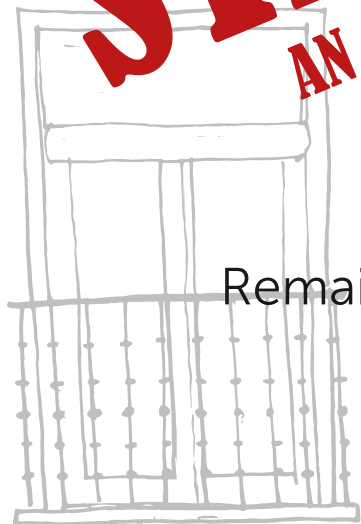


# STAYING PUT!

AN ANTI-GENTRIFICATION HANDBOOK  
FOR SOUTHERN EUROPEAN CITIES



Remain in your home and your neighbourhood!



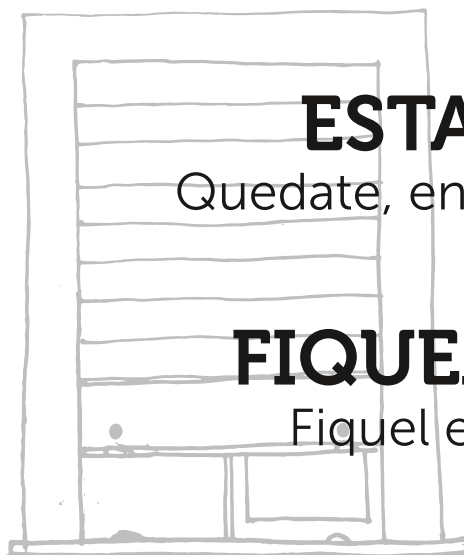
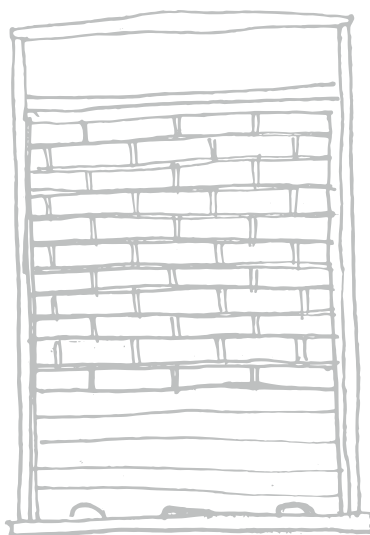
**STAY PUT!**

**STAI ALLERTA!**

Rimani nella tua casa e nel tuo quartiere!

**ΜΕΙΝΕ ΕΚΕΙ ΠΟΥ ΕΙΣΑΙ!**

Μείνε στο σπίτι σου και στη γειτονιά σου!



**ESTATE ATENTO!**

Quedate, en casa y en el barrio!

**FIQUEM ATENTOS!**

Fiquel em casa i em barriol

## WHO HELPED WORK ON THIS HANDBOOK?

Action, Ufficio Tutela Sociale, Roma

Angelo Fascetti, Asia USB

Antonello Sotgia, architetto e attivista, Roma

Agustin Cocola Gant, Università di Lisbona-Barcellona

Daniel Pardo, colectivo ABTS (Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible), Barcellona

Daniel Sorando, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

DecideRoma, Roma

Dimitra Satitsa, Encounter Athens

ETICity, Exploring Territories Imagining the City, Roma

Georgia Alexandri, Università Autonoma de Madrid

Giovanni Caudo, Università di Roma Tre

Lefthandrotation, Lisbona

Libera Repubblica di San Lorenzo, Roma

Lidia Manzo, Maynoot University

Loretta Lees, University of Leicester

Mara Ferreri, Università Autonoma de Barcelona, attivista

Margherita Grazioli, University of Leicester e attivista dei Blocchi Precari Metropolitani, Roma

Nick Dines, Università di Roma Tre

Plataforma de los Afectados por la Vivienda Publica, Madrid

Plataforma de los Afectados por la Hipoteca, PAH Centro

Pietro Saitta, Università di Messina

Rita Silva, Habita65, Lisbona

Rete anti-sfratto Magliana, Roma

Sandra Annunziata, University of Leicester

Tonia Caterini, Solidarity for All, Atene

Stefano Portelli, University of Leicester, Collettivo Repensar Bon Pastor, Barcellona

Thomas Maloutas, National Centre for Social Research, Atene

Philipp Katsinas, London School of Economics

## GRAPHIC DESIGN CURATED BY

Elisabetta Vacca

Flavia Albanese

Silvia Chiavoni

## FUNDED BY :

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# STAYING PUT!

## AN ANTI-GENTRIFICATION HANDBOOK FOR SOUTHERN EUROPEAN CITIES

By Sandra Annunziata  
with Loretta Lees

### REVISION AND EDITING BY

Alice Sotgia, Carlotta Fioretti, Claudia Faraone, Claudia Meschiari,  
Elisabetta Vacca, Flavia Albanese, Grazia Rutica, Loretta Lees, Stefano Portelli  
Mara Cossu, Pietro Vicari, Silvia Chiavoni, Viola Mordenti, Giulia Barra.

### REVISED EDITIONS IN OTHER LANGUAGES BY

Stefano Portelli (Italian)  
Philipp Katsinas (Greek)  
Ana Estevens, Eduardo Ascensão (Portuguese)  
Alvaro Ardura Urquiaga, Clara Rivas Alonso (Spanish)





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## PREFACE (BY THE CURATORS)

---

It has been a bittersweet task to complete the unfinished work left by our friend and companion Sandra Annunziata. After her sudden passing in 2018, a group of people linked both to the Department of Geography at the University of Leicester, where Sandra had been working until a few years earlier, and to the ETICity association – of which she was a co-founder and president – came together with the aim of presenting at least part of the invaluable work Sandra was conducting.

Sandra had one clear objective: she wanted to offer a contribution to the anti-eviction and anti-gentrification networks of southern Europe, by learning from the anti-gentrification reflections and practices she became familiar with during her time in the UK, to the contexts of Spain, Italy and Greece, which she was able to research in-depth through winning a prestigious Marie Curie EU grant.

The analyses and proposals from the UK had to be adapted to the diverse economic, political and social situations that characterise southern Europe, at that time plagued by unpopular 'austerity' measures imposed by the European Union on individual governments. The sale of public assets, the financialisation and privatisation of public credit institutions, the institutional bailout of private banks and credit institutions, had amplified the accumulation of wealth, leaving millions of vulnerable people falling victim to misery and expulsion.

These policies and their effects although faced with determination and courage by collectives and resistance movements located across these cities, often showed fragmentation and a lack of coordination. Sandra saw in universities a social force, able to weave relationships into alliances and support between these groups, as she believed that universities, through a politically conscious use of knowledge, could influence governments' decisions, in favour of the most vulnerable sections of the population.

We do not know what this commitment would have led to, if death had not nipped all these aspirations almost in the bud, just when, ironically, Sandra had finally received an important recognition from the Italian academy with a tenured position at Roma Tre University. What we have courtesy of Sandra is a very important collection of reflections and testimonies of the fight against gentrification that deserves to be shared as she expected to happen, although several cases have evolved in the meantime.

Thanks to Professor Loretta Lees from the University of Leicester, who mentored and worked with Sandra throughout the research, and the award of ESRC IAA funds, we formed a working group with the aim of completing Sandra's 'toolkit' (which Loretta had already worked on with Sandra) and presenting it to the public, especially to the collectives and others who had been involved in its co-production from the beginning.

Many of them were actively involved in the seminar organised by Sandra in Rome, in October 2016, which served as an occasion to discuss and feedback on the shared construction of the first draft of the handbook.

In order to remain faithful to the original project and handbook draft, we decided only to revise Sandra's text, not to alter its approach, even when the passing of time demanded a more decisive editorial approach. In the aftermath of the protests of 2011, many of our hopes turned out to be more illusory or controversial than one might have expected; we are therefore confident that the reader will be able to recognise the specificities of the moment that are discussed in this handbook. Following Sandra's desire to continuously update the handbook with more recent cases, and to publish it in Greek and Spanish, and in Portuguese (Portugal was not in Sandra's original research but added after Sandra, Loretta and others attended a conference in Lisbon). These other versions of the handbook will be uploaded to anti-eviction network sites in those locations, to help inform resistance across Southern Europe. The new cases remind us that one fight has no time and no space, even if it is linked to a moment or a specific place; and that we need to learn from the mistakes of the past and develop new strategies for the present, and for the future.

Thank you, Sandra, for leaving us the legacy of your hard work. And thanks, to those who will use it to fight against the misery and expropriation that decades of neoliberal policies have caused. Good luck, ETICity

# WHAT IS AN ANTI-GENTRIFICATION HANDBOOK?

---

This handbook has at its core the fight against urban displacement adapted to the Southern European cities context, characterised by a climate of permanent austerity, resulting in a subsequent economic recession and in the shrinkage of democratic space and citizenship rights.

In this document, we begin the work of recognising gentrification in Southern Europe and structuring an anti-gentrification manual that identifies an agenda of practical actions for a particular problem, that of gentrification and its effects, which concerns all citizens and cities that we live in and that can be further adapted and adjusted. Who can take part? Everyone who wants to assume an anti-gentrification perspective, who wants to question the ongoing changes in their own neighbourhoods and wants to offer their contribution.

## ONE OF MANY, THEY ARE NEVER ENOUGH...

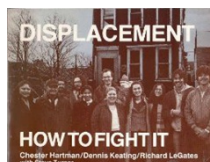
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The references used for the creation of this toolkit include several handbooks that were produced in relation to this subject, all useful and a result of collective and collaborative work. This handbook seeks to be an addition to this work and it does so in a precise historical moment, where Southern European cities are trapped in a prolonged state of austerity and political crisis.

It is loosely inspired by the work of Chester Hartman, Displacement how to fight it! – the first anti-gentrification handbook. In his work, Hartman not only questioned the forces of expulsion and interrogated how to find a balance between transformation and social diversity, but he also delineated the impacts of expulsion on the daily life of vulnerable groups residing in a neighbourhood, while attempting to find viable alternatives. Like Hartman's work, this handbook will try to do the same, starting from an analysis of the practices in place in Southern European cities.

As a result of the financial crisis of 2008 and the crisis of sovereign debt that, since 2011, has been witnessed by Southern European countries, new anti-eviction networks and anti-austerity movements have emerged (and already existing ones have been strengthened). These, in addition to countering the different types of eviction taking place in our cities, have outlined a specific agenda and forms of civil disobedience, and these handbooks are mostly available online. Please refer to the incredible expertise of the anti-eviction networks and groups in your city to which this work is dedicated.

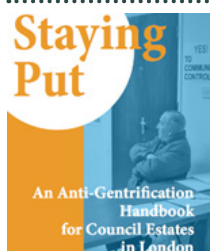
## SHARE YOUR ANTI-EVCTION HANDBOOK



## DISPLACEMENT: HOW TO FIGHT IT

by Chester Hartman, Dennis Keating, Richard LeGates con Steve Turner.

First anti-expulsion handbook resulting from the work of groups of citizens in the



## STAYING PUT AN ANTI-GENTRIFICATION HANDBOOK FOR COUNCIL ESTATES IN LONDON

<https://southwarknotes.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/staying-put-web-version-low.pdf>

Handbook of anti-gentrification in London coming from the cooperation between London Tenants Federation, Loretta Lees, Just Space e SNAG.



## LIBRO VERDE DE LA PAH

<http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/LibroVerde-PAH-32.pdf>

## MANUAL 'OBRA SOCIAL LA PAH'

<http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/MANUAL-OBRA-SOCIAL-WEB-ALTA.pdf>

## EMERGENCIA HABITACIONAL EN EL ESTADO ESPAÑOL

[http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2013-Emergencia-Habitacional\\_Estado\\_Espanyoldef.pdf](http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2013-Emergencia-Habitacional_Estado_Espanyoldef.pdf)



Ada Colau y Adrià Alemany

## VIDAS HIPOTECADAS

De la burbuja inmobiliaria al derecho a la vivienda

## VIDAS HIPOTECADAS DE LA BURBUJA INMOBILIARIA AL DERECHO A LA VIVIENDA

by Ada Colau and Adrià Alemany

<http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/vidas-hipotecadas.pdf>

Handbook of the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca de Barcelona (PAH)



## MANUALE DI AUTODIFESA DAGLI SFRATTI

<http://docplayer.it/15930002-Manuale-di-autodifesa-dagli-sfratti-www-abitarenellacrisi-org.html>

Handbook of anti-eviction networks in Italy.



## RESISTING EVICTIONS ACROSS EUROPE

[www.rosalux.eu/publications/resisting-evictions-across-europe/](http://www.rosalux.eu/publications/resisting-evictions-across-europe/)

Handbook product of the cooperation between several European anti-eviction movements. (European Action Coalition for the Right to Housing and to the City).



## RÄTT ATT BOKVAR

[https://www.korpenkoloni.se/m/ratt\\_att\\_bo\\_kvar.pdf](https://www.korpenkoloni.se/m/ratt_att_bo_kvar.pdf)

Anti-gentrification handbook in Sweden modelled on Staying Put: an anti-gentrification handbook for council estates in London.







PART ONE

## GENTRIFICATION AND POLICIES



# 1. WHAT IS GENTRIFICATION?

'Gentrification' is a word that is now in common use due to its ability to synthesize and give political depth to a very complex process.

Historic centre of Athens, the capillary redevelopment of heritage.



Gentrification is a process of replacement of a pre-existing, local population by incomers who have a higher socio-economic status; it is a process that is associated with change in the built environment seen through investment in real estate and urban redevelopment.

It is a concept that has its roots in the Anglo context but that has travelled extensively and possesses a flexibility that allows us to critically read, through the lens of class restructuring, various phenomena in place in our cities.

Gentrification manifests itself in many different forms in different local contexts and across different historical periods; for this reason, it is imperative to look at the urban through the lens of class struggle; this allows us to critically observe and outline the irreversible effects of speculative and predatory governance, that is careless with the future of the city as a common good.

**IT IS A CLASS  
RESTRUCTURING  
PROCESS**

## STUDIES HAVE SHOWN HOW THIS PHENOMENON MANIFESTS IN AT LEAST FOUR SELF-REINFORCING WAYS:

### 1 IT HAS ITS ORIGINS IN CAPITAL REINVESTMENT.

Gentrification is a process that unfolds as part of investment in and redevelopment of urban space, the regeneration of building stock (both public and private), and the edification of urban land and abandoned areas. In addition, it evolves through new-build development aimed at attracting the middle classes. Although the capital invested is often private, public policies play an important role in favouring certain operations or, conversely, being too weak in the protection of the public interest

### 2 IT IS CONNECTED TO THE SOCIAL CLASSES AND THEIR WAY OF REPRESENTING THEMSELVES AND LIVING THE CITY.

Those who settle in areas subjected to reinvestment reveal heterogeneous socio-economic characteristics and status that differs from their previous residents. They are carriers of specific lifestyles, preferences, tastes and needs that have effects on the commercial offer and the way of living the urban space.

### 3 IT INVOLVES THE DIRECT, INDIRECT, SYMBOLIC AND EXCLUSIONIST DISPLACEMENT

The sum of many small investments made within an area, or a large investment linked to the realisation of a major project over time, gentrification leads to an increasing cost in housing which often results in the direct and/or indirect displacement of vulnerable groups. This is often the case for migrants who live in rented apartments, but also for public housing tenants who are often at risk of eviction following the sale of such assets to real estate companies and hedge funds. As the social landscape changes, the networks of solidarity and coexistence built up over time wear out. Displacement sometimes also manifests through demolition.

### 4 IT ACTS AS A SYMBOLIC APPARATUS.

Through a complex process of rewriting the meaning of places – often for commercial purposes – gentrification can also lead to an overall change in the atmosphere and of the urban environment, which adapts to the new lifestyles of the new inhabitants or of the potential new users of the neighbourhood. It can also lead to an overall change in the commercial environment and of the rhythm of the neighbourhood, for example, through changes in the designation of use (from commercial to cultural, from residential to office, from residential apartment to temporary tourist let, etc).

## IT IS A MULTI-PHASE PROCESS

Gentrification was initially seen as an organic process, resulting from the behaviour of a new class of urbanites in search of a home to renovate or of a place with more affordable living costs in the inner city; and of small business entrepreneurs who assumed the risk of an initial investment. **Over time this phenomenon was reinforced** and what were individual, small-scale forms of investment were later followed by more substantial and speculative ones: for change takes off and becomes unstoppable.

In some cities this process has affected entire historic neighbourhoods, which become inaccessible to the point that it seems impossible that people with middle to low incomes or

**THIS PHENOMENON  
CAN BECOME  
UNSTOPPABLE.**

Rome, Pigneto  
capillary  
redevelopment



retirees can still reside in the area the area. The pioneering march of the gentrification process is in constant movement towards new spaces and neighbourhoods – often close to the city centre (but not always as suburban areas are now being gentrified), locations well served by public transport and local amenities.

The shock troopers of gentrification often return to the same places in search of spaces that offer opportunities for additional extraction of value, e.g., ex-industrial and ex-productive sites to redevelop.

Justified by **economic austerity**, the most recent and acute form of gentrification is the privatisation and financialisation of public and semi-public residential housing.

## IT IS A MULTI-FACETED PROCESS

Although the original meaning of the term implies residential displacement, the process does not only refer to residential but also to **commercial structures**, the rhythm of daily life, and the overall atmosphere of neighbourhoods and historical inner cores across major southern European cities.



Madrid, the rhythms  
of the neighbourhood  
change

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

Gentrification permeates all aspects of everyday life in the city. Indeed, besides its material form it tightens access to affordable housing, and extracts value from even what was considered a memory or a daily practice

So to our slogan **STAYING PUT!** which here possesses the double meaning of 'pay attention' and 'remain in place', indicating the possibility of being able to stay in your home or neighbourhood and pay attention to what it is happening. .

## 2. POLICIES AND AUSTERITY

.....

We believe it is important to question if this process can be controlled and governed and to ask what the role played by public authorities is in this context.

Much has been said on the relationship between gentrification and politics, often inadequately. For example, the suggestion that the contribution of the market to the regeneration of neighbourhoods is a supposedly positive force in contexts where there is limited ability to pay for or manage transformations. What is often overlooked is the tight relationship between gentrification and urban, social, cultural and economic policies.

### **CAN THIS PROCESS BE MANAGED? WHAT IS THE ROLE PLAYED BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS?**

In Southern European cities, much has been invested in the regeneration of historic centres for commercial and touristic purposes; we have witnessed a liberalisation of the housing market; housing welfare policies have been greatly reduced; and a process of privatisation of public assets and valorisation of state property is currently underway, also through financialisation processes. These policies have received a strong impulse from debt discourse, austerity, and the cuts imposed by the Stability Pact.

To conclude, urban displacement is insinuated in the absence of housing policies; in the shortage of public housing; in the regulation of the rental market and property-oriented taxation regimes; in the black market of illegal rentals. The free real estate market, which in Mediterranean contexts also presents a horizontal distribution of wealth, no longer responds to the needs of the population, nor even of the middle classes. In the years of the crisis, and in those that preceded it, the market demonstrated a lack of sensitivity towards the social demand for housing and the numerous housing problems.



**It would be a mistake not to consider the relevance of public policies in this context.** Years of economic austerity in Southern Europe have shown the great efficiency of administrations in implementing austerity policies and in facilitating easy sales plans, plus private investments and speculations in cities. We believe that public institutions and policies should at the very least properly understand gentrification and be able to interpret its



**The 5 requests made by the PAH: social rent, public residential construction, debt erasure, access to utilities, stop evictions.**

## **AN ANTI-EVICITON PERSPECTIVE AS A POLICY AGENDA**

cascading effects as negative, in order to intervene and prevent the displacement caused by gentrification. **Urban government actions should assume an anti-eviction lens.** This would allow for the development of an agenda of public priorities – that can be defined as ‘anti-gentrification’- able to address the housing issues of those residents who wish to stay put, regardless of their social category.

With this handbook we give voice to the variegated forms of resistance which, although often very different from one another, are all unified by the adoption of an anti-gentrification perspective for the protection of all urban citizens.

### 3. EXPULSION REGIMES

---

Gentrification is characterised by a slow-violence which ultimately leads not only to the displacement of low-income residents from their homes, neighbourhoods, and even cities, but also of those commercial activities deemed no-longer to fit and of collective memories that are embedded in, and characterise the urban space, that are not those of the new-comers.

Although different, the drivers of displacement, which are associated with the term 'gentrification', are all characterised by a strong institutional legitimacy, responding to economic trends and being reinforced through mainstream discourses on cities.

The current displacement regime that characterises Southern European cities is very complex. At least four **forms of displacement** can be identified:

#### DIRECT

This often manifests through evictions (due to rental arrears in Italy, mortgage insolvency in Spain or indebtedness in Greece) or the demolition of buildings or even of entire neighbourhoods. When discussing displacement, there is a need to remember that this not only means the loss of one's home, but also the loss of the connection with the territory and the social connections that were once part of the residents' everyday life, with the risk of further impoverishment. Displacement here is directly the result of changes in the urban landscape, changes in use, and the privatisation of public housing. .

#### INDIRECT

Indirect displacement occurs when, for example, the site was industrial and is redeveloped as residential – here the gentrification indirectly displaces those living in adjacent areas instead.

#### EXCLUSIONIST

This type of displacement manifests when the neighbourhood or city becomes too expensive to the exclusion of certain social categories.. Working and middle class groups are excluded from being able to access housing as they cannot afford it.

#### SYMBOLIC

Here gentrification insinuates itself in the discourses and practices that moralise the behaviour of the disadvantaged and vulnerable. It stigmatises poverty and certain kinds of diversity, and criminalises practices that re-appropriate space for housing, and social and cultural purposes. It feeds on collective memories that enriched the sense of belonging of a community with respect to a territory and exploits them in order to sell only a partial idea of the urban.

Although with different intensities, these forms of displacement can **act simultaneously within the same area**, leading to significant pressures on residents and their lives to the point of becoming forces that tend to divide communities rather than unify them. They also have impacts on the personal sphere of individuals, affecting the choices we make for inhabiting the city. The ambiguities brought about by gentrification affects everyone,



Rome,  
ex Fonderie Bastianelli

to the point that even those who attempt to resist it are assimilated by this phenomenon. . For example, social spaces in Southern European cities are, on the one hand, places where alternatives can be produced but, at the same time, they run the risk of being absorbed by the very same market logic they are desperately trying to escape. In order to develop an optimal resistance strategy against gentrification, it is imperative to understand the causes of these ongoing displacement processes, as well as the interdependency between the factors that characterise them, and their relationship with current governmental policies.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR CITY?  
ARE THERE DISPLACEMENT PROCESSES  
CURRENTLY HAPPENING?  
WHO MIGHT BE A VICTIM OF DISPLACEMENT?  
AND YOU?  
AND YOU? DO YOU FEEL AT RISK OF  
EXPULSION?



## FORMS OF DISPLACEMENT

### DIRECT



### INDIRECT



### EXCLUSIVIST



### SYMBOLIC



## STRUCTURAL/SYSTEMIC CULTURAL

### GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AND REGULATIONS

- No-fault eviction
- Hypothecation, due to mortgage interest financialisation housing regime
- Debt foreclosures
- Squatters removal
- Demolitions
- Changes in destination of use
- Natural disasters (earthquakes)

### SPECULATIVE BEHAVIOUR

- Purchase of properties at discounted prices (auctions) and re-selling according to market conditions
- New construction projects without social housing requirements

### Privatisation of public and semi-public spaces

- Sale to hedge funds
- Conversion of rental properties into private ownership (first refusal on the purchase)

### Urban planning without mediation

- Destination of use of already developed areas
- Change in buildings' destination of use
- Restoration of private properties through public intervention without contractual obligations with the state
- Abandonment of buildings and dilapidation over long periods of time.
- Discriminatory practices that negate the right to utility services (e.g., Art 5 of the National Urban Policy)
- Closure of public and/or private services
- Production of residences and urban infrastructure with the aim of attracting the middle class

### LIBERALISATION AND URBAN BRANDING

- Issue of new licences given to the owners of commercial activities (bars, restaurants)
- New licences for tourist accommodation
- Principal factors, cultural practices and urban representations
- Promotion of a mortgage as the only way to own a home
- Urban representations that emphasise cleanliness of the public space
- Urban representations, "the coolness" of the city
- Criminalisation of certain occupations and activities
- Criminalisation and marginalisation of minorities, foreigners and refugees)

## SYSTEMIC/INTERPERSONAL/ CULTURAL FACTORS

insolvency under a

quake, floods)

d prices (lease ERP, judicial  
market prices.

social housing quota

### Public residential assets

lease properties (right of

oped urban land  
use

ough public funding  
ne occupants.

idated areas for long

e access to citizens and  
al Housing Plan)

ices

spaces with the specific

opening of new recreational

lations

and narrations

y form of access to housing

se luxury

se public decorum and the

s" of the city

ns eg. housing and

of minority groups (ethnic

## POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF DISPLACEMENT

Commercial retailers

Adults without jobs

Single parents, often women with children

Young adults (students or temporary workers)

Elderly people

Low-income individuals and family groups  
relying on benefits and unemployment  
allowances

Vulnerable categories

Tenants residing in welfare institutions'  
properties or in other forms of public housing.

Mortgage holders

Ethnic minorities

Residents in informal settlements

Resident foreigners (at least 1/4 of the evictions  
affect foreigners and people of a non-  
European background)

Refugees and asylum seekers

Collectives and groups: community centres

Cultural and voluntary associations

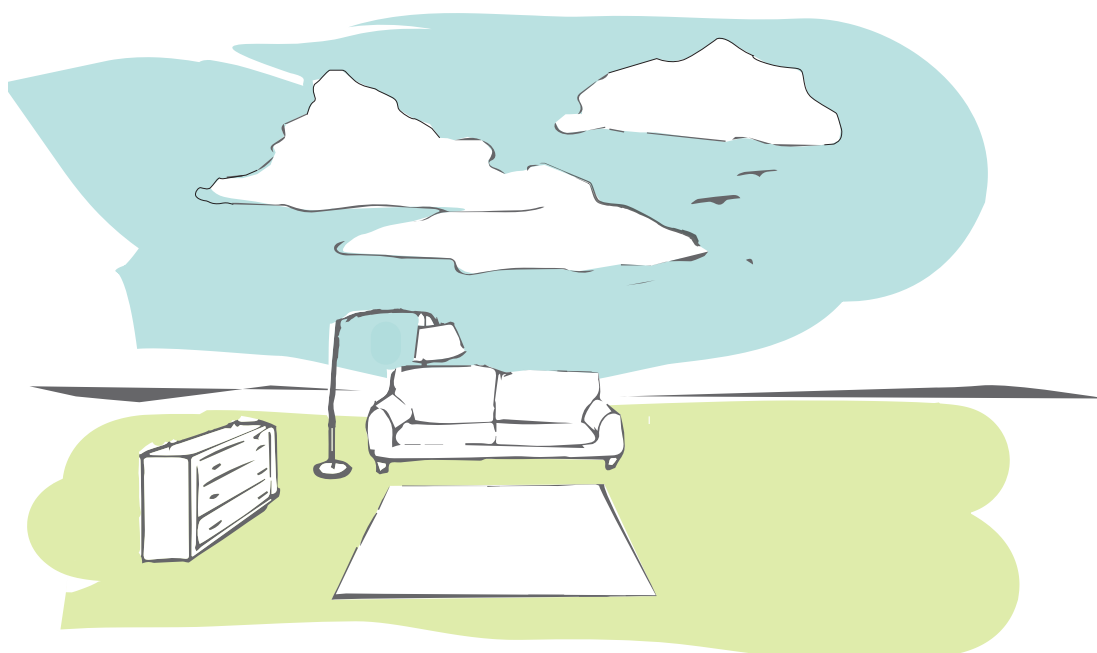
## 4. DATA OBSERVATIONS

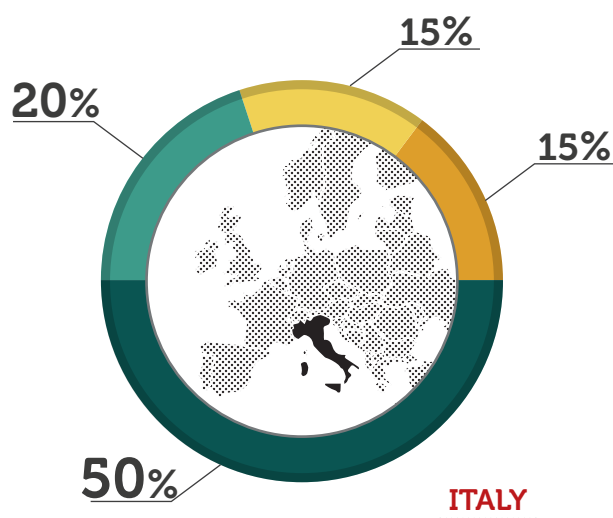
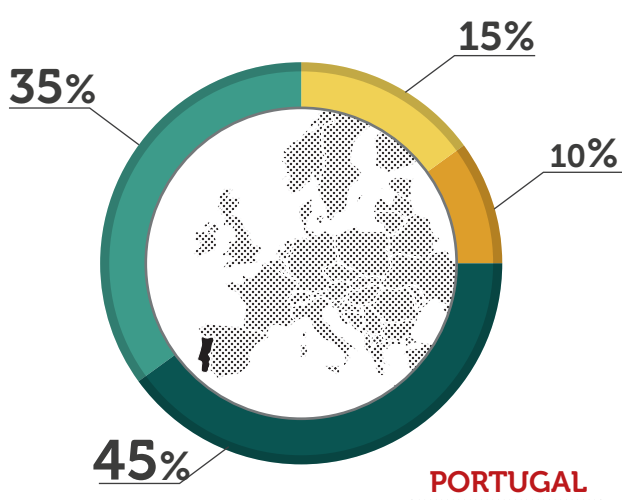
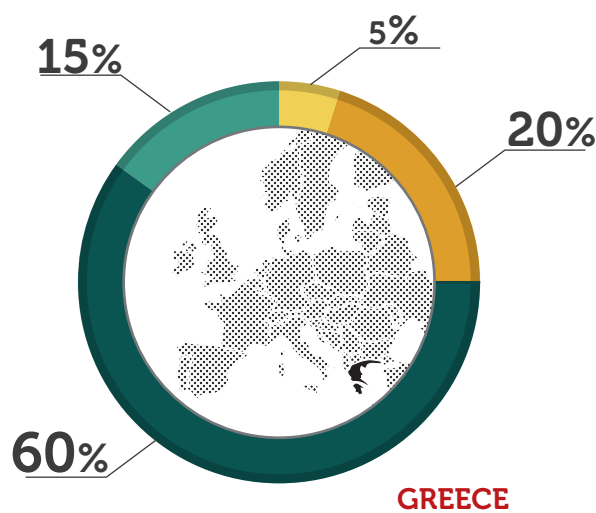
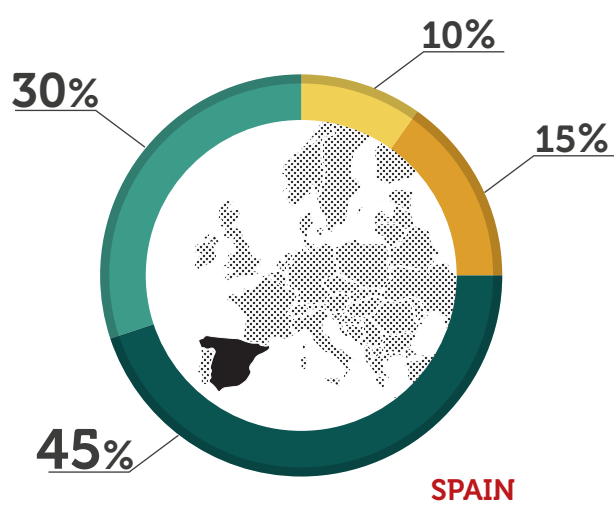
Urban displacement is described as an invisible process. The data we have, released by the Minister of Internal Affairs, courts, and international banks does not show all the complexities of this phenomenon. These data are not only difficult to compare but they often fail to report indirect and undocumented forms of displacement – often described either as a voluntary choice or as return to the place of origin. It is hard to keep track of those who cannot rely on the support of familiar networks.

## HOW TO MEASURE THIS PHENOMENON?

Following the economic crisis and during the economic recession, direct displacement became a social emergency – as also stated on European Union official documents. In a recently published report of the European Commission (Pilot project – Promoting protection of the right to housing – Homelessness prevention in the context of evictions) it was stated that the data are hard to compare, although it is possible to envisage the increasing trend of the phenomenon. **What emerges is that eviction is related to multiple dimensions of social expulsion which, in turn, reinforces the mechanism of exclusion.** In countries where preventive measures are not in place and occupation movements are absent, the link between evictions and homelessness is producing a social emergency.

“THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVICTION AND HOMELESSNESS HAS BECOME A SOCIAL EMERGENCY”





This graph shows the proportions of the various types of access to housing.

EUROSTAT, 2012

Rent based on the market price

Rent at a reduced price

Properties with mortgage or a loan

Properties without mortgage or loan

## DID YOU KNOW THAT:

NEARLY A QUARTER OF THE EVICTED PEOPLE, A QUARTER OF WHOM ARE FOREIGNERS, ARE EITHER IN A SITUATION OF SERIOUS HOUSING EMERGENCY OR HOMELESSNESS?

IN SOUTHERN EUROPEAN STATES, THE HOMELESSNESS CAUSED BY EVICTION IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS LIKE JOB LOSSES, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND/OR HOUSING COSTS?

50% OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IN SPAIN AND GREECE HAVE LOST THEIR HOME DUE TO UNEMPLOYMENT? *(European Commission, 2013)*

THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COST OF DISPLACEMENT CAN BE HIGH AND CAN ALSO BE CONNECTED TO NUMEROUS ASPECTS OF PUBLIC POLICIES: MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ASSETS, HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND HOUSING POLICIES.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN A SITUATION OF HOMELESSNESS, THE COSTS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES IS SEVEN TIMES HIGHER THAN FOR OTHER CITIZENS; WHILE IT IS ONLY THREE TIMES HIGHER WHEN PREVENTION POLICIES ARE EFFICIENTLY IMPLEMENTED. *OECD report (2015)*



PART TWO

HOW TO FIGHT IT



## STOPDESAHUCIOS #CARLOSSEQUEDA

*Carlos vive con sus tres hijos en la portería del mismo edificio donde residen su madre y padre dependientes. Desde hace un tiempo, sin trabajo, ha sido incapaz de pagar el abusivo alquiler a la comunidad de vecinos propietaria de la vivienda.*

*Lunes 11 de enero 2016 a las 8:30h  
Calle Calatrava, 27 (Metro Latina)*





## HOW TO FIGHT IT

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Anti-gentrification practices of resistance are heterogenous. They can encompass everything, from collective and politically organised practices to the choices we make in our daily life. For this reason, it is more appropriate to talk about resistances. Some anti-gentrification practices are explicit, visible and politically conscious and offer grassroots responsible alternatives for urban development. They make explicit requests to public administrations to mitigate the impacts of urban transformations and ask for stronger regulations.

The basic assumption is that resistances develop through internal territorial networks, that replicate within each State or government. Resistances, in order to be considered as such, need to share:

- **A TARGET**, or knowledge of who or what they are against (often represented by the forces producing displacement or speculative behaviour).
- **POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS SUBJECTIVITIES**, able to interpret the causes of the ongoing displacement processes and the impacts brought about by these on daily life.
- **AN ACTION OR A SUM OF ACTIONS**, that can either represent a way to obtain change or a way to survive in the midst of things.
- **RECOGNITION**, or the need for resistance practices to be recognizable to get recognition from communities

Therefore, here, to resist does not simply mean to stay put, but it also refers to the production of a variegated set of alternatives, and/or to the action of surviving in the midst of things.

Equally important are the less explicit practices of resistance like, for example, the continuous work of counterinformation, the creation and recreation of a neighbourhoods' soul or the development of forms of solidarity among different groups. There are also deliberately invisible forms of resistance, which have become key tools for urban survival. Part of these are those practices that involve engagement in informal settings, escaping from institutional radars, negotiating temporary agreements, and so on.

Practices of resistance can also be contradictory, incoherent and the site of intimate conflicts between individual aspirations and collective ideals. This will be further explained in the conclusion

## **WE ARE INTERESTED IN UNDERSTANDING WHY WE RESIST, WHO RESISTS AND FOR WHO.**





## A CLASSIFICATION

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The forms of resistance to urban displacement depend on the factors behind the displacement, on the kind of displacement and on the timing of intervention– e.g how much in advance it is possible to intervene. They all express a desire for government action and are closely related to each other.

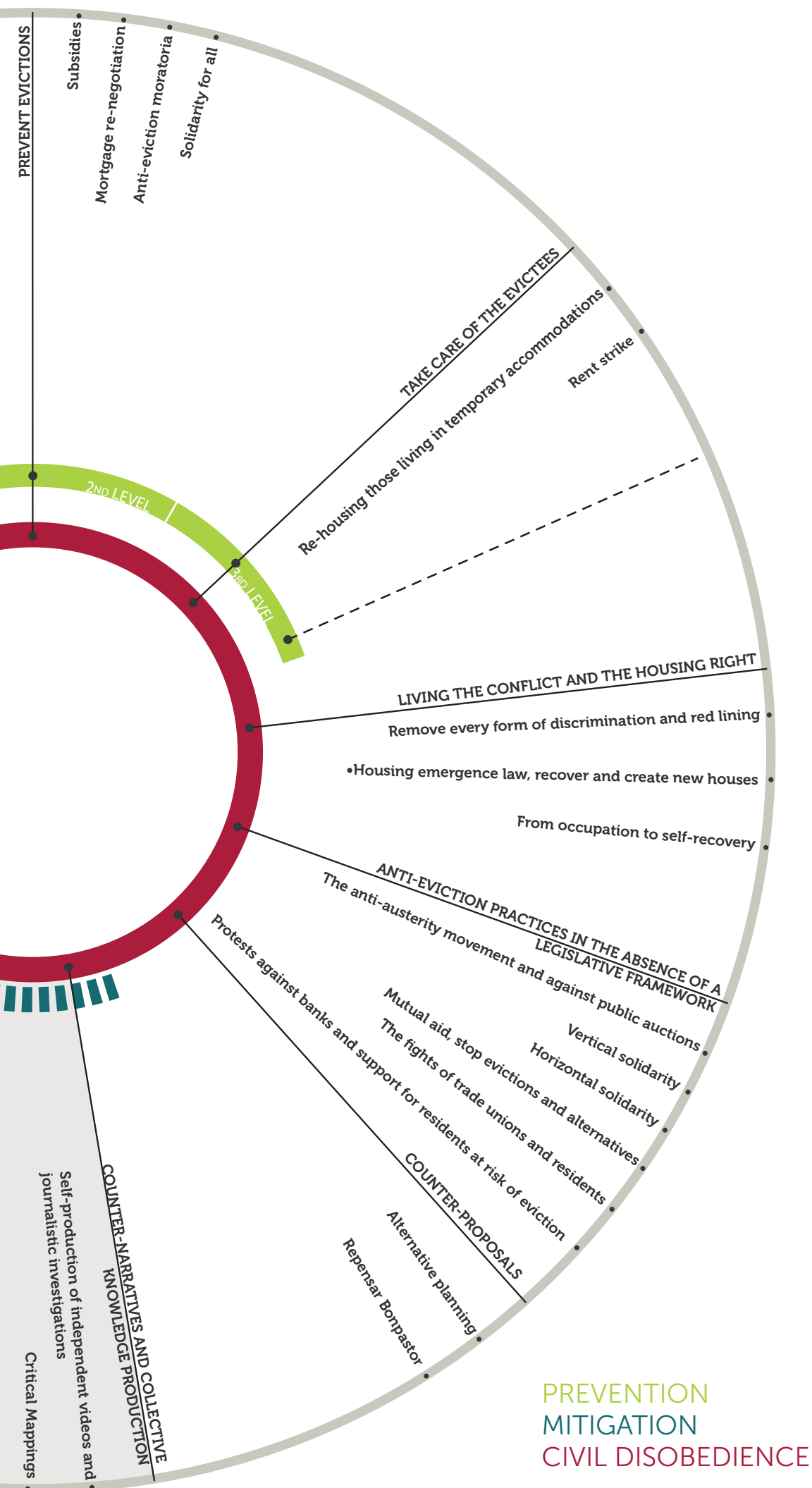
It is possible to classify them in three large independent families:

### 1. PREVENTION (OF FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD LEVEL)

### 2. MITIGATION AND PARTICIPATION

### 3. CIVIL MOBILIZATION AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION





# 1. PREVENTION MEASURES

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## **FAMILY OF PRACTICES**

### **MEASURES AND ACTIONS**

#### **CASES**

## **1.1 FIRST LEVEL MEASURES: ANTICIPATE DISPLACEMENT**

### **A) PROTECT PUBLIC HOUSING, INCLUDING THAT PROVIDED BY SOCIAL SERVICES AND REVISE LEASE REGULATIONS**

HALT PUBLIC HOUSING SPECULATION  
HALT THE FINANCIALISATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS  
HALT THE SPECULATION OF PUBLIC RESIDENTIAL ASSETS  
SECURE OLD RENTAL AGREEMENTS  
PROMOTE THE CREATION OF COALITIONS TO FOSTER DIALOGUE WITH PUBLIC ACTORS  
PROTECT THE SOCIAL SCOPES OF MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS

### **B) INCREASING SOCIAL HOUSING WITHOUT RECURRENCE TO NEW CONSTRUCTIONS**

RENT CONTROL  
SELF- REHABILITATION – SMALL SCALE  
SELF- REHABILITATION – LARGE SCALE

### **C) DIVERSIFY THE FORMS OF ACCESS TO HOUSING AND TO URBAN COMMONS, ACHIEVE SOCIAL RENT**

REGULATION OF RENTAL COSTS AND SOCIAL RENT  
COUNTER TAX EVASION CONTRASTING 'BLACK TENANCIES'  
RIGHT OF USE AND CONCESSION OF PROPERTIES FROM BANKING AUTHORITIES AND SPECULATIVE FUNDS.  
NEW GENERATION OF UNDIVIDED COOPERATIVES

## **1.2 SECOND LEVEL MEASURES TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT**

### **A) PREVENT EVICTIONS**

SUBSIDIES  
RENEGOTIATION OF MORTGAGES  
ANTI-EVICTION MORATORIA  
SOLIDARITY FOR ALL

## **1.3 THIRD LEVEL MEASURES IN CASE OF EVICTION**

### **A) TAKE CARE OF THE EVICTEES**

RE-HOUSING THOSE LIVING IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

### **B) SOLIDARITY AGAINST EVICTIONS**

RENT STRIKE

# 1. PREVENTION MEASURES

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With prevention we primarily refer to the compliance with international conventions, which consider forced eviction as a violation of human rights and of the constitutional principles that recognise housing as a fundamental asset that needs to be guaranteed to all citizens. Housing security should therefore be guaranteed by the State and governments (both at regional and at local level) as an essential condition of citizenship rights.

## 1.1 FIRST LEVEL MEASURES: ANTICIPATE DISPLACEMENT

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Under this umbrella there are all those forms of resistance that co-locate at the top of the eviction processes and that, if adopted, would represent a strong barrier against eviction. Among these there are measures that want to:

### A) PROTECT PUBLIC HOUSING, INCLUDING THOSE PROVIDED BY SOCIAL SERVICES AND REVISE LEASE REGULATIONS

Albeit marginally Southern European cities can still rely on public housing supply, at least until austerity policies have not contributed to the entire privatisation and alienation of these supplies. Austerity policies have imposed both privatisation and financialisation on the building stock, without taking into account the issues posed by the economic crisis. There has been a failure to go in the direction of a policy that has the fight against displacement at its core. The central node of anti-eviction discourse is therefore to review the plans for the sale of residential and state-owned stocks, promoting its reuse for housing purposes.



## HALT PUBLIC HOUSING SPECULATIONS



In Italy some housing unions share a common vision in relation to public housing: they must not be sold and call for the rehabilitation and restructuring of unused stocks.

In 2020 several families, residing for decades in the public housing near the Termini Train Station in Rome, many of whom were elderly people, received an eviction notice, being treated as if they were tenants of any private owner. As a consequence of a campaign that discredited them as privileged for the mere fact of living in the historic centre, the Council of Rome authorised the auctioning of their apartments, transforming a precious opportunity for public housing into an occasion for speculation. This decision

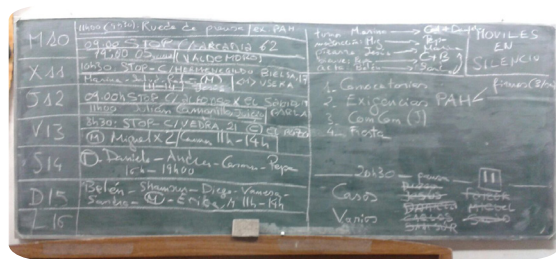
contributed to the displacement of working class Romans from the city centre, encouraging the privatization and illegal transformation of public heritage as tourist accommodation.

The mobilisation of the ASIA-USB union has stopped many evictions caused by the illegal liberalisation of public assets; a few years before the mobilisation of the Tenant Union against the implementation of **Article 3 of the Housing Plan** related to programs for the removal of public housing stock.



## HALT THE FINANCIALISATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

A



In Madrid, in the years following the economic crisis, both municipal and regional owned residential buildings were sold to hedge funds. More than 5000 dwellings were sold to funds called 'vulture funds' followed by the doubling of the price for their tenants. **PAH Madrid** (one of the local branches of the organisation Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca) is a mutual aid platform that opposes the sale of public assets

and works for the assignment of social housing to those affected by eviction or that had to recover a home for reasons of necessity. The recovery of properties, which does not always happen in an organised manner, serves as a tool for negotiation with the Empresa Municipal de la Vivienda for the regularisation of the contract or the assignment of an accommodation.

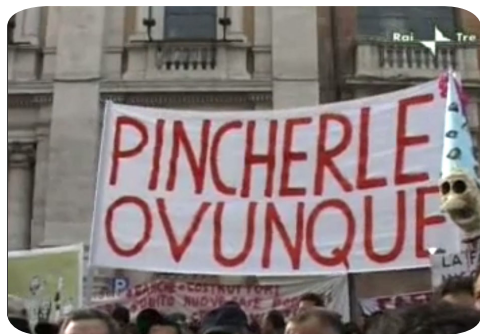
The Afectadosivima group opposes the sale of public assets under the property of the Comunidad di Madrid regional body. The group has ongoing criminal cases against the legitimacy of the sale. The tenants of the IVIMA have challenged their contracts requesting the recognition of their rent under the contract signed with the regional body before the sale.

<https://afectadosivima.org/>, <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/>





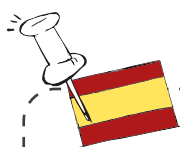
## HALT THE SPECULATION OF PUBLIC RESIDENTIAL ASSETS AND RENEGOTIATE OLD RENTAL AGREEMENTS



The 'Inquilini Resistenti' – an Italian group formed by tenants affected by the housing privatisation process – was among the first affected by eviction. In 2009, FATA – an insurance organisation and owner of several apartments built in the '60s in Pincherle Street – sold the apartments to the real estate company Giacomazzi. Although the company offered to the then current tenants the opportunity to buy the apartments they were residing in, the price of the properties were prohibitive. The company thus began selling apartments at **market prices**; the buyers were compelled to maintain the same rent to their tenants until the expiration of the contract (one

year later), then they could proceed with the eviction. As a reaction the tenants of the apartments mobilised in order to prevent eviction, adopting the slogan "**Everywhere's Pincherle**". After a year of collective mobilisation and thanks to the mediation of the **ASIA USB** union with the Regional Councillor for Housing Policies, the real estate company was forced to sell the apartments to the ATER (the public housing management body) turning them into public properties. This not only prevented the eviction of the tenants but also guaranteed the renovation of the lease contract without incurring any price alterations. Ten years on, and the rental prices are still adjusted based on the properties' market value. Despite the transfer of ownership from the property developer to ATER, there are still several cases of rental arrears; to avoid the risk of eviction, tenants ask to have their rents adjusted to their income.

*Video: 'Case da pazzi' 31/01/2010 [www.presadiretta.rai.it](http://www.presadiretta.rai.it)*



## SECURE OLD RENTAL AGREEMENTS

**YO no me voy!** (I won't leave) is a neighbourhood association, mostly composed of elderly people, who opposed the sale of public housing belonging to the Empresa Municipal de la Vivienda located in Madrid. "Displacement" is not a new term to these people, as they were evicted from their historic homes in the centre of the city as a result of a "Declaration of Ruin" which allowed the city to acquire the historic buildings and demolish them to rebuild social housing. Their fight was centred on the possibility for tenants to secure their old lease agreements to ensure that the same protections and rents - established before the sale - were granted and that the new ownership could not speculate on public housing.



## CREATE A WIDE COALITION TO FOSTER DIALOGUE WITH PUBLIC ACTORS

One of the fundamental steps that needs to be taken into account, and that can be decisive if undertaken from the beginning, is the creation of a wide coalition in which different groups, activists and scholars can strategically lobby to influence public decision-makers.

The measures to halt or reduce gentrification can change over time and place (from limitations on rents to support for evictees, and the creation of housing cooperatives or community land trusts), however, it is essential to have a voice articulating in public discourse.

**The collective Morar em Lisboa (MEL)** is a perfect example, showing the potential of these types of platforms to lobby against institutions. The group gathers together associations, academics and activists that aim to secure new housing policies and address urban issues. They are committed to debating and drawing proposals for more transparent and participatory policies. Among its members are the Lisbon Tenants Association (AIL), artist collectives like Habita! or Stop Despejos, unions like the SPGL or InterReformados, or alternative architecture hubs like Artéria e Atelier Mob. This platform includes other organisations like Transparência e Integridade, which fights against the corruption under the regimen of the 'golden visa'.

The MEL **participates in parliamentary hearings**, meets with deputies from all parties and the representative of the Municipal Chamber of Lisbon; in addition, it provides information for national and international media, organises conferences and publishes technical reports and policy guidelines. Alongside other social movements, it lobbied for the creation of the Secretaria de Estado da Habitação in 2017 of the Ministério das Infraestruturas e da Habitação in 2018, and for the approval of the first basic housing law in 2019.

<http://moraremlisboa.org/>



## SAFEGUARDING THE SOCIAL PURPOSES OF PUBLIC ENTITIES

With the adoption of the Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece in 2012, the Organization of Workers' Housing (OEK) was abolished, which for several decades had facilitated access to housing for the beneficiaries of the organization. The beneficiaries of OEK's housing benefits were workers and employees who were insured with a social security organisation for employees and did not own a home. OEK's resources came from the contributions of its beneficiaries and their employers (thus directly connecting the benefits to employment status) and were used for the provision of housing through granting home ownership in complexes that the OEK had constructed, loans for the purchase or the construction of housing, and rental subsidies. The abolition of the organization, which had been the main instrument of housing policy, was a major blow to the virtually non-existent public housing provision in Greece and exacerbated the problems of access to housing for OEK's beneficiaries who had received loans or rental subsidies.



## KEY POINTS

One key aspect of all these different positions is that: public assets must not be sold and should not be the object of speculation. A second aspect is that low-income groups must/should keep inhabiting inner city areas – which are progressively becoming more and more prestigious.

The role played by local and regional actors is not only to ensure that these criteria are being met but also to ensure that public assets are not put up for sale.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

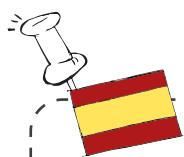
**1** The occupation of public-owned dwellings is a controversial topic. Several regularisation processes have taken place in Italy and the unions are still asking for more to happen. Recently, in Madrid, occupations have been regulated although in an insufficient number. An issue that lends itself to all sorts of media exploitations. Attention should be paid to the divisive discourses in which occupations are seen as a privileged channel for access to public housing. However, discourses of this sort are like a blanket that is too short; what are the options when those occupying are people in extreme deprivation? The only way to resolve this conflict is by strengthening housing policies – and not by declaring war on the occupants. This regularisation must be followed by an increase in public residential stocks.

**2** There is an obvious generational issue: those who live in social housing are generally either elderly people or adults with older children; except due to inheritance, young people are excluded, as they no longer meet the conditions for having access to this housing sector. Is it possible to generate strategies that promote a more intergenerational presence in public housing?

**3** It is necessary to consider the interclass dimension of the issues related to the housing struggle and on the limited solidarity among different groups. Often, when in one segment one group of tenants is willing to buy and another one is not, conflicts emerge thus diminishing the ability to find a single policy line. State-facilitated access to property is still a sustainable practice.

## B) INCREASING SOCIAL HOUSING WITHOUT RESORTING TO NEW CONSTRUCTION

The practices adopted to counter urban displacement offer a holistic approach towards urban recovery: producing social housing and new services for citizens, starting with a large plan of maintenance, adaptation and rehabilitation of the existing assets.



### RENT CONTROL



In the Spring of 2020, the Tenant Union of Barcelona (see p.66) recorded an important victory against the Parliament of the Generalitat of Catalonia who approved a rent control law. This represents the first measure of this kind adopted in Southern Europe since the liberalisation of the housing market during the '80s and the '90s. This law recalls similar measures recently adopted in the US and Germany, or those proposed by the "Living Rent" campaign. The Tenant Union was born in 2017 and since then it has always been involved on different fronts: on one side it engages in organising and supporting those territorial assemblies involved in

the prevention of evictions, on the other in building alliances in order to influence legislation revisions. In 2019, a Catalan housing congress identified rent control as a collective political path, laying the foundations for this achievement.

Despite the attempts of the lobbies of large property owners asking for its repeal – even appealing to the Constitutional Court – the law is now progressively extending to the rest of the country as it represents an effective and cost-efficient way to preserve the right to housing for millions of people. With the Covid-19 crisis, thousands of vulnerable families have become victims of an unjust regime of evictions also harmful to public health: between September and October more than seven hundred evictions have taken place in the city of Barcelona alone.

The law aims to regulate the rental market in those areas where speculations and tourism pressures have now become so strong as to prevent the right to housing. How it works: the Generalitat of Catalonia and the different municipal authorities identify "critical" areas according to the following criteria: rents must have been raised surpassing average levels, more than a third of a family's income be spent on rent, or rent has surpassed the Generalitat index of more than three points. All the sixty municipalities of the city of Barcelona with more than twenty thousand residents – including Barcelona itself – are considered part of this area: where five out of the seven million residents of Catalonia live.

In these areas, rental leases must not be increased beyond the index set by the Generalitat – which is based on the price per square meter and the services available (similar to the German Mietspiegel). The owners of these properties must not raise rents nor renew contracts that do not abide to the index. Those who fail to follow the limits imposed by the Generalitat or fail to correctly inform their tenants on the existence of this new regulation can be fined between nine and thirty thousand euros.



## SELF-REHABILITATION – LARGE SCALE

In 2000, Action diritti in movimento, one of the movements in the fight for housing in Rome, occupied a building – which had been empty for 5 years – owned by the Italian Air Force in Via Masurio Sabino. In 2001, the property was acquired by the Municipality which, through the municipal ordinance of January 10th, 2002, assigned the property to the occupiers (60 families) to start a process of self-renovation of the building financed by the Municipality. Through a participatory process, the association relied on the consultancy of the architects Antonello Sotgia and Rossella Marchini for the design of the project. 104 apartments were created to be rented out as social housing. Among the objectives of the project is reducing the price of the new apartments, which is a quarter of the average house price.

Although self-renovation projects represent a sustainable and affordable alternative for the Municipal Administration in the housing crisis, the case of Via Masurio Sabino still remains an isolated case.



## SELF-REHABILITATION – SMALL SCALE

The experience of the **Cooperative "Vivere 2000"** is a case of self-renovation of a publicly owned property in Piazza Sonnino (Trastevere, Rome) for residential purposes. It is thanks to their mobilisation, alongside that of other experiences and housing movements, that the Regional Law 55/1998 "per l'auto-recupero del patrimonio immobiliare abbandonato mediante cooperative di senza casa" (for the self-rehabilitation of abandoned housing stock through homeless cooperatives) was created. After the promulgation of the law, 12 self-rehab projects have opened in Rome.

In the 70's and the 80's, the property in Piazza Sonnino was owned by the Municipality and was in an abandoned and degraded state. When the Trastevere neighbourhood was affected by numerous evictions, on July 14th, 1989, 200 people from the Comitato Lotta per la Casa del Centro Storico (Committee for the Historic town's housing struggle), occupied the building to claim the right to live in the historic centre for the working classes. A few months later 12 families, evicted from their previous homes, set up in the "Vivere 2000" Cooperative with the aim of rehabilitating the property and pushing the Administration to accept and legitimise the self-rehabilitation.

By the end of the '90s the Municipality and the cooperative had signed an agreement for the rehabilitation of the building which was transformed into social housing. Through this process, the property remained under the ownership of the municipality, while becoming part of the public residential stock.

It took 10 years for the allocation of housing and contracts. Today the building has been assigned to the cooperative; its tenants, after 26 years, have passed from 'occupants' status to that of legitimate tenants. However, to date they still do not have a regular contract.



## ASPECTS TO REFLECT ON

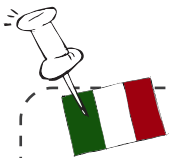
In your city, what kind of acquisition and reuse initiatives of otherwise abandoned, or sold to hedge funds, properties are currently being enacted?

## C) DIVERSIFY THE FORMS OF ACCESS TO HOUSING AND URBAN COMMONS AND ACHIEVE SOCIAL RENT

Among anti-gentrification practices, **the access to equal opportunities to choose the best way of living and inhabiting an area must be taken into account.** The crisis has clearly shown how unstable a system can be when access to housing heavily depends on debt to pay mortgages or market rents. There is a need to avoid mortgages as the only option in access to housing, as this subjects individuals to the interests of banks and financial institutions. It is therefore necessary to **diversify the range of options available which, under the current regime, translates into increasing the offer of social rental.**

What is **social rent**? A form of rent that does not exceed 30% of income, including utilities and municipal and regional taxations. Who can have access? In Mediterranean regions those who have access are the most vulnerable groups and those who meet the criteria for access to public housing. In other countries, social rent is a fundamental principle, and everyone can have access to this form of housing. How can social rent be secured? Both public institutions and state-owned intermediaries are entitled to guarantee access to social rent either directly – by promoting new public housing units, rents regulation mechanisms and tax relief benefits, and new self-rehab cooperatives or undivided cooperative housing – or indirectly – by granting assets to intermediate bodies to be managed according to social constraints.

What kind of measures are available? Both national laws and practices of 'the commons' are contributing to profoundly reshaping different forms of access to the city.



### RENT REGULATION AND SOCIAL RENT

In Italia esistono i Contratti Agevolati (L. 431/1998) che rispettano un tetto nel costo dell'affitto. Questo tetto è stimato in relazione al valore delle aree e concordato tra sindacati, piccoli proprietari e comune mediante dei Patti Territoriali. I Patti sarebbero un'esperienza interessante. Le soglie però sono vicine a quelle di mercato e ancora troppo alte se paragonate ai salari dei lavoratori. Andrebbero rivisti i canoni alla luce della crisi economica, dell'emergenza sociale e dell'attuale valore delle abitazioni.





## COUNTER TAX EVASION CONTRASTING 'BLACK TENANCIES'

A large number of tenants do not have a valid rental contract and pay so called 'black rents'. This puts leaseholders at a high risk of eviction. As per the Leg. Decree, 23/2011 (which introduced the taxation system of the "Cedolare secca sugli affitti", art. 3 subs. 8 and 9), tenants could have requested the registration of a black tenancy contract by paying three times the cadastral value (indemnity of occupation). This measure was aimed at reducing the black market and tax evasion in the rental system. Following the judgment of Constitutional Law, the subsections of the article were later repealed, as they were considered unconstitutional. Those tenants who had complied with the law found themselves fighting in court against their property owners who were asking for their eviction and/or reimbursement of the unpaid rental difference. However, thanks to the campaign by the Tenant Union on the December 15th, 2015, the law was amended and until July 7th 2015 the rent to be paid remained as per that stated in the Leg. Decree 23/2011.

With a sentence in 2016 the Constitutional Court modified art. 15 of the law 431/1998 delineating a mechanism that allows those who do not hold a registered or regular contract to appeal to the judge. Indeed, the court is called upon to apply the minimum level of rent among those locally defined through the negotiations between the unions and the owners' associations.

<http://www.unioneinquilini.it/index.php?id=7282>



## RIGHT OF USE AND CONCESSION OF PROPERTIES FROM BANKING AUTHORITIES AND SPECULATIVE FUNDS

The municipal (or regional) level can play a decisive mediation role with large property owners. More than 4000 properties have been sold to credit institutions in Spain, 300 in Madrid; 9866 have been given to speculative funds –400 in Madrid under pressure from the PAH movement (and only after that the city sold more than 4000 of its own properties to this very same speculative fund). The discourse around the concession of the right to use private property assets is also present in Italy.



In 2007 the President of the X Municipio of Rome, **Sandro Medici**, issued an ordinance that enabled the expropriation of the use (but not the property) of private properties. The practice, despite a gap in the legislation around this matter, is not considered to be illegal. The aim is to manage common use of unused private real estate stock, while being able to maintain private property.

Considering the great housing emergency, there are indeed many private properties in an abandoned state. In 2011, many of the owners of these unsold properties denounced Sandro Medici; however, in July 2011, the Court of the city of Rome favoured the initiative taken by the President of the X Municipio of the other two presidents, establishing that **the expropriation of unleased properties to counter the housing emergency cannot be considered a crime.**



## NUOVE GENERAZIONI DI COOPERATIVE INDIVISE A DIRITTO D'USO



The scope of housing cooperatives is to ensure its members an indefinite lease, with more competitive conditions and prices compared to the market sector and more sustainable criteria. The cooperative must take care of the building project in all its stages: find the building area (often sold by the council based on the social scope of the project), present and obtain the approval for the project and carry out the works. ENTREPATIOS is one of the numerous cooperatives born in Spain after the economic crisis. One of the ideas sustained by the cooperative is for the shareholders not to become owners, but to have access to housing through an undivided, undetermined,

transferable and economically accessible right of use.

<https://entrepatrios.org/el-proyecto/>



## KEY POINTS

Key points of these practices can be reduced to two simple aspects: the re-use of available stock and the diversification of forms of access to housing and urban spaces, going beyond the public-private dichotomy. There is the need to revamp social rent and halt the anti-social and speculative habit of abandoned properties. The ideas are there and there are plenty of them. What is needed is the political will and the credibility of institutions in the management and administration of public resources.



## OUTSTANDING ISSUES

In those countries of Southern Europe where there is a high level of property ownership, the solution to the housing issue relies heavily on active engagement and participation with small owners. In these countries there is a lack of juridical mechanisms to control empty properties, however it is crucial to find strategies to counter their abandonment for speculative purposes. Taxation forms cannot represent the only strategy to discourage the anti-social employment of private property. Indeed, these forms of taxation might result in unsustainable small owners and more generally to citizens of Southern European cities – which have been considered poor because of their income but, at the same time, rich as owners of a second house as an investment asset. **A coalition between tenants and small owners would be able to absorb the social demand for housing? Would it be possible to distinguish between small and large owners in the regulations? How would we establish this threshold?**

**A fair rent. Is it possible to revise the rental regulations of Southern European cities?**

In Italy and Spain during the '90s and in Portugal after the economic crisis there were no mechanisms in place for rental regulation; in Greece they have never been present. The regulation of tenancies has long been considered problematic as it would have slowed down the market and favoured the black housing market.



## 1.2 SECOND LEVEL MEASURES TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT

The second level measures take into account the issues related to some population groups at risk of eviction and intervene in the attempt to mitigate the issue of housing costs on incomes, or to propose anti-eviction measures. While subsidies have proved insufficient and are not enough to satisfy the needs of some groups, discourses related to informal solidarity contracts and calls for anti-eviction moratoria emerge.

### A) PREVENT EVICTIONS



#### SUBSIDIES

An interesting practice is represented by the **Housing Bonus** – a form of housing benefit that has been adopted in Rome and has been heavily criticised. For 5 years, the Municipality pays the rent based on the market price to those small (or medium) owners that are willing to rent their properties to people currently living in emergency housing at an agreed price. However, this measure has not received a large consensus: nor among small owners – due to the lack of trust in the institutions and the continuous provision of the fund; nor among those living in emergency housing – as the fund does not guarantee a secure, long-term answer to the issue and represents an implicit income support.

In Italy a specific measure to mitigate evictions called the **'No fault' Eviction Fund** has been introduced. The fund offers financial help in the payment of rental arrears in the case of eviction. To prove your arrears are **not your fault**, it is necessary to demonstrate the end of your working contract, the reduction of working hours, the ordinary or extraordinary redundancy fund, the failure to renew fixed-term or atypical employment contracts or the cessation of a freelance position. In addition, there is a need for the tenant to receive an ongoing notification of eviction. The fund, however, does not protect precarious workers and its implementation has been too slow in preventing evictions in court.

As of 2020 the House Bonus is still in force; however, since the fund is currently underfinanced, it is not possible to have access to it.



#### MORTGAGE RE-NEGOTIATION

**Mortgage re-negotiation** is possible both in Spain – regulated by the royal decree of the Código de Buenas Practicas – and Greece, where there are still **some limitations** in relation to the value of properties and on the behaviour of the debtors in place.

In Italy, the possibility to have access to mortgage renegotiations is regulated under National Law (Law 7/2007 e.s.m.i and Law 221/2012) and under consumer law and free competition principles, which allow for renegotiation of the loan and the possibility for it to be transferred to another credit institution offering cheaper rates.



## ANTI-EVICTION MORATORIA

The anti-eviction moratorium is a practice that entails the suspension of an acquired right for extraordinary reasons. In Italy the terms and conditions of the moratorium are established by the prefecture. Housing law also contemplates the existence of a moratorium against evictions to protect vulnerable groups. In winter, at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, pressure from unions and international networks of tenants such as the International Alliance of Inhabitants, as well as from the UN councillor Leilan Farha on evictions pushed many countries around the world affected by evictions to offer a moratorium.

However, the suspension in many countries did not last long: in Spain, for example, evictions resumed with great intensity in September 2020. In Italy, the anti-eviction moratorium remained in force for the whole of 2020: during this period evictions can follow their legal tender but cannot be carried out.



## SOLIDARITY FOR ALL

Solidarity for All is an organization based in Athens, which was formed in autumn 2012 by members of Syriza and non-aligned activists. Solidarity for All had access to a fund created by Syriza, to which most of the party's MPs were contributing 20% of their salary. The organization aimed to facilitate the development of grassroots solidarity, to enhance the culture of self-organization and the cooperation among solidarity groups and local communities, and to create collective tools and spaces for coordination. It provided financial, logistical, legal and administrative support to these local solidarity structures. Local groups included assemblies against foreclosures, food coops, community GPs and pharmacies, and alternative/solidarity economy networks. In 2013 Solidarity for All published an informational brochure against property foreclosures, to which individuals and collectives active in anti-foreclosure struggles contributed. The organization's affiliation to Syriza increasingly caused tension amongst members and solidarity structures negotiating their position between grassroots empowerment and the incorporation into institutional politics, resulting in the withdrawal of individuals and groups.

Brochure about foreclosures (in Greek):

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160403125226/https://www.solidarity4all.gr/sites/www.solidarity4all.gr/files/odigos-pleistiriamoi.pdf>



## KEY POINTS

**Halt evictions is an anti-gentrification practice.** When talking about expenditure and social cohesion, supporting rent and preventing evictions represents a much more sustainable practice if compared to facing a housing emergency. It has been proven that the costs related to second level prevention measures is seven times lower than the costs faced in relocating and offering adequate services to homeless people.

In some cases, with adequate mediation, even small owners could benefit from these measures; for example, by renting out their properties – at an agreed fee and with the institutions as guarantors – to people living in a housing emergency.



## WEAKNESSES

There are a variety of subsidies that unfortunately are available intermittently – often of an emergency nature – and inadequate to needs. Without first level measures in place, second level measures are a hole in the water. In both Spain and Italy, although it should be regulated based on household incomes, it has not witnessed any decrease in rental costs.

## 1.3 THIRD LEVEL MEASURES IN CASE OF EVICTION

When we talk about third level measures, we generally refer to the re-housing of evicted households or of those living in emergency housing, in temporary council accommodations etc.

This practice has recently been implemented in Madrid. The case of Rome, however, shows how these are still inadequate measures and cannot by any means be considered as a satisfactory alternative. Indeed, in the absence of public residential housing and the transitory re-housing process – which should be followed by the re-location of households into their definite accommodation – is missing. In addition, among these practices, severe forms of emergency and social marginalisation speculation have emerged. In other countries, anti-gentrification measures have involved the development of regulations for the protection of single home hotels for single resident households. In Mediterranean countries instead, the needs of those in a housing emergency are often mitigated by family networks. The recent rent strike phenomenon is the first attempt towards the collective management of evictions, also in relation to public health. Especially during the current period, where we are facing a global pandemic, it has become even clearer how every eviction poses a threat to the health of those who are affected by it.

### A) CARING FOR THE EVICTEES



#### REINTEGRATION OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

In the absence of preventive measures by the state and public housing, eviction from a home can lead to homelessness. Non-governmental organizations like PRAKSIS, Klimaka and Human Humans (Ανθρώπινοι Άνθρωποι) are trying to address this social emergency to a limited extent with day structures, hostels and reintegration programs including the provision of (temporary) housing and assistance in job search..

## B) SOLIDARITY AGAINST EVICTION



### RENT STRIKE



During the first months of the Covid-19 emergency, thousands of eviction procedures were initiated against those no longer able to pay their rent in several countries in Southern Europe. On April 1st, 2020, an international rent strike was called with the aim of preventing the execution of these evictions, and convincing owners and institutions about the need to lower prices and regulate the real estate market, in order to ensure the survival and health of all.

The strike recorded many followers, especially in Spain and Italy, where many tenants chose to stop paying, self-reduce or negotiate a lower rent with the owners. Some of them reported their case through the global rent strike map developed by the California collective Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP). Others contacted the legal support networks available at municipality level. Although as a way to protect tenants at risk of eviction it may require a wide level of mobilisation, the spread of the strike can represent a pressure factor for landlords to negotiate with tenants before proceeding with evictions.

The effects brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic have also negatively affected the tourism industry, making many apartments previously destined as short rentals – especially through platforms such as Airbnb – available once again. In light of this, housing movements are asking to make available these apartments at controlled prices not only for health professionals or those who need to temporarily isolate, but also for people who have been evicted, in order to prevent the repercussions of the economic crisis from affecting the health situation. The rent strike shows how the pandemic has only made more evident the systemic issue related to the access to housing and its relationship with real estate capital gain.

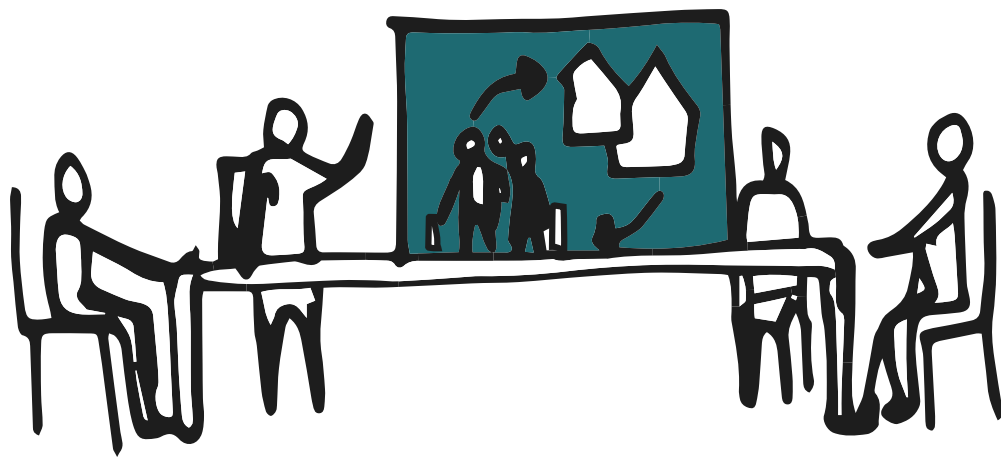
In a historic moment in which several non-essential economic activities are suspended or considerably reduced, it is argued that real estate capital gain is considered as a non-essential activity and, as such, it can be suspended in order to protect the primary right to housing and health. Like any person able to prove they have lost their income, small owners as well – who depend on rent as a form of income – must be given the right to apply for public benefits. A condition, that must not depend on the income and the effort of the tenants.

<https://scioperodegliaffitti.noblogs.org/>

<https://covid19.antievictionmap.com/>

## 2. MITIGATION AND PARTICIPATION

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## **FAMILY OF PRACTICES**

### **MEASURES AND ACTIONS**

#### **CASES**

## **2.1 MANAGE THE COLLECTIVE VALUE OF CITIES**

**A) VALUE CAPTURE: MANAGE URBAN REAL ESTATE CAPITAL GAIN IN CONSOLIDATED AREAS OF THE CITY**

**B) VALUE CAPTURE AND SOCIAL HOUSING**

**C) REDUCE/RE-NEGOTIATE OLDER VERSION OF CONSTRUCTION RIGHTS**

REDUCE CONTRUCTION RIGHTS

## **2.2 PROTECTION FROM SPECULATIVE PRESSURES**

**A) INTRODUCTION OF TEMPORARY ANTI EVICTION MORATORIA**

**B) PRESERVE ARCHITECTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE AS A COMMUNITY INTEREST**

ACT ON TIME THE SAD STORY OF THE EX BASTIANELLI

EXPAND RESTRICTIONS TO GREEN SPACES

USE HERITAGE AND ANCIENT BUILDINGS FOR CO-HOUSING EXPERIENCES

**C) MANAGING THE CHANGES OF DESTINATION OF USE, PRESERVE SMALL TRADE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS RHYTHMS OF LIFE**

HANDLE THE CONFLICT BETWEEN USE VALUE AND EXCHANGE VALUE

TOURISTS AND RESIDENTS, WHAT EQUILIBRIUM?

NETWORKS AND ASSEMBLY TO RESIST TOURISTIFICATION

REGULATE TOURISTIC RENTALS THROUGH CARRYING CAPACITY

## **2.3 PARTICIPATION AND CONFLICT**

SELF-GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCES AND DIRITTO SORGIVO

RESPOND TO THE PANDEMIC AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSFORMATION AND MITIGATION

## 2. MITIGATION AND PARTICIPATION

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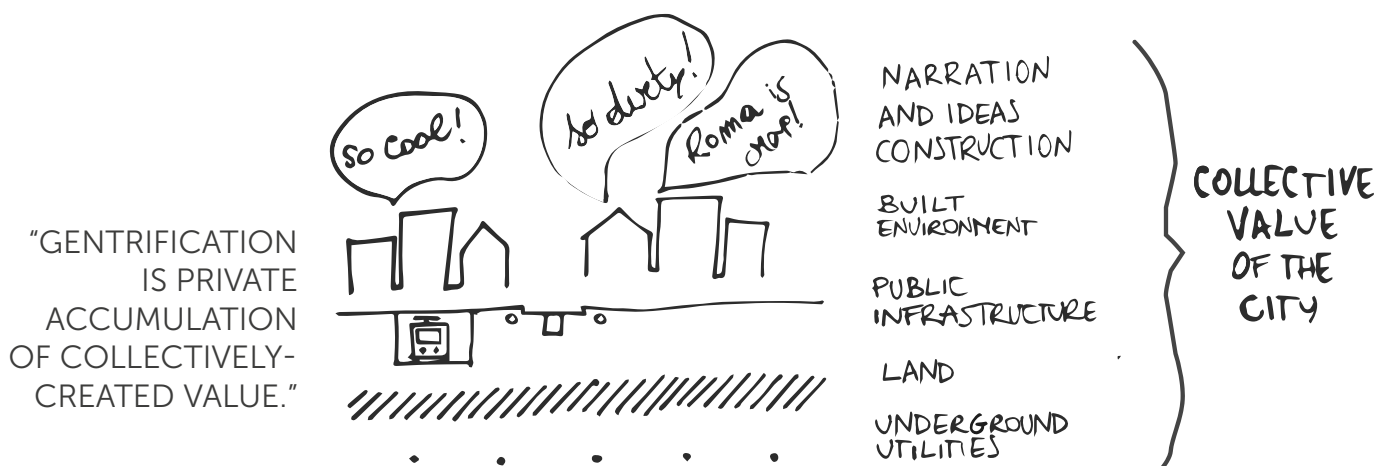
This is a group of practices that are carried out by urban planners and by those who govern urban transformations. A starting point, in this sense, is the opinion that the effects brought about by urban transformation – especially when new construction is involved – produce long-term impacts on the area, as well as negative externalities, including conflicts emerging from the different uses of space, that need to be managed. Let's face it, urban transformation is not a sustainable practice; it exploits the soil, raw materials, water, energy. It can be made sustainable but only through the adoption of conciliation and impact mitigation mechanisms, the mediation of private interests with the general ones and participatory processes. There are laws that require every transformation to generate services of general interest and (logically) charges able to repay the urbanisation work, although they operate differently in each country. These better exemplify the nature of urban planning as a mediation practice among different interests. However, in the last decades, increasingly giving way to speculative interests, urban planning failed to fulfil its task. While managing a complex transformation, it is not impossible to maintain a view towards mitigation of the effects generated on the space, however, there is need of a political vision. Here we discuss some of the aspects.

### 2.1 MANAGE THE COLLECTIVE VALUE OF CITIES

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#### A) VALUE CAPTURE: MANAGE URBAN REAL ESTATE CAPITAL GAIN IN CONSOLIDATED AREAS OF THE CITY

When talking about anti-gentrification practices, we cannot but talk about rent, which is often described as 'value capture', or the value produced by collective infrastructures. In some countries, national laws and/or local experiences allow public bodies the right of first refusal over the purchase of land and/or properties in areas that need to be transformed, re-urbanised or readapted to new uses.



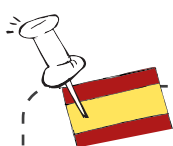
## B) VALUE CAPTURE AND SOCIAL HOUSING

There has been too much exploitation of land and for too long urbanisation has focused on the regeneration of central areas. This poses issues of value capture in almost all Southern European Countries. Often, in place of value capture, the value produced by the transformation is **'exchanged' for social housing shares through the creation of *ad hoc* housing funds**. These experiences are, however, still at an experimental stage, and they have been put in place during a period of revision to public expenditure in which the financialisation process of housing has worked its way. These experiences are not able to satisfy the increasing demand for social housing. **Self-recovery experiences in particular follow this direction and require the real state production chain in which speculative margins are dismantled.**



## C) REDUCE/RE-NEGOTIATE FORMER CONSTRUCTION RIGHTS

The real struggle here is not only linked to the rental value, but it is linked to the potential rental value. In other words, we are facing the need to stop those speculative mechanisms enabled by old construction rights still characterised by a strong trust in building development.



### REDUCE CONSTRUCTION RIGHTS

A reduction in construction rights has been recently achieved in the city of Madrid, where the Superior Court of Justice has blocked the Operacion Chamartin, an ambitious urban project declared not to be conforming to the 2007 land law. The project was meant to build 17,000 properties, only 10% of which were protected as social housing. The reduction of construction rights has resulted in a reduction of investment capital and in a revision of the project's strategic priorities. Construction rights are a collective product and, as such, must be able to be reviewed by the community.



## KEY POINTS

The challenge of urban planning as a mitigation practice is to revise construction rights and concessions and rethink transformations that we really need, from the perspective of a widespread heritage maintenance plan.

## 2.2 PROTECTION FROM SPECULATIVE PRESSURES

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### A)INTRODUCTION OF TEMPORARY ANTI-EVICTION MORATORIA

How do we measure predatory behaviour and the intention to speculate in specific areas? The answer is simple, we need to cross reference data: the increase in housing prices, the number of new construction concessions, the number of evictions, the relative increase of rental costs and, lastly, the removal of residents living within a specific area/territory from the registry office.

The proximity to metropolitan and regional infrastructures of interest (e.g., Universities) and to infrastructural projects (e.g., metro and train stations) can be considered as factors that facilitate speculative pressures.

### B)PRESERVE ARCHITECTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE AS A COMMUNITY INTEREST

Is it possible to consider that those areas left empty within neighbourhoods or already-consolidated areas – in which previous construction rights are in place – are subjected to a special regime and that their destination of use could be the result of the genuine participation of local communities?

To this end, **referring preventively – and always within the time limits set by the current legislation** and under a social lens – **to architectural, landscape and environmental constraints** could be useful to discuss the future development of free areas of private property located in areas subject to strong speculative pressures, in which the right of use collides with the property right.



## ACT ON TIME, THE SAD STORY OF THE EX BASTIANELLI



Despite the entire neighbourhood of San Lorenzo being placed in the “Carta delle Qualità”, it still has not been protected in its entirety. Over the last years, new attempts have been made to build new residences in the areas left empty by bomb damage and by the former registered industrial areas left vacant, as examples of industrial archaeology.

In 2012, for example, the Council of the city of Rome released to the Sabelli Trading s.r.l the permit for the demolition and the redevelopment of the Ex Fonderie Bastianelli building complex (built in 1908 and registered as an example of industrial archaeology) and permission to realise four floors of mini apartment buildings and two lower-ground

parking garages. In April 2013, the foundry was occupied by activists of the *Comuniana Roma* collective, cleaned up in mid-August of the same year. After the experience of the foundry, activists occupied the spaces of the Piaggio factory located in via dello Scalo San Lorenzo. Later, in May the foundry was demolished by the owners. However, on April 2015 – already out of time – the Regional Administrative Court (TAR) accepted the appeal presented by the Free Republic of San Lorenzo and withdrew the building permit issued to Sabelli Trading.

The Court, indeed, pointed out the irregularities of the *iter* followed the release of the permit; in particular, the lack of advise from the Cultural Heritage Department on the demolition.

“The Administration – it is written on the sentence of the Court – should have conducted an accurate analysis of the effects on the existent urban fabric connected to the implementation of the project, respecting also the public interest in the preservation of the historic-cultural character of the City of Rome”. It has been one year since the works on the foundry have restarted, not without protests among the residents who lamented issues related to the stability of the buildings surrounding the area under construction. The aim is always the same: mini apartments.

[www.comunianet.org](http://www.comunianet.org)

<http://www.liberarepubblicadisanlorenzo.it/>



## EXPAND RESTRICTIONS TO GREEN SPACES

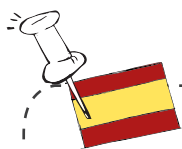


The ex SNIA lake, declared a natural monument by the regional administration after the long struggle of the residents of the district Prenestino in Rome, is a natural water body that formed accidentally in the early Nineties in a very dense part of the city, as the excavations to build a shopping mall in the area of the ex Snia Viscosa Factory tapped an aquifer. Before the emergence of the lake, the neighbourhood committees had already lodged a complaint regarding the building concession given on the area. The criminal trial revealed the falsification of the plan on which the concession was

based which was subsequently cancelled by the Region. Over the years there have been several attempts at speculation in different parts of the area, also favoured by the unclear regulatory framework often accompanied by the silent complicity of the administrations. Since 2015, the various committees managed to obtain the re-opening of the public area of both the factory and the lake for a total of 10,000 square meters. In the fight, the timing with which the movements acted to prevent the various attempts at speculation and exclude the emergence of any unclear and not agreed decision on the property, proved to be crucial.

<https://lagoexsnia.wordpress.com/2014/07/25/644/>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcb\\_Thrq2P8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcb_Thrq2P8)



## USE HERITAGE AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS FOR CO-HOUSING EXPERIENCES



The 'corrala' is a kind of infravivienda construction typical of Lavapies popular architecture and of several neighbourhoods in Madrid, characterised by large balconies and internal courtyards often used as common spaces. As the accommodation is often small and lacking in services, it was considered inadequate, not in line with the house needs of the 70's. Numerous 'corralas' were then demolished through the 'declaration of ruin' leaving space for new modern social housing. The building known as Kambalache is an example of this kind of historic construction in the district of Lavapies in Madrid.

For about 10 years, the owner of the property systematically pressured the inhabitants to push them away from the building, using as an excuse a never documented declaration of ruin. In 2011, a group of people decided to recover the property, stipulating an agreement with the owner. However, the building was acquired by a credit institution and the agreement signed with the tenants would not have been respected by the new owners, who started a legal process in the attempt to empty, demolish and rebuilt Kambalache. The residents waged a battle to defend the corrala and its model of communal living by creating assemblies such as Corrala Despiertas. The aim was to make the corrala known and publicise it as a housing model and raise interest among the local community. Eventually the occupiers of Kambalache accepted a severance offer which was then donated to all social movements

<https://kambalache.noblogs.org/kambalache-2015/>



## CURRENT ISSUES

Although constraint and conservation tools are very important, they have not proved sufficient. Constraint, indeed, represents a form of protection of urban quality, but it is not sufficient if not accompanied by adequate planning for the management of public resources.

## C) MANAGING CHANGES IN DESTINATION OF USE, PRESERVING SMALL TRADE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RHYTHMS OF LIFE

An important factor in relation to the changes currently in act in neighbourhoods is characterised by changes in destination of use and of commercial supply, increasingly oriented towards potential users. Restaurants, bars, night clubs, increasingly move into working-class neighbourhoods where there is a reserve of abandoned spaces ready to use. New activities are often the result of private initiatives conducted under the sharing economy and the new start-ups considered vital for the urban economy. This confronts us with a paradox. In what contexts and based on what premises is it appropriate to support new business initiatives within the context of the sharing economy? And what exactly do we mean by sharing economy?

As a result of private initiatives, of branding, and of promotion of urban experiences, **tourism** has increased in once-popular areas or in historic inner cores. The president of the first municipality of Madrid made it clear: more than gentrification, tourism represents a concrete government issue. What to do? Differentiate the offer and let tourism spread into new destinations? Try to halt it? The same questions affect policymakers and ruling classes in other cities. Is it possible to manage the changes in destination of use, from residential to touristic and/or offices? How might we preserve neighbourhoods' commercial fabric and the rhythm of life?



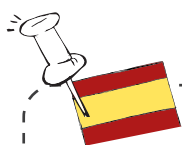
### TOURISTS AND RESIDENTS, WHAT EQUILIBRIUM?



In cities with strong tourism attractions, the possibility of preserving a neighbourhoods' rhythm of life is often threatened by the arrival of new tourism related economic interests. A classic example is the case of Venice in Italy, a city that – as denounced by the "Gruppo 25 Aprile" group – loses more and more residents every year, sinking under the weight of tourists. The group mainly lashes out against the changes in destination of use from residential to touristic. Furthermore, there is currently a shortage of rental apartments, sucked into the Airbnb circuit.

<https://gruppo25aprile.org/>

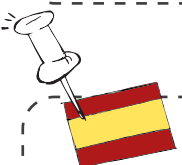




## HANDLE THE CONFLICT BETWEEN USE VALUE AND EXCHANGE VALUE



Solar of Lavapiés is a privately owned lot in a densely populated neighbourhood affected by strong speculative pressures in Madrid; it represents a classic case of a conflict between use value and exchange value of an asset. In 2000, the space was recovered by the local community as a communal garden. However, on the land exists the building right of an owner who wants to build a hotel in one of the areas that is gradually becoming a destination for night and alternative tourism. The Asamblea Popular de Lavapiés alongside with other social movements in Madrid, have protested by adopting the slogan 'Aquí se gentrifica', demanding for the works to be stopped and for the creation of a community space. The same has happened in a lot not far away, where now exists one of the few public parks in the area widely visited by residents.



## NETWORKS AND ASSEMBLIES TO RESIST TOURISTIFICATION (ABTS - SET)

The Asamblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible (ABTS) of Barcelona and the Sud Europa contro la Turistificazione (SET) international network carry out activities to denounce, criticise and mobilise against the dominant discourse on tourism in European Cities.

In Barcelona, the promotion of the city as a destination for both recreational and business tourism as an institutional project – resulting in the creation of the so called 'marca Barcellona' – has been considered a model by many cities, even beyond Southern Europe. Since the 1992 Olympics, tourism has been used by the ruling classes as a way to legitimise more destructive transformations in the most emblematic districts of the city, especially in the historic inner cores. This tendency towards the touristification of the city has increased with the celebration of the famous 'Fòrum Universale delle Culture' in 2004, promoted by the socialist administration of Joan Clos; since then, tourism has become more intrusive, leading to the progressive depopulation of the centre not only from its residents but also from traditional commercial activities causing also an exponential increase in prices. Not even the administration of Barcelona en Comú, born from the protests of 2011, has managed to reverse this trend: major events such as the Barcelona Mobile Congress, Sonar or Primavera Sound are still considered economic opportunities to be kept, despite their social impact over entire urban areas (eg. the districts of Sants, the historic center, and Poblenou).

Today the battles of ABTS are framed in a wider network that connects the claims of many districts and cities of Southern Europe: SET – Sud Europa di fronte alla Turistificazione. It also includes other local realities such as OCIO and the Comitato No Grandi Navi of Venice, as well as collectives of cities such as Palermo, Naples, Rimini, Bologna, Athens, Valencia, Seville, Palma, Pamplona, Lisbon, Malta, Malaga, Madrid, San Sebastian, Canary Islands.

<https://assembleabarris.wordpress.com/>





## REGULATE TOURISTIC RENTALS THROUGH CARRYING CAPACITY

Facing the explosion of new forms of tourist accommodation based on digital short-term rental platforms, Southern European cities have tried to regulate the sector in an attempt to mitigate its impacts on the availability of housing for (normal) long-term rent. The policy proposals span from those requesting the increase of taxations on these forms of rental followed by a reduction of long-term rentals, to the prohibition of additional tourist accommodations in a specific area. In Lisbon – where short-term rentals have taken approximately 30,000 homes from the market (Rio Fernandes et al., 2019) – one of the ideas proposed by the councillors of the Partido Comunista Portugues was to put a cap on the number of properties to serve as tourist accommodations, so to limit their number.

This proposal is based on the concept of “tourist carrying capacity” developed by the World Tourism Organisation in relation to natural habitats and which measures the physical, ecological and social weight of tourism, applied here to historic urban centres.

In Lisbon this index would work on a district scale; it would be measured by calculating the number of tourist beds with the number of residents. A ratio of 1 (one tourist for each resident) could be considered the limit beyond which not to authorize other tourist apartments. As a planning tool, this index can be adjusted to the specificities of the area and to the dialogue between municipalities and inhabitants. As an example of tourist pressure on the historic centres of European cities, Salgueiro et al (2017) calculate that in the Alfama district of Lisbon the ratio is 2.2 tourists / residents taken from the announcements on the booking.com site only, therefore without counting the reported accommodations on Airbnb, which would further elevate the ratio. Tourism’s ‘carrying capacity’ could also be a tool to distribute tourist rents more evenly in each city, helping to dilute the pressure of gentrification on already saturated areas.

Si veda Salgueiro, T.B., Mendes L. e Guimaraes, P. (2017). Tourism and urban changes: lessons from Lisbon. In Gravary-Barbas, M., Guinand, S. (eds.) Tourism and gentrification in contemporary metropolises: international perspectives. London: Routledge.

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## KEY POINTS

Urban planning must be an anti-eviction practice. We have all the instruments, the knowledge and the skills needed to orient transformation towards the creation of more socially-just cities. Ideas often come from self-governing initiatives and from alternative asset management solutions. A mitigation praxis should embrace the instances that express a collective need and speak out on the requests of those left behind or at risk of eviction.



## CURRENT ISSUES

Technique is not enough. The kind of disputes and conflicts taking place in gentrifying neighbourhoods can only be solved through citizen-oriented policies, policies that stand for the rights of the most vulnerable and at risk of eviction.

## 2.3 PARTICIPATION AND CONFLICT

The participation of a population is a vital aspect for democracy, for the city and for urban planning. However, in urban transformation this word has become an institutional fetish, as it never takes conflict as a basis for action. 'Citizen participation' has become a practice that works more as an anaesthetic rather than assuming its terms. There is also talk about the 'displacement of participation' which manifests when participatory strategies tend to dismiss conflicts or even exclude the more conflictual and antagonistic voices from consultation.



### SELF-GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCES AND ORIGINAL LEGITIMACY

In the event of privatisation, valorisation and private regulation of urban communal assets, public institutions lose all legitimacy in presenting themselves as a promoter of participatory processes; in these cases, the basis for participation in the form of self-organisation can only expand. The participatory path undertaken by the platform - movement and social spaces 'Decide Roma' - which advocates for the writing of a charter of common goods, in response to generalised eviction of social spaces, intermediate bodies and associations that occupy the municipal heritage - goes in this direction.

Participation in self-governing processes is inclusive and promotes strategies to fight against the stigmatization and marginalization of resistant communities. Recently, all those who, with their practices, have contributed to finding alternative housing solutions or to offering services of great social and proximity interest - such as occupations for residential purposes and social spaces - have been victims of ad hoc criminalization processes, also part of the logic of eviction and removal from places where they are established and from which they operate.

<http://www.decideroma.com/carta1>



### OPEN ISSUES

Which form of participation and processes are useful in gentrified contexts? What is the real weight of settled communities in building the rights of individuals? Or against the myopia of the institutions?



## RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC: OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSFORMATION OR MITIGATION

Although the most cogent initiatives countering processes of gentrification usually come from grassroots organisations, municipal governments can provide important platforms and programs from which a modicum of transformation, or at least some mitigation, can be achieved. The variegated responses to the Covid-19 pandemic in southern European cities gives us some examples of immediate measures taken to tackle the public health crisis that can also have potential positive effects in the struggles against gentrification. At the same time, the framing of the pandemic as a crisis also created opportunities for the fast-track implementation of pro-gentrification/touristification measures without consultation.

In Lisbon, pushed by the City Assembly's minority movement Citizens for Lisbon (Cidadãos por Lisboa), a participatory program entitled Healthy Neighbourhoods (Bairros Saudáveis) was initiated in October 2020 with the aim of funding small projects submitted by local partnerships of organisations such as parish councils, local associations and other movements to improve health and wellbeing conditions in vulnerable areas. The areas considered eligible must have three of seven characteristics: 1) poor or precarious living conditions; 2) a significant number of residents with low or very low income; 3) people at risk of COVID-19 contagion; 4) people with constraints on access to health care; 5) a vaccination coverage rate below 95%; 6) a significant number of school-age children and youth not attending school or with a high percentage of failure; 7) and a significant number of people in situations of social exclusion, isolation or abandonment.

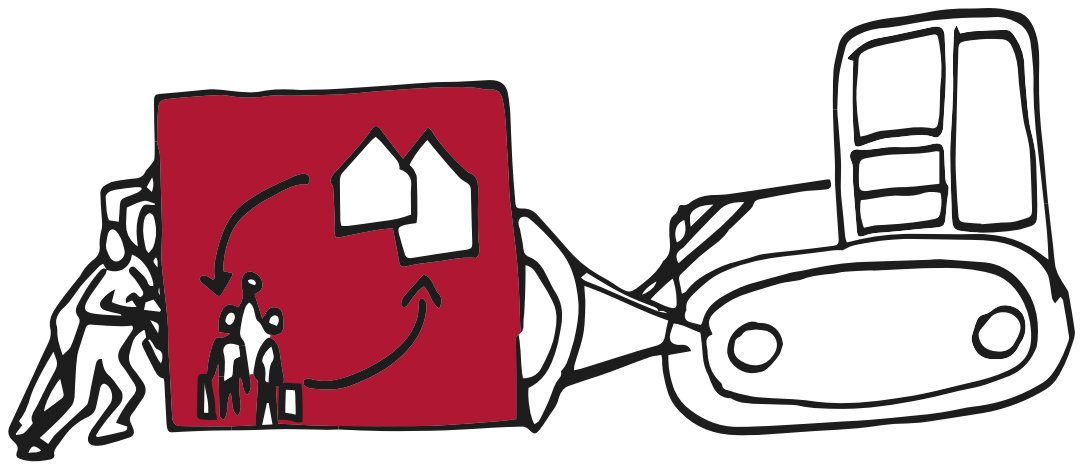
The nature and final form of the projects are decided by the participants and there is scope for small and effective interventions that empower communities, promote employment and, crucially, 'requalify' public space with citizens' participation or make improvements in people's homes (e.g., asbestos removal, changes for accessibility, etc.). The latter two are where counter-gentrification projects can be included, for instance by promoting social mobilisation in a given area or financing home refurbishments for incumbent residents. These types of programs have the potential to slow down gentrification in vulnerable areas. However, in this case the fact that the program is competitive, with a limit of €50,000 for each project and a total budget of €10 million (thus 200 small projects nationwide) indicates that it might mitigate more than truly transform pre-existing processes of expulsion.

In Athens, in May 2020 the municipality launched the "Great Walk", a six-month pilot pedestrianisation project that included the replacement of four (out of six) car lanes on the major Panepistimiou Street with pedestrian walkways and bike lanes. The lockdown between late March and June reduced car traffic and offered the ideal opportunity to cast this intervention as a walking and cycling friendly transformation of the downtown. The pilot, imposed without consultation, implemented part of a larger plan to unify the existing pedestrian link between the city's archaeological sites with one to its main museums, creating a tourist boulevard. It was criticised for the lack of measures for countering the adverse effects of increased tourism on housing and business in the affected area, but the pilot project was soon partially abandoned on different grounds: post-lockdown, car traffic on fewer lanes without offering diversions or imposing restrictions on the use of cars resulted in chaos and the municipal government reopened more lanes to cars in late July.

<https://www.bairrossaudaveis.gov.pt/>

# 3. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

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# FAMILY OF PRACTICES

## MEASURES AND ACTIONS

### CASES

#### **A) COUNTER-NARRATIVES AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION**

AUTOPRODUCTION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEOS AND JOURNALISTIC  
CRITICAL MAPPING

#### **B) COUNTER-PROPOSALS**

ALTERNATIVE PLANNING: REPENSAR  
REPENSAR BONPASTOR

#### **C) ANTI-EVICTION PRACTICES IN THE ABSENCE OF A LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

THE ANTI-AUSTERITY MOVEMENT AND AGAINST PUBLIC  
VERTICAL SOLIDARITY

HORIZONTAL SOLIDARITY

MUTUAL AID, STOP EVICTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

THE FIGHTS OF TRADE UNIONS AND RESIDENTS

PROTESTS AGAINST BANKS AND SUPPORT TO RESIDENTS AT  
RISK OF EVICTION IN THE CARAVAN FOR HOUSING RIGHTS

#### **D) LIVING THE CONFLICT AND HOUSING RIGHTS**

REMOVE EVERY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION AND RED LINING

HOUSING EMERGENCY LAW, RECOVER AND CREATE NEW HOUSES

FROM OCCUPATION TO SELF-RECOVERY

### 3. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

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In times of limited political expectations, institutional crisis, austerity and economic recession, prevention and mitigation measures adopted by political institutions are mostly non-existent and inadequate for the forces that characterise the current **eviction regime**.

The crisis has undermined citizen rights as well as opposition. As a result, as the base of the conflict expands so do civil disobedience practices and collective knowledge production. In this scenario, creative practices emerge, those that ironically attempt to dismantle the mechanisms of austerity as a rigorous and normal discipline.

#### A) COUNTER-NARRATIVES AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

As part of creative forms of resistance, collective knowledge production practices offer critical narratives about the complex nature of eviction processes.

Those who want to raise awareness on the issue often make the gentrification phenomenon visible – starting by exposing its contradictions – and they attempt to give voice to the evictees in the process, the main aims of these strategies is to raise awareness on the issue. There are creative, ironic, self-reflective practices, which aim at producing widespread and collective knowledge on the issue of urban eviction and its causes. Humour is often used as a key in deconstructing clichés and false myths, such as the myth that urban transformation and regeneration bring unconditional benefits to residents; or the false idea that “as far as the construction industry is stable, everything else is too!” and that “a society based on land-owning is more stable”; the erroneous belief that those who cannot afford to pay rent or a mortgage because of lack of economic possibilities or work, should be held directly responsible.



## AUTOPRODUCTION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEOS AND JOURNALISTIC INVESTIGATIONS

Numerous videos have been produced with the specific aim of denouncing the causes of gentrification and eviction phenomena or to raise awareness among local readers. An example is "Ficción inmobiliaria" by the Left-Hand Rotation collective, which interprets the gentrification process through the cinema which, since the seventies, has tried to offer a representation of this theme. Another one is "Gentrification no es un nombre de señora", by the same collective, which tries to introduce the theme ironically among the older inhabitants of a neighbourhood. The Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca platform has also developed its own specific media strategy. In the "SI SE PUEDE, Siete días en PAH Barcelona" the video describes the platform and the reasons behind the movement.

In relation to the issue of eviction due to mortgage insolvency, Jordi Evole's investigation in his "Salvados" tv program had national resonance while, in Italy, Riccardo Iacona's reports on housing emergency – in his "Presa Diretta" tv program – became famous.

[www.lefthandrotation.com](http://www.lefthandrotation.com)



## CRITICAL MAPPING

To make explicit the dynamics in place at a neighbourhood scale, several collectives are producing critical mappings. An example of this type is the risk map of the Free Republic of San Lorenzo, which summarizes the demolitions, speculations and the main conflicts of use taking place in the district of San Lorenzo in Rome. In Southern European cities there is a paucity of network data to produce exhaustive critical eviction maps; however, the VIC (Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas) group of architects, in collaboration with the PAH Madrid, has successfully developed a map of the evictions taking place in the city of Madrid.

A tangible example of mapping, unfortunately hardly practicable in southern European cities due to the lack and complexity of data, is the work of the **[antievictionmappingproject.org](http://antievictionmappingproject.org)** in San Francisco, which shows the extent of the expulsion regime (evictions and privatizations of public space) following the economic boom, the development of new technologies and the subsequent increase in the living and housing costs in one of the cities that was among the first to introduce anti-gentrification measures (rent control, economic housing defined single occupancy central areas, community land trusts - see "undivided cooperatives with right of use"). With the spread of the rental strike also in Southern Europe (see p.42), several local collectives have used the map produced by AEMP (See also the London Tenants Federation, Just Space and Loretta Lees's Estate Watch London (<https://estatewatch.london/>)).

<http://viveroiniciativasciudadanas.net/2015/03/10/madrid-desahuciado/>  
<https://antievictionmappingproject.org>



## B) COUNTER-PROPOSALS

The citizens who reside in areas facing strong speculative pressure and gentrification witness the quick changes that affect their territory, often due to the requalification projects aimed at improving urban quality. Correct and timely information on future projects allows local communities to choose the best ways to participate and discuss the potential impacts of ongoing projects. As already mentioned, institutions and politics do not recognize settled communities as having competences in matters of development. Local communities are often consulted when decisions have already been made, or without any actual implementation of participation practices. Hence the precious legal bricolage activity, verification of the rules, verification of the opinions put in place by the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods in an organized form.

Committees and assemblies of inhabitants are the antennae of a neighbourhood, immediately understanding if an intervention can genuinely improve the daily life of all residents or if it is destined to drastically change the appearance of the neighbourhood (for the benefit of a few). The need to choose between the status quo and change is a false choice: the real choice is between the status quo and the different forms of proposed urban development.



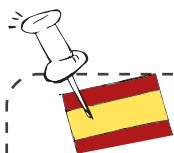
### ALTERNATIVE PLANNING

The Free Republic of San Lorenzo is a union of citizens and activists from the district of San Lorenzo in Rome, which has closely followed a participatory process in the project for the redevelopment of the neighbourhood and supported Communia Roma against the eviction of the former Bastianelli (see p.49). Disappointed with the Council's project for the transformation of the neighbourhood – which unfortunately presents potential areas to be redeveloped and is located alongside important urban functions (university, railway station) –, the citizens have produced their own alternative plan which represents an explicit request to the institutions to review the terms of the urban project (first drafted in 2007 and reviewed in 2014).

The alternative development plan offered by the Free Republic, called "La volontà di Sapere" (The willingness to know), poses some limitations to the speculations and advances precise questions on the fate of some of the areas affected by the project such as the Ex-Dogana. However, although its conversion into a shopping mall was hindered, the area of the Ex-Dogana was then entrusted to a management entity by the Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, who has promoted the branding of alternative cultures and the contestatory soul that characterised San Lorenzo. The requests of the citizens to claim that space as the headquarters of neighbourhood associations and as a public space for its citizens have remained unheard; the existing buildings will be completely replaced by a new one which, following the regional housing plan also allows for the extension of the construction area. The Ex-Dogana, after having been commercially exploited for a long time by the entertainment industry, has ended up in the hands of the "Student Hotel" group, in order to build a new private hotel, with student residences intended largely for Erasmus students and professionals.

The Free Republic of San Lorenzo has recently taken part in the urban regeneration process for the Scalo/Lucani area, which has long been abandoned. Through a modern regeneration project based on the creation of green spaces and services for the neighbourhood – defined through public and participatory assemblies in the area – Libera aims to represent a real and credible alternative to private projects that could constitute yet another speculation in San Lorenzo.

<http://www.liberarepubblicadisanlorenzo.it/>



## REPENSAR BONPASTOR

The Bon Pastor neighbourhood of 'casas baratas', built in 1929 on the outskirts of Barcelona, is one of the oldest public housing complexes in the city. Mainly inhabited by workers and precarious construction workers coming from the south of the Spanish state, during the civil war it had been one of the emblematic spaces of urban resistance.

After the redevelopment of the northern coast, following the celebration of the Forum of Cultures, the Municipality of Barcelona has decreed its complete demolition and replacement with a thousand newly built apartments in which to relocate residents, promoting mortgages to buy homes and generating a dramatic social fracture since the demolition of the first 'casa barata' in 2003.

Starting in 2009, a group of female architects, researchers and residents of the neighbourhood reacted to the urban planning offensive by promoting an international ideas competition (self-managed and self-financed) to find new alternatives for the neighbourhood other than demolition. Supported by the International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI) and by various collectives from Barcelona and other cities, their call reached hundreds of scholars, artists and collectives from all over the world, who responded with ideas and projects of the highest level. The proposals were evaluated by an international jury that included a member of the United Nations anti-eviction group, a Harvard professor, and several other professors of architecture and anthropology from Barcelona, they were subjected to scrutiny by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

However, the responsible authorities did not take into account the work produced, and the initiative failed to bring about a change, despite the change of municipal government that took place a few years later. The proposals included the possibility of rehabilitating the residential complex as an historic monument and, at the same time, the expropriation of land to build apartments for the inhabitants who wished to leave the 'casas baratas'. In addition, in a time of economic crisis, cooperative solutions were also imagined, creating jobs for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. However, the pressure from banking entities and lobbying groups, interested in the demolition, proved stronger.

<http://repensarbonpastor.wordpress.com>

<https://archive.org/details/RepensarBonpastor/mode/2up>

## C) ANTI-EVICTION PRACTICES IN THE ABSENCE OF A LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

While housing production can be time consuming and requires unavailable resources, stopping evictions (especially if unintentional and due to the crisis), providing non-discriminatory legal support to discuss extensions and the terms of eviction, making social service psychologists available to help take care of the psychological pressures related to the loss of one's home and the support of institutions in the search for alternative solutions (see second level measures), would not require additional resources and skills to those already available to public institutions.

An eviction is a dramatic event. It displaces families, children, individuals from their neighbourhoods, from their acquaintances and involves psychological trauma. Eviction has been described as the reproduction mechanism of marginalization and social expulsion.

While the reasons for the eviction may seem similar, each case is unique, as it has to do with the experience and the intimate life of the people involved. For a long time, public opinion has considered a person or a family under eviction directly guilty – or in any case responsible for a behaviour to be criminalized.

In the years of the crisis, instead, eviction has become an unpredictable event, its causes can be traced back to structural factors, such as the loss or lack of work, on systemic factors such as the lack of first and second level prevention measures, and on interpersonal ones, such as the lack of support networks or the breakup of a family.

It is now clear that where evictions happen, it is possible to witness an overlap between structural problems and the particular interests of banks and owners to benefit from the exchange value (market value) of the asset. Not renewing a lease agreement to increase rents, setting discriminatory conditions for access to housing, converting residences to tourist or speculative uses, are symptoms of a use of housing as an exchange and investment asset, rather than as a primary asset necessary to guarantee the protection of a human right.



## THE MOVEMENT AGAINST AUSTERITY AND PUBLIC AUCTIONS

In Greece the housing crisis is not the direct result of the global crisis and the subprime mortgage crisis. It was rather caused by austerity policies that led to the transformation of the sovereign debt crisis into a private debt crisis. The introduction of new taxes, especially the property tax (ENFIA), and the income squeeze affected the lower and middle classes, for whom repaying mortgages or even paying the bills and maintaining a home has become unsustainable. As a result, private assets such as homes, businesses and land are at risk. For this reason, a set of horizontal networks, popular assemblies and organizations united by an anti-austerity line was set up that developed a specific focus on foreclosures and auctions of homes, which mainly affect property owners. The most important actions of these groups included physically stopping auctions in the court, fiscal disobedience under the slogan "I won't pay", the reconnection of electricity for households, the demand for a moratorium on debt, the adjustment of debts to the current value of housing, and the continuation of the law that protects the primary residence from foreclosure. In response to the successful intervention of these movements that led to the cancellation of auctions, the Greek government introduced online auctions (e-auctions) in 2017 resulting in their sharp increase.

Recognizing the diversity of movements, some examples of groups are: Πλειστηριασμοί STOP Plistiriasmi STOP (STOP auctions), Κίνημα «δεν πληρώνω» Kinima Den Plirono (Movement "I won't pay"), Ενωτική Πρωτοβουλία κατά των Πλειστηριασμών Enotiki Protovulia kata ton Plistiriasmon (Unitary Initiative against Auctions).



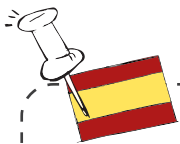
## VERTICAL SOLIDARITY

In many countries, the informal agreements in place between tenants and landlords are considered practices of vertical resistance and solidarity. These are experiences outside any regulatory framework and dictated by a condition of emergency. In cases where landlords find it impossible to pay utility taxes (an indirect taxation on the house), to avoid accumulating arrears or leaving the house empty, they are willing to renegotiate the rent with the tenants by offering a discount in exchange for the payment of the tax – avoiding the tenant being evicted for not having paid their rent. However, there are no precise data on these phenomena.



## HORIZONTAL SOLIDARITY

The anti-eviction movement involves different social categories and workers. In some regions of Spain, groups such as the Fire Brigade and the Union of Locksmiths have refused to open their doors and evict families unable to pay their mortgage. On the other hand, in Italy, the Allaccio Popolare groups, reconnect water during the night to those tenants who have undergone a forced disconnection of the service for arrears. Resistance practices are also in place in Greece due to the reconnection of electricity. We could define this practice as a practice of horizontal solidarity.



## MUTUAL AID, STOP EVICTIONS, AND ALTERNATIVES

Born in Spain after the global financial crisis of 2007, the PAH (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca) is a platform actively engaged in the fight against eviction.

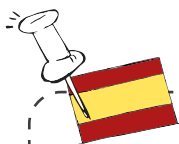
People who had lost their jobs as a result of the crisis and were no longer in a position to pay their mortgages, have become victims of an insolvency foreclosure procedure that has affected more than half a million people across the Spanish state. The request and the motions presented by the PAH were then also extended to those under eviction because of no-fault insolvency. The Spanish case represents an anomaly linked to the mortgage law of 1946 and to the so-called abusive clauses present in the deeds.

The platform operates on multiple levels: it works as an opening assembly in which those under eviction are welcomed, implements mutual aid and support strategies based on listening, and takes care of the organisation of campaigns for the approval of laws in defense of vulnerable residents. Thanks to the PAH, people are no longer alone in managing their housing problems; they also help evictees and those who have witnessed the loss of their home at auctions in the search for a replacement home.

Strategies change depending on who is the agent in the eviction. In the case of large owners and financial institutions, a *dacion en pago* is frequently asked for (e.g., the cancellation of the debt in exchange for the house key). A social rent or the cancellation of the debt are requested when the house has already been sold at auction.

On the contrary, when it comes to public and semi-public properties, it is possible to ask for the cancellation of the debt. In the event of evacuation for the occupation of a public property, regularization and the stipulation of a regular contract can be requested. More delicate is the situation if the evictor is a small owner, here the PAH requests the institutions to take charge of the evicted or conduct mediation activities.

<https://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/>



## THE FIGHTS OF TRADE UNIONS AND RESIDENTS



After the victory in the municipal elections, that brought the Barcelona en Comú party and the activist Ada Colau to become Mayor of Barcelona, many grassroots activists operating in different neighbourhoods, joined the council and district administrations. This institutional opening, as it has happened during the post-Franchist transition period, has also represented a drain in the energy flowing from neighbourhoods and collectives engaged in the daily fight against evictions.

At the same time, however, a series of individuals mobilized both by the protests of 2011 and by the general strike which happened some time before, as well as by the massive protests for independence that have grown exponentially since 2012, converged in the creation of neighbourhood housing unions. These are present in ten neighbourhoods, in the city of Barcelona alone, and try every day to mobilise evicted or inhabitants at risk of eviction to defend their own homes and those of others. Their meetings – which very often take place in occupied premises, can reach hundreds of members. On many occasions, they succeed in stopping evictions, simply by organizing many neighbours in solidarity, certain that offering help today will secure them into receiving it tomorrow.

Often occupying the vacant houses of real estate funds responsible for the evictions, the unions frequently house people in difficulty and manage to mobilise part of the migrant or excluded population previously very little involved in grassroots mobilizations.

Nevertheless, police and court violence, both at the municipal, regional and state levels, is on the rise: many members of the union have been subjected to persecution, prosecution or police violence. In this context it is also worth mentioning the increasing involvement of private security companies in the evictions, as well as the growth of speculative 'vulture' funds that accumulate huge amounts of housing to evict the inhabitants and rent or sell them at higher prices. This is the case of companies, like 'Desokupa', which employs neo-fascist or neo-Nazi sympathizers to intimidate the inhabitants.

A renowned case is that of the campaign that the Sindicats (unions) have been carrying out since 2018 against the US real estate fund Blackstone, now the main property owner in the city. More recently, at the end of 2020 a new campaign against the Cerberus fund started. In December 2019, several of these unions joined the first 'Congrès d'habitatge de Catalunya': <https://congrreshabitatge.cat/>, from which the legislative project for rent control emerged (see page 34).

Since 2011, similar organizations have emerged in other parts of the Iberian Peninsula: among the most active figures - the Federación anarquista de Gran Canaria and the Sindicato de Inquilinas de Gran Canaria which, in addition to defending the residents of the historic centre of one of the most touristic cities in the entire state, and occupying empty houses to relocate the evicted to, they have also produced some of the best materials in the analysis of gentrification.

<https://sindicathabitatgesantandreu.wordpress.com/>  
<https://twitter.com/RavalSindicat>  
<https://anarquistasgc.noblogs.org/>  
<https://sindicatodeinquilinasgc.noblogs.org/>





## PROTESTS AGAINST BANKS AND SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS AT RISK OF EVICTION IN THE CARAVAN FOR HOUSING RIGHTS

Addressing unjust practices in the exact same place where these decisions are taken is among the strategies adopted to increase political consciousness. A good example in this sense is represented by the protest organised by the Stop Despejos collective in January 2020, at the headquarters of the Novo Banco, against the eviction of the tenants living in houses owned by the bank.

The Novo Banco, redeemed with about 4 billion euros of public money, was later sold to a hedge fund specialising in eliminating the risks associated with real estate transactions; however, evictions of low-income tenants have been carried out to ensure the maximisation of profits. Protesting against the use of public money to support these practices offers the opportunity to denounce the link between the banking sector and the growing financialization of housing, today the root cause of many injustices.

Helping those at risk of eviction is another of the significant activities that can be undertaken. Emblematic here is the work of Habita! in Lisbon, which offers excellent assistance to economically and socially vulnerable families facing eviction or displacement processes. This support is carried out on a voluntary basis by the members of the association, helping families navigate the complexities of legal rights and possible housing options in the short term.

Another example is represented by the protest organised by the Caravana pelo Direito à Habitação organised in September 2017, carried out among fifteen of the most vulnerable neighbourhoods in the country. Organised to offer visibility to the housing struggles, the movement also aimed at promoting the creation of new support networks among people living through similar situations, and at pressuring policymakers to take action.

<https://stopdespejos.wordpress.com/>; <https://sindicatdellogateres.org/>  
<https://habita.info/>

Falanga, Roberto et. al. (2018), 'The Caravana pelo Direito à Habitação': Towards a new movement for housing in Portugal?, *Radical Housing Journal*, 1(1), 171-187.



## KEY POINTS

Today displacement can also involve the owner class in crisis. In this regard interesting practices of horizontal and vertical solidarity have been developed. Ownership can become a collective asset when distributed (as in Greece) or a serious issue when it concentrates in the hands of the few (as in Spain). The experience of the PAH has enabled the creation of a dialogue among different social groups equally affected by the crisis, and it has also enabled the creation of a social group cognisant of the nature of the global financial crisis. The possibility to re-negotiate the terms of the mortgage or renouncing the property opting for social housing are resistance strategies that go against the impositions from the financial market.



## OPEN ISSUES

The anti-eviction and anti-action discourses, born as movements of owners, have as their main goal to open a dialogue with the rental sector. In Spain, the shift from home ownership to social rent seemed inevitable to many. Is it possible that guaranteeing increasing protection to owners and to the middle class could also lead to the creation of a public housing policy in Greece?



## D) LIVING THE CONFLICT AND HOUSING RIGHTS

Having a long history, housing struggle movements in Italy have always been instrumental in the battle for the right to housing. Occupations are in fact an anti-gentrification practice; a practice of resistance that allows for the production of alternatives by those who would otherwise find themselves displaced because of the rising costs of living in the city. As a result of the significant occupation of both public and private property in a state of abandonment, the housing movements organised in Rome have attempted in various ways to promote an institutional dialogue. In some cases, these have led to an actual recognition of the housing emergency situation, to the law on self-recovery law (see self-recovery), to the institutionalisation of the Sportelli Diritto (leading to the creation of the Agenzia Diritti active in different municipalities) and, in cooperation with the unions, has also led to several anti-eviction moratoria.

In the years following the crisis, after a mass occupation called the Tsunami Tour, it seemed that the movement was attributed increasing importance in the policy agenda. However, with the advent of repression and austerity policies, the climate of dialogue was interrupted, and specific measures were introduced that criminalize occupations and their leaders, with the space for citizenship rights being reduced. The housing struggle movement has become more and more radicalized, with their slogan becoming: "every eviction will be a barricade".



### ERADICATE EVERY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION AND RED- LINING

Containing "Urgent measures for the housing emergency", the decree-law n. 47/2014 (Renzi-Lupi House plan) proposed urgent interventions to address the housing issue. In reality, it quickly revealed its real face by promoting privatisation and introducing discriminatory measures. Article 5 states that "anyone who illegally occupies a property will be excluded from the opportunity to apply for a residence permit or for connection to public utilities in relation to the property".

Without a residence permit, many activities part of fundamental constitutional rights cannot be exercised. Indeed, without residence, the right to vote, access to health and education services, the possibility for foreigners to obtain Italian citizenship, the right to the distribution of resources and the use of welfare services are denied. This prevents the occupants from being able to request connection to electricity, gas, water and landline phone services.

In this regard, a national coalition – Abitare nella Crisi – was formed to ask, among other things, for the elimination of Article 5.

[www.abitarenellacrisi.org](http://www.abitarenellacrisi.org)



## HOUSING EMERGENCY LAW, RECOVERY, AND CREATE NEW HOUSES

From the mobilisation of housing movements, which resulted in a series of mass occupations between 2012 and 2013 and to a long camp at the headquarters of the Ministry of Infrastructure, a new dialogue between housing movements, trade unions and the Lazio Region emerged, leading to the formulation of the decision no. 18 of January 15, 2014 "Extraordinary plan for housing emergency in Lazio and implementation of the housing emergency program for Roma Capitale".

The decision states that the residual resources (257 million) of the "Global Fund for Subsidized Construction Regions" (Formerly Gescal) should be allocated to the Plan. It also proposes a survey of the three different categories of housing emergency situations manifesting within the area, in order to proportionally assign the new buildings. Among these three categories there are: those who are in the ranking waiting for ERP accommodation, those who are staying at Temporary Housing Assistance Centres and those who live in occupied properties, public or private. Although the decision seemed willing to recognise the social value of occupations, however, it was then blocked at the municipal level due to a pending implementation protocol.

By 2020, the implementation still has not arrived. After a series of significant evictions (via Curtatone, via Cardinal Capranica), the Lazio Region approved a series of amendments to the related budget (February 20, 2020) overstepping the municipal level and assigning the Region the burden of implementing directly the interventions to deal with the housing emergency.

[http://www.regione.lazio.it/binary/rl\\_urp/tbl\\_news/Deliberazione\\_15\\_gennaio\\_2014\\_n.\\_18.pdf](http://www.regione.lazio.it/binary/rl_urp/tbl_news/Deliberazione_15_gennaio_2014_n._18.pdf)



## FROM OCCUPATION TO SELF-RECOVERY

The Obra Social promoted by the PAH is a new form of employment developed in light of the social emergency and described as the practice of recovering properties owned by credit institutions - responsible for evictions due to mortgage insolvency - in order to obtain housing for social rent in the same or in other properties. It also provides for a horizontal and collective platform in which the evictees can take part. The contact person to ask for an answer is the credit institution owning the property. To date, Obra Social has re-housed 2,500 people (see the PAH Social Obra and Civil Disobedience Manual). In 2015 they launched a campaign, "La SAREB es nuestra", which denounces the properties owned by a bank institution and recapitalized with public funds - the SAREB - to ask that this institution fulfil its public service obligations and convert the property to social housing. The campaign has published online a map of the properties owned by SAREB that are currently empty and unused and proposes their recovery through Obra Social.

<http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/>





# STAYING PUT

## UN MANUALE ANTI-GENTRIFICATION PER LE CITTÀ DELL'EUROPA DEL SUD

Di Sandra Annunziata con Loretta Lees

FINANZIATO DA :

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