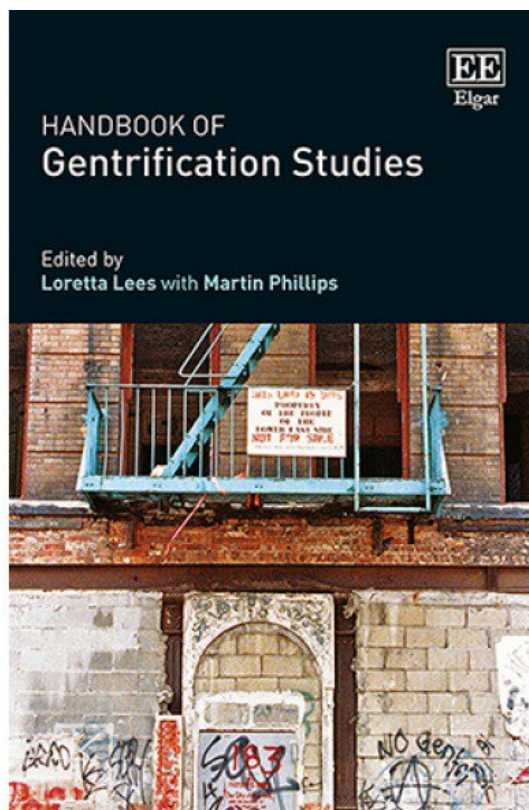


Sandra Annunziata e Clara Rivas (2018) “Resisting Gentrification” in *Handbook of Gentrification Studies*, a cura di Loretta Lees e Martin Phillips, Edward Elgar Publisher, Cheltenham, UK, ISBN: 978 1 78536 173 9



23. Resisting gentrification

Sandra Annunziata and Clara Rivas-Alonso

23.1 INTRODUCTION

Currently processes of urban destitution are gripping the vast majority of cities across the world. We believe that understanding the responses to these attacks on the most vulnerable holds the key to unlocking present and future struggles. This chapter challenges the conceptualization of resistance in gentrification theory and seeks to foster debate about the analytical framework for studying resistance to gentrification. We begin by discussing what resistance is and what we mean by resistance in the field of gentrification studies. We argue that we need to go beyond the current state of affairs in the literature given the acuteness of gentrification at the present time – a time characterized by economic breakdown and political upheaval, a global financial crisis, austerity measures, and a crisis of democracy.

Rather than assuming a given definition of what it means to resist gentrification, we seek to open up the notion of resistance to gentrification asking: which specific set of practices can be catalogued under the label of ‘gentrification resistance’ today? Under which circumstances does it overtly and covertly unfold? What if the ‘appeal’ and visibility of resistance is not that useful after all and invisibility is the best strategy to resist gentrification pressures? Moreover, could resistance to displacement be a reactionary concept? In other words, are we referring to the creation of alternatives or simply to oppositional, defensive practices?

International comparisons of gentrification have framed some of the regularities as the ‘state-led class restructuring of urban space’ (Lees et al. 2015: 443). However, can we also talk about global regularities and tactics in the way urban populations, both organized or individually, resist? As post-colonial conceptualizations challenge Anglo-Saxon hegemony in knowledge production, new geographies of gentrification contribute to the understanding of the global regularities of class restructuring processes intertwined with unresolved colonial histories and racial fault lines. As Mbembé and Nuttall point out, the question needs to be posed whilst complicating ‘the center of gravity of traditional forms of analysis’ (2004: 351). Thus we argue here that looking at different forms of resistances explicitly self-defined as anti-gentrification or implicitly addressing this issue (anti-speculation, anti-system, anti-privatization) can strengthen our collective repertoire and social imaginaries regarding the potential and limits of what we know (and do) to counter processes of gentrification. But in doing so we open up the tricky question of what counts (and what does not) as resistance to gentrification.

We start from the assumption that resistance to gentrification is a set of complex practices that should be pluralized and problematized in relation to its scope, its agents and its intentionality. We attempt to foster much-needed conversations across scales, going from the micro to the macro (and everything in between). Furthermore, we do so by focusing on both strengths and weaknesses, in order to understand the limits and

potential of resistance to the acute and generalized phase of gentrification and its global dimension, acknowledging the fact that gentrification processes might have long taken place in other places under different labels (see Maloutas 2012; Janoschka and Sequera 2016).

In the following section we will frame the way resistance to gentrification and displacement is conceptualized in the gentrification literature, underlining what is missing and what has been less explored. In the first section, which draws on classical studies and political economy approaches, we will frame resistance as the right to stay put and as a conscious opposition to the structural forces that result in the current regimes of expulsion. We then go on to offer a classification of resistance practices, followed by an attempt to enrich the conceptualization of resistance: we problematize the way resistance has been conceptualized in gentrification studies drawing on post-structuralist theories, relational approaches, and other disciplines that have addressed its complexity.

Exploring the heterogeneity of practices that seek to counter displacement (in its direct, indirect, symbolic and exclusionary forms) has allowed us to argue that politically conscious, overtly oppositional, intentional and visible practices of resistance are not the only way to counteract gentrification-induced displacement. While interesting regularities and convergences among different practices of resistance are on the horizon, we argue that the field of resistances is also characterized by non-politicized, covert, unintentional, informal, and deliberately invisible practices of everyday life that draw on different perceptions of time and survival, the negotiation of ambiguity and mobilization of invisibility. We argue that the visibility of resistance and counter collective knowledge production, central in anti-gentrification practices, might not be that useful after all in spaces where informality, ambiguity and invisibility have become some of the best strategies through which to resist the assault of displacement.

23.2 THEORIZING RESISTANCE IN GENTRIFICATION STUDIES

Resistance is a recurrent theme in gentrification studies. Most critical gentrification scholars agree that after having explored processes of gentrification, their geographies, causes and effects, it is high time that we shift our attention to resistance (Lees et al., 2008). However, exploration of those strategies and tactics that seek to counter the violence of gentrification remains very limited. As Lees and Ferreri (2016) point out, through their direct involvement in resistance to state-led gentrification practices in London, '(r)esistance to gentrification still deserves renewed attention in gentrification studies and beyond' (p. 3).

Knowledge of gentrification resistance, however, benefits from going beyond the field of gentrification studies. Acknowledging that resistance can encompass everything from revolution to hairstyle, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) argue that practices of resistance have in common a system (or a target) they seek to oppose and they imply action (or a set of actions). More specifically in gentrification studies the most commonly defined practice of resistance is the Right to Stay Put. It is described by Hartman (1984) as a long life right of tenure for tenants. It has become a political slogan and a resistance practice; it implies recognition of the forces that produce displacement (e.g. Marcuse 1985a;

Janoschka 2016); forces induced *by gentrification* and *for the production of gentrification*.¹ It involves an action of opposition to the mode of urban development that generates displacement of the most vulnerable. In gentrification studies resistance has a very specific, social scientific, meaning: it is the practices of individuals and groups who attempt to stay put in the face of exclusionary, neoliberalizing forces. In this respect we can say that resistance to gentrification ‘seeks to occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities from those defined through oppression and exploitation’ (Pile, in Rose 2002: 3). However, this is, we argue, a rather ‘minimal definition’ (ibid) of resistance as a ‘common sense’ reaction to the regimes of expulsion taking place both in the so-called global South and North.²

Under the current regimes of expulsion, practices that counter gentrification are also identity-based and have much more micro, less visible dimensions. As much as resistance to gentrification can be collective, politically organized and visible, it can also be highly heterogeneous, somehow contradictory and incoherent, reflecting the intimate conflicting feelings of individuals, deliberately invisible, unconscious and practised in solitude. We have to learn how to explore the different forms that resistance to gentrification takes, as well as the cultural politics of agency (Rankin 2009), and to navigate outside of what we see and can decipher as an anti-gentrification resistance if we are to enrich the notion. As Rankin (ibid) argues in regards to planning theory, gentrification theory can be informed by Scott’s (1985) observation of the ‘hidden transcripts’ and the ‘infra-politics’ in reference to the everyday practices of resistance mobilized by peasants in South Asian rural areas. They are described as ‘weapons of the weak’, in the sense that they constitute the root of a collective social mobilization. In her reconceptualization of resistance, Hynes (2013) refers to Collins and Munro (2010; 550), and calls for a ‘micro politics of everyday life’ to suggest an exploration of resistance in between macro-political analyses of visible, collective struggles against structures of power (e.g. urban social movements and squatting practices) and micro-sociological analyses, which take seriously the smaller-scale dynamics of power and resistance as they affect individuals in the context of everyday life. In this sense we must consider that resistance to gentrification is intrinsically related to scale, and the possibility of jumping scales: from the body, to the home, to the neighbourhood up to the national and global (Smith 1992).

Assessments of valuable and practical alternatives that go beyond resistance as an oppositional (contradictory and paradoxical) practice have been, to date, a marginal part of gentrification studies. In fact, even if we use a ‘strategic’ concept with ‘political’ value (Lees et al. 2016), such as gentrification-induced displacement, we argue that we still lack understanding of resistance in gentrifying contexts, besides institutional measures or housing cooperatives (ibid: 221–224), radical policy incrementalism (see Gallaher’s 2016 interpretation of condo conversion and right to buy as a practice of staying put in Washington DC) and the building of local strategic alliances (as in the Traditional Retail Markets Networks discussed in Dawson and Gonzales 2016). Alongside the now classic work of Chester Hartman (1984), anti-gentrification studies and progressive policies have

¹ This concept is borrowed from the idea of displacement by and for development explored by Penz et al. (2011). On the need to strengthen the nexus between development studies and gentrification studies see Lees et al. (2016).

² We say so-called as we follow Comaroff and Comaroff’s (2012) remark (quoted in Roy 2016: 207) of the South being a ‘relation, not a thing in and of itself’.

been developed in the Anglo-American context such as: Peter Marcuse's (1985b: 922) 'floating zone': 'a set of policies and procedures capable to reverse the negative effect of gentrification: provision and maintenance of decent, secure and affordable housing in stable and non-discriminatory neighbourhoods for all city residents'; the anti-growth machine movement and the preservation of a single occupancy hotel in the Tenderloin, San Francisco (Robinson 1995); and the battle for Tompkins Square Park in New York City (Smith 1996). These are cases that remain key reference points in the gentrification literature but they do not help us much when faced with a new, acute and predatory phase of capitalist accumulation in cities around the globe. As Lees and Ferreri (2016) argue, such classic US-centric studies must not remain dominant in a properly cosmopolitan gentrification studies.

A more multidisciplinary approach to resistance can be found in urban social movement theory. In fact, for urban social movement theorists, practices of resistance at the urban scale are often in relation to gentrification processes. According to Mayer (2013) anti-gentrification struggles are part of the fragmented, variegated, and deeply impacted by the neoliberal order, field of urban social movements, and stand against the commodification of urban space, 'scandalizing' the new regime of accumulation. Activists today deal with a diverse set of practices: squatting, social centres and autonomous spaces, citizen organizations claiming the urban commons or spontaneous movements with a poetic perception of social reality (Petropoulou 2014) that can be grouped under the umbrella of 'the right to the city' (Mayer 2009, 2013). They encompass different 'forms of alliances across towns and across issues, between housing activists and artists, leftist groups and cultural workers, small business owners and the new precarious groups – as all of them feel threatened by contemporary forms of development entailing gentrification, mega projects, and displacement' (Mayer and Boudreau 2011: 281). They are overtly oppositional and clearly visible. Making the invisible and the unspoken dimension of injustice visible is one of the core issues of urban social movements that deliberately use anti-gentrification (and anti-systemic) discourses. In fact, visibility makes a collective claim easily recognizable and recognition is a fundamental component of resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004).

Besides these academic debates, we should also acknowledge that the most effective (and interesting) work on resistance to gentrification is not academic. It comes from activist-scholars who position themselves halfway between community engagement and academic reflection (Routledge and Derickson 2015). This body of work assumes the form of handbooks, blogs, passionate writing, documentaries/movies and artist-activist works. These types of material are accessible, easy to read, reduce complexity and clearly offer possible solutions. They are written for and with communities, and imply the participation of those directly affected by gentrification. The first handbook of this type was *Displacement, How to Fight It?* by Hartman et al. (1982). They argued that 'each variation of the basic profiteering assault on housing requires different sort of responses from anti-displacement groups' (1982: 28) and they provided a whole set of place-specific, cause-related and community-based ways to fight displacement. More recently, new anti-gentrification handbooks have been produced in relation to the distinctiveness of displacement in context. Among them the struggle against a new gentrification, that of council estates, as see in *Staying Put: An Anti-Gentrification Handbook for Council Estates in London* (2014), the result of a collaboration between the London Tenants Federation,

gentrification scholar-activist Loretta Lees, Just Space and Southwark Notes Archive Group. In Spain, a passionate biographical account of the struggle against eviction for mortgage arrears *Vida Hipotecada* [Mortgaged Lives] written by Colau and Alemany (2012) as a result of the work of the *Plataforma de los Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH), can also be seen as an anti-displacement manifesto.

23.3 A CLASSIFICATION OF ANTI-GENTRIFICATION PRACTICES

While acknowledging that anti-gentrification practices must be contextualized, we also think that the existing anti-gentrification literature allows us to establish a set of regularities. We have classified the literature in Table 23.1 into the following categories: Prevention, institution-based measures: e.g. fostering public housing policies, tenants protection, and alternative planning tools to prevent and mitigate displacement; Mitigation and legal bricolage: e.g. delay, negotiation, compensation practices, anti-eviction, re-housing, buyout practices that can only postpone the problem or move it somewhere else; building alternatives: e.g. community planning, squats, occupations, protests and urban commons; counter narratives, building awareness and strategic mobilization of (collective) identities: e.g. collective constructions of sense of belonging and alternative narratives mobilized against mainstream discourses. We discuss each group referring to the literature listed in the table. Although we have tried to be as comprehensive as possible the table will no doubt have gaps, it is however a fair reflection of the kinds of resistances to gentrification happening around the world.

23.3.1 Prevention

A lot of the measures that prevent gentrification-induced displacement are directly dependent on land and housing regimes, namely public housing policies, tenants' protection and rent regulation. Publicly subsidized housing plays a crucial role in the prevention of gentrification. It is described as a 'barrier to gentrification' (Ley and Dobson 2008) and a fundamental part of spatial justice based on rights that have spatial implications (Brenner et al. 2011). The role played by housing policies as a barrier to gentrification was explored by Newman and Wyly (2006), who asked what the tipping point was in terms of low-income residents staying in a gentrifying neighbourhood. The decline of tenants' protection under neoliberal regimes is due to the erosion of low income housing stock as a collective asset (via demolition or privatization) and the weakening of regulations that protect tenants (such as the abolition of rent control, the introduction of express eviction measures and property-oriented taxation regimes). The critique of the demolition and privatization of public housing is the premise and the core of any anti-displacement discourse applicable also to the clearing of informal housing (Ascensao 2015; İslam and Sakızlıoğlu 2015). However, the success in banning privatization depends on the strength of solidarities among tenants. Their desire to become property owners or achieve acceptable compensation can become a divisive force.

Rent regulation, a fundamental anti-gentrification measure, is under threat or has been completely abandoned under certain neoliberal-oriented regimes. After decades of

Table 23.1 A classification of practices used to resist gentrification

Focus	Prevention, institution-based measures	Mitigation and legal bricolage: delay, negotiation, compensation	Building alternatives: community planning, squats, occupations, protests and urban commons	Enhancing visibility, counter narratives, building awareness and strategic mobilization of (collective) identities
<i>Eviction</i>				
<i>Housing privatization</i>	<i>Publicly subsidized housing as a 'barrier to gentrification'</i> : Vancouver: Ley and Dobson (2008); Buenos Aires: Rodríguez and Di Virgilio (2016)	<i>Zoning regulations</i> (encouragement and discouragement zones): New York: Marcuse (1985)		
<i>Building conversion</i>	<i>Tenants protections, rent control and regulations</i> : New York: Newman and Wylie (2006); USA: Hartman (1984); Berlin: Holm, Grell and Bernt (eds) (2013), Connolly (2016)	<i>Anti-eviction practices</i> : Spain: Colau and Alemany (2012); Rome, Athens, Madrid: Annunziata and Lees (2016); Rome: Mudu (2015), De Felicianonio (2016)		
<i>Demolition</i>	<i>Urban renewal without evictions</i> : Lima, Perú: Betancur (2014); Belgium: Uitermark and Loopmans (2013)	<i>Displacement Free Zones</i> : Park Slope, New York City: Lees et al. (2008: 250–255); USA: Kolodney (1991); Puerto Rico, Morales-Cruz (2012)	<i>Community organization, grassroots movements and alternative planning</i> : USA: Hartman, Keating and LeGates (1982), DeFilippis (2004); London: Just Space (2013); Istanbul: Erman and Coşkun-Yıldar (2007); Caracas, Venezuela: Velásquez-Atehortúa (2014); Sweden: Rätt att bo kvar (n.d.)	

	<p><i>Building conversion regulations:</i> Barcelona: Asmblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible (ABTS) (2016); Berlin: Holm, Brendt, Britta (2014)</p> <p><i>Anti-privatization struggles:</i> London, Berlin, Amsterdam: Holm (2007); Berlin: Mayer (2013)</p> <p><i>Single occupancy hotels:</i> San Francisco: Robinson (1995)</p> <p><i>Street vendors' resistance:</i> Mexico City, Mexico: Betancur (2014), Crossa (2013)</p>	<p><i>Resistance via legal action and legal struggle:</i> Puerto Rico: Morales-Cruz (2012); London: Lees and Ferreri (2016); Lima, Peru: Betancur (2014)</p> <p><i>Resistance by tenants and tactics of negotiation:</i> Rome: Herzfeld (2009)</p> <p><i>Court cases against master plans:</i> Santiago, Chile, in Lees, Shin and López-Morales (2016)</p> <p><i>Compensation, in the case of condo conversion:</i> Washington DC: Gallaher (2015)</p>	<p><i>Anti-gentrification protests:</i> Tompkins Square Park in New York City (see Smith 1996); Gezi Park, Istanbul: Gül and Cüntük (2014); Accra, Ghana: Gillespie (2016)</p> <p><i>Political housing squats:</i> European cities: Martinez and Cattaneo (2016); Europe: Squatting Collective (2015); Rome: Mudu (2015); Berlin: Holm and Kuhn (2011); New York: Maeckelbergh (2012); Amsterdam: Pruijt (2013), Uitermark (2004)</p> <p><i>Critical resilience and the reproduction of the commons:</i> London, Los Angeles, Sydney: DeVerteuil (2016); Athens: Stavrides (2016)</p> <p><i>Informal occupation and land squatting:</i> Santiago: Casgrain and Janoschka (2013); South Africa: Cabannes, Yafai, and Johnson (2010); Lisbon: Ascensao (2015); India: Slum Dwellers International, McFarlane (2010)</p>		<p><i>Historical centre preservation</i></p> <p><i>Urban renewal/regeneration plans</i></p> <p><i>Retail changes</i></p> <p><i>Slum improvement</i></p>	<p><i>Community land trusts:</i> New York: Hartman, Keating and LeGates (1982); London: London Tenants Federation, Lees, Just Space and SNAG (2014)</p> <p><i>Vacancy control, confiscation/acquisition of abandoned property:</i> New York: Hartman, Keating and LeGates (1982)</p>	<p><i>Grassroots movements' legal controls over urban renewal policy:</i> San Francisco: Hartman (1974), Robinson (1995)</p> <p><i>Environmental legal struggle:</i> Pearsall (2014)</p>		<p><i>Counter narratives of mainstream urban governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Blogs and media activism:</i> Berlin: Gentrification Blog; UK: Slater (2014) – <i>Arts:</i> Mexico City: Crossa (2013); Lisbon: <i>LefthandRotation</i>; Berlin, Hamburg: Novy and Colomb (2013) – <i>'visioning workshop' and alternative design competitions:</i> London, UK: Lees and Ferreri (2016); Barcelona: Portelli (2015)
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Table 23.1 (continued)

Focus	Prevention, institution-based measures	Mitigation and legal bricolage: delay, negotiation, compensation	Building alternatives: community planning, squats, occupations, protests and urban commons	Enhancing visibility, counter narratives, building awareness and strategic mobilization of (collective) identities
<i>Environmental planning</i>	<p><i>Anti-speculation ordinance:</i> San Francisco: Hartman (1974)</p> <p><i>Land value extraction policies:</i> Puerto Rico: Lees, Shin and Lopez-Morales (2016)</p> <p><i>Retail resistance:</i> Mexico City: Lefthandrotation (2015), <i>Defend Traditional Retail Markets Networks</i>, London: Dawson and Gonzales (2016)</p>	<p><i>Armed conflict:</i> Turkey (this chapter); South America: Janoschka and Sequera (2016)</p>	<p>Antievictionmappingproject, or – <i>Poetry:</i> Mexico and Greece: Petropoulou (2014)</p> <p><i>Alternative culture and social centre:</i> Hamburg: Noeger (2012)</p> <p><i>Mutual support for threatened groups (evicted, minorities, street vendors, specific guilds):</i> Spain: Colau and Alemany (2012), Crossa (2013)</p> <p><i>Informal networks of support:</i> Jakarta, Dakar: Simone (2009)</p>	<p>Antievictionmappingproject, or – <i>Poetry:</i> Mexico and Greece: Petropoulou (2014)</p> <p><i>Alternative culture and social centre:</i> Hamburg: Noeger (2012)</p> <p><i>Mutual support for threatened groups (evicted, minorities, street vendors, specific guilds):</i> Spain: Colau and Alemany (2012), Crossa (2013)</p> <p><i>Informal networks of support:</i> Jakarta, Dakar: Simone (2009)</p> <p><i>Invisible forms of resistance (collective and individual):</i> South East Asia: Scott (1985); Egypt, Iran: Bayat (2000); Israel/Palestine: Yiftachel (2009)</p>
<i>Criminalization of informality and squatting</i>				
<i>Militarisation of urban spaces</i>				
<i>Symbolic changes</i>				
<i>Otherization of minority groups</i>				

housing deregulation, rent control, which brought housing law reforms, has been subject to revisionism (Arnott 1995). The first generation of rent control, the 'nominal rent freeze system' (ibid) has been substituted in some cases by a new, more flexible second generation of rent control described as 'highly beneficial' for tenants' protection (Lind 2001). This type of rent cap can be seen in cases such as Berlin, where low income tenants were protected in areas targeted by cautious urban renewal programmes and upgrading (Holm et al. 2013). The regulation of condo conversions into luxury apartments can also prevent gentrification to a great extent. For instance, the Berlin North-Neukölln Tenants' Alliance achieved the enforcement of a pre-existing anti-speculative measure, *milieuschutz* (social environmental protection), to ban the luxury conversion of historical and former low-income apartments in the area (Connolly 2016). Similar requests come from organizations advocating for the de-growth of tourism and regulation of building conversions for temporary and touristic uses (such as *Assemblea Barris Turisme Sostenible* [Assembly of Districts for Sustainable Tourism], n.d., in Barcelona).

In the case of redevelopment, rehabilitation and land use transformation, alternative community planning has proven effective for neighbourhood stability. The self-hab program proposed in New York City in the 1980s is still relevant for the new housing crisis. This practice sought the recovery and self-renovation of abandoned property, given to tenants' cooperatives by the city after a process of confiscation.³ This type of practice has been linked to vacancy control guaranteed by a juridical system that implies that abandoned or empty property can be taken over by the city and converted into social housing. However, vacancy control is not implemented in all situations. For this reason, critical planning practices attempt to foster community engagement and participation as a strategy to mitigate top-down planning decisions before it negatively impacts residents (Taylor and Edwards 2016; Novy and Colomb 2013; Uitermark and Loopmans 2013). This type of work challenges the responsibility and reflexivity of planning professionals in the face of an urbanism that is reproducing injustice. Even if highly heterogeneous (see a comparison of anti-privatization movements in Europe by Holm 2007), critical planning practices advocate for alternative forms of urban development. They are oriented towards a long-term goal such as radical egalitarian access to the city as well as a more short-term set of claims such as the preservation of urban heritage of the built environment (Mayer 2013), banning renewal projects and asking for a more cautious type of intervention (see Holm and Kuhn 2011) or stopping eviction (see the case of Kotti and Co, in Berlin, in Mayer 2013). As for North America and London, practices of community organising can inform the most appropriate forms of solidarity, collective ownership when desired (see DeFilippis 2004), as well as sustainable economy and alternative city plans.⁴

23.3.2 Delaying, Compensation and Re-housing

When preventative measures are not in place (the norm nowadays) resistance practices can easily take the form of compensation, re-housing and delaying strategies. One

³ A similar scheme was introduced in Italy as a result of the claims of the housing squatting movement and became regulated by a regional law for Self-Rehab (*autorecupero*) in 1998.

⁴ See for example Towards a community-led plan for London: policy directions and proposals (2013), which was a proposal for the next London Plan by Just Space in London.

delaying strategy is the request for an eviction free zone (EFZ). This tool was described by Kolodney (1991: 513) as a ‘legal bricolage in an era of political limited expectation’. An EFZ can be place-based, applied directly onto an entire neighbourhood, or people-based, helping vulnerable residents. It must be accompanied by a whole set of legal services, where lawyers work together with community groups on tenants’ rights to delay or stop evictions. The core of an anti-eviction zone is a ‘vigorous (and participated by the community) legal defence against eviction’ (ibid: 518). EFZs have never properly existed; however, moratoria on anti-eviction practices were extensively implemented city-wide for vulnerable groups in Rome until the advent of the crisis which represented a real turning point for anti-eviction practices (Annunziata and Lees 2016). When the attempt to stop or delay eviction fails and eviction becomes unavoidable, resistance practices call for one-to-one replacement (from the previous home to a new home, for everyone). The re-housing process must consider a possible relocation near the previous home, to allow continuity in everyday life (such as school for children and other facilities regularly used by residents). This is for instance one of the core claims of the anti-eviction manifesto of the European Coalition for the Right to Housing (see <https://housingnotprofit.org/en>) and the claim of the housing movements in Rome: ‘*Ogni sfratto sarà una barricata*’ [each eviction will be a barricade] (Mudu, in Martínez and Cattaneo 2016).

Recently Gallaher (2016) drawing on the case of Washington DC argued that the tenants’ right to buy in cases of condo conversion and related forms of compensation can be seen as a way to enable residents to stay put. Explaining how challenging and contradictory the practices can be, she argues that compensation may result in a new opportunity in the life of indebted tenants. Drawing from Roy (2009), Karaman (2014: 290) has further complicated the picture by problematizing resistance in the context of a “politics of compensation” that is simultaneously, and paradoxically, communitarian and market-centered’. However, considering the severity of displacement, the literature also considers compensation or buying someone out a very divisive practice which limits solidarity and undermines the possibility of staying put for the most fragile residents.

23.3.3 Critical-counter Narratives, Awareness Campaigns, Collective Identities

When the production of gentrification implies spatial, semantic and social cleansing to accommodate new uses and meanings (the subtlest and most pervasive form of displacement) resistance is very challenging. Exclusionary and symbolic displacement (see Blomley 2004; Janoschka 2016) permeates everyday life and calls for a different type of conceptualization and related forms of resistance. Here the production of critical counter-narratives and awareness campaigns which aim to delegitimize planning practices and rent extraction are crucial. Collective knowledge production has taken the form of open platforms, blogs, websites, public lectures, art and media work, all done with the specific goal of framing counter narratives, and/or a critical and ironic understanding of gentrification. A variety of methods have been used such as the artist interventions of the collective Left Hand Rotation (n.d): *Gentrificación no es un Nombre de Señora*, *Museo de los Desplazados*, *Ficción Inmobiliaria*, the Creative Charlois Control; the Swedish version of LTF et al’s (2014) *The Right to Stay Put*, *Rätt att bo kvar* (n.d.), in council estates which used reggae to spread its message; Italian hip hop in the case of the lake struggle in Rome, *‘IL LAGO CHE COMBATTE’ – Assalti frontali & Il Muro del Canto* (2014);

Turkish hip hop denouncing Roma cleansing through so-called urban renewal (*Sulukuleli Roman Rap Grubu Tahribad-ı İsyân – TOKİ KAFALAR*, 2015); Berlin anti-tourist actions, ‘Berlin Doesn’t Love You’, that seeks to build awareness of the pervasive multiple forms of gentrification happening in Berlin. A critical political economy approach regarding urban transformation in Berlin is at the core of the detailed Berlin Gentrification Blog (n.d.) edited by Andrej Holm, as well as systematic, prompt and full responses to the mainstream, acritical interpretation of housing unaffordability in the media.⁵

Another practice that builds awareness about the effects of gentrification is critical mapping and data analysis. The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (n.d.) in the San Francisco Bay Area makes visible the nexus between urban displacement and more contemporary (self)entrepreneurial, touristic and high-tech related urban development. The eviction maps in Madrid (*Madrid Desahuciado* 2015) by VIC in collaboration with the *Plataforma de los Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH) show the effects of the debt-induced housing crisis in Madrid.

These works have in common an attempt to challenge consolidated social imaginaries and define a counter narrative to the hegemonic idea of urban living. Irony, creativity and rhetoric are used to counter the mainstream discourses and legitimacy surrounding the kind of urban development that implies financial burden and displacement for local residents. These practices of resistance, have however, been documented as internally contradictory, at risk of being hijacked by new forms of economic development such as ‘the creative city’ (Mayer 2013) or falling into the trap of the ‘commodification of the culture of resistance’ as documented by Noeger (2012: 157) in the case of anti-gentrification practices in Hamburg, which became incorporated into the processes of gentrification they originally meant to defend against.

Methods of urban mobilization and resistance draw, in some situations, on the strategic mobilization of (collective) identity and cultural practices. For example, in the case of *Ripensar Bon Pastor*, a collective in Barcelona who developed an engaged anthropology and considered the character and culture of the neighbourhood as an important tool for resistance. In this particular case, as can happen in other neighbourhoods with a strong historical (and political) identity, collective memory was mobilized in order to construct belonging in the present, thus rooting their lives and strengthening ties to their neighbourhood under threat (Portelli 2015). In other contexts, the strategic mobilization of collective identities includes the militarization of neighbourhoods (Janoschka and Sequera 2016), or the work of neighbourhood associations that organize struggles (or alliances) with gentrifying forces (e.g. Eрман and Coşkun-Yıldar 2007). Practices of mobilization of identity that are not necessarily deemed overtly antagonist can easily escape epistemological exercises that attempt to recognize them as resistance. However, these could pave the way for further conceptualizations of innovative ways of escaping the physically and symbolically destructive character of gentrification.

⁵ Among them see Tom Slater’s (2014) response to the Guardian newspaper.

23.3.4 Organized and Informal Squatting

Squatting is considered the quintessential practice of staying put (Martínez and Cattaneo 2016). Social movement theorists have contributed extensively towards exploring the varieties and heterogeneity of squatting practices (Uitermark 2004; Mudu 2015). The ‘political squatting movement’ as a direct answer to housing and the loci of an alternative to capitalism is the assumption of the Squatting European Kollektive (Martínez and Cattaneo 2016). However, we can say that today squatting does not necessarily relate to a consciously political and oppositional choice by individuals in search of a counter culture or alternative to capitalism. Deprivation-based squatting, one of the configurations of squatting described by Pruijt (2004), is back as a visible manifestation of a time characterized by multiple crises: economic breakdown and political upheaval, a global financial crisis connected to housing, austerity measures and the shrinkage of citizenship rights. McFarlane (2010) sees squatting as a global phenomenon and links it with squatted settlements and informal housing. In the context of the so-called Global South, organizations such as Slum Dwellers International and the achievement of legal title deeds through legalization of informality contribute to an ‘entrepreneurial image of urban squatters as skilled and capable’ (ibid: 772). These initiatives carry an anti-poverty discourse that can be seen as a right to stay put. However, even if informal settlements can be considered a form of do-it-yourself strategy, their legalization and inclusion in formal market dynamics carries the risk of rising land and housing prices ‘to the point where the original inhabitants are priced out’ (ibid: 771).

Besides the organized forms of squatting and the newly emerging anti-eviction platforms, we also find a large number of fragmented ‘residents survival’ tactics as documented by Herzfeld in Rome (2009). In some cases, they are capable to act as a bounded community. However, when it comes to displacement, social ties get broken and solidarity erodes, which has an intimate and irredeemable effect on displaced people. Contrary to the mobilization of visibility, irony and thought-provoking anti-gentrification practices, ‘resident survival’ remains largely invisible. We will argue in the following section that mobilizing invisibility rooted in everyday practices becomes a tactic of survival.

23.4 TOWARDS MORE INCLUSIVE GEOGRAPHIES OF RESISTANCE

As said earlier the above classification has its limits. It is dominated by the Anglo-Saxon conceptualizations of resistance within gentrification studies. It contains then, the ‘shortcomings that both post-colonial and post-structuralist theory have identified’ (Lees et al., 2015, p.9), this cannot be ignored and it pushes us to consider the real complexity and variants of a given moment of resistance, something that might allow us to identify the opening up of possibilities (Cerulo 2009; Fariás 2011; McFarlane 2011a). We recognize the need to go beyond the idea of a homogeneous hegemonic force, namely capitalism, in its globalized form (Roy 2011), as the main factor behind urban processes of destitution in order to account for the complexity and indeed possible successes of practices of resistance. In an attempt to respond to Roy’s (2016) ‘Who’s afraid of postcolonial theory?’ we recognize the urgent need to unpack understandings of resistance rooted in Western

theorizations, not by simply choosing to focus on cases located in the so-called Global South, but by also trying to theorize away from the ‘master narrative that is Europe’ (2016: 205). As argued by Ley and Teo (2014) the epistemological absence of gentrification as a term to explain the phenomena does not necessarily imply the absence of the process itself; in the same vein, we argue that the absence of theorization of resistance to gentrification does not imply its absence either.

New and recently conceptualized types of gentrification continue to affect the everyday life of urban citizens. Moving away from a political economy approach in the study of gentrification, we find the micro-politics of everyday life to be a starting point in challenging the conceptualization of resistance in gentrification studies. We see everyday life as the ‘quiet encroachment of the ordinary’ (Bayat 2000: 545), the struggle of ‘thousands of small movements in spaces of survival and stealth’ (Yiftachel 2009: 250). The experience of the everyday is a breeding ground for non-normative ways of associating. In this field, Bebbington (2007) draws on Habermas to identify the links between mobilization and everyday practices, as the latter are being colonized by ‘modern capitalism and welfare statism’. Merrifield (2013) advocates ‘encounter’ as an inspiration to conceive another way of political engagement. It is ‘a more free-floating, dynamic, and relational militancy, to be sure, “horizontal” in its reach and organization’ (p. xvii). Subsequently he presents us with a key question: ‘How to ensure that this encounter in everyday life – this spontaneous lived moment – assumes a mutation of world-historical significance?’ (Merrifield 2013: 92). Similarly, we ask if these practices can be seen as resistance to gentrification and whether they are in fact reactionary.

It is through these new critical openings within the literature that struggle and resistance in everyday practices of urban living might be understood better. In particular, the notion of urban assemblage as developed by Farias (2011) ‘allows us to think about spatial formations as products that must be constantly defended, held together, maintained and repaired’ (Farias 2011: 370); McFarlane (2011a) also sees in urban assemblage a key to unlock the complexity of becoming urban: ‘Assemblage is a latent possibility of new politics and movements based on desire and becoming that can both emerge through and exceed capitalism’ (p. 211). Urban assemblage theory thus compels us to seek the processes rather than the structures, radically opening up the meaning of urban resistance, which might translate into the different ways dwellers perform the ‘right to be’ (drawing from Merrifield 2013) or into ‘everyday practices of emergence’ as described by Ong (2011) when referring to the worlding of cities.

Considering this critique and the gaps identified in the literature we are opening up the notion of resistance to its (yet) non-politicized forms, its covert dimensions, to informality and invisibility. Besides the different types of anti-gentrification measures identified in the literature, we propose here four aspects, deeply rooted in the everyday urban experience, under which we could further analyse different practices of resistance: temporalities, negotiating ambiguity (and limits of solidarity), invisibility, and informality.

23.4.1 Temporalities

Different temporalities of practices of resistance depend on strategic positioning in respect to gentrification pressures. ‘In dwelling the city, people draw upon previous experience or memories, and the multiple temporalities and rhythms of the city itself help

to shape the possibilities of learning through dwelling' (McFarlane 2011b: 23). There are practices that seek a long-term solution for staying put or short-term steps for solving urgent need (such as re-housing of evictees or temporary shelter). They might be oriented towards the strategic reframing of the long term strategic view for city development (such as counter-narratives) or be limited to the short-term improvement of a neighbourhood resulting in neighbourhood-based practices.

Time is also a crucial variable for understanding the dynamics of resistance, since it does not have the same value and is not perceived in the same way by those involved in the process. For a household under threat, time is a matter of survival. For the city administration, a financial organization, a real estate broker, it is just a matter of postponement of financial gains, a practice of power-relations. At the same time, how past and future are conceptualized within the implementation of gentrification projects is essential in order to understand the positions different actors take and the narratives they draw from. The memory of a completed project or a gentrified neighbourhood can be mobilized by those resisting in order to remind the public and institutions how these projects do not work for the benefit of all. At the same time, and once a project has started, agents act on their guesses of the different future outcomes of the gentrifying landscape: some will decide to organize themselves (more often than not, the more precarious the position the less they are likely to get involved); others will decide that the struggle is not for them, and will try to find an escape route (normally trying to find housing nearby, if affordable); other dwellers will actually act on the possibility of taking advantage of the changes. It is thus that aspirations, desires and conceptualizations of past and future have a direct impact on how dwellers decide to take different positions in the present. The different meanings of time stress the need to clearly understand different threats or fears, intentionality and positionality of the agents involved in the struggle against gentrification.

23.4.2 Negotiating Ambiguity

The need to be flexible in searching for alternatives sheds light on the limits of solidarity when dealing with material needs and the negotiation of ambiguity. The austerity and violent urbanizing practices which characterize the global financial crisis around the world result in highly visible solidarity in the face of displacement (see the growing anti-eviction platforms in Chicago, Spain, Ireland, to name a few). The real burden for the success of these resistance practices comes from a culturally rooted, internal contradiction within the anti-displacement movement. In a proprietary society anti-gentrification practices have to face a consolidated (and culturally rooted) preference for homeownership as a means of wealth, welfare and social reproduction. The landscape of resistance is full of contradictions as far as the challenge posed by homeownership and lack of tenure alternatives is not resolved. For instance, the collective struggle against the privatization of public housing in Rome can result in a de-facto anti-eviction zone or in negotiations with the institution for the most convenient sale price. Those willing to negotiate in this climate are mainly organized tenants willing to buy. However, negotiation can be contradictory when proprietary aspirations are prioritized against the need of tenants or other groups severely affected by housing vulnerability (those forced to pay prohibitive rent at market prices, unable to buy or access public housing due to a chronic shortage, already evicted from previous houses and living in temporary accommodation). There are notable exceptions,

where homeownership concerns can become a force of further solidarity actions that include tenants and informal dwellers. In cases where informal housing is historically rooted, applying for and receiving homeownership certificates or regularization might be the main objective for the fulfilment of citizenship rights. And yet, this move works as a strategy to improve informal dwellers' position at the possible negotiating table, thus forming and strengthening a collective that cares for the neighbourhood as a whole, as much as their own personal homeownership situations.

Moreover, both negotiating with the local authorities whilst building an anti-institution narrative can go hand in hand. Local authorities might be the only point of information in regards to a possible urban renewal plan, and thus become a possible key ally in the struggle. This allows us to break down the idea of the state or institutions as homogeneous constructions (in fact, there are civil servants within the institutions that consider their work to serve and protect dwellers, whilst dealing with political interests, top-down questionable decisions and nepotism). This inherent complexity of the (corrupted) institutional apparatus can work both in favour and against those affected residents. On the one hand, dwellers need to carry out a certain amount of research (with the help of city-wide voluntary organizations and activists) to improve their position. On the other hand, that same complexity also translates into sometimes institutional incompetence, which gives room for informed resistance to intervene and can lead to delays in the implementation of urban plans (when no one really knows exactly what is going on – especially if the legal framework changes rapidly). The ambiguity of the positions different actors take in regards to urban transformation depending on the circumstances and what is to be gained, are key in the processes.

23.4.3 Mobilising Invisibility and Informal Networks

We would like to draw attention to a growing number of practices of resistance which do not fit the classification of formal/visible practices. Contrary to the mobilization of visibility, irony and thought-provoking anti-gentrification practices can remain invisible. Not everyone is willing to negotiate overtly with those responsible for their displacement. In these cases, we argue that people tend to find solutions informally and outside of institutional regimes, especially when they start failing them. The majority of practices of resistance are in fact outside the classic/institutional/normative approach in which progressive policies have been formulated. Invisibility and informality play a key role in those cases. McFarlane's (2012: 105) conceptualization of informality/formality is particularly helpful when addressing their possible politicization: 'They co-constitute and dissolve spaces, becoming politicized or depoliticized at different moments, and they both enable and restrict urban life.' Furthermore, Simone's (2004) account of informality and notion of 'people as infrastructure' is particularly relevant: 'These intersections, [. . .], have depended on the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices. These conjunctions become an infrastructure – a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city' (2004: 408). Informality can be applied to ambiguous homeownership situations, whereby dwellers who have built their own houses mobilize this identity to organize themselves. Another way informality works is through networks whereby family and neighbours get together to support whoever is in need. These radical forms of solidarity could strategically mobilize (in)visibility (drawing on

Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2007) to hide from (or block) the relentless path of urban restructuring in its various forms. Remaining institutionally invisible is a key tool in order to stay put: if you become too visible, too noisy, you risk being stigmatized or excluded from a normative way of living.

We have created a working table (Figure 23.1) where we present what we have seen as practices of resistance to gentrification so far in the tension between visibility and invisibility / formality and informality. We argue that using the different conceptual threads described above as points of reference allows us to anchor highly diffuse and unstable concepts for detailed exploration. We hope this will trigger further conversations about different ways of resisting gentrifying forces.

23.5 CONCLUSION

We initially identified four sets of practices that have sought to mitigate gentrification from the gentrification literature, as summarized in Table 23.1. This body of work allows us to say that practices of resistance and possible alternatives can only be site-specific. If we see them all together they constitute an attempt to contextualize and define place-specific anti-displacement agendas and localized action plans as suggested by Lees et al. (2016: 224).

However, the achievements of these practices in the face of the acuteness assumed by gentrification at the current conjuncture are limited. In some cases, those limits are not only the lack of institutional attempts to prevent displacement but also internal contradictions within the resistance practices themselves. In order to problematize the way resistances have been conceptualized in gentrification studies to date we drew on post-structuralist theories and relational approaches. These angles have allowed us to see that politically conscious, overtly oppositional, intentional and visible practices of resistance are not the only way to counteract gentrification-induced displacement. We have argued that the field of resistances is also characterized by non-politicized, covert, unintentional, informal, and deliberately invisible practices of everyday life that draw on different perceptions of time and survival, negotiations of ambiguity and mobilization of invisibility.

We have witnessed the growth of collective practices aimed at amplifying the possibilities of a future where dwellers retain as much agency as possible within a landscape of urban displacement and dispossession. There are certain regularities in resistance practices that enrich our repertoire: informality mobilized whenever necessary, informal networks of support where precious knowledge is shared (that might include neighbours, acquaintances in local municipalities, practices of situated solidarity), and differences between homeowners and tenants' aspirations that at first might seem insolvable, but that finally might help organize a neighbourhood better against gentrification pressures.

In order to further understand what the possibilities are in the face of dispossession and eviction, we have tried to unpack the concept of resistance, unburdening it from more structural narratives and further incorporating all those aspects that enrich the concept ontologically. Resistance is far from a uni-dimensional, linear storyline of collective action: in fact, resistance happens at different levels of engagement and in constant relation to other processes (what today is resistance tomorrow can be compliance), from the forces it seeks to overcome to multi-scalar hegemonic fault lines. In this sense, the meaning

of resistance needs to be constantly negotiated according to an ever-changing landscape of circumstances.

Negotiating ambivalences and ambiguities (or refusing to negotiate) with institutional and private actors demonstrates how resistance itself is a deeply complex concept, relative and adapted to the context precisely by those who carry it out, and consider themselves part of it. Further difficulties arise when individual everyday actions that allow dwellers to stay put, or to find other options in the face of brutal evictions, are not considered part of traditional forms of organized resistance. We have tried here to find a balance on what counts as formal anti-gentrification practices and individual, non-organized, (and sometimes) incoherent behaviour, whilst staying away from romanticizing the precarious lives of the resisting 'urban poor'.

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