetoric of livability and safety often accompany formal sweeps and vigilante activity (Schmid 2018, Toft 2014).*

18 *Boden 2014.*

19 *AP 2019, LAHSA 2019.*

R2S, engaged and participatory action research is emanating out of, and supporting, ongoing efforts to forge new, decommodified models of urbanized life, including supporting self-organized houseless communities to mitigate environmental hazards and evade evictions in the name of insincere EJ concerns.[20] Yet, many empirical questions with regard to BIDs remain, and WRAP leaders are eager to work with committed researchers to address them:

- Uneven development: What is the role of BIDs in processes of commercial and residential gentrification and displacement? What are some of the relational ways in which the formation of a BID in one area impacts non-BID areas, adjacent to the BID and beyond? To what extent are certain types of developments (e.g., affordable housing, transportation infrastructure, shelters) zoned out of BIDs? What overlap exists between BIDs and the new federally-recognized Opportunity Zones, older Urban Renewal Areas, etc.?

- Policy mobility: What does the BID model look like in non-commercial spaces, including residential, green, and industrial areas? What does the "policy mobility" process entail for the migration of BIDs to these types of spaces? What is the relationship between BIDs and conservation organizations, neighborhoods associations, business associations, natural resource agencies, parks departments, and other entities?

- Policing, criminalization: How is racialized surveillance and policing of housed and houseless people alike occurring at the hands of BID-hired security guards and police officers? How does BID policing impact people dwelling in their vehicles? What is the nature of communications and relationships between BIDs and police departments? What are police department procedures as they relate to BIDs? What happens with the property of houseless people seized in sweeps, and is it legal?

- Nuts and bolts: What kinds of lobbying and advocacy activities do BIDs engage in? What do BID budget processes entail? Can some types of property owners be exempt from BID assessments/fees (i.e., residential properties, non-profit organizations)? How are assessments justified, how are assessment fee formulas developed, and where does the fee assessment formula methodology come from? Why can cities augment state law with regard to BIDs? What ongoing public oversight/accountability mechanisms exist under enabling legislation?

- Collective action: What are some legal mechanisms and other strategies/tactics that grassroots groups might pursue to halt the spread of BIDs, building on the work of WRAP and other groups/coalitions? What are points of synergy and tension between houseless and tenants' rights groups, as well as across lines of geography (e.g., rural, urban, suburban), race, and age within the housing justice movement?

BIDs are only one of many entry points into housing justice research that does not center directly on housing, itself. If home is where the heart is, an expanded conceptualization of what counts as a housing justice issue is required to account for those with no legal claims to housing. Scholars must be closely attuned to grassroots groups to know what the key issues are, to redirect university resources toward relevant investigations, and to help put local campaigns in conversation with other times and places. In turn, working closely with social movement leaders can ensure that research does not simply sit on a shelf; when designed with close attention to conditions unfolding on the ground, research

20 *We are creating a toolkit by and for houseless people that arms communities with information about hazards and provides technical and organizing tools to help circumvent the catch-22 of toxic exposure and eviction (www.resting-safe.org).*

has the potential to enhance and connect local organizing to broader systemic analysis in service to social change. ▪

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The Potential and Limits of Community Land Trusts in Efforts for Housing Justice

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Given the multiple and clear housing injustices confronting people in the United States, there is a growing interest in finding different ways to organize how housing is produced, lived in, and owned. One of the forms of ownership that has generated a lot of attention in recent years is the Community Land Trust (CLT). In this essay I will introduce the basics of how CLTs work and discuss the history of CLTs. I will then discuss the potential and limits of CLTs—both in terms of their narrowly pragmatic uses and in terms of their larger political uses and implications.

Background and History

A CLT is a form of ownership in which land is owned by a not-for-profit (usually) and removed from the speculative market in perpetuity. The improvements on the land, which are usually housing units (but need not be, and can be, in theory, anything a community wants on the land) are then leased from the CLT. Those lease agreements carry a set of restrictions on the improvements—both in terms of their uses and, importantly for us here, their transferability—that is, their sales price. These use agreements include resale restrictions for owner-occupied homes or include provisions doing much the same thing for owners of multi-family properties (usually another not-for-profit—often in the form of a Mutual Housing Association [MHA] or limited-equity cooperative [LEC]). These agreements and provisions maintain the permanent affordability of housing on CLT land as it goes from one resident to the next resident. Finally, in the classic form of the CLT, governance is by a tri-partite board that is: one-third leaseholders; one-third non-leasing members of the community; and one-third supportive "others." This structure enables the community to control the land, while at the same time makes sure the current lease-holders do not have the

ability to act in ways that are detrimental to the larger community (by eliminating the price restrictions to allow them to sell at market prices, for instance).

The first CLT was created in Albany, Georgia by organizers from the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and was borne of efforts to enable black farmers to have more control over their land and not lose their land to predatory lenders who would not provide credit to black farmers with decent or fair terms. It emerged out of the organizers combining a set of different influences to create a new form of land tenure. These influences included: Henry George's ideas on property; the "Garden City" movement inspired by Ebenezer Howard and its form of collective land ownership; 20th century land reform movements in different parts of the world such as the *ejido* in Mexico, the *gramdan* in India, the *kibbutz* in Israel, and the *Ujamaa Vijijini* in Tanzania. Black power organizers in Albany, who were motivated by the goals of community control and social change borrowed from these different land reform movements to create the first CLT. They did so, not as a tool for affordable housing, but rather (as the CLT's founders put it) so that, "a legitimate alternative institutional expression of land ownership may be found, thereby contributing to the much-needed social and economic reconstruction of America."[1] While there were a few CLTs created in the 1970s, the model began to really grow in the 1980s as large and well known CLTs were created in Dudley Street in Boston, and in the Old North End in Burlington, VT. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw even more growth, as the CLT became firmly part of the community development industry system, and its role largely reduced to the maintenance of affordable housing units[2]. CLTs came through the foreclosure crisis with very few foreclosures, and that resulted in quite a few more supporters. But such support has come with the emphasis on the simply pragmatic uses of the CLT, rather than its far more potentially transformative character as a form of community control over land. Thus, by the time 2010 arrived, John Davis, a longtime CLT advocate and consultant argued that, "a contest for the soul of the community land trust" was underway.[3]

The pragmatic and political potential of CLTs

The pragmatic potential of the CLT as a tool for affordable housing comes from several different sources. The most important of those is the retention of the affordable housing subsidy that makes the housing affordable in the first place. Most forms of subsidized housing in the United States, with the exception of public housing, have time limits, after which the property owner can decide to convert the housing to market rate. When that happens, the subsidies that made the bricks and mortar housing units affordable are lost—or, more accurately, those subsidies are redirected to the owners of the property and away from the larger public. In a CLT, that does not happen, and the CLT effectively buries the subsidy in the land as it removes the land from the speculative market and enforces its use restrictions on the resale prices for the homes on the land. The appeal of this to pragmatic, and resource-constrained governments is fairly obvious. The second part of the appeal of CLTs as a tool for affordable housing is that they are very flexible in what kinds of housing can go on the land. By this I mean both how dense the housing can be (single family homes; 2-4 unit houses; and multi-family properties of all sizes). That means that the form can be utilized in very different kinds of neighborhoods without having to alter the aesthetics of the housing, and thereby mitigate some of the typical pushback from homeowners who do not want affordable housing near them. Finally, this is a way to do permanent affordable housing that is non-governmental. And while the systematic under-funding of public housing in the United States is, itself, an enormous housing injustice, the reality—especially for pragmatic local officials—is that building new, publicly owned and managed properties is not

1   *The above paragraph relies heavily on Davis's (2010) history of CLTs, and I encourage those who are interested in learning more to consult that text. See also: Swann et al. 1972,: xvi.*

2   *That "industry system" itself had emerged through the transformation of many community organizers into community developers in the 1980s. In that transformation, they narrowed their goals and tactics and became focused on building affordable housing and doing economic development; rather than fighting for housing and economic justice. For more on this, see, DeFilippis, 2004.*

3   *Davis 2010: 38.*

likely to occur. The CLT enables comparable permanence, without having to necessarily revisit the fight to fund and development public housing. It also does so in a way that, theoretically at least, enables people residing within the housing to have control over the land. It does not, in short, politically marginalize the residents within its housing as public housing did for so many residents.[4] This last point leads to the discussion of the political potential of CLTs.

CLTs have the potential to be an important part of efforts for social and political transformation in the United States and elsewhere. There are several reasons for this. First, transforming land into the commodity of real property has long been recognized as a vital part of making capitalism work. This has been observed by thinkers as diverse as John Locke, Karl Polanyi, and Hernando de Soto.[5] Therefore, transforming land into a community-controlled non-commodity has the potential to do real political work. Second, as was indicated in the prior paragraph, CLTs have structures that enable for working class and poor people to have much more control over their housing and their communities. That, in and of itself, is transformative in an American political economy that routinely and systematically disempowers working class and poor people—especially working class and poor people of color. Third, the model enables radical political goals to be lived—both by those who came to the model because of their politics, and, importantly, those who became politically transformed by virtue of living in a CLT. This latter situation does not appear to happen often, but it does occur.[6]

The pragmatic and political limits of CLTs

Despite the apparent appeal of CLTs as a pragmatic housing tool, and despite the incredibly rapid growth in the number of CLTs in this century—there are now 225 CLTs in the United States—there are still very few actual housing units on CLT lands.[7] The most recent estimate is that there are roughly 12,000 housing units on CLT land.[8] That is a miniscule number and would not be enough to address the housing issues of a single mid-sized city; it is clearly a paltry sum for a country of 330 million people. That we have only 12,000 units in CLTs is a testament to the practical difficulties of using CLTs for housing justice. These difficulties are of several different kinds. First, the subsidies required for CLTs are disproportionately front-loaded (that is, are required at the beginning). This can make acquiring new properties very difficult—especially in markets with expensive real estate—and usually requires either a sizeable grant of capital or a grant of land; or, in some cases both. Second, CLTs that do owner-occupied housing can struggle to find mortgage lenders willing to make loans for houses on CLT land, and CLTs that do rental realize pretty quickly that removing land from the housing cost equation is still not enough to get affordable housing for low-income people. Other, deeper, and ongoing subsidies are needed, and those have to be obtained somehow. Third, getting the land often requires support from local politicians and bureaucrats. This can be hard to come by, for two distinct reasons. The first is that land is a central part of what local governments have control over, which makes the real estate industry particularly interested in, and therefore remarkably influential in, local politics. We live in cities governed by "the real estate state," and therefore local efforts that directly challenge the framework of: "land=real estate property=commodity for investors and speculators," can be hard to win politically.[9] The second reason is that local bureaucrats tend to be "small-c conservative." They would prefer to continue doing things as they have done, and policy interventions that are novel can be hard for them to understand, accept, or implement. The end result of all this is that doing affordable housing on CLTs is a long, arduous process and the miniscule number of units on CLT lands in the United States is indicative of that.

4 *Drake Rodriguez 2014.*

5 *De Soto* (2000) *famously wrote about land as a commodity as the key to "the mystery of capital."*

6 *DeFilippis, et al. 2019.*

7 *Thaden 2018.*

8 *Thaden 2018.*

9 *Stein 2019.*

The political limits of CLTs take rather different forms than the practical limits, and are mostly self-created. The bulk of CLTs now "apolitical," narrowly pragmatic, and geared towards property acquisition for affordable housing for homeownership. They are now firmly rooted in the community development industry system, and the much larger non-profit industrial complex, and as such are not inclined to embrace the radical potential of CLTs for housing justice, and ill-equipped to mobilize a community if they were inclined to do so. Further, the embrace by many CLTs, and the national scale Grounded Solutions Network[4], of the goal of homeownership ironically reinforces the ideological hegemony of homeownership as *the* norm and goal for working class people.[10] This narrow and unchallenging political direction of the leadership of the CLT industry/movement is mirrored in the understandings of those involved in them. In my own research we found that CLTs have fairly modest political meanings for those who live on CLT land, and for the staffs and board members at CLTs.[11]

Conclusion

CLTs are in a prolonged period of growth in the United States and other countries. This growth is the result of the pragmatic and political potential of CLTs. But the practical constraints on CLT growth are real, and not likely to be overcome any time soon. Thus the growth in CLTs is far more apparent in the number of CLTs in the country, than in the amount of land and/or housing in CLTs' portfolios. Relatedly, the political potential of CLTs as vehicles that enable both community control by working class and poor communities, and the de-commodification of land, is currently being squandered or unrealized by most involved in CLTs. And the transformation of land ownership that is at the heart of CLTs appears to have modest political content in-and-of-itself.

However, the model enables and supports transformative thought and action. The potential political power of collective land ownership remains; even if that power is too often latent rather than real. Those of us that are working for the "much-needed social and economic reconstruction of America" (to return to how the first CLT founders talked about it) need to recognize the limitations of CLTs, even when we embrace their potential. ▪

10 *The Grounded Solutions Network emerged out of the merger of the National Community Land Trust Network and Cornerstone Partnerships (a technical assistance provider for shared-equity homeownership), and that merger was a result of the leadership at the Network wanting to steer CLTs into a basket of other forms of homeownership (deed-restricted homeownership and limited-equity cooperatives, in particular). Thus the merger itself, is the result of, and expression of, this narrowing of the agenda of CLTs to simply a vehicle for affordable housing.*

11 *DeFilippis, et al. 2019.*

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We Buy Home

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In San Francisco Bay Area neighborhoods that were redlined and are still struggling through the wake of the foreclosure crisis, bold yellow signs tacked to electrical polls map out the gaze of real estate investors. The bandit signs, as they are called, are daily acts of violence, reminding the remaining low-wealth residents of their insecurity. In 2016, I began taking down the signs as I travelled around Oakland—some you can knock off easily with a long stick, others require a drill or a box-cutter and a ladder. On the same routes where I would find the signs, I would often find the signals of a recent eviction—half a sidewalk stacked with the belongings of family or individual. On the signs, I began painting objects that evoke a summertime yard sale or bbq as a reflection of the celebratory history of real estate speculation and the predatory impact of this for African American and Latinx residents in the Bay Area. I also created and installed new signs with reworked messages in "high-opportunity" or predominantly white, wealthy neighborhoods and on key development projects as a way to invert the optics and message of the bandit signs.

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Beyond Financialization

In This Section

Beyond Extraction

Gilda Haas, LA Co-op Lab

When John Jacob Astor died in New York City in 1848, he was the richest man in the world.

His death occurred a mere decade after the Panic of 1837, a five-year financial crisis that was comparable in its severity to the Great Depression. Forty percent of all banks failed. Many New Yorkers lost their homes to foreclosure and so many others were behind on their mortgage payments that the state passed a bill that gave them all a year to catch up.

And, while homeowners and investors were losing their shirts, John Jacob Astor snatched up their losses.

Astor's attitude towards real estate was that he preferred to buy or lease land and then rent it to developers whose projects he sometimes financed. Many of his profits came from acquiring large tracts of land and then subdividing them into smaller lots, which he would lease for short periods of time. The tenant was responsible for maintaining the property and paying taxes. And then, when the lease ran out, Astor would either raise the rent or buy the buildings that his tenants had built themselves and rent them out again. According to Justin Kaplan, author of *When the Astors Owned New York*, "his chief way of getting rich was to buy up tenements, keep them that way, and extract rents;" his guiding principle being "never sell anything, just hold onto it and suck the blood out of it."[1]

So, when Astor died, a great source of this richest-man-in-the-world's wealth to be passed on to his heirs included enormous land holdings in Manhattan and their rents. This infuriated James Gordon Bennett, editor and founder of the *New York Herald,* who responded to this confluence of events by reprinting Astor's will on the front page of his newspaper along with his own editorial

1   *Ulam 2008.*

that charged Astor with hoarding wealth that really belonged to the people of New York City. He argued that the steadily increasing value of Astor's holdings — land and rent — did not come from his own initiative, but rather, from the "industry of the citizens of New York."[2]

Regardless if Bennett's motivation was to sell papers or authentic moral outrage, I applaud his very public act of extraction-shaming. We need more of that today, as extraction of rents, of value, of the very essence of the land beneath it all has become capital's primary enterprise.

We particularly need to call out the perpetrators who have been extracting wealth from black and brown communities without reprisal or reparation.

Housing, as a profit-maximizing, extractive real estate practice (as opposed to society's response for the human need for shelter) possesses deeply racialized roots. It has been over 40 years since the enactment of the Community Reinvestment Act, which at the time, purported to eliminate redlining of communities by banks by making these practices visible to the public and subject to reprisals by financial regulators. However, those reprisals were few and far between.

Redlining's legacy of racial segregation continues to define opportunity and denial; resilience and precarity; and inclusion and exclusion in all matter concerning housing and land use. In other words, there is a renewed interest in the persistent and unequal problem of where and how people live. Today the stark inequality of homeless tents amidst L.A.'s palms and condos, the racialized impacts of the 2008 financial crisis, and new movements like Black Lives Matter that shine a light on all this and more, have revitalized redlining's currency in recent civil discourse, with:

- "The Case for Reparations," Ta-Nehisi Coates' expansive 2014 article in The Atlantic, persuasively subtitled: "Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy. Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole;"[3]

- The 2018 publication of Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*;[4]

- The 2019 national tour of the "Undesign the Redline" exhibit, "a timeline of discrimination, segregation, and housing policy in the U.S." produced by Designing the WE and the Enterprise Foundation.[5]

Each of the above examples defines redlining as the practice of denying loans or services to an area based on its racial and ethnic composition; each provides a window into the historic through-lines of racialized systems as an interplay between policy, practice, and resistance, and each explains the role of redlining in a longer and deeper unresolved history.

Redlining's legacy is well summarized by real estate industry notable Homer Hoyte, who helped author the training manuals of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers in the 1930s, and then later, the underwriting standards of HUD's predecessor, the Federal Housing Administration, which required restrictive covenants in any housing developments with which it was involved. Hoyte insisted:

2 *Bennett 1848.*

3 *Coates 2014.*

4 *Rothstein 2018.*

5 *Enterprise Foundation 2019.*

"There is one difference in people, namely race, that can result in very rapid decline, and usually such decline can be partially avoided by segregation."[6]

Although these words were written in 1931, the ideas they represent are baked too deeply into our institutions to be dislodged without strategic, intentional intervention. As evidence, note that as late as 2015, Hudson City Savings Bank was ordered to pay over $30 million in fines and restitution because they had been caught disproportionately denying loans to Black and Latino neighborhoods.[7]

And this is why *Root Shock* author, Dr. Mindy Fullilove, refers to the persistent histories of redlining as a "Rosetta Stone" for understanding the current intersectional crisis of racial inequality in our society.[8]

However, even with this understanding of the disease, the current structure of relationships between capital and community makes the possibility of curing racial inequality even more elusive. The fact that the land and buildings that comprise the physical plant of our cities are increasingly vaults for global capital—simply places to store (and, presumably, to later extract) capital—is very well summarized in the introduction to Samuel Stein's engaging and useful book, *Capital City*, which accounts:

> "Global real estate is now worth $217 trillion—36 times the value of all the gold that was ever mined in history...Sixty percent of the world's assets now consists of real estate with 73% of that in housing. In 2016, 37% of home sales were to absentee investors, including equity investors like Blackstone, the largest landlord in the world."[9]

These new concentrations cause housing values to rise, and with them rents.

But what of communities where property values are not sky-rocketing? Where disinvestment is more the rule than the exception? In *Capital Cities*, Stein asserts that these divergent tendencies of hyper-investment and disinvestment are two sides of the same coin: "a political economy organized around real estate." Stein explains, "When space becomes the primary commodity and rents overdetermine all other economic activity, cities become vulnerable to extremes of wealth and poverty, glitz and grit." Thus, the gentrification and speculation that we can see are merely the tip of the iceberg — the expression of the consequences of a deeper system that Stein aptly calls the "real estate state."[10]

What is most important and most daunting here is the fact that today, capital's global growth strategy is centered in real estate, and that without intervention, is heading towards crisis with those who have been excluded for prior generations the most viciously victimized.

We don't have far to go from this analysis to locate the common roots of climate and community disruption in the inequality-producing problematics of our dominant economic system.

To the Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project collective, climate disruption is essentially an economic problem with disastrous environmental and social consequences because:

6   *Hoyt 1932: 91.*

7   *CFPB 2015.*

8   *Fullilove and Fullilove 2010: 31.*

9   *Stein 2019: 3.*

10   *Stein 2019: 5, 225.*

"An economy based on extracting from a finite system faster than the capacity of the system to regenerate will eventually come to an end — either through collapse or through our intentional re-organization."[11]

Movement Generation calls out the "enclosure" of wealth and power as the disruptive purpose of the dominant economy, its extractive nature, and its source in the exploitation of labor and rent. They rename our dominant system of industrial production "dig-burn-dump," as in "we dig up oil, burn it in cars, and dump the waste everywhere."[12] Their proposed counter-system is a "regenerative economy" — one that is essentially non-extractive and that produces restoration, community resilience and social equity governed by a deep democracy where people have control over decisions that affect their lives.[13]

Assuming that deep democracy appeals to us — assuming that we not only have the motivation, but also the means and opportunity to govern, create, and experiment, I offer here a story about a small (but very promising and growing) experiment that is dedicated to building a democratic and sustainable and non-extractive practice of development and finance that can, to paraphrase Bennett, redistribute ownership by investing "in the industry of the people of L.A." It is the story of the L.A. Co-op Lab collective of which I am a member and which itself is a member of a larger network of peers that support each other and comprise Seed Commons, our shared financial cooperative.

The purpose of the L.A. Co-op Lab is to redistribute ownership in L.A. by supporting the development of worker cooperatives — businesses that are democratically owned and controlled by the people that work there. It is one intervention among many to push back against the forces of inequality, exclusion, and extraction. It is intended as a counter to gentrification and displacement and for this reason, our resources are dedicated to people and communities who have been historically excluded from fully benefitting from the economy as a function of the racial divide and discrimination.

Right around the time that we started, I was invited to an early convening that was hosted by The Working World, a radical lending organization that started about 15 years ago in Argentina to help finance and develop the cooperatives that were being formed out of the recuperated factory movement, where workers were taking over the means of production in plants that had been abandoned by their owners. After some years in Argentina, The Working World set up shop to support workers in Nicaragua, and then, upon returning to the U.S. devised a similar method of non-extractive financing for our particular context. One of their best known and successful investment and support ventures is New Era Windows in Chicago, a windows manufacturing company that was taken over by the workers after various occupations against the owners' plans to shut the place down, as similar to the Argentina experience that you might find here.

What was compelling about this first meeting was the proposition, that rather than setting up offices or franchises around the country to spread their mission of non-extractive lending for democratic ownership, they looked around for where local people were doing interesting and committed work in that wheelhouse and invited them into a conversation about becoming a national learning community of local peers that could share values, mutual support, and together, create a shared instrument of non-extractive finance and development. The premise was to recapture some of the wealth that was stolen from Black and Brown communities—through social investors, philanthropy, and any other available means—and repurpose it through a financial cooperative, now called

11 *Movement Generation 2016.*

12 *Movement Generation 2016: 9.*

13 *Movement Generation 2016: 14.*

Seed Commons, to cultivate our potential for locally based sustainable economies, across many differences, experiments and contexts.

One touchstone that binds our efforts is a set of shared principles, the most important of which, along with Non-Extraction, is the principle of Radical Inclusion. Radical Inclusion defines who the system that we are building is for. This requires us both as a local project and as a national network to prioritize lending and accompanying support to people and communities who have been historically excluded from finance, whose potential has been diminished by the racial divide, and whose communities and families have suffered the brunt of every extractive mechanism our society has yet to offer.

This changes what our loan applications look like, which is different from the "3 C's" standard of a typical bank which stands for:

- credit history — our folks don't have that;

- collateral — they don't have that either, and even when they do, it would be counter to our purpose to take an asset that was neither a function of our labor or investment;

- "character" — our folks have plenty of that, but the traditional meaning here would exclude the undocumented, returning citizens, people who suffered evictions, and others whose lives have been marred by exclusion. This too would be counter to our purpose.

Similarly, our principles of non-extraction, productive sustainability, and democratic ownership necessarily redefine and then still consider common financial measures such as risk, value, and return on investment.

As we take multiple paths to build a regenerative counter to the extractive economy which has mismanaged resources so that climate has become an existential threat, housing a precious commodity, and employment a series of precarious engagements, the principle of Radical Inclusion will bode us well. As Movement Generation says, "transition is inevitable. Justice is not."

That ball lies firmly in our court.

Will Seed Commons and the L.A. Co-op Lab slay the extraction beast? Not by a long shot, or, at least, not for a long time. And, there are many more noble experiments with which we are aligned towards that end. But as more and more of us productively put our principles into practice we are gaining a much stronger muscle for democratic governance, a greater collective self-confidence, and experiencing living examples of what is possible when capital is transformed into a servant of justice.

At this moment there are several variations of what to call the goal in a manner that amounts to more than the sum of its parts. We use the term "non-extractive" to define our lending, but as negative construct, it is a word-in-progress. Movement Generation and others use the more affirmative "regenerative," which borrows from the wisdom of nature and the framework of a "just transition," which, perhaps, best describes this moment, that it is one concerned with justice and open to change of various stripes of "right." Right to the City and others use "development without displacement"—which again, involves the "not." As a movement we have not yet landed a common term. We use them all.

We use some. I am ok with this because we too are in transition. The words will change, the words will come, and the words will change again.

I really like how the idea of this moment is captured in *Octavia's Brood*, an anthology that conflates science fiction with organizing and social change, a proposition that makes perfect sense to me.[14] There is an essay at the end of the book by science fiction author Tananarive Due, who describes the coming-of-age of the book's namesake, Octavia Butler, a black woman who was the first science fiction writer to ever win a MacArthur award:

> "Octavia was dyslexic, the only child of a housekeeper, whose father died when she was a baby. She grew up in poverty. Seeking escape from the constraints of her life when she was 12, Octavia started watching a movie called Devil Girl from Mars and she had the epiphany that so many of us have experienced: 'Hell, I can write better than that.'"[15]

And therein lies our motivation. I am confident that we have the means and opportunity. We can all write a better story than extraction. We can do that together. We can all start that project now. ▪

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14 brown and Imarisha 2015.

15 Due 2015: 259.

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Mortgaged Lives: A European Perspective

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The risk that escalating mortgage debt and the financialisation of housing poses on the global economy received increasing attention in the aftermath of the US subprime mortgage crisis triggered ten years ago.[1] Although less attention has been paid to the European housing crisis in the global media, many advanced European economies were just as badly hit by the financialisation of housing and the unregulated expansion of mortgage lending.

Indeed, in 2014, the Bank of England issued a warning: the increase in gross mortgage lending combined with the rise in UK housing prices were putting the country's financial stability under serious threat (Cunliffe 2014). At the time, the running figure for mortgage debt in the UK was sitting at an alarming £1 trillion, with predictions for continuous expansion. The UK was not alone. Data from the European Mortgage Federation in 2016 reported the ratio of outstanding residential loans to disposable income for the UK at almost 100%, and this figure was even higher in other advanced European economies: 167% in Sweden, 178% in Denmark and 199% in the Netherlands.[2]

Since the 2008 crisis, the increasing exposure of hundreds of thousands of households across Europe to the fluctuations of global financial markets through mortgage lending has increased the risk that rising and unregulated mortgage debt poses on advanced economies. However, despite the sustained focus on the macroeconomic consequences of the escalating mortgage debt, the consequences of the same process on households and everyday life—what Kaika and Ruggiero call "the lived dimension of financialisation"—still receive far less attention in both research and policy making in the US and Europe alike.[3]

In a recent paper titled "Mortgaged lives": the biopolitics of debt and housing financialisation we consider mortgages not only as market tools only but also

1 *Aalbers 2008.*

2 *European Mortgage Federation 2017.*

3 *Kaika and Ruggiero 2016. For notable exceptions in the US see Desmond 2012; Morduch and Schneider 2017.*

as instruments that engineer an intimate relationship between global financial markets, and the bodies and lives of the workforce.[4] Drawing upon ethnographic research and in-depth interviews with people affected by mortgage debt defaults in Spain, we show how mortgage contracts connect not only a person's current and future income into global speculative financial strategies, but also tie the practices of everyday life into the very heart of financial markets. In other words, as housing becomes financialised, so does life itself. This process, we argue, affects not only access to housing, but also the ability to care for oneself and others, perceptions of self-esteem, social status, class, citizenship and belonging to a community or society more broadly.

In documenting the changes that macro-economic processes and the expansion of mortgage credit brought to everyday lives, our work explains how living a "Mortgaged Life" means that the fluctuation of interest rates, real estate prices and currency exchange rates become factors determining not only access to housing, but the very conditions and (im)possibilities of life itself. Building on the concept of Mortgaged Lives coined by two of the founders of the Spanish social movement for housing rights named the Platform for Mortgage Affected People (PAH), our research shows how mortgage holders realise that they had never really been homeowners or middle class: just a proletariat indebted for life to their creditors.[5]

In the case of Spain, as the 1997-2007 housing boom busted after 2008, and unemployment rates skyrocketed, hundreds of thousands of households became unable to pay their mortgage instalments. Since 2008, over half a million properties have been repossessed and over a quarter of a million families evicted from their mortgaged homes. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of people were left indebted for life even after they were evicted from their mortgaged homes, since Spanish law does not allow for personal bankruptcy claims and commits mortgage holders to pay their outstanding debt in full even after their homes are repossessed. In Greece, a similar social disaster is pending today, as the most conservative estimate counts the number of households that currently cannot service their debt (mortgage or otherwise) at over 300,000. The law that has thus far protected indebted households from repossessions and evictions is undergoing revision under pressure from Greece's lenders and the supervisory 'troika': the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The institutional and state response (or lack of) to the vulnerability and loss of agency created by unregulated mortgage lending combined with an economic downturn and potential indebtedness for life (particularly in the case of Spain) has already become a source of social unrest. But it has also generated spaces for experimentation with new practices of resistance, social organisation, coping and solidarity, as one of the authors in this text explores in her articles on the creation of political subjects and on insurgent practices in Spain.[6] However, these practices of personal and community coping in relation to indebted lives remain largely undocumented and their innovative social impact fails to reach channels that would enable some aspects of social innovation to become institutionalised and potentially transformational in the long term

Moreover, the implications of the explosion in the numbers of men and women who live 'mortgaged lives' reach far beyond an increase in economic risk and volatility of households. Mortgage and debt affected citizens in both Greece and Spain defy standard categorisation as 'urban poor.' With the values of repossessed properties ranging between 50,000-300,000 Euros, these citizens form a newly impoverished middle class, what one of the authors of this text calls a

4   *Garcia-Lamarca and Kaika 2016.*

5   *Colau and Alemany 2013.*

6   *Garcia-Lamarca, 2017a; 2017b.*

new category of *nouveau poor*.[7] In a recent article titled "Between compassion and racism," Kaika furthermore draws attention to how escalating indebtedness can be linked to the inability of people to act as active citizens: "as housing, healthcare, etc. become accessible mainly through private loans and mortgage markets, private welfare debt becomes the biopolitical tool that enrols the workforce into volatile financial speculative practices and turns citizens into fear-imbued 'idiots,' i.e. private individuals who can only care for their private matters."[8] Kaika notes in this article that the word "idiot" is a pejorative term derived from the Greek word *idiotes* [ἰδιώτης] which literally means "[a] 'private person' (as opposed to one taking part in public affairs)."[9]

In conclusion, the increasing indebtedness of households in the European North and South poses not only an economic challenge, but also a serious social and political challenge which remains uncharted territory, with the role of communities and grassroots organisations in resilience building and support until now poorly understood and supported. As it transpires that recovery and institution building in the European South will be lengthy processes, Spain and Greece become living laboratories for policy experimentation, which thus far has had meagre economic results and massive social cost.

For the time being, a continuous rise in housing prices, relative economic stability, low interest rates and relatively low unemployment keep mortgage defaults at bay in the European north. However, as 100% loan to value mortgages have reappeared on the market, and as mortgaged homeownership increasingly expands as a way not only to access housing, but also to secure a future income in the face of declining welfare provision and rising rents, the combination of escalating housing prices, rock-bottom interest rates and extensive mortgage lending is a potentially explosive mixture not only financially, but also socially. The impact of mortgage debt defaults cuts across borders, educational, income, status, gender and age groups, and we underline the urgent need to focus beyond the macro-economics of mortgage lending and onto their personal, family, health and community impacts. ▪

7   *Kaika 2012*

8   *Kaika 2017.*

9   *Kaika 2017: 1275.*

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Towards Abolitionism

In This Section

Segregatory Consequences of the Carceral State

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This essay argues for a bridging of carceral studies and housing justice research.[1] To illustrate the value of this approach, I focus one area of significant intersection between the two fields: how segregation and carcerality relate to each other. I describe how the country's systems of policing and punishment not only take advantage of but also produce racial residential segregation—the latter of which I refer to as carceral segregation. From this analysis, it becomes clear that housing justice requires an abolitionist approach to the country's systems of policing and punishment.

Why consider the relationship between carcerality and segregation?

Fifty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act (FHA), designed to ban discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, the degree of racial residential segregation has declined slowly, and remains relatively high for Black residents relative to other minority groups.[2] Because access to resources and power are tied to where one lives, segregation is often understood as the foundation upon which extreme racial inequality is built. Too often though, this perspective functions to silo segregation from other axes of racial inequality.

One way this perspective obscures as it illuminates is in what it leaves out from the explanations of why segregation has remained persistent. These explanations often revolve around personal preferences, discrimination at the individual level, lack of access to financial resources, institutional barriers, and local, state, and federal policies that entrench segregation. But missing from these accounts is the role of policing and punishment in shaping access to neighborhoods and housing.

1   *By carceral I refer to a broad view of the country's policing and punishment mechanisms, one which includes not just police, courts, jails, and prisons, but also homeland security, border enforcement, surveillance technologies, punitive law and policy, and so on. See more here:* http://www.processhistory. org/the-size-and-scope-of-the-carceral-state/

2   *Logan 2013.*

In this piece I suggest that we consider the carceral state—broadly, the policing and punishment functions of local, state, and federal government—as an important mechanism of creating and entrenching racial residential segregation. Particularly as the country's systems of policing and punishment have grown and diffused since the early 1900s, the ways that these systems build upon or themselves create racial segregation become increasingly important. Rather than functioning as separate pillars of racial inequality, segregation and carcerality are better understood as intertwined.

We already know segregation facilitates policing and punishment

Existing work illustrates the many ways policing takes advantage of or builds upon segregation. Black and Brown men and women living in segregated urban areas experience extreme policing and persistent surveillance, itself a form of intimidation, stigmatization, and punishment that transforms the relationship between members of these groups and the state.[3] Take, for example, Victor Rios' work on the policing of Black and Brown youth in Oakland.[4] There, the extreme surveillance and policing of these young people was made possible in part by racial segregation and concentration. Without a segregated geography making it so possible to police a subjugated group, these tactics might be more difficult to accomplish, or the state would need to achieve its ends through other means. In Los Angeles, the Million Dollar Hoods project maps the scale of carceral spending at the neighborhood level, illustrating just how spatially targeted the city and county's punishment systems are.[5]

Looking to other cities, we see the rise of stop and frisk tactics, police sweeps, traffic stops, broken windows policing, and expansion of criminal and civil codes as other opportunities to surveil, police, and assert control—each of which relies on having access to minority groups in relatively defined areas. And this is not just about segregation in cities: evidence from Ferguson suggests that these tactics operate in segregated suburbs as well—where police can easily stop, detain, fine, and imprison Black residents without even inconveniencing whites in adjacent areas.[6] Here Soss and Weaver's analysis suggests that policing is used to govern segregation.[7]

If we accept that in these cases, the state takes advantage of racial segregation to deploy extreme versions of policing upon particular minority groups, then the corollary questions are whether and how the relationship between policing and segregation operates in the other direction. Setting aside how policing and punishment follow segregation, we might also consider how policing and punishment creates segregation. I argue that we should think of the relationship between systems of policing and punishment and patterns of racial segregation as bi-directional—policing can take advantage of racial segregation, and it can create racial segregation.

Turning to carceral segregation

In what follows, I sketch out examples of policing and punishment interacting with the housing market and suggest ways that these interactions might entrench racial segregation. I organize this review from broad to narrow—starting with how policing and punishment restrict people's access to neighborhoods, then how these forces restrict people's access to housing within those neighborhoods, and finally how they shrink people's feelings of safety within their own homes.

3   *Anderson 2013; Herbert 1997; Jones 2009; Rios 2011.*

4   *Rios 2011.*

5   *See:* http://milliondollarhoods.org/

6   *Boyles 2015; Lowery 2016.*

7   *Soss and Weaver 2017.*

Access to neighborhoods

The spatial implications of the most prominent aspects of the carceral state—jails and prisons—have been well-identified by scholars such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore.[8] But the extension of the nation's systems of punishment outside of these physical structures also has implications for an analysis of race and space, functioning as a powerful tool of what Ananya Roy terms racial banishment.[9] While the literature on banishment illustrates many pathways of expulsion that are segregatory, in what follows, I focus on three examples tied to policing and punishment: gang injunctions, mental health courts, and gentrification.

Ana Muñiz's work on gang injunctions in Los Angeles illustrates the way that these policies banish Black and Brown men from neighborhoods.[10] Once the city has secured an injunction against a gang, a police department is empowered to determine who it believes is a member of that gang, and to enforce the injunction against them. The injunctions impose significant restrictions on their ability to live within the boundaries in which the injunction is enforced. Muñiz documents how these injunctions are applied to members of a community based largely on racial stereotypes or racialized proxies for gang membership (how one looks, how one is dressed, whom one is seen with). Once included in the injunction, a person's rights are constrained and his liability for incarceration and punishment by the state increases dramatically. One adaptation described by affected individuals is to temporarily or permanently leave the boundaries of the injunction, thereby lowering risk to themselves and their communities. The injunction, therefore, illustrates a case of policing advancing segregation by facilitating the removal of men of color from urban space through their targeted criminalization.

Meanwhile, in Chicago's mental health courts, Julian Thompson documents how similar processes of spatial regulation force people involved in the criminal legal system out of predominantly Black neighborhoods.[11] Mental health courts are targeted at individuals who are arrested for non-violent felonies who also have mental health or substance abuse problems. They allow these individuals to avoid imprisonment by participating in a court monitored community level rehabilitation program. Thompson documents how judges in these courts advise program participants (including whites) not to live in or return to neighborhoods on Chicago's predominantly Black west and south sides and suggest that moving to or remaining on the predominantly white north side would be better for their own lives, would help them avoid relapsing into drug use, and would be viewed favorably by the court when it made a final determination of whether they are making improvements sufficient to merit completion of the program (thereby avoiding imprisonment). In this way the court is essentially mandating segregation as a condition of staying out of prison.

Finally, combining data on gentrification and the deployment of Stop and Frisk tactics by police across New York City, Laniyonu finds that while census tracts experiencing gentrification do not themselves experience higher levels of policing, the tracts surrounding them see higher rates of aggressive policing of young Black and Brown men.[12] Legewie and Schaeffer analyze local 311 calls to show that at fuzzy racial boundaries, including those indicating ongoing gentrification, tenants increase their rates of 311 calls—deploying the state to police race.[13] These findings suggest the possibility of further displacement, the advancement of gentrification, or the prevention of access to a recently gentrified space.

8   Gilmore 2007.

9   Roy 2017.

10 Muñiz 2015.

11 Thompson 2019.

12 Laniyonu 2017.

13 Legewie and Schaeffer 2016.

Access to housing

The recent case of Matthew Charles exemplifies how landlords' use of criminal records as grounds to deny a rental application functions to extend the racial inequality of the criminal legal system to the housing market.[14] Freed after a 22-year sentence for a non-violent drug related offense, Charles found employment and purchased a car in his home state of Tennessee, overcoming two large hurdles in the process of re-entering the community. However, his rental application at a unit he felt best suited his needs was denied because of his prior criminal record and lack of credit history. Because federal housing support for low-income households excludes those with criminal backgrounds, this option was also cut off from him. These conditions force people leaving the system into a neighborhood they prefer less but which will not discriminate on the basis of prior criminal record. This dynamic will be segregatory if the distribution of landlords who will and will not discriminate on the basis of prior criminal record matches or approximates the distribution of race across neighborhoods in a given municipality. In Charles' case, extraordinary public attention and crowd-sourced assistance found him a willing landlord. But those without such remedy will likely continue to find themselves pushed to the margins of the housing market.

This mechanism of exclusion also appears in the way that immigration is policed and regulated.[15] Anti-immigrant housing ordinances passed in cities around the country attempt to bar landlords and property owners from renting to undocumented immigrants or penalize them for having done so. According to the Immigration Policy Center, as of 2007, 104 municipalities in 28 states had adopted such ordinances.[16] Their adoption was "not correlated with the size of a locality's foreign-born or Latino population, but with a rapid increase in the foreign-born or Latino share of the population, especially since 2000." In other words, adoption of ordinances aimed at denying undocumented residents access to housing are an attempt to preserve white dominance of neighborhood space. These rules are likely to push undocumented people to informal housing arrangements, landlords willing to skirt the law, or to other municipalities altogether. This dynamic can have racialized, and therefore segregatory, implications.

Safety from eviction

Beyond access to neighborhoods and housing, residents may also find themselves targeted for eviction and policing in their homes, in ways that have segregatory impacts. Crime-free housing and nuisance ordinances vary across municipalities but generally enact strict rules that push landlords to evict tenants on the basis of 911 service calls to their units (including calls tenants themselves make for assistance) or make landlords include clauses in leases making criminal activity (broadly defined) grounds for eviction. Research in Milwaukee illustrates how these regulations disproportionately affect women who report incidents of domestic violence to the police and are exposed to eviction on account of it.[17] In Los Angeles, white residents have been documented weaponizing nuisance ordinances to file complaints about Black neighbors and pressure their landlords to evict them. In Faribault, Minnesota, the ACLU finds a more extreme version of crime-free housing rules that allow police to tell landlords to evict tenants if they suspect them of engaging in "even minor criminal activity, even if the person is not prosecuted and even if they are found not guilty in a criminal case.[19]" The rules were adopted after a large number of Somali residents moved into the area.

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14 See: https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2019/03/08/matthew-charles-released-prison-clemency-struggles-find-nashville-housing/3103611002/

15 *While immigration is formally considered part of civil law, following many scholars of crimmigration, I treat it here as part of the carceral state.*

16 See: https://americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/IPC%20Special%20Report%20PR.pdf

17 *Desmond and Valdez 2013.*

18 *Ocen 2012; Hayat 2016.*

19 See https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-economic-justice/minnesota-citys-ordinance-illegally-targets-people

What the above dynamics illustrate, however, is the importance of situating law enforcement in the racialized and segregatory eviction process itself. Evictions are often cast as emblematic of the cruelty and inequality embedded in the private housing market, and indeed they are. But in states and municipalities across the country, it is sheriffs who are at the heart of the process—enforcing the landlord's claim that the tenant is no longer a lawful resident and making it more difficult for tenants to assert their claims to rightful residency. So to the extent that we see eviction as a segregation problem, by implication policing is part of that system—placing the power of the state in the hands of landlords.

Finally, beyond the formal role of police in the segregation process, we can also see an expansion of policing practices as potential mechanisms of protesting or re-asserting racial segregation. The application Nextdoor, for example, has been cited in numerous cases as functioning as a platform for the surveillance and policing of race by white residents both in cases where they surveil Black residents moving in, and in cases where they use the application to assert power of neighborhoods they are gentrifying.[20]

What this means for housing justice

So far, I have focused on how systems of policing and punishment can function to racially segregate. But it is also true that policing segregates through shaping people's understanding of their own safety. Monica Bell's work suggests that Black residents avoid moving to neighborhoods that they know to be heavily policed or policed in a discriminatory manner.[21] In this manner the policing that locks people into segregated neighborhoods signals to others that they should avoid those neighborhoods for fear of similar treatment as well.

How can all of this inform a definition of housing justice? I think three conclusions are worth making.

First, in cases like crime-free housing ordinances or bans on renting to undocumented tenants, I have only offered a conceptual link between punitive policies and segregation. Further work can be done to determine whether, how, and to what extent these policies have segregatory impacts.

Second, the broad evidence outlined here should indicate that scholars and activists focused on segregation, and particularly forms of segregation which tie material resources and access to power to space, must grapple with the ways the country's expansive regimes of punishment and policing function to segregate society.

Third, this evidence suggests that the abolitionist framework built in response to the growth of the carceral state also has radical implications for housing justice. Although reforms could address each policy on a one-by-one basis, taking stock of them as a whole suggests a more radical conclusion: without addressing the carceral state we cannot break the link between where one lives and what resources one has access to. The abolitionist approach to the carceral state has clear implications for housing justice: it would create a society in which the force of the law cannot be used to prevent someone from living in a particular neighborhood or renting a home and in which tenants could not be evicted on the basis of virtually any law enforcement encounter. Abolition means not treating tenants as potential criminals, not being told by a judge where you can and cannot live in order to meet your rehabilitation metrics, not being evicted by a sheriff, and not being subject to racial banishment.

20 *Kurwa 2019.*

21 *Bell 2019.*

This is not the first paper to suggest that abolition has much to offer housing justice. Tommie Shelby has argued for an abolitionist approach to the ghetto, as a break from essentially neoliberal policy trajectories that focus on individuals rather than structures, and that force integration as a solution (rather than or without redistribution or reparations).[22] But when considering the links between segregation and the country's systems of policing and punishment, we can see just how deeply the abolitionist framework connects both sites of racial inequality. Following Shelby, we should not only apply an abolitionist framework to housing justice, but also recognize how prison abolition in and of itself contributes to housing justice, and thus how much stake people involved in housing justice research and action have in abolition's success. ▪

22 *Shelby 2016.*

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Abolish the Stalker State: A Call to Action!

Hamid Khan, on behalf of Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

"from these killing fields shall rise the lovers of freedom
picking up the banners from the fallen ones."
— Faiz Ahmad Faiz[1]

The history of surveillance in the United States is the history of patriarchy, capitalism, and white supremacy. A fundamental function of power is to trace, track, monitor, criminalize, contain, control as the necessary elements of a stalker state. We, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, use "Stalker State" not only as descriptive of structures of governance but also as a state of being within a system that was built on genocide and enslavement.

Current and historic realities demand us to peel away the layers of mainstream conversation about surveillance that are limited to invasion of privacy or turn into sensationalized debates over constitutional rights and national security prerogatives as we saw following Edward Snowden's recent expose of NSA activities. Such understandings of surveillance are rooted in race and class privilege and mask its real purpose which has always been the intent to cause harm to Black, Indigenous, Brown, Migrant, Poor and Trans bodies, bodies that for hundreds of years have been deemed the real threat to national security. Decades before COINTELPRO there were the Red Squads, and decades before the Red Squads there were Lantern Laws which were "18th century laws in New York City that demanded that Black, mixed-race and Indigenous enslaved people carry candle lanterns with them if they walked about the city after sunset, and not in company of a white person."[2]

It is with this understanding that the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition joins communities across the United States against racist police brutality and systems of oppression that foster state violence, and the continuing marginalization and

1   *Faiz 1956.*

2   *Garcia-Rojas 2016.*

murders of Black, Indigenous, and Brown people. Modern policing in the U.S. since its beginnings to control slaves and urban workers is predicated on an underlying assumption that there are classes of people outside the white and wealthy standards that police call "criminals" and now "terrorists" who must be contained in cages.

In its current order using the events of September 11th, 2001 as their excuse, police have intensified the surveillance and militarization against the classes of people they criminalize to justify apprehension, brutality, and killing. Reforms will not radically change an institution whose flaws are built in by design; institutions rooted in the use of violence to preserve a social order based upon exploitation and conquest. Abolition of policing is a multi-generational journey and the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition is fully committed to ensure safe travels for lovers of freedom and liberation in this journey.

We start with these guidelines, questions and tactics as a living marker to remind ourselves of what we are up against and how to sustain ourselves with clarity of purpose. Purpose that is not driven by reform or policy proposals but by fierceness and collective strength that is driven to abolish and dismantle the Stalker State.

Any conversation on surveillance must begin with questions such as:

1. How do we expose and debunk the conventional understanding of the nature and impact of policing in the United States?

2. How does our focus on the surveillance and data-gathering activities of police help us understand their replication and application in the larger public and private sectors that have grown exponentially in the information age and that facilitate deepening and broadening regimes of violence and control?

3. How do these policies and practices violate our human rights and deeply undermine and impact our political, structural, economic, and cultural lives?

4. What are the conversations on abolition of policing and how do we pivot these conversations beyond the lament of "legitimation crisis" into actions and solutions?

5. What is our understanding of the re-configurations of power and its multi-tangential assault on communities?

Some guiding values in building our narrative and building power against the national security police state should include:

-   Surveillance must be a process of information gathering, storing and sharing to trace, track, monitor, and to subjugate and/or eliminate the "other;"

-   The intent to cause harm is central to all surveillance, spying, and infiltration activities;

-   This is not a moment in time but continuation of history;

- There's always the "other;"

- The constitution is a blueprint for oppression;

- Policing is fundamentally flawed by design;

- De-sensationalize the rhetoric and language of national security;

- Our fight is for human rights;

- We must cleanse ourselves of space and resources that are monopolized by legalistic and reformist advocacy groups;

- Stay grounded and build power toward abolition of policing. We need to understand and organize for harm elimination and harm reduction;

- Our journey is multi-generational;

The White Gaze

The story of surveillance in these United States needs to begin with the un-packing and de-bunking of the construction of the "New World" narrative. A world where everything "old" had to be demonized, criminalized and contained, hence invisibilized. Surveillance has always been an integral part for building systems of knowledge and structures of power that have served the preservation and sustenance of white supremacy and settler colonialism.

For too long the analysis of state violence and its impact has been comfortably rooted in the soft narratives of constitutional violations, few bad apples, need for more training, more diversity, and so forth. These arguments continue to guide and control the debate and advocacy shared amongst the "progressive" advocacy community and its cohorts in the media and non-profit world. Such arguments not only miss core issues but dangerously continue to create an illusion of rights hence leading us down the un-ending fight for "reform and accountability." Furthermore, the invasion of privacy and violation of civil liberties narrative sorely misses and undermines clear analysis that the police state is an ever-expanding endeavor which is fundamentally and inherently flawed by design intended and organized to repress and control Black, Brown and Poor communities causing irreparable physical and emotional harm.

Our work has to offer deeply enriching and provocative understanding and analysis that expose multiple trajectories of the national security police state including the development, legitimization, and operationalization of tools of social control. While surveillance and data gathering were always an integral part of policing, the information revolution and the unholy marriage between policing and the post 9/11 re-configuration of national security has led to an unprecedented expansion of both. Behavioral surveillance and data mining have become the primary modes of speculation and hunches under the guise of "pre-emptive" policing. Furthermore, such tools of social control are not limited to law enforcement but are deployed through many sectors such as social services, health care, housing, and employment. It is the surveillance and policing of our bodies in every aspect of our lives. Communities of color, immigrants and the economically marginalized are the primary targets of the new modes of surveillance. These ever-expanding regimes of monitoring and control often unfold under the color of law. Consequently, critiques and resistance to these regimes remain imprisoned in legal frames of reference and reformist agendas. Our work has to

offer an alternative framework for critique and resistance by exposing the expansion of police surveillance in the inherent structural imperative of violence and control—the foundational logic of law enforcement.

In her book *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander instructively captures the racial caste hierarchy deeply embedded within the criminal (in) justice system in the United States.[3] The book strikingly and in moving ways portrays the devastating impact of mass incarceration and the relegation and maintenance of millions of Black men to second class status. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement shook the white supremacist establishment and their "community partners." Led by fierce Black folks, BLM has injected and provoked a much-needed rejection and alternative to the pathetic specter of respectability politics. As expected, the backlash and demonization of BLM by perpetrators of state violence and its supporters has been speedy and widespread.

While *The New Jim Crow* energized efforts to reform mandatory minimums and disparate sentencing laws, and the Black Lives Matter movement has generated conversations and action on many levels within and beyond social justice movements, what remains relatively invisible is a collective community-based analysis and debate on the intersectionality of numerous arteries and entry points in public and private sectors that feed and maintain the carceral state within and beyond prison walls. The national security police state continues building and deploying tactics and programs for information gathering, storing and sharing that track, trace, monitor, criminalize, incarcerate, and murder Black and Brown bodies with impunity.

The applications and enforcement of such tactics are not limited to law enforcement but permeate all sectors of our society. Some of the tactics and programs include incorporation and codification of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency tactics into domestic policing. Programs such as the National Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR), originally intended for counter-terrorism intelligence, are now a routine local policing practice under the guise of "all crimes" approach. Predictive Policing, which is grounded in counterinsurgency mapping on the battle fronts of Afghanistan and Iraq, is rapidly becoming local policing methodology in "crime prevention" strategies. Predictive algorithms are being incorporated into social services to identify "abusive parents" in child protective services. Such technologies are also being applied in private sector for "weeding out" problem tenants. Counter-terrorism practices like See Something, Say Something are being replicated by apps such as nextdoor.com by residents of upscale neighborhoods for identifying "suspicious" individuals. Electronic surveillance technology built for military use on the battle front such as facial recognition and bio-metrics collection or cell phone catchers AKA stingray are being increasingly incorporated for "investigative" purposes. Vague and abstract concepts like "observed behavior" and "reasonable indication" are becoming key determinants in crime fighting, legitimizing hunch based and speculative policing. Programs such as Countering Violent Extremism have led to the creation of FBI guidelines for all schools around the country to identify "problem" youth.

Our challenge is to advance current thinking by locating ever expanding multi-sector surveillance of marginalized and vulnerable communities as a complement and facilitator of police violence and incarceration. Our practice must turn the focus of resistance struggles from legalistic police reform to abolition of policing as we know it and re-direct resources toward communities' self-sustenance. Our organizing requires us to intersect with communities of color, immigrants, economically marginalized, youth led organizations, liberation movements, cultural warriors, community organizers, and opinion-makers.

3   *Alexander 2010.*

In order to fully understand the impact of the national security police state it is incumbent upon us to meticulously map multiple audiences layered within and outside social justice movements. The range of this mapping should include those who actively seek community partnerships with law enforcement and conduct themselves as "shock absorbers" of the system to grassroots organizers and community members who fight for the abolition of our perpetual carceral conditions but remain marginalized and considered "rigid" or "fringe" even in progressive circles.

All Power to All People! ▪

Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

Know your power!
Know your fight!

The Architecture of Surveillance

For details: https://stoplapdspying.org/policing-strategies-and-tactics/

Outer ring labels (clockwise from top): FUSION CENTERS · SAR · iWATCH · ATIS-IGG · PREDICTIVE POLICING · TRAPWIRE · STINGRAY DRT · ALPR · DRONES · HD CAMERAS · DHS MEMO · BODY CAMERAS · MILITARIZATION · JTTF

Inner quadrants: Data Collection · Policing Strategies & Tactics · Profiling · Corporate Profit
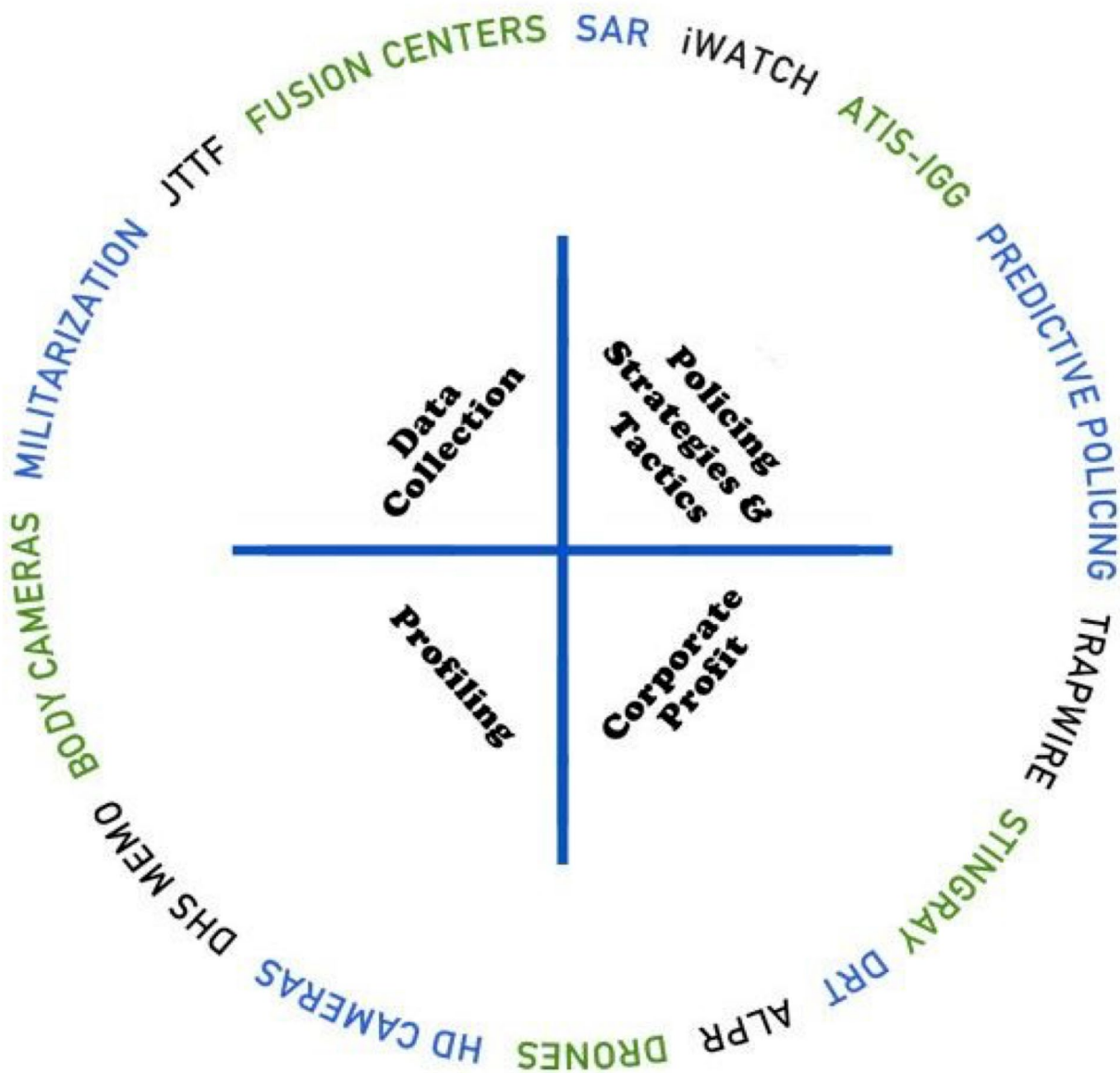
Check out the photos of surveillance equipment on the back

INFORMATION SHARING ENVIRONMENT
"STALKER STATE"

PUBLIC

Sciences
Higher Ed
General Relief
HUD
Department of Health
Fire Dept.
DMV
Schools
Waste Management
Dept. Public Social Services
Dept. Mental Health
Dept. Transportation
Hospitals
Public Transit
Libraries
"Utilities"
Social Media
Law Enforcement
Emergency Services
Postal

DHS

ICE

DOJ

FBI
CJIS
NDX
LEIS

iWATCH
ATIS-IGG
Pred Pol
LASER
Trapwire

LAPD
Architecture of Surveillance

Racial Profiling
Data Collection
Militarization
ALPR
SAR
Corporate Profit
DHS MEMO
JTTF
Policing Tactics

FUSION CTRS

Stingray
DRT
Information Storing
Information Sharing
Information Gathering
Hi Def Cameras
Drones

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Army
FBI
NG-IA
NRO
DEA
U.S. Air Force
DIA   CIA

USMC
U.S. Navy
Body Cam
Biometrics
Facial Recog
Taser/Axon
Palantir
Cloud-Based Storage
Jails
Security Firms
D of S   D of T
DHS
D of E
Electronic Manufacturer
NSA

NSA

PRIVATE

Facebook
Google
Snapchat
LinkedIn
Twitter
Private Security Firms
Instagram
Social Media
Tumblr

NCTC

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Get Informed!

Following are some of community-based outreach and education materials released by the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition since 2012. Let's stay informed as we build to dismantle the Police State. Please share widely.

- Before the Bullet Hits the Body - Dismantling Predictive Policing in Los Angeles: A community-based report on LAPD's Predictive Policing - PredPol and LASER Program. https://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Before-the-Bullet-Hits-the-Body-May-8-2018.pdf

- People's Audit on Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative - An analysis of LAPD SAR program and the Information Sharing Environment (ISE). https://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PEOPLES-AUDIT-UPDATED-APRIL-2-2013-A.pdf

- Body-Worn Cameras: An Empty Reform to Expand the Surveillance - A report that examines how police body worn cameras are an empty reform that will expand the surveillance state. https://stoplapdspying.org/body-worn-cameras-an-empty-reform-to-expand-the-surveillance-state/

- The Drone Report - Examines the rise of drones and the dangers and impact of their expansion into tactical operations of domestic law enforcement. https://stoplapdspying.org/the-drone-report-drone-free-lapdno-drones-la/

- Body Camera Fact Sheet - Body Cameras have not helped enforce accountability. https://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Body-Camera-Fact-Sheet-Jan-2015-1.pdf

- Securing Impunity - A report written on the surveillance, militarization and extensive information gathering in LA during the first week of protest against Darren Wilson's non-indictment. https://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Securing-Impunity-2.pdf

- Coalition Analysis of ACLU Report - A critical analysis of a report written by ACLU entitled "Making Smart Decision about Surveillance" that includes a draft model ordinance. https://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Coalition-Analysis-of-ACLU-Surveillance-Report.pdf

- Watch the Watchers "They Lie" - A short video that details the deployment of surveillance equipment and infiltration during the May Day march on May 1, 2015. https://stoplapdspying.org/watch-the-watchers-they-lie/

- Watch the Watchers "They Still Lie" - A second video from our Watch the Watcher series. It examines the presence of surveillance equipment and the role of police during multiple marches from Los Angeles to Santa Ana on May 1st, 2016. https://stoplapdspying.org/watch-the-watchers-they-still-lie/

- Data Driven Policing Public Hearing Presentation - Stop LAPD Spying Coalition's presentation at July 24, 2018 Public Hearing on Data Driven Policing at LA City Hall. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEDNKiRL9UQ&t=3s

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Housing Financialization and Racial Capitalism After the Global Financial Crisis

Desiree Fields, University of California, Berkley

Elora Raymond, Georgia Tech

In this essay, we situate the financialization of housing since 2008 in the broader context of racial capitalism. Broadly, housing financialization refers to a process by which home is treated in financial terms, i.e. principally as an asset rather than a site of shelter and social reproduction.[1] Here we are primarily concerned with how the process of financialization has reconfigured the American 'owner-ship society'—in which owning a home "is a defining element of model citizenship" since the 2008 financial crisis.[2] By mobilizing the Black radical tradition and centering the housing struggles of marginalized groups, we relate contemporary racialized displacement and dispossession to settler colonialism and the plantation. Such a perspective is often absent from social scientific research on the financialization of housing, which rarely considers the logics underpinning the uneven impacts of what Manuel Aalbers has called 'the real estate-financial complex' on Black and Brown people and places, even as it ably documents these consequences.[3] On one hand, such scholarship enriches our understanding of the place of housing in contemporary capitalism and concretizes the terrain of current struggles for housing justice. But a focus on racial *outcomes* can miss the process by which racial difference drives the production of value.[4] Without situating financialization in the context of racial capitalism, we stand to lose sight of questions like that posed by Chakravartty and da Silva: "*what is it about blackness and Latinidad that turns one's house* (*roof, protection, and aspiration*) *and shelter into a death trap?*"[5]

Racial capitalism and the settler colonial roots of the 2008 crisis

This question calls for forging links between today's racialized geographies of housing financialization and the much longer history of the reliance of finance and financial technologies on Black and Indigenous spaces as frontiers for new rounds of capital accumulation. Assumptions of Black and Indigenous

1   *See Fields 2017 for further discussion.*

2   *Roy 2003: 464.*

3   *Aalbers 2017.*

4   *Pulido 2017.*

5   *Chakravartty and da Silva 2012: 367.*

"a-spatiality" and "non-being" create "relations of severe inequality among human groups" that are central to the commodification of space; these "antimonies of accumulation require loss [and] disposability" resulting in racial banishment.[6]

Racial capitalism is therefore the context for the financialization of housing in the post-2008 era, grounding our understanding of property in settler colonialism and the plantation. Here, we necessarily draw on the Black radical tradition, which centers race as both crucial precursor and organizing logic of capitalism, and reveals the racial character of "practices of abstraction" that define financialization and enable the violence it wreaks to be naturalized.[7] We argue the production of racial difference that Du Bois stressed as a crucial element of economic subordination in a divided and racially tiered labor force extends to the real estate profit cycle.[8] The devalorization of non-White bodies, places and property, what Bledsoe and Wright theorize in terms of "antiblackness" and McKittrick calls "urbicide," hastens dispossession, making way for revalorization and successive rounds of accumulation.[9]

McKittrick connects contemporary cycles of real estate investment, disinvestment and revalorization to slavery.[10] The plantation provides a "meaningful geographic prototype" for understanding these contemporary cycles because it both "housed and normalized (vis-à-vis enforced placelessness) racial violence" and "naturalized...decay and death of a very complex black sense of place."[11] Like the plantation, contemporary racial violence through the systematic, finance-mediated underdevelopment of Black spaces is routine and ordinary, depredations Bledsoe and Wright argue are necessary to capitalist reproduction.[12] As Zenia Kish and Justin Leroy's analysis linking today's social impact bonds to colonial-era financial innovations based on the bodies of slaves confirms, "financialization has long been—and continues to be—deeply racialized."[13]

Indeed, K-Sue Park's study of foreclosure in colonial America demonstrates how the 2008 crisis is intimately tied to settler colonial commodification of property and theft of Indigenous land.[14] Park analyzes how English colonists exploited differences in Indigenous conceptions of land and value to deliberately extend unpayable debts and induce Indigenous people to mortgage their land. At the same time, colonists transformed longstanding English legal practices that made it difficult to alienate debtors from land. By normalizing the seizure of land to recover debts, they forged a new, American conception of land as fungible commodity. Indigenous debts came to function as an asset to such an extent that there was a secondary market by which settlers exchanged mortgages amongst themselves for the value attached to land pledged as collateral—a development that foreshadows a much more recent history.

Thus we not only dwell with the *history* of how chattel slavery and settler colonialism shaped real estate in generations past, but also their racializing logics remain fundamental to the operation of finance in housing markets today. McKittrick and Park show us how the practice of predatory mortgage lending is inseparable from the violence of the plantation and of settler colonial expansion, as is the now nearly unquestioned notion of land as money. The parallels between how colonists leveraged difference to create value and appropriate land as commodity and the practices leading up to the subprime mortgage crisis are striking. Predatory subprime lending represents a continuation of generations of differential access to credit for Black and other marginalized populations. Like land contracts of the mid-20th century, subprime lending relied on racialized geographies to extract value. In both instances, Black populations and spaces afforded capitalist accumulation via the housing market. Finance and real estate

6 *Bledsoe and Wright 2018: 5; Blatman-Thomas and Porter 2018: 5; Melamed 2015: 77; Roy 2017.*

7 *Robinson 1983; Gilmore 2002; Byrd et al., 2018.*

8 *Du Bois 2009; Du Bois 2017.*

9 *Bledsoe and Wright 2018; McKittrick 2011.*

10 *McKittrick 2011.*

11 *McKittrick 2011: 951.*

12 *Bledsoe and Wright 2018.*

13 *Kish and Leroy 2015: 632.*

14 *Park 2016.*

actors appealed to—and undermined—Black efforts at "establishing legible space," i.e. realizing what Ananya Roy has called propertied citizenship.[15]

The perpetuation of racial capitalism through the financialization of homeownership has included the creation of tiered financial markets, segmented risky financial products and the innovation and standardization of credit scoring, automated underwriting and algorithmic racism.[16] Early in the 20th century, financial markets responded to the problematic positionality of Blackness with a strategy of individualizing and quantifying risk. In the case of life insurance, early forms of actuarial statistical segmentation were invented to price non-White customers.[17] Similarly, in the case of mortgage finance, credit scoring, automated underwriting, risk-based pricing and tranched securitizations emerged to replace credit rationing (i.e. redlining) that excluded African Americans entirely in an earlier era. The individualization and quantification of risk extended mortgage credit to non-White borrowers and places while simultaneously constructing them as hazardous and legitimizing higher prices.[18]

Contemporary techniques of abstraction are layered onto older tactics and the residue of prior regimes of accumulation in housing. These include the persistence of explicitly racist attitudes toward individuals in housing and financial markets; an inherited wealth inequality that structures the ability to enter homeownership; and the differential impact of racial segregation on home price appreciation and housing wealth accumulation for those households who can buy.[19]

However, in the 2000s this system of extraction through racialized abstraction moved towards crisis. The volume of loans needed to keep the "securitization machine" running in the leadup to the 2008 crisis entailed retooling tactics historically applied to Black urban spaces for Sun Belt suburbs and growing shares of White borrowers, and reconfiguring mortgage property rights to advantage bulk securitizers over individual mortgagors.[20] By extending to White and suburban communities, the foreclosure crisis therefore exceeded longstanding racial geographies of dispossession wrought by financial tactics. But in the decade since we are witnessing the reassertion of this history, largely authored by private equity-backed investors.

Reasserting racialized geographies

National measures of the housing market tell a story of property values that have returned to pre-2008 levels. Yet this recovery has been dramatically uneven geographically, and deeply racialized.[21] White neighborhoods recovered more rapidly than communities of color, where until recently homeowners were often still struggling with negative equity, or mortgage loans that are greater than the value of their homes.[22] Among all households, homeownership remains lower than it was 20 years ago, but there is a racialized hierarchy in the fallout from the crisis. Since 2005 White homeownership has fallen by 7%, Hispanic/Latinx homeownership by 8% and Black/African American homeownership by 13%.[23] Well into the recovery, Black and Latino mortgage applicants are less likely than whites to be approved for a mortgage, and those approved are more likely to receive higher cost loans; disparities that are especially pronounced in areas that experienced high rates of subprime lending before 2008 and large concentrations of foreclosures during the Great Recession.[24] Home equity represents over half of household wealth in the U.S., so spatialized racial inequalities in home price recovery, mortgage pricing, access to credit and home purchase during the recovery are widening the racial wealth gap: from 1998 to 2016, median Black households' wealth fell from 18.8% to 9.5% of that of White households.[25]

15 *Bledsoe and Wright 2018: 5; Roy 2003; Wyly et al. 2009.*

16 *Squires 2003; Taylor 2012; Chander 2016; Freeman 2016.*

17 *Bouk 2015.*

18 *Immergluck 2011; Taylor 2012.*

19 *Steil et al. 2018; Shapiro et al., 2013; Walks, 2014, Walks, 2016.*

20 *Wyly et al., 2012: 600; Levitin 2013a; Levitin 2013b.*

21 *Dreier et al., 2014; Tumpson Molina, 2016; Immergluck and Law, 2014; Raymond, 2018.*

22 *Dreier et al., 2014; Raymond et al., 2016.*

23 *Goodman and Mayer 2018.*

24 *Faber 2018.*

25 *Weller and Hanks 2018.*

Whereas in 2012 Wyly and colleagues could argue that "the devastation wrought by deregulated mortgage capital" threatened "the home equity premium so long promised by American white privilege," today the racial divide has reasserted itself, conferring relative privilege to those who can claim Whiteness (albeit under conditions of continued exploitation by the capitalist class).[26] The American dream of homeownership remains more available to White households than to non-Whites, as does the promise of price accumulation, particularly through purchasing homes in devalorized but gentrifying spaces.

With the federal response to the crisis largely ceding recovery to the market and years of record-low interest rates prompting the growth of alternative investment strategies including real estate and private equity, the status of housing as a financial asset has only been entrenched since 2008.[27] The "overall churn, disinvestment, and housing insecurity" affecting black neighborhoods through the 2008 crisis and uneven recovery has offered private equity investors space for accumulation.[28] A through line can be drawn from predatory subprime lending to foreclosure, to the resurrection of racially exploitative land contracts and aggressive eviction practices that continue to make home a 'death trap.'

Land contracts, or contracts for deed, enable buyers without access to mainstream mortgage financing to buy a home by putting money down and paying in instalments, only receiving title and starting to build equity when they have paid off the principle in full. Widespread as a means for Black people to buy homes in the segregated real estate markets of the pre-Fair Housing Act 1950s and 1960s, contract for deed is associated with abusive terms and practices that often lead to repossession, including high interest rates, wide latitude to evict buyers, and sale of properties unfit for habitation.

Today, "the land contract has returned as an instrument for finding profit in otherwise devalued landscapes," namely Black neighborhoods beset by negative equity and limited access to mortgage finance.[29] But they are being deployed by a new set of actors: nationally-coordinated private equity firms with the funds to buy foreclosed homes in bulk from public institutions.[30] Acting in the market created when government agencies and mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac began selling repossessed homes to investors in bulk, firms such as Harbor, Stonecrest, and Vision are engaging in the same kinds of practices local actors used in the mid-20th century: selling derelict homes at high interest rates, contracts offering little protection to buyers, and substantial markups from acquisition costs without making improvements to the property.[31] Investors engaging in contract selling are most active in metropolitan areas with higher Black populations, and focus their acquisitions on majority-Black neighborhoods.[32]

While one set of private equity firms is reviving contract selling, another set has become more traditional landlords. Global investment giants like Blackstone, Cerberus, and Colony Capital have become some of the nation's biggest property owners through buying foreclosed single-family homes by the thousands and converting them to rental housing.[33] Unlike traditional landlords, these Wall Street actors are not just collecting rent checks, they are bundling them into financial assets similar to mortgage-backed securities. In binding tenants into relationships with bondholders and shareholders, corporate landlords are reconfiguring the social relations of rent in ways amenable to the demands of financial accumulation.[34] As part of the 'resolution' of the 2008 crisis, the geography of this phenomenon partially overlaps with that of contract selling in cities like Memphis and Atlanta. Overall though, it tilts more toward Sun Belt metros with a greater supply of newer homes (places like Phoenix, Dallas, and Tampa)

26 *Wyly 2012: 600.*

27 *Fields 2018.*

28 *Akers and Seymour 2019: 3.*

29 *Akers and Seymour 2019: 5.*

30 *Immergluck 2018a; Akers and Seymour 2018; Akers and Seymour 2019.*

31 *Goldstein and Stevenson 2017; Stevenson and Goldstein 2017.*

32 *Akers and Seymour 2019.*

33 *Fields 2014.*

34 *Fields 2018.*

than metros in the Midwest and the Rust Belt, where contract selling by private equity is more deeply entrenched.[35]

A variegated geography of racialized housing precarity is associated with post-2008 financialization. Midwestern metro areas that were major destinations for African Americans in the Great Migration are experiencing the exploitation and insecurity that characterize contract sales. Meanwhile Sun Belt locales with large Latinx populations and growing African American populations coming to the South as part of the 'new Great Migration' face aggressive eviction practices by corporate landlords.[36] Matthew Desmond's work has shown eviction is alarmingly common.[37] But in Evicted (2016), landlords have a face; they are people. In research on Atlanta, Raymond and colleagues found eviction is even more routine for tenants of large, faceless, institutional investors like American Homes 4 Rent and Invitation Homes.[38] Such corporate landlords were more than three times as likely to initiate eviction than non-professional, small-scale landlords. In Memphis, a city with among the highest share of African-American residents in the US,[39] and the greatest decline in owner-occupied homes since 2008, private equity firm Cerberus Capital management has become the largest landlord of single-family rental homes.[40] The company files for eviction much more aggressively than other area landlords, and their filings are concentrated in majority nonwhite neighborhoods.[41]

Echoing how loan servicers tacked fees on to mortgage arrears that buried homeowners deeper in debt, the scale of their portfolios means corporate landlords can substantially increase their income through routine, automated eviction filings that pile late fees, court fees, and other costs onto past-due rent —even if, like Cerberus's Memphis portfolio, their properties are beset by housing code violations.[42] Invitation Homes generated $2 million this way in 2017.[44] While corporate landlords have established an industry trade group representing themselves terms of "investing in America's recovery and helping to rebuild communities," this image is at odds with the reality of the violence eviction wreaks on households and communities.[44]

Conclusion

Financial tactics of accumulation via the housing market have shifted in the years since the 2008 crisis. Akers and Seymour argue that today financial actors favor purchasing properties outright through limited liability companies rather than extending subprime credit (though the latter practice is ongoing).[45] Of course, there also are many continuities running through this story. These vehicles are often run by erstwhile investment bankers harnessing the same flows of global capital and investor networks they did before 2008.[46] In the case of contract selling, such financializing projects are yoked to a 20th century technology of racial capitalism predicated on undermining Black efforts to establish claims to space. Evictions by corporate landlords are falling into the racialized footprint of predatory lending and foreclosure, sometimes with tenants now renting the very homes they once owned.[47] Post-2008 housing financialization may be mobilizing (some) different tactics than before the crisis, but demonstrate the persistence of what Roy discusses as "foundational dispossession," wherein tenuous claims to personhood make home "a lived experience of loss."[48]

Centering Black, Brown and Indigenous housing struggles is core to understanding techniques of economic subordination through housing and financial markets. The current moment continues to be characterized by "colorblind" techniques of financial abstraction that "displace difference into hierarchy," dividing and differentially subordinating White and non-White places.[49] The

35 *Immergluck 2018b; Akers and Seymour 2019; Fields et al. 2016.*

36 *Raymond et al. 2018; Frankel and Keating 2018.*

37 *Desmond 2016.*

38 *Raymond et al. 2018.*

39 *Rastogi et al. 2011.*

40 *Frankel and Keating 2018.*

41 *Frankel and Keating 2018.*

42 *Frankel and Keating 2018.*

43 *Raymond et al. 2018.*

44 *National Rental Home Council 2017.*

45 *Akers and Seymour 2018.*

46 *Akers and Seymour 2018.*

47 *Frankel and Keating 2018.*

48 *Roy 2017: 9.*

49 *Gilmore 2002: 16.*

process of transforming social relations into value so central to financialization means that "in abstracting the violence of dispossession into value, financialization economizes forgetting."[50] Furthermore, the globalization of capital markets and real estate investment allows actors working from afar to have a stake in local contexts while blurring, dispersing, and rescaling lines of responsibility.[51] This distance can make powerful actors "invisible" to those on the ground, complicating efforts to confront specific actors and hold them accountable for the consequences of their actions.[52] The origins of contemporary urbicide in chattel slavery and settler colonialism remind us that history and context are crucial tools to undo distance and abstraction, pointing to strategies no less than reparations or land reform as central to housing justice movements struggling to re-vitalize home. ▪

50 *Byrd et al. 2018: 9.*

51 *Fields 2017.*

52 *Clapp 2014: 800; Fields 2015; Garcia Lamarca & Kaika 2016.*

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Where You Live Matters

In This Section

Police, Displacement, and Black Women's Resistance

Keisha-Khan Perry, Brown University

On January 31, 2019, I delivered the following remarks at the opening of the Housing Justice in Unequal Cities Network conference opening at the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) located in the downtown area of the city known as Skid Row, where the country's largest concentration of homeless people reside. I have updated some of the material for clarity.

I am delighted to be here in California, to join you in Los Angeles, and to speak at tonight's event at the Los Angeles Community Action Network.

My heart is heavy tonight. Last Thursday, on January 17, the heavens opened up and welcomed my beloved Brown University student Maryori Conde, class of 2018. Maryori was enrolled in a graduate program to become a high school teacher serving low-income students of color. She died when the car she was riding in was struck by another vehicle. Maryori came from Los Angeles, born to parents from El Salvador. With her gold hoop earrings, broad smile, and LA accent, she lived her life as a proud Latina who fought tirelessly for the rights of immigrants, refugees, first-generation students, poor students, teachers, and all workers. It wouldn't feel right to be in LA, so close to the people and communities who inspired Maryori to give her full 23 years to the human struggle, without mentioning her. I hear that it hardly ever rains in LA. For me today's rain seems fitting. I feel privileged to have been Maryori's professor and I hold up her memory tonight.

It is mainly young activists like Maryori Conde who are pushing us to make sure that our intellectual work in the classroom is in line with the political work being done in community organizations like this one. She was not a black woman, but she understood the need to expand definitions of Latinidad to include African descendants and their histories and struggles. In April 2016 she brought

Goldman Environmental Prize and land rights activist Francia Elena Márquez to campus to speak about the collective fight against forced displacement, the militarization of black and indigenous territories, and the killings of social movement activists.

Whenever I talked about my research on black dispossession in Brazil, New York, or Jamaica, Maryori would always remind me that in LA, the struggle was the same. The struggle for adequate housing was a human rights issue that was tied to the fight for fair wages, good public schools, proper health care, an end to police killings, and the abolition of prisons. In my "Introduction to Africana Studies" class in Fall 2015, Maryori always sat close to the front, nodding and smiling to indicate that she was with me, especially on September 26, when I read a poem I had written in honor of the disappeared student teachers of the Normal School in Guerrero, Mexico. The class had a majority of African-American students who had come in increasing numbers to my classes after the death of Michael Brown in the summer of 2014, but I was worried that perhaps they were not taking the course materials seriously—that they were either preoccupied with the move toward so-called "theory" in Black Studies, separate from the ideas that come out of the everyday social conditions and political work that generate theory, or that they were enthralled by the pessimist trend in the field, which some would argue downplays the vibrant history of black politics that emphasized new models of survival ranging from the mutual-aid societies of the early twentieth century to the Black Panthers to present-day cooperatives.[1] I worried that perhaps I was failing as a teacher to convey that we were fighting an ideological war — one that understood black people as nonhuman well before the police encounter — and that many scholars and activists were putting their lives on the line to fight that war.[2] I thought that perhaps if I reminded these students that 43 student teachers had not been given a chance to live after participating in a protest in Mexico precisely because they were making demands for basic rights such as good public education, then they would understand their own collective value as political agents of change.

Perked up in her seat, you could tell that Maryori was holding on to my every word. I told them that the students of Guerrero were massacred by militarized police forces that were part of the same structure of policing that they as black students in the United States claimed to be fighting against. The struggle for black lives was a global and collective one. Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani rose up in politics on a human-rights-violating, black-and-brown killing and mass incarceration "zero tolerance" policy for fighting crime. His consulting firm was invited to Mexico City and paid $4.3 million dollars by downtown real estate developers, supported by the mayor, to implement a similar kind of "broken-windows" policing to clean up urban criminality.[3] Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Kayla Moore, and Rekia Boyd, among numerous others, were not unlike these students in Guerrero, indigenous and rendered nonhuman, from a poor rural agricultural region, whose lives were rendered without value long before they disappeared on September 26, 2015.

Over the past two decades, "zero tolerance" has become institutionalized all over the Americas to include Mexico, El Salvador, Brazil, and the Philippines. Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte credits training on "effective policing" delivered by US police for the so-called "success" of his militarized war on drugs, which human-rights organizations call a "bloodbath." Rudy Giuliani's security consulting firm has played a key role in the amplification of what human rights advocates have also called a "draconian" approach to "law and order."[4] You can see evidence of the firm's work in Trinidad and Tobago, Peru, and Rio de Janeiro in preparation for the 2016 Olympic Games.

1   *Christian 1987.*

2   *Wynter 1994; Woods 2019.*

3   *Davis 2003.*

4   *LaSusa 2015.*

There is a global war on black, indigenous, and poor people, especially those who are fighting against social exclusion to claim space in a society that understands them as a "security problem" that should be annihilated. The global circulation of violent policing practices is what has led to a young black person between the ages of 15 and 29 being killed every 23 minutes in Brazil. Every 23 minutes. That is 63 per day. In 2016, it amounted to 23,100 black people. Between 1980 and 2014, a record 1 million blacks were killed. Between 2009 and 2013, the Brazilian police killed 11,197 blacks, listing the reason as *auto de resistencia*, "resisting arrest." Black men and women comprised 71% of the 318,000 homicides in Brazil between 2005 and 2015, and in 2015 police operations accounted for 3,320 black murders nationwide.[5]

This is the context of the Rio de Janeiro that produced black councilwoman Marielle Franco, who was born and raised in Maré, one of the most heavily policed low-income, mostly black and brown communities in the city. She wrote her sociology master's thesis on the failure of the pacification policing units in Rio and had joined forces to document the human rights abuses targeting black and poor people.[6] Marielle was killed because she was black, a woman, queer, and from a poor neighborhood constantly under siege by the military police and drug traffickers, and because she dedicated her life to ending the genocide. Just the night before she was brutally assassinated as she was leaving an event on black women's empowerment, she tweeted about 23-year-old Matheus Melo de Castro, who was shot in Rio: "Another killing of a young person possibly committed by the Military Police (PM). Matheus was leaving church. How many more must die for this war to end?" Marielle was executed on March 14, 2018, nearly four years after Claudia Ferreira da Silva was shot by the police and then dragged to her death before falling out of the back of a police car.[7]

Almost 200 activists have been killed in Brazil over the last five years. Most were left-leaning, black and indigenous, and fighting for environmental and land rights. Similar patterns can been seen in Colombia and other parts of Latin America.[8]

After the public launch of Keeanga-Yahmatta Taylor's book *From Black Lives Matter to Black Liberation* in the Brown University bookstore as part of my Activist Scholarship class, in which Maryori was a student, two people I believed to be undercover police officers approached Taylor and asked her if she thought that Eric Garner would have died if he had cooperated with the NYPD officers who were attempting to arrest him. Their presence reminded me that present-day surveillance of radical scholar-activists is always in effect, as is also evident in the state's designation of Black Lives Matter activists as "identity extremists."

But the question also speaks to the fact that Eric Garner's life had no value before he was choked to death on the pretext that he was selling loose cigarettes on a public sidewalk. As Audre Lorde reminds us in her poem "a litany for survival," he was never meant to survive: "So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive."[9] The fact that Arizona State professor Ersula Ore survived being body slammed for jaywalking and "resisting arrest" was in itself an act of resistance. Dajerria Betcon's survival after being body slammed by police at a pool party was an act of resistance. Jazmine Headley, age 23, fought with every fabric of her being to hold onto her baby when officers ripped her child from her arms, and was later arrested and held in jail on Riker's Island for five days. Jazmine was at the Human Resources Administration office to apply for food stamps. There had been a pattern at this office of calling the police instead of practicing peaceful resolutions. Jazmine survived.

5   *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada 2017.*

6   *Franco 2014.*

7   *Smith 2014; Caldwell et al., 2018.*

8   *Asmann 2018.*

9   *Lorde 1978.*

10 *ACLU ND.*

11 *Flagg and Nerbovig 2018.*

The American Civil Liberties Union has made it a priority in their advocacy work to fight the overuse of nuisance ordinances or labeling properties a nuisance when the police have been called a number of times.[10] Mostly impacting survivors of domestic abuse, landlords evict these tenants reportedly causing the nuisance rather than facing punishment from the city. In addition to this, in areas where real estate prices are rapidly rising, unscrupulous landlords hire security firms to surveil tenants to find evidence to evict them. These landlords can then renovate and increase rents in previously rent-controlled buildings in cities such as New York. The formerly incarcerated are ten times more likely to be homeless than the general public. This is not disconnected from the fact that the homeless population is much more likely to be arrested for "loitering" or being a "nuisance." Homeless women also lose their children to foster care.

Hence, there is a global pattern here where housing is the basic part of the human rights project. Where you live matters. Living in a poor neighborhood lessens your chances of having access to a good public education, good health care, and something as basic as clean, lead-free drinking water. In poor neighborhoods in global cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and Salvador da Bahia in Brazil, harsh policing is the first sign that gentrification is well underway. Colonization and settlement—whether it be in 1492 or 2019—does not occur without violence, primarily because black, indigenous, and poor people are always resisting being forced off their lands, out of their houses, off of their streets.

When it comes to making the lives and experiences of black women visible, if we wait only to find them lying in pools of blood, cramped in overcrowded jails and prisons, we have failed to see them were they are struggling en masse to survive. Policing and mass incarceration do not happen in a vacuum: there are chain effects that lead to mass incarceration and violent police encounters. What kinds of trauma are black women living with after having been beaten on sidewalks for grilling or in hallways while waiting for social services, shackled in hospital beds while giving birth, or lost their children because they had no place to live?

Over the past couple of days, I have been thinking a lot about Malaysia Goodman, who at 22 years old fell and died trying to carry her daughter down the stairs in a New York City subway. What kind of society do we live in where we spend money on policing poor people who can't afford to pay the subway fare that could be spent providing safe public transportation?[11] Where landlords leave tenants without heat for years in an effort to push them out and the struggle against evictions starts with demands for these kinds of basic infrastructural services that ensure human dignity?

In closing, I want to encourage all of us to expand how we think about state violence and how it impacts the lives of those living on the socioeconomic margins of the margins even as their neighborhoods have now become part of the coveted center. ▪

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