The Politics of Dispossession and Reappropriation in the Neoliberal City

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Abstract

Nei primi decenni del XXI secolo è emersa in Europa, in America del Nord e in America Latina una domanda collettiva per il “Diritto alla Città”. Attorno a questa rivendicazione si sono formati nuovi tipi di coalizioni, che danno voce e contemporaneamente uniscono i movimenti che si oppongono a forme di sviluppo urbano neoliberale sempre più escludenti (Mayer 2012). Il neoliberismo è al cuore delle odierne politiche di austerità e spossessamento, e contemporaneamente fissa nuove forme di riqualificazione urbana che sempre di più coinvolgono politiche culturali. Con l’inizio della crisi del 2008, le persone hanno cominciato a reclamare spazi e diritti, confrontandosi con nuove e specifiche sfide sia nelle aree degradate sia in quelle più al centro della concorrenza urbana. Le divisioni e le distanze tra i due tipi di lotte (all’interno delle città, così come nelle regioni del nord e del sud) rappresentano l’ostacolo più grande sulla strada per nuove forme di pianificazione.

L’urbanistica contemporanea riflette le modalità attraverso cui i pianificatori hanno cercato di gestire la crisi del 2008. È caratterizzata da quattro elementi principali, ognuno dei quali ha impatto sugli spazi contemporanei del dissenso dal momento che rappresentano la cornice strutturale in cui agiscono i movimenti urbani: (I) politiche di crescita economica; (II) forme di governance imprenditoriale; (III) intensificazione
della privatizzazione di infrastrutture e servizi pubblici; e (IV) nuovi strumenti per il trattamento della polarizzazione sociale. (I) La crescita economica delle città è perseguita attraverso la promozione legata ai grandi eventi. Con la diminuzione delle risorse economiche a disposizione, le politiche di promozione culturale traggono beneficio e incorporano alcune subculture e movimenti alternativi come elementi della “città creativa”, contemporaneamente marginalizzando i gruppi che hanno meno risorse simboliche a disposizione, facendo così crescere le loro proteste; (II) le forme di governance imprenditoriale possono essere individuate in diverse politiche, che si ispirano ai modelli presunti più efficienti derivati dal mondo degli affari e alle forme di governance private. Questo significa più contratti con privati e uno scivolamento verso iniziative guidate da progetti e obiettivi, come lo sviluppo di una particolare parte della città, o la competizione per i grandi eventi, ricorrendo a partenariati pubblico-privato e agenzie speciali; (III) l’intensificazione della privatizzazione dei servizi pubblici, attraverso cui risorse, infrastrutture e servizi vengono trasformate in stock speculativi e mezzi di accumulazione del capitale; (IV) la trasformazione degli strumenti per rispondere alla crescente polarizzazione sociale ne comprende principalmente due: la marginalizzazione – anche fisica – dei gruppi indesiderati, con spostamenti al di fuori del perimetro urbano e criminalizzazione di gruppi e comportamenti indesiderati, e la riqualificazione di quartieri impoveriti attraverso eventi, con risultati contestati e resistenze.

La seconda parte dell’articolo descrive alcuni dei movimenti che si sono opposti all’urbanistica neoliberale, sorti in particolare dopo il 2008: (I) occupazioni come mezzo per reclamare spazi, come ad esempio gli indignados del movimento 15M; (II) gli sfrattati, che si sono uniti nel movimento APH (affectados por la Hipoteca), sempre in Spagna. (III) Nell’Europa del Nord, alcuni movimenti sul diritto alla città sono riusciti a conquistare terreni e edifici, come lo storico Gängeviertel, ad Amburgo, reclamato attraverso un’occupazione artistica; (IV) i movimenti degli inquilini a basso reddito e migranti che si sono organizzati non senza difficoltà contro il deterioramento delle loro condizioni alloggiative, motivo per cui il movimento di inquilini migranti sorto in un ex quartiere di case popolari a Berlino è stato salutato con molta eccitazione (V).
Mentre i lavoratori culturali (precari) e alcuni movimenti anarchici o di sottocultura, che hanno scelto di lottare abbellendo i loro quartieri, possono essere utili per il branding competitivo della città culturale e hanno a disposizione abbastanza risorse culturali e simboliche per far sentire la propria voce, i gruppi privi di tali risorse sono di norma politicamente silenti. In alcuni casi, alcuni di questi gruppi sono stati in grado di trasformarsi in attivisti urbani al fine di prendere parola in modo autonomo. Anche se le misure di austerità colpiscono diversi strati della popolazione, continuano a esserci molte differenze in termini di esperienze quotidiane e culturali tra persone che possono essere considerate relativamente privilegiate, movimenti di sinistra e di contro-cultura, e gli esclusi ed emarginati che l’urbanistica neoliberista rende invisibili. Anche se tutti questi gruppi vengono ugualmente colpiti dalle forme contemporanee di espropriazione, essi continuano a occupare posizioni strategicamente molto differenti nella società. Queste differenze devono essere riconosciute dalle rispettive lotte per unire le forze, cosa necessaria al fine di progredire nella destabilizzazione del regime neoliberale. Senza legami e supporto tra questi due tipi di lotte, infatti, a livello urbano così come a livello europeo, i movimenti degli esclusi rischiano di essere facilmente spazzati via, mentre le lotte dei più privilegiati rischiano di perdere il loro potere di contestazione e di essere sussunti con facilità.

The demand for the right to the city and a novel type of coalitions mobilizing under its banner emerged across Europe and North as well as Latin America to express and fuse opposition against the increasingly exclusive forms of neoliberal urban development in the course of the first decade of the 21st century (Mayer 2012). After several rounds of neoliberalization – roll-back, followed by roll-out, followed by a post-crisis round of austerity urbanism –, urban conditions have become fundamentally different from those characterizing the Keynesian city of the post-war period. Before discussing how these urban movements have evolved and struggled to reclaim their right to the city, I will present some of the political and theoretical context of the recent social and spatial transformations of European cities. In spite of the increasingly uneven developments between Southern and Northern European regions, I argue
that neoliberalization is at the core of austerity and dispossession, while also undergirding the new forms of urban upgrading of city space that increasingly involve cultural policies. After presenting key features of urban neoliberalism, I will discuss how, in the wake of the 2008 crisis, people have sought to reclaim spaces as well as rights and what specific challenges they confront, both, in downgraded areas and in those deemed profitable in the intensifying interurban competition. The divides and distances between both types of struggles – within cities as well as between northern and southern regions – pose the gravest obstacle on the way to alternative models of urbanism.

1. Contemporary urban neoliberalism and the politics of dispossession

The latest round of neoliberalization is characterized by a devolved form of extreme fiscal constraint, which in the northern countries is projected largely on to subnational state scales, while in so-called Peripheral Europe (PIIGS)11 it manifests on national levels as well, thanks to the politics of the EU and IMF. Everywhere the municipalities are adversely affected (except in very flourishing wealthy cities), many of which have developed an advanced form of austerity politics, which now not only dismantles Fordist social welfare infrastructures (as during the first roll-back phase), but grinds away at what has survived the repeated rounds of cut-backs and neoliberal restructuring.

Contemporary urbanism thus reflects how urban policy managers have tried to cope with the fall-out of the 2008 crisis. It is characterized by four features, all of which have impacts on the contemporary spaces for dissent in that they present a structural frame within which urban movements operate: (I) growth first strategies; (II) entrepreneurial governance forms; (III) intensified privatization of public infrastructures and services; and (IV) new toolkits for dealing with social polarization.

(I) The overarching political strategy continues to be what it has been since the beginning of neoliberalism: the pursuit of growth first. Urban managers still do everything they can think of to accelerate investment flows into the city and to improve their position in the interurban rivalry. But shrinking budgets now prevent more and more cities from doing the
type of big projects, urban spectacles and signature events that seemed so effective in radiating the message of success to investors and tourists alike. Cash-strapped cities – and not merely in the more heavily indebted European South – now turn to locational politics that make more use of less costly and symbolic forms of eventization and festivalization. They look for low-cost ways to attract “creative classes” to help culturally upgrade their brand, i.e. innovative low-budget, especially culture-led efforts to mobilize city space for (unfettered) growth. Such cultural branding strategies often benefit and incorporate some alternative and sub-cultural movements as elements of creative city upgrading, particularly those movements that can easily be fitted into creative city projects – while further displacing or marginalizing groups lacking symbolic cultural resources, thus triggering their protest.

(II) Secondly, neoliberalization has entailed that in terms of governance, cities have been adopting entrepreneurial modes of governance in more and more policy areas: they make use of presumably more efficient business models and privatized forms of governance. This has meant more out-contracting and a shift towards task- and project-driven initiatives such as developing a particular part of town, or competing for mega-events such as Olympics or World Cups or International Building Exhibits, Garden Shows, etc. In these endeavors mayors and their partners from the business sector (often bypassing council chambers) set up special agencies to deliver target-driven initiatives that focus on specific concrete objectives. To the extent that this type of governance still entails the production of hegemony, this occurs via small-scale involvement: Instead of modes of regulation designed in the traditional tripartistic, corporate and long-term ways, we now see flexible, small, and constantly changing concessions to shifting particular groups. In this ad-hoc and informalized political process, global developers and international investors have come to play even more leading roles – though it is local politics that allows them this role.

These strategies and their lack of public transparency have given rise to all kinds of struggles over the (erosion of) representative democracy, as more and more residents who do not conform to the standards of global developers are excluded from “the right to the city”. But they demand it in greater numbers and louder voices (Brenner et al. 2012).
(III) Intensified privatization of public infrastructures and services is another key feature, which keeps being pushed to new levels. This has not only transformed the relationship between the public and the private, as it involves not just the rolling-back and reorganization of the socially oriented institutions of the public sector; but as everything from public transport and utilities to social housing is now exposed to the market, privatization is now actually turning into financialization (Hodkinson 2012). In this raiding of public coffers, often by government-sponsored private companies, urban resources, infrastructures and services are turned into speculative stock, into options for expanded capital accumulation by dispossession (Merrifield 2014).

Intensification of privatization has equally pertained to land: the extortion of maximal land rent works best through dedicating more and more private spaces to elite consumption, while the privatization of other (public) areas, such as shopping malls or train stations has meant limiting access to and/or making the use of collective infrastructures more expensive. Whole urban centers – from Paris, Manhattan and London all the way to Singapore and Hong Kong – are becoming, in the words of the Financial Times no less, exclusive citadels of the elites. «(T)he middle classes and small companies are falling victim to class-cleansing. Global cities are becoming patrician ghettos» (Kuper 2013).

These enclosure strategies have triggered a variety of contestations, from protests against rent increases, and occupations of social centres, to guerilla actions in the semi-public privatized spaces of surveillance and consumption (Belina 2010; Eick/Briken 2014), and sporadically movements have forced municipalities to re-communalize water and/or energy utilities with popular (Becker et. al. 2015).

(IV) Finally, the neoliberal tool kit for dealing with the ever-intensifying social polarization has also transformed. During the roll-out phase of neoliberalism this tool kit consisted of area-based programs (i.e. some mix of neighbourhood, revitalization, and activation programs) that were to stop the presumed downward spirals in blighted neighbourhoods. These programs have been severely cut back and are superseded by a two-pronged policy: On the one hand, attrition and displacement policies are pushing the poor to further outskirts or into invisible interstices of blight within the urban perimeter, while punitive and repressive strategies tend to criminalize
unwanted behaviors and groups; on the other hand, a bunch of more benign programs seek to incorporate some of the impoverished, marginalized areas as well as social groups into upgrading processes, to thereby undergird efforts to attract growth, investors, creative professionals, and tourists. Even big development projects and urban spectacles such as Garden Shows or International Building Exhibits are nowadays set up in (ex-)industrial or social housing districts (such as Hamburg Wilhelmsburg), designed as vehicles to upgrade those neighbourhoods and to induce a gradual residential shift – with, however, controversial effects, also frequently triggering resistance.

All of these currently popular instruments and policies have implications for movements and structure their room to manoeuvre. Creative city policies often open up new space and new resources for action and sustenance for some movement groups, while the simultaneously expanded austerity and criminalization policies not only exacerbate social polarization, but also restrict and suffocate (protest) movements of more vulnerable urban residents who find themselves more aggressively policed or pushed to the margins – and they are also looming larger in the authorities’ response to radical, militant, and riotous behaviour.

2. Reclaiming and reappropriating the city

There have been more and less scattered protests and resistance movements against the strategies and developments with which neoliberal urbanism has established itself. After 2008, when policy makers devolved the costs of the crisis to municipalities and exacerbated the dispossession of residents and thereby social inequality, such movements have swollen and congealed to defend and to reclaim spaces and rights. This section presents a few different types of such struggles, from Northern as well as Southern Europe, and from across the uneven neoliberalizing geography of cities: Occupations as a means of reclaiming space were used to great effect by the Indignados (15M) of Southern Europe (I); the evicted have enacted themselves as activist citizens reclaiming their right to decent housing with innovative political and legal tactics, especially with PAH, the Platform for People Affected by Mortgage, in Spain (II). In Northern Europe, Right to
the City networks have occasionally succeeded in reclaiming land and buildings, such as in Hamburg’s historic Gängeviertel that was reclaimed in 2009 with an “artistic occupation” (III); low-income tenants and migrants in Northern European cities have, however, not as easily mobilized against the deterioration in their housing conditions (IV); which is why a movement sparked by migrant tenants in a former public housing district in Berlin, Kotti & Co., was greeted with much excitement (V).

(I) Occupations as a means of reclaiming space started in Spain and Greece and went viral with the Occupy movements in northern countries in 2011. But the Indignados of Southern Europe proved to be more long-lasting and with broader effects, as the occupation of public squares (and their reoccupation after evictions) as well as symbolic occupations of bank offices became a powerful tactic for, both, prefiguring direct democracy and building pressure against the political authorities (Hadjimichalis 2013; Martinez 2016). Across Greek and Spanish cities, the assemblies, committees and working groups of the occupied central squares were self-managing most of their issues. Their inclusiveness and autonomy from formal organizations, abundant digital communication, and prevailing civil disobedience made up the “spirit of the 15M”, which pervaded most of the Spanish mobilizations between 2011 and 2014. The interactions of militants with people politicized for the first time and their self-organization around the growing problems of social reproduction led to new forms of direct action: in Spain to defending people from evictions; in Greece, assembly members would go around households whose electricity connections had been cut due to non-payment of the property tax, to reconnect them. As Hadjimichalis (2013, 116) has pointed out, the role of radical social movements, incl. urban social movements, has been decisive: for them the crisis acted as a catalyst for making the link between local/sectoral struggles and those arising from wider socio-spatial contradictions and injustices.

(II) The evicted have been reclaiming their right to decent housing with innovative political tactics – most impressively the Platform for People Affected by Mortgage (PAH), in Spain, but also local coalitions such as in Berlin, the Bündnis Zwangsräumungen Verhindern (BZV). They are blockading with human walls (and often preventing) the forceful evictions of those who can no longer pay their mortgages (as in Spanish cities) or of
tenants who are displaced by exploding rents (though the scale of the problem as well as of the activism is far smaller in Germany).

PAH emerged in February 2009 to respond to the exploding numbers of foreclosures and evictions. First founded in Madrid, it has spread throughout the country: more than 200 groups have been formed across Spain (Barbero 2015, 274). Their efforts to peacefully prevent the police and judicial officers from kicking people out of their homes were portrayed by the mass media in a way that tended to legitimate these actions of civil disobedience. PAH also launched a citizen-initiated legislation that obtained 1.5 million signatures to reform the mortgage laws. Its campaign of squatting bank- and state-owned buildings (while making clear the intent to pay affordable rents) turned into a persuasive challenge of governments and courts in the face of soaring rates of unemployed and impoverished people. And PAH has continued, with its Obra Social (Social foundation), to appropriate empty houses resulting from foreclosures, to help families squat in dwellings from which the previous occupants had been evicted, thereby not only retrieving the social function of an empty house, but also exerting pressure on financial institutions and the government.

Unlike the more autonomous groups within 15M, PAH celebrates leadership: its spokesperson Ada Colau became the head of a new electoral platform Guanyem Barcelona, first, and Barcelona en Comú, later on. In the June 2015 local elections she was elected to the mayoralty – and it will be interesting to see whether and how new city governments in Barcelona, Madrid (where Manuela Carmena, from Ahora Madrid, became mayor) and five other Spanish cities can push back austerity and give residents their right to the city (Candeias 2015, Zelik 2015).

(III) The way Right to the City networks in Northern Europe have reclaimed land and buildings has been somewhat different. Activists from Hamburg’s RttC network succeeded in reclaiming buildings that the local governments had already sold to developers for upgraded office and high culture uses. In 2009 this initiative reclaimed Hamburg’s historic Gängeviertel with an “artistic occupation”: a week-long event of exhibits, concerts, and performances organized by around 200 activists and artists, for which more than 3000 people showed up and supported the demands to save this historic cluster of buildings for precarious cultural producers as well as for the community. Rather than evicting the squatters (along with
their art), the municipal government entered into negotiations with the activists, which eventually resulted in a contract allowing for their self-management while the buildings were to be renewed (Twickel 2010; Füllner, Templin 2011). The artist-activists had deliberately invoked the city’s discourse about Hamburg as a center of culture and the arts, and their own role and importance as part of the “creative class” within such a policy, rendering it impossible for the authorities to respond with repressive force as normally deployed against squatters. Going beyond their own material interests, the activists used their powerful position within Hamburg’s city politics also to reject the exploitation of their milieus and subcultures for the purposes of growth-oriented urban policies, stating in no uncertain terms their opposition to policies formulated in their name, and against the market-based urban development agendas they camouflage (Novy and Colomb 2013, 1832-34, Mayer 2015).

While struggles like these critique the commercialization and functionalization of the creative work of precarious cultural producers and alternative scenes, other Hamburgerers have no such leverage on the city in fighting for their buildings.

(IV) As mentioned above, impoverished, marginalized districts that are currently being turned into sites of upgrading, such as Hamburg’s Wilhelmsburg, have also seen attempts to defend the rights of local residents, low-income tenants and migrants in social housing. Some groups within the Hamburg RttC network set out to organize these residents of the Wilhelmsburg social housing districts, which have come under gentrification pressures. But in spite of widespread discontent with the neglect and disrepair of these quarters and the terribly inadequate services provided by the responsible social housing company (e.g. lack of heat during freezing temperatures), the RttC groups managed to attract only few residents to neighborhood meetings and to involve only few local tenants in their campaigns and actions. They self-critically describe their lack of adequate language and the unintended result of finding themselves turned into the residents’ “representatives” instead of building joint struggles (Rosa Luxemburg Foundation 2011). Instead of “mobilizing” the social housing tenants and migrants, they were turned into their (professional, paternalist) advocates. They had to learn that unless the “dispensable” speak
(V) Because of such difficulties of overcoming the distance between ‘classical’ urban activists and those dispossessed even more severely by contemporary neoliberal urbanism, a movement sparked by migrant tenants in one of Berlin’s former public housing districts was greeted with much excitement. Kotti & Co. (named after the central square around which the social housing complexes are concentrated) represents a – for Germany rare – instance where an action repertoire resonating with urban and occupy movements was kicked off by non-traditional movement groups. To protest the rising rents in their housing complexes, the (primarily Turkish) tenants in May 2012 occupied, with a gecekondu, the public space in front of their houses, invoking the informal settlements sprouting overnight in Turkish cities. Supported by neighbors and activists, who would bring food and volunteer for shifts, and visited by people from around the city and around the world, they made themselves visible, and with noisy demonstrations every Saturday they made themselves heard, and have since become recognized as activist citizens. They intervene into local politics, getting support from planners and housing experts and political groups, and have used the public attention to scandalize the problem of social housing in Berlin where rents have risen to above the average market rent.

A success, albeit temporary, success was that the Senate put a stop on rising rents for 35,000 flats for four years (it did not, as Kotti & Co. had demanded, lower the rents). Similar to PAH, the Kotti & Co. activists have added legal counseling for problems with landlords and for problems with the welfare office to their repertoire, and mobilized for a public referendum on keeping housing affordable, which has received 45,000 signatures (while only 20,000 were required, and not counting the 9,000 “illegal” ones). After submitting the signatures in June 2015, politicians saw the need to respond with their own – possibly watered down – law to keep rents under control.

Most of these mobilizations succeeded in gaining some recognition and visibility, which is particularly noteworthy in the case of those regarded as marginal or dispensable. While the (precarious) creative workers, and even some sub-cultural and anarchist groups that have spiffed up their neighborhoods can be quite useful for competitive branding and creative
city policies, and also have symbolic and cultural resources which allow them to make their voices heard, groups without such resources used to be politically silent. In various instances, some of those groups have begun to transform themselves into activist citizens and to speak in their own voice, as in the case of people affected by the consequences of nonpayment of mortgages in Spain, or with the Turkish tenants threatened with displacement from Kreuzberg. With such struggles, opportunities emerge for joining heretofore distinct struggles for the right to the city.

3. Overcoming the obstacles to alternative models of urbanism

As of yet, however, the distances as well as tensions and conflicts among and between most of today’s fragmented urban movements remain very real. I have highlighted especially those between groups deemed dispensable by and excluded from the neoliberal city, and those who have some leverage due to their usefulness within the politics of the creative city. Even as austerity measures push more people into precarity, there continue to remain huge differences in terms of cultural and everyday experience between the comparatively privileged, countercultural and traditional leftist movement groups, and the ‘outcasts’ and dispossessed, which in the model of neoliberal urbanism are made invisible. Even though both are affected by contemporary forms of dispossession and disenfranchisement, they continue to occupy very different strategic positions within the neoliberal city. These differences need to be acknowledged for the respective struggles to be able to join forces – which is necessary if these movements want to make headway in destabilizing the neoliberal rule regime.

I am here building on Brenner/Peck/Theodore’s conception of the global neoliberal project, which, in their view, in the course of post-2008 crisis management has set in motion a reconstruction of neoliberal rule that is becoming more multi-polar and multilaterally entrenched. Parallel to the moves with which neoliberalization shifted from “disarticulated” to “deep(ening)”,16 its destabilization will require a move from fragmented local experiments (via orchestrated systems) towards a new rule regime: deep(ening) socialization. 8 Counter-neoliberal pathways and scenarios are conceived as following parallel dimensions as those of neoliberal regulatory
restructuring, progressively pushing back and replacing the neoliberal rule regimes, from experiments across dispersed, disarticulated contexts at local, regional and national scales, via a thickening of networks of policy transfer based upon alternatives to market rule, all the way to “deep socialization” dismantling and replacing neoliberal rule regimes by constructing alternative, market-restraining, socializing frameworks for macro-spatial regulatory organization, and characterized by radical democratization of decision-making and allocation capacities at all spatial scales.

But it is not only for this – theoretically indicated – reason that a joining of movement forces across existing divides and an up-scaling of its claims and practices is necessary. It is also for reasons of pragmatic feasibility that both types of struggles will need to be connected, because without support and bonding (within cities as well as across Europe) the movements of the vulnerable will be overstrained and those of the comparatively privileged will lose their irritant power (and easily become incorporated). Such connections will need to be created locally, within cities between the heterogeneous, more and less privileged movements, as well as across the two-speed European movement landscape, where the forces of austerity are undermining the massive protest movements of Southern Europe, demoralizing even their large-scale experimentation with solidarity networks and progressive alternatives. While the movement response to the harsh austerity measures imposed on Southern European countries have triggered astoundingly broad mobilization on to the streets, into assemblies, solidarity projects and alliances (as well as for electoral successes of anti-austerity political parties), localized struggles alone are no match for “the systematic forces that have been animating the metapolitics of austerity”, as Peck writes (2013, 23-24). Not until such localized joint struggles begin to multiply beyond the sum of their parts, not until we build new forms of inter-urban politics, not until we join forces across two-speed Europe will there be a chance to break with the pattern of neoliberal austerity. Breaking with this pattern will require that “networking across local alternatives become much more effectively articulated with a strategic fight for new rules of the extra-local game” (Peck 2013: 24, italics by MM). This necessarily multi-scalar struggle for “new rules” requires us to build local bridges as well as movement-to-movement solidarity across the uneven
European landscape, as we are all facing the same drivers of the neoliberal project, whether in Greece, Italy or Germany.

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Note

10 The phases of roll-back of the 1980s (reacting to the limits of the Keynesian city); roll-out of the 1990s (addressing some of the problems created by the rolling-back and austerity measures of the first phase of neoliberalization); and, starting with the dot.com crash of 2001, a third round, in which urbanization became a global phenomenon thanks to the integration of financial markets to debt-finance urban development around the world to rekindle new growth, are well described in Peck et al. (2009), austerity urbanism in Peck (2012).

11 Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain.

12 In January 2015, PAH's website counted 1,135 prevented evictions and 1,180 re-housed people, many of them in more than 20 squatted buildings (Martínez 2016, 19).

13 Cf. the [website](http://example.com) of the group Arbeitskreis Umstrukturierung Wilhelmsburg.

14 While in the district of Kreuzberg overall 17% of the population receive welfare, in the approximately 1000 flats surrounding Kottbusser Tor, 37% depend on it; 80% of the residents have a “migrant background”. About half of them have a German passport, but still 40% don’t. Over 50% of the families at Kottbusser Tor pay more than 60% of their income for rent.

15 480,000 Berliners are not allowed to vote because they don’t have a German passport.

16 From the regulatory experiments (during the 1970s), via the mechanisms for inter-jurisdictional policy transfer (during the 1980s), to, finally, the trans-national rule regimes (during the 1990s) (Brenner et al. 2010, 335-37).