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From eviction to evicting: Rethinking the technologies, lives and power sustaining displacement

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Abstract
An unnamed shift has occurred in geographies of eviction. While past research focused on the causes and effects of eviction in political economy, state power, and cultural difference, emerging work emphasises the subjective experience and sustaining practices of eviction as it happens. This paper makes the case for this turn away from causes and outcomes of 'eviction', and towards 'evicting' as a set of material technologies and practices that sustain displacement, and explores the implications of such a shift. Research into lived durations of eviction, evicting technologies, and eviction enforcement agencies opens up new conceptual and political fields of intervention.

Keywords
displacement, dispossession, domicide, eviction, gentrification, housing

I Introduction

Since the collapse of the market in American subprime mortgages in 2008, evictions have been made into a powerful symbol of the impact of the prolonged financial crisis in wealthier nations. Eviction is also an icon of what Saskia Sassen (2014: 5) calls a 'savage sorting' of the global population, especially in a context where 65.6 million people were considered displaced in their own country in 2017 (UNHCR, 2017). Though it has always been a feature of economies of housing and space, eviction has been violently forced back onto the agenda of geographers by these processes. Collections of work on land grabs (Kaag and Zoomers, 2014) and geographies of eviction (Brickell et al., 2017) have prioritised displacement and gathered together disparate studies into dialogue. When it comes to evictions, what appears to be a classically geographical challenge concerning the organisation and distribution of space has drawn little attention from geographical researchers comparative to its scale (Brickell et al., 2017: 5). A renewed set of literatures are answering this neglect through research into phenomena such as the housing economies and politics that drive eviction and social movements against eviction. This work not only investigates contemporary surges, but also the deep historical forms of eviction that permeate and sustain structures of power.

As observers, we have an adequate account of the combination of economic and social

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factors that cause eviction. There is also a growing narrative of the outputs; mass displacement, homelessness, trauma, ill health and even death. While a recent systematic review of legal literature on eviction has noted the lack of strict 'silos' (Vols et al., 2019), in geographical literatures certain fields of emphasis persist. Work focuses on the economic causes of eviction, the role of eviction in shaping citizenship and subjectivity, and the impacts of eviction on the cultural meaning of home. For shorthand purposes we may call these the 'economic', 'political', and 'cultural' registers of the critique of eviction. Economic critiques point to the structural role of eviction in sustaining capitalist regimes of accumulation. These critiques interplay with a political critique that emphasises the way eviction works to structure rights and political agency. Finally, in order to understand the operation of this policing, the cultural impact of eviction has been emphasised. This impact is most clearly expressed in the meaning and loss of the home. New research reveals the limits of these critiques by using a perspective that makes visible the ways the eviction *process* itself is a means for producing inequities – inequities which are so often seen as mere inputs and outputs. In simple terms we have excellent accounts explaining *why* evictions happen and what their impact is but less about the processes and materials that constitute and complicate eviction.

It is an epistemological shift taking place on to *how* evictions happen, and its implications, which this paper seeks to describe for the first time. Building on a recent coinage used to describe legal processes in the United States (Garboden and Rosen, 2019), I name this a shift from explaining 'eviction' to researching 'evicting'. This conceptualisation is underpinned by drawing from studies which build on affective geographies and participatory research methodologies to explore the ways eviction is lived in the 'now', as a duration of time. It aims to take account of the material assemblages which operate at a global scale to manage homes and land and which sustain evicting practices. And finally it points to the developing forms of enforcement and policing which do the work of evicting as a crucial site of intervention. I conclude by exploring the ethical and practical implications of such a shift.

It is necessary to give some meaning to the term 'eviction' as I use it here. Definitions used by NGOs and international bodies have acted as touchstones for work that focuses on eviction. Brickell, Vasudevan and Fernández Arrigoitia (2017: 1) start from Amnesty's definition of 'forced eviction' as 'when people are forced out of their homes and off their land against their will, with little notice or none at all, often with the threat or use of violence', while UN-HABITAT (2014) rely on the definition of 'permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection'. These definitions situate eviction as a clear relationship to 'land' and 'home' and their culturally specific formations. There is also the legitimating relationship between law and violence – implicitly or explicitly, eviction is almost always 'forced'. In practice 'eviction' has proven to be a complicated category that evades simple definitions. As Hartman and Robinson (2003) encountered in their study of what they ended up framing as 'involuntary moves' in the United States, there is no easy zone of definition which captures all permutations of eviction. More recently some authors have implied a narrower focus through a reworking of categories of 'domicide' (Nowicki, 2014) or a broader framework of 'expulsion' (Sassen, 2014), or an 'expanded meaning' of dispossession occurring through intersections of class and race (Roy, 2017: A1–A2). However, subsuming eviction into broader categories also risks subsuming specific actions, operations, and functions that make eviction important to research.

Yet a 'sufficient' definition of eviction presents a potentially overwhelming philosophical, ethical and research challenge.

To account for this I have adopted a provisional definition that retains the core concept of unwilling movement from land and homes. While I remain critical of many of the aspects of this definition, not least the sticky ontological category of 'will' (Ahmed, 2014), this rubric is the one under which studies of eviction have been gathered over the last few decades. It should be clear that this is not a sleight of hand: the material presented here is organised in order to explore emergent trends which then reveal the limitations of this definition. As I describe below, eviction acts through different temporal and durational forms, creating complex affects including forms of inertia, dejection, and defeat. Established critiques have focused on eviction as a function or output of broader political, economic, and cultural processes. Emergent work on eviction emphasises that the moment of being physically removed is just one in a long set of processes that constitute eviction, researching how eviction produces particular durations of being or ways of life for those caught up in its processes. The multiple effects of eviction remind us that spatial processes are also complex systems that resist generalisation (Simone, 2014: 2). By moving towards an understanding of forms of 'evicting', rather than causes of eviction, and researching material practices and technologies, rather than events, we might start to find a more useful conceptual toolbox.

II The economic critique of eviction

The most voluminous body of work on eviction is situated within research on broader housing and land economies. This research explains the structural necessity of displacement to capitalist economies through systems of dispossession and displacement. Works of political economy after Marx have often emphasised the role of foundational acts of displacement in producing capitalist production, and ongoing systems of accumulation by dispossession. Following this, studies of land and housing's transformation into a commodity emphasises particular strategies of capital accumulation. These strategies produce variegated and graduated systems of dispossession that sustain systems of economic production.

Pivotal to the political economists' claims are the concepts of primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession. Primitive accumulation is often taken to refer to forms of enclosure and eviction that produce a landless proletariat, a social class of people who have no property of substance and whose labour is the only thing they have to sell (Harvey, 2009: 149). Expropriation and eviction is treated here as the foundational act, not the result, of the capitalist system and the alienation of the worker from their labour (Marx, 1976 [1867]: 775). Land grabs and forms of agrarian displacement are 'classical' features of primitive accumulation (Adnan, 2013; Hall, 2013), and as such it tends to be used to explain societies or systems of production undergoing transitions from agricultural to industrial economies. However, primitive accumulation is already a broad concept, which has been understood by historians to also incorporate systems of gendered violence (Mies, 1986: 145; Federici, 2004: 14–15) and extractive economies that channel wealth from the (post) imperial periphery to its core (Amin, 1974: 3). This theory places eviction at the foundations of capitalism, making it an essential feature of capitalist practice. Accumulation is then understood in this analysis to perpetuate a secondary process of 'accumulation by dispossession' which recurs throughout the capitalist cycle (Harvey, 2004), rather than at the point of inception. It is this second process that appears in most contemporary economic geographical accounts of eviction.

Once land is circulating within the economy, evictions are central to the processes of housing commodification. Peter Marcuse and David Madden (2016) identify commodification with practices of financialisation, globalisation, and deregulation, and the cycles of gentrification, speculation and neglect they stimulate. These phenomena occur in a panoply of permutations whose cataloguing is beyond the scope of my argument. However, we can turn to a few of the most contentious 'economic' causes of eviction – financialisation, gentrification, and state deregulation – as exemplars of the impact of commodification on eviction.

Financialisation is a term used to understand the linkage of real estate, land, and homes to local and global financial processes and mechanisms to produce new revenue streams. Contemporary financialisation research focuses on a wide range of impacts on housing markets as connected interlocking features (Aalbers, 2016; Rogers, 2017; Rolnik, 2019). This can happen through a variety of mechanisms, and particular attention has been brought to where investment switches from 'primary' circuits of production where profits are declining to 'secondary' circuits such as real estate (King, 1989). In many contexts, this is often facilitated by a deregulation of borrowing by the state, allowing the use of housing as a source of private equity where borrowers use homes to generate cash streams (Ferguson, 2008, in Rogers, 2017). While much of the impact of financialising housing on eviction can be observed through the way in which it drives fluctuating property values and rents (Fields and Uffer, 2016), and cycles of disinvestment and neglect, financialisation also appears as an ongoing form of enclosure, and an incomplete project subject to forms of fragmentation responding to forms of resistance (Langley, 2008; Fields, 2017a). We have to treat financialisation as an open-ended process which can throw up new forms or mobilisations of land and housing in its service.

One such mobilisation manifests through gentrification, and there has been a glut of literature on the replacement of lower income residents by higher income groups. Gentrification has generated substantial and fierce debate as to the extent to which it directly contributes to displacement in each context (Slater, 2006; Lees et al., 2016: 217). Central to this debate is the role of emerging 'rent gaps' which happen when 'the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use' grows, encouraging cycles of decline and neglect in some areas, and urban renewal displacement of lower-income tenants in others (Smith, 1996: 65). This process has impacts on eviction rates and intensities as the increase in rent that gentrification often produces makes eviction more likely for the poorer tenants and incentivises local government to evict squatters or social tenants. However, the predominance of gentrification in narratives of urban displacement can sometimes make gentrification research appear as one with eviction research, even though it is only one reason displacement occurs.

Systems of state deregulation and re-regulation facilitate commodification. The state at both a national and local level can roll back, deregulate, re-regulate, or legislate against protections for tenants and homeowners in order to encourage investment. One outcome has been further deregulation of mortgage markets, such as in the US, where mortgages lent to people with poor credit ratings are widely attributed with triggering the 2008 financial crisis and causing a wave of repossessions (Aalbers, 2008), and in Spain, where 250,000 evictions are estimated to have happened since 2008 as unemployment rose and quick mortgages that were sold to middle-class and low-income families became unsustainable (García-Lamarca and Kaika, 2016). These effects are not limited to homeowners, but also affect tenants. Desiree Fields (2017a) has shown how equity firms

acting as landlords refuse to invest in properties, as well as cycles of eviction as rented buildings are foreclosed on. State re-regulation of the economy also facilitates conditions in which evictions proliferate.

Another form of re-regulation is the roll-back of social housing programs and welfare provision. In the UK social housing construction has seen a net decline since 1978, following a shift from a subsidy for the supply of homes to the state subsidy of the demand for homes (Minton, 2017: 28–9), which has combined with gentrification and attempts to 'decant' social tenants by local government looking to work with property developers (Lees and Ferreri, 2016). The introduction in 2013 of a reduction in housing benefits for those with spare rooms led to 28 per cent of tenants falling into arrears for the first time ever (Nowicki, 2017: 134). Tenant evictions doubled to 40,000 in England and Wales between 2009 and 2015, and the majority of these have been in the social sector, while mortgage evictions have been meliorated (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015). These practices have been called 'a return to class war conservatism' (Hodkinson and Robbins, 2013), and connect to small-state ideologies that define 'austerity urbanism' and broader neoliberal economic doctrines (Peck, 2012). They may also represent 'the reversion to the private domain of common property rights won through past class struggles' which is considered a hallmark of accumulation by dispossession in the 21st century by David Harvey (2004: 75).

However, there are issues raised with the Eurocentric and contested nature of the concept of accumulation by dispossession (Doshi, 2013; Shin, 2016). Eviction and dispossession, as outlined above, are related but distinct processes. Leitner and Sheppard (2018) have argued that a classical 'accumulation by dispossession' narrative is inadequate for understanding evictions in context. Through an analysis of communal ownership systems in kampungs in Jakarta, they argue that there are variegated orders of displacement that exceed the more reductive forms of accumulation by dispossession. A shift from the seizure and privatisation of land by the state under the Suharto regime to a negotiated process under successive government has differentiated the scales at which kampung residents can or cannot claim traditional lands and sell them. Residents often use their wealth gained in quasi-capitalist and informal forms of economy to purchase land, producing both immediate violent evictions and soft collaborations in commodification (Leitner and Sheppard, 2018: 451). Historians mentioned above have already shown that accumulation by dispossession is a much broader process than geographers like Harvey present. The critique of geographical interpretations of the concept raises the importance of a differentiation between the ways forms of dispossession manifest themselves, from their structural and historical role in the development of capitalism. Dispossession is not always eviction, but eviction remains a structuring force within the process of constructing (dis)possession. This work highlights that studying the means, rather than the ends, of displacement can reveal unforeseen dynamics of capitalist accumulation.

Despite these critiques, the argument that displacement is a structural necessity of capitalism remains well-evidenced. Economic explanations of eviction that situate it within capitalist economies can therefore provide a useful challenge of public discourses that seek to blame the evicted for their own condition, revealing the underlying motivations behind the creation of categories of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor (Nowicki, 2017: 136). However, by their nature, economic theories have frequently passed swiftly over a more specific level of analysis of the processes by which accumulation is enacted. Invariably a key question here hangs around the role of the state, so it is necessary to turn to work on evicting that foregrounds the political.

III Political critiques of eviction

Political critiques emphasise the role of eviction in constituting the state, citizenship, and political subjectivity via property and land claims. While for authors like Engels the state was the manifestation of the 'collective capitalist' (1953: 67–8), these studies emphasise the way eviction acts as a tool of governance that reciprocates political dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. This work tends to focus on the political function of private property, and the way a specific set of property relations, working through eviction, shapes categories of citizenship through which the local and national state is able to constitute itself, producing a differentiation of political subjects through displacement. However, as a result, the process of eviction has often been passed swiftly over in work that articulates this function in favour of a broader narrative about the political outcomes of eviction.

The notion that force defends property and the social contract is central to European political philosophy: 'Covenants, without the sword', as Hobbes (1991: 117) wrote, 'are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all'. European political thought places violence at the foundation of law and property, which led classical European critics of property in the anarchist and Marxist movements to understand property's social function in largely coercive terms (Blomley, 2005). As Nicholas Blomley (2004: xvii) has shown in work on eviction and housing struggles in Vancouver, property is thoroughly political and social, and European property regimes elide and suppress other forms of property claims, such as those made by First Nations groups (Blomley, 2004: 154). This position produces a supportive challenge to some of the presumptions of left-wing critiques regarding property, for instance, some anarchists who talk of property only as violent dominance (Springer, 2013a, 2013b). More significantly, it articulates a critique of essentialist accounts of property as universal and pre-Columbian, such as that provided by the neoconservative Richard Pipes (2007: 2–3, 94). In Blomley's narrative 'property' is the hegemonic form of a specific iteration of multiple social practices of spatial claiming. We may then argue that property struggles form part of the way subaltern and disempowered groups articulate demands.

This is clearest where housing struggles are struggles for racial justice (Roy, 2003; Blomley, 2004; Holston, 2008; Makhulu, 2015), and where eviction becomes part of how racial difference is enacted. In work on the Chicago housing crisis, Ananya Roy (2017) has positioned evictions at the core of racialised regimes of dispossession in relation to personhood, connecting the politics of eviction to historically deep social structures of racialised power. In a study of slum clearances in Mumbai, Sapna Doshi (2013) links race and class to the problematic of accumulation by dispossession by observing how eviction facilitates 'accumulation by differentiated displacement', producing different categorisations of urban citizenry. Doshi builds on what Aihwa Ong (2006) terms the neoliberal system of 'graduated citizenship' where citizenship is processed and hierarchically organised through multiple systems of power and identity. This variation produces challenges: for instance accounts of gentrification erase the variegated racial politics of displacement in the San Francisco Bay Area (McElroy and Werth, 2019). Where eviction plays a role in (re)producing 'abject' subjects, excluded and vilified citizens, marginal or liminal collectives and categories (Tyler, 2013: 46), it is necessary to consider how eviction and difference are enacted together through their practice.

Here we can start to see how eviction and 'domicide' are implicated with racialised regimes of sovereignty. Eviction sustains a border politics, demonstrated clearly in the targeting of Bangladeshi immigrants in slum-

clearance schemes in Delhi (Ramachandra, 2002), or claims on indigenous land in Canada, where the state practised forms of accumulation by dispossession through the construction of specific legalities (Miller, 1991; Blomley, 2004: 107). Well-documented demolitions of Palestinian homes by both British counterinsurgency operations in the mandate period, and the Israeli Defence Force in the present, are often pointed to as the manifestation of (neo)colonial power through eviction (Hanafi, 2009; Khalili, 2010). These acts reveal the connection between the home and the state in explicit terms. Eviction has a biopolitical action that produces and constructs the state through differentiated modes of racialised citizenry.

Eviction resistance is also a point at which counter-hegemonic concepts of property take root. Normative models of property ownership are perpetually challenged and contested by those excluded from them: James Holston (2008: 18) argues that movements by landless people and squatters in Brazil to formalise property regimes both reinforce and subvert hegemonic functions of citizenship, and he cites eviction resistance as a means by which such rights are asserted (Holston, 2009). Anne-Maria Makhulu (2015: 161) shares a similar critique in her work on how struggles of squatters in Cape Town to protect their home form part of a racialised 'politics of presence' working through the 'encroachment of the everyday'. In an extensive review of the literature on squatting, Alex Vasudevan (2015) points to the potential of forms of informal settlement for creating spaces of radical political alterity. Eviction presupposes the closure of one set of possibilities in favour of another. When thinking about eviction in these narratives, we are certainly dealing with a political tool that imposes over or excludes alternative articulations of property and politics.

The political critiques of eviction outlined above emphasise the role of eviction in governing citizenship and dynamics of political exclusion and inclusion. Their attention lies in how the micro-political development of eviction eventually comes to rest in the macro-political; they recognise the need for research on the methods by which evictions carve out political 'insides' and 'outsides' and reproduce and embody social classifications, allegiances, and hierarchies. Yet they do so without engaging fully in the inherently political practices at work in enacting evicting, and they pass a little too swiftly through the cultures and everyday politics involved in living through eviction. To fill this space, we may shift to examine a third tendency in research that pauses to pay attention to the cultural politics of eviction and explores the subjective and embodied experiences of displacement.

IV Cultural critiques of eviction

Cultural critiques of eviction have emerged out of the effect eviction has on the social meaning of space, and in particular, the home. Literatures that have focused around the key concepts of 'domicide' and 'home unmaking' have emphasised the forces which 'end' the home. These literatures explore the meaning of home and situate eviction as part of a wider set of destructive practices reshaping this meaning. The most notable among these is Porteous and Smith's (2001: ix) study of domicide: '[T]he act of destroying people's homes and/or expelling them from their homeland'. This seeks to resonate with others geographical neologisms like 'ecocide' or 'urbicide' in echoing terms for killing. Porteous and Smith refer to both 'extreme' and 'everyday' domicide. 'Extreme domicide' refers to planned operations of major destruction that occur in times of conflict enacted by senior political leaders, military officials or colonial bureaucrats (Porteous and Smith, 2001: 105) 'Everyday domicide' concerns projects which have the consent of the majority of the population (p. 107) and facilitate forms of economic activity, growth, and development

(p. 115), such as infrastructural projects (pp. 123–7). 'Domicide' is therefore a broader term than 'eviction' but also one that centres the destruction of domestic spaces, locating eviction away from other kinds of conflicts over space, such as political protests.

Domicide is therefore depicted as a particular kind of destructive indifference to the inherent value of the home (Porteous and Smith, 2001: 63). The meaning of 'home' in this critique is fixed and morally affirmative, a view which is also central to other studies which can erase forms of difference in the meaning of home (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 11). Part of the justification for this view may be that losing the home is often narrated as a traumatic or distressing experience. Using interviews with single homeless people in the UK, Crane and Warnes (2000) show how eviction from the home is both produced by and re-enforces forms of physical and mental health. In a critique of resettlement programs promoted by the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia (2017: 92) argues that even where alternative accommodations required under international human rights frameworks are available, eviction and displacement retain a profoundly disruptive effect upon settlement and the creation of a new home. Mindy Fullilove (2016) has described the broader damaging emotional processes of urban displacement through her concept of 'root shock', the psychologically traumatic loss of the collective forms of life that forge attachment to places. While the 'meaning of home' is invariably varied and specific, it is clear that the concept of domicide aims to reflect the traumas and aftereffects of eviction and displacement.

However, Melanie Nowicki (2014: 789) cautions that while domicide is often treated as a temporally fixed concept, in practice it should 'not necessarily imply that the destruction of home is linear and finite, that new homespaces cannot be forged from the old'. It is in response to this need to undo linear narratives of the destruction of the home that Baxter and Brickell (2014: 134) talk about 'home unmaking', a process which is part of the 'life course' of all homes. We can see eviction as one particular possibility through which homes are unmade, and a means through which practices of home making and unmaking are governed. Combining this perspective with political critiques of eviction outlined above highlights an understanding of the home as a 'porous' site that is neither fully public nor fully private, and one that is subject to different racialised, gendered, and heteronormative meanings and emotional attachments (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 27). In studies of the cultural impact of eviction such as *Domicide*, the home exerts a centripetal pull on critiques that reduces the multiplicity of phenomena around eviction. Other aspects of eviction get sucked into a narrative of loss and mourning. These studies compress the time of eviction into the event of eviction.

To achieve such compressions the division of labour both in the home and its defence is occulted, despite the work of others to bring the division to the fore. In resonance with authors like Makhulu, Ayona Datta (2012: 150) has noted how domesticity and notions of family among squatters in Delhi were expanded in order to resist forms of communal and sectarian violence: 'domesticity became central to the way that squatters constructed a gendered urban citizenship and belonging through conviviality. The home and patriarchal family thus also became ways to conceive of alternative forms of home and legitimacy in the city'. Resistance to eviction is subject to a gendered division of labour, and often falls to women's groups to organise and publicise (e.g. Brickell, 2014; Watt, 2016). However, this work also resists normative gendered relationships. In several European cities, marginal forms of housing such as squatted spaces can provide points of refuge for queer people excluded by domestic family relations, and as such their defence is also a crucial part of articulating new lines of desire away from heteronormative domesticities

(Brophy, 2007; Eleftheriadis, 2015). There is an ongoing gendered remaking and unmaking of the home present in the work of eviction resistances. Given this, feminist geographers are among those who have produced the boldest calls for understanding eviction (and more specifically domicide) as an 'embodied, grounded, phenomenon' (Brickell, 2014: 1257) that needs to be treated as embedded within a 'complex set of logics and materialities' (Brickell et al., 2017: 4).

'Eviction' is understood to be active in enforcing the economic, creating and legitimating the state, and policing the meaning of home itself. These three elements concern the inputs, outputs, and impacts of 'eviction'. In each case however, the need for a shifted emphasis towards an understanding of 'evicting' is recognised but not yet enacted. Critiquing eviction may act as a centralising epistemological force, diminishing the view of 'eviction' towards being a function, tool, or output of systemic social inequalities. However, in each case, within these critiques emerges a sense in which studying the time, technologies, and technical practice of eviction reveals forms of power, resistance, and complicity. In order to make sense of this we need to look at the qualitative differences emerging in other research, which have sought to remake the ways we can understand eviction as 'evicting'.

V Evicting time

Underpinning this change is an epistemic shift in the way the time of eviction is understood, lived, and experienced. An ethnographic mode of research which has proved especially popular in the United States has produced a wealth of evidence about the ways eviction is experienced through time. Matthew Desmond's (2016) detailed study is possibly the most widely known of these. Desmond combines ethnography with extensive quantitative data and interview material to produce a detailed narrative of eviction in Milwaukee, and his work included following landlords and tenants through the eviction process. He includes a brief and detailed description of the eviction removals process and the actions of an eviction team (2016: 111–25). Though Desmond retains an essentialist understanding of home (2016: 293), he nevertheless focuses on the way the experience of being evicted compounds poverty, arguing that 'if housing instability leads to employment instability, it is because the stress and consuming nature of being forced from your home wreak havoc on people's work performance' (2016: 296). A similar critique is made by Gretchen Purser (2014) in a study of day labourers working in eviction crews in Baltimore. Working as part of the team in dangerous conditions clearing homes of possessions, Purser found that many of the people working these precarious shifts had also experienced evictions as a result of foreclosure and rent arrears, feeding a vicious circle in which eviction facilitates eviction. While there remains a risk that this focus skews towards a somewhat contingent, rather than structural, account of eviction, both studies illustrate a vital understanding: eviction creates a temporality that is not reducible to an event, a 'day of eviction'. In recent qualitative work on repeat filings in the USA which revealed the scale of eviction proceedings which begin with no intention to remove the tenant, Garboden and Rosen (2019) have argued that eviction can be used as an existential threat to discipline tenants and extract rent, without ever being fully acted upon. For Garboden and Rosen eviction can be better understood as *evicting*. I borrow this apt terminology to describe the epistemic shift more broadly at work in research. While in their work this refers to (a repeated leveraging of) the legal process, I refer to something far more substantial: moving away from the perception of eviction as a discrete event or output that lies at the end of a procedure, towards one grounded

in how eviction compresses, stretches, appropriates, and produces time

For this reason, evicting must be thought of as an affective relation between space and time. Here I follow Felix Guattari (1996: 159), who describes affect as 'a process of existential appropriation through the continual creation of heterogeneous durations of being'. Evicting is not just the appropriation of space but also the appropriation of time. Recent work building on cultural geographies of affect has explored this aspect of evicting. Michele Lancione (2017) expands on the affective relation of eviction and resistance in his work, following on from Guattari and geographies of affect such as the work of Ben Anderson and Thrift and Amin (Lancione, 2017: 1017). This approach emphasises a relationship between the potential capacities of bodies to act upon each other to affect and be affected. The empirical implications of this work reveal the ways in which eviction resistance can contest capacities, create new kinds of bodies, and produce multiple temporalities. In his work as both an activist and a researcher with a group of Roma evictees challenging their displacement from a housing unit in Bucharest through a prolonged protest encampment, Lancione observes how the state produces forms of affective 'inertia' which mitigate the power of resistance through the exhausting processes of repeated procedure and bureaucracy. A similar narrative is also found in Schoenberger and Beban's (2018) account of land grabs in Cambodia as 'affective grabs' which mobilise fears and anxieties in the process of enclosure. Cambodian land clearances occur most in rural areas, and often involve military personnel who came to power under the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime. The bodily and sensory experience of land grabs is combined with the actions of state officials to produce fear and anxiety through misinformation, rumours, and public statements which are also grounded in a deep historical awareness and collective fear of mass murder and incarceration (Schoenberger and Beban, 2018: 1343). These actions extend the space and time of the land grab, appropriating collective feelings and restructuring civil society (p. 1350). Both studies move past the exploration of meanings of loss to identify how affects govern and manage the resistant subject.

By emphasising the non-linearity and affective power of eviction, studies of evicting build on the account of home unmaking from the cultural critics of eviction. They also move beyond simply documenting the emotional and cultural effects of losing the home, to study how feelings and time are mobilised together. Here we start to see problems emerging for a definition of eviction grounded in 'involuntary movement'. If evicting is itself the process of appropriating time, and bending the will through affecting practices such as those described above, when and how can we identify what is unwilling movement? Researching eviction as a durational process reveals the production or negations of willingness that govern evicting.

VI Evicting technologies

If evicting is a process of affective governance, then we must consider the wider technologies that underpin, govern, and shape it. Tracing the affective genealogies that fuel evicting enables us to see how apparently inert elements, such as legal instruments, software management, and forms of design, define the ways evicting happens. This is where recent work on the interaction of real estate economy with assemblage theory has made headway. Dallas Rogers' (2017) work on the role of geopolitical infrastructures of real estate emphasises that such technologies are not inert and neutral but part of a process of statecraft. Building on a combination of Deleuze and Guattari and Foucault's ontologies of power technology and control, Rogers (2017: 17–18) identifies three key 'conceptual registers' – organising technics, mediating technologies and discursive codes – and two 'meta-concepts' of semblance and assemblage.

These conceptual frameworks act fairly loosely, which flow into one another; organising technics are themselves assemblages of both technical materialities and mediating technologies. Mediating technologies can be almost anything, and are better defined by their capacities to act as mediators, while codes translate between multiple discursive spheres in law, numerical and electronic data. This flow is structured around semblances, which appear as 'little absolutes' (such as foreign investment data) that reveal larger assemblages of real estate while hiding them in other ways (Rogers, 2017: 18–35).

This slightly soupy set of concepts becomes clearer through looking at a specific semblance; the integration of the physical force of eviction within the digital and automated management of housing. 'In overlooking digital technologies', Fields (2019: 2) argues, scholars 'miss an avenue of analysis vital to grasping how financialization is practically realized'. Rogers (2017: 135–7) talks of a 'global real estate cyborg', coordinating different real estate markets across borders through mediating technologies like *juwai,* a website that facilitates transnational property speculation for Chinese investors. There exist many companies that provide tenant and mortgage management software packages which facilitate forms of participatory reward and automatic penalty for late payment, meaning 'eviction can even be outsourced through software-as-service already compatible with leading property management platforms' (Fields, 2017b). Fields' (2019) work on landlord automation reveals the extent and limitations of these platforms that allow landlords to do a number of tasks as diverse as manage maintenance and track rent arrears. This allows tenants to be tracked across platforms in an 'information dragnet' that means that histories of bad credit or repossession orders follow tenants and govern their relationship to future housing suppliers. There are clear connections to other forms of financial recovery and their deep histories and forms of scheduled threat escalation such as debt collection (Deville, 2015). Considering evicting within a cyborg assemblage of real estate management allows the lineages of a single eviction to be traced across multiple platforms.

Research on evicting draws attention to practices the design critic Keller Easterling (2014) has recently identified as 'extrastatecraft' – governance through seemingly 'innocent' and inert infrastructural tools and technologies. Evicting technologies are potentially infinite, from locksmithing to legal files, and their importance emerges through the analysis of their capacities in the process of eviction itself. There is a flow of knowledge, as digital technology informs material enforcement and assists in the timing of action. Complex assemblages can lead to 'amazingly simple brutalities' of eviction (Rogers, 2017: 161). One option is to trace the multiple capillaries, flows and molecular political interactions that contribute in form and content to the experiences of eviction described in the work above. However, we need to maintain sight of the coercive implications, as knowledge can still only become power if it is able to enact its prescriptions onto the body (Federici, 2002).

VII Evicting by force

In order to enact eviction, it is necessary to use force. Although the anthropologist Alan Smart (2002) noted over a decade ago in work on the policing of Hong Kong squatters that research into eviction enforcement is limited, until recently few studies of peacetime eviction enforcement have been conducted. Those we do have demonstrate the diversity, but also the potential connectivity, of such practices. By 'eviction enforcement' I initially refer quite simply to those agencies, be they state bureaucrats, police, private security, or combined quasi-legitimated institutions, who are tasked with the physical removal of residents from their homes and land. Despite many years of

ongoing work on police and police power, eviction enforcement remains under-researched.

Eviction agencies are often simply forms of street-level bureaucracy, empowered with the use of legal force. There is therefore an 'everyday' materiality to eviction enforcement. An examination of the working lives of county court bailiffs who are responsible for enforcing evictions under English law reveals three key processes which shape eviction enforcement: the routine and rhythms of eviction work, the political technologies of eviction that combine material and emotional coercion, and the role of eviction resistance at both a large and small scale in enacting and reshaping them (Baker, 2017: 162). As a localised case study of an eviction resistance in London reveals, when encounters between these professionals and organised forms of eviction resistance take place, the process of negotiation between bailiff and eviction resister reveals clashing moral frameworks around the meaning of home (Wilde, 2017). Comparable agencies for the enforcement of legal documents and acts of repossession are found across Europe in the Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany (Stenberg et al., 2011). These institutions bridge the deep histories of debt recovery and the 'newer' forms of rent recovery, and research on them shows eviction resistance 'on the doorstep' also redefines eviction itself.

Eviction enforcement acts at multiple scales and across varied contexts, often emerging out of local conditions in a complex relationship with national government agendas. The creation of the South African Anti-Land Invasion Units emerged out of a long history of colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid policing involving the violent prosecution of evictions against black and coloured squatters in South Africa, linked to already established patterns of urban pacification elsewhere (McMichael, 2015: 1268; Levenson, 2017; Wicks, 2017). Clearances for the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010 explicitly drew on the language of military strategy, as eviction crews called *junshi* (military strategists) and the negotiators responsible for dealing with reticent evictees, the *jiandaoban* (sharp knife squad), removed residents from the Expo Area. Yunpen Zhang (2017: 100–1) has articulated the genealogical relationship of western sovereign categories to Chinese Communist Party thought in the creation of these organisations, a framework combining official histories of guerrilla warfare and Schmittian identifications of friends/enemies underlying the 'exceptional' logic of the displacement program. Armed police sheriffs are the primary enforcer of evictions in many US states, with shared histories of white supremacy between underlying eviction and policing patterns (Desmond, 2016; Roy, 2017), and the large-scale deployment of riot police on traveller groups in the UK shows how patterns of racialisation and marginality interact with the degree and scale of violence enacted on evictees (Tyler, 2013: 131). We can hypothesise that the dynamics of 'graduated' displacement are therefore also enacted and produced in the micro-political contestations and intensities of enforcement.

However, eviction enforcement agencies have also not escaped the encroachment of, or hybridisation with, the private sector. Many state eviction agencies are complemented by an ongoing market in private enforcement. Paton and Cooper (2016) have noted the growth of an 'eviction industry' around English High Court enforcement, a second layer of the eviction enforcement profession which consists of private agencies which market their services as eviction specialists. Some individuals they employ have career trajectories across international security, and one 'evictions specialist' has a career which includes time spent as a soldier and private security in Iraq, and in maritime security (Carter, 2013) practices which exist at what has been called the 'seam' of civilian and military life (Cowen, 2014: 82). There are varying degrees of formality and informality in the use of groups in the private sector, from licensed

individuals, to 'thugs-for-hire', in the words of Lynette Ong (2018), who has recently started to explore the role of gangs and private subcontractors in evictions in China. Private eviction companies have both domestic and international markets that demand further exploration, though in each case there is a necessity to acknowledge a 'place' to these institutions that displace.

We still understand very little about the links between local enacted and codified practices of enforcement and larger systems of state and transnational government. Outside of a few journalistic reports and official documents that confirm the existence of formal networks (Vázquez Díaz, 2007; CEPOL, 2016), much work is to be done on how eviction practices have been developed and 'globalised', alongside practices such as zero-tolerance and 'broken windows' policing initiatives exported by the USA (e.g. Camp and Heatherton, 2016a). Key studies of urban policy and policing in the Global North that discussed exclusion in urban development in the last two decades, such as Don Mitchell (1998) and Beckett and Herbert (2009) on homelessness, Mitchell (2003) on public space, Wacquant (2008) on marginality, and Mustafa Dikeç (2011) on urban policy, all point to these processes at work in legalities of banishment, stigmatisation, and urban partition. Yet curiously they did not discuss the recognised practices of eviction which also produce social margins and exclusion in their contexts (Purser, 2014: 3). We might therefore entertain the possibility of a complex 'demonology' of private and state-led eviction agencies and practices, documenting their local specificities, and their particular caprices in given moments. However, the more important task is identifying the causes for specialisation in particular patterns of eviction enforcement, and how agencies, but also tactics, are developed, spread, and shared, and how they interact with other technologies of eviction and mechanisms of policing and disciplinary control.

VIII Research after eviction

Eviction appears as a multiplicity of different alignments of law, space, home, and force across multiple contexts. While the economic, political, and cultural registers of research which this paper started by outlining remain crucial to understanding eviction, the specific cases they draw us into through fine analysis of evictions can hide the sustaining methods at work. New developments in eviction research articulate that we must also start to think about 'evicting': the practices that create eviction and the lives and times produced by them. Evicting is an ongoing practice rather than a distinct 'output' of social relations. Research on evicting challenges normative definitions of eviction as the product of a relation of law, force, home, and land – instead it considers evicting as the non-linear, reciprocal production and management of this relation. Such research reveals a site and time of possibilities for repression and resistance, technological experimentation, cultural destruction and social (re)production. It demonstrates that evicting is an essential point of intervention for research committed to a form of life without eviction.

These new developments raise some refreshed practical challenges for geographers. Foremost among these is the need to redefine or at least reconsider fully what we mean by 'evicting'. Rogers' (2017) outline of the semblance and assemblage of real estate provides one potential basis for beginning a proper analysis of the global ways eviction is enacted and materially created. We might, however, note some caution at the disturbingly quick passage in his work past enforcement to eviction. Emergent studies show a need to think about evicting as a practice which is continually sustained by linked materials, people, and technologies across the multiple axes described above. This would need to recognise the existence of explicit and conscious global policing institutions and materials, which may help us consider

eviction as a pattern of global police power. This kind of power has been indicated by authors like Roy (2017), and researching it might build on work on policing (Neocleous, 2000; Camp and Heatherton, 2016a; Vitale, 2017). Meanwhile, studies of distributed material phenomena, such as logistical literatures (e.g. Cowen, 2014), show us how to analyse evicting within larger systemic movements such as global property markets and legal regimes. The contribution of established conceptual frameworks from other fields is a topic for future work, but we should explore the possibility of eviction as an infrastructure, strategy, tactic, technology, or time, with an appropriate epistemic flexibility.

Such an approach requires a methodological and conceptual persistence with evicting as it unfolds in what Lauren Berlant (2008: 5) terms the 'stretched out now' of traumas, which merge an intensified present with the recent past and future. This entails research methods which involve continuities of history and space, ongoing forms of observation, and writing methods which describe this 'now'. This raises ethical challenges, most apparent in ethnographic studies such as Desmond's (2016) work, where co-habitation with people undergoing eviction was a central methodology, or Purser (2014: 5), who 'was dispatched to carry out 16 separate evictions in three different, privately owned, low-income residential apartment complexes' in impoverished African-American neighbourhoods. While this provides 'deep' immersion and detailed description, there are obvious questions here about the extent to which a researcher, in possession of a degree of racial and economic power, is actively reproducing harmful social phenomena when producing real-time accounts of evictions in process. Alternatively, Schoenberger and Beban (2018) have suggested the use of 'periscoping' methodologies that allow researchers to use multiple contextual sets of data which can then be used to reconstruct displacements. While this method was developed to allow access to forms of displacement the local and national state wishes to conceal, it may help create observation and research which lessen the footprint of researchers who are trying to study evictions across multiple contexts. However, we should be aware that data sets also have sources which require further scrutiny; researchers from San Francisco's Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP) criticised Desmond for using data purchased in bulk from private landlord companies (Aiello et al., 2018). The AEMP's own explorations in 'countermapping' offer an alternative example of research which reflects variation through interwoven methodologies and social practices, aiming to produce an alternative cartography of power and place that dissects the institutions that produce displacement (Maharawal and McElroy, 2018). Studying evicting also means being drawn into the making and unmaking of evictions.

For this reason the problem of complicity remains at the forefront of the most contentious debates in eviction research today. Researchers should be wary of producing knowledge that would only strengthen evicting at the expense of the evicted, or working towards lesser evils that can facilitate humanitarian violence (Weizman, 2011). We should also recognise the challenge from the black abolitionist tradition, which reminds us that the acceptance and melioration of coercive institutions in the present can become the deferral of justice in the future (see for instance Moran et al., 2017; Espada in Camp and Heatherton, 2016b). While we should be cautious when transposing theory emerging from black liberation movements across the proliferation of urban life (Simone, 2018), this call to remake the present is provocative. Work on evicting emphasises that eviction is constant work, which is contingent, non-linear, ongoing, and only one possibility of many. This should be enough for us to recognise that research after 'eviction' must anchor itself

in the existential possibility of a world after evicting.

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