

Gentrification and The Right to the City

Day 1 – October 23, 2025 (Thursday)

9:00–9:10 Opening Remarks - Adam Dyrda (10 minutes)

Session 1: Philosophical Foundations

9:10–9:45

Nathanaël Colin-Jaeger (ESPOL, Catholic University of Lille)

Place-Based Rights and the Moral Topography of Gentrification

9:45–10:20

Jason Flato (Georgia State University-Perimeter College)

Metaphilosophy: Social Domination and the Right to Housing

10:20–10:55

Bartosz Biskup (European University Institute)

The (Radical) Idea of the Right to Housing

10:55–11:40 Coffee Break (45 minutes)

Session 2: Case Studies

11:40–12:15

Olena Bila (Jagiellonian University) & **Jagoda Puchała** (Jagiellonian University)

Towards an Organic Right to the City: Reconsidering Urban Development in Poland

12:15–12:50

Jacobo Centanaro (Université de Tours / Université Gustave Eiffel)

Observing Social and Spatial Inequalities on Film: A Case Study of the Transformation of Two Major Colombian Cities

12:50–14:50 Lunch Break (2 hours)

Session 3: Alternative Urban Models

14:50–15:25

Maria Giulia Arciero (Sapienza University of Rome)

Contesting the Right to the City: Can Commoning prevail over Neoliberal Urban Utopias?

15:25–16:00

Oriane Roty (Université de Tours)

Community Land Trusts as Instruments of Urban Justice

Gentrification and The Right to the City

Day 2 – October 24, 2025 (Friday)

Session 4: Housing, City and the Private Law

9:00–9:35

Szymon Osmola (University of Edinburgh)
Housing as Consumption: Promise and Perils

9:35–10:10

Katarzyna Wiśniewska (Jagiellonian University)
The Smart City's Unconscious: pDOOH and Algorithmic Urban Dreams

10:10–10:40 Coffee Break (30 minutes)

Session 5: Marginalization

10:40–11:15

Krzysztofa Gašiorowska (University of Warsaw) & **Jan Pieniążek** (Adam Mickiewicz University)
The Gentrification of Experience: How Urban Development Reinforces Barriers for Neurodiverse and LGBTQ+ People

11:15–11:50

Bartłomiej Brzozowski (Jagiellonian University)
Urban Revolution Against Ableism. The Right to the City for People with Disabilities

12:00–14:00 Lunch Break (2 hours)

Session 6: Spatial Justice & Displacement

14:00–14:35

Zofia Czaplicka (Cracow University of Technology / Jagiellonian University)
Urban Lighting; spatial justice and inequality

14:35–15:10

Anna Młynarska-Sobaczewska (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Right to Housing in the City. Forced evictions, revitalisations and segregation of habitants

15:10–15:45

Małgorzata Damek (University of Wrocław)
“Judicial robbery” and horizons for tenant struggles in post-socialist Poland

15:45–16:00 Closing Remarks - **Bartosz Janik** (15 minutes)

Nathanaël Colin-Jaeger

Affiliation

ESPOL, Catholic University of Lille

Bio

Nathanaël Colin-Jaeger is a political philosopher. His research is united by a concern for ethics in a non-ideal and complex world. He examines how principles of justice, autonomy, and fairness can guide institutions and practices when societies face diversity, interdependence, and structural inequalities. He teaches and conducts research as an Associate Professor in Politics, Philosophy & Economics (PPE) at the European School of Political and Social Sciences (ESPOL, Université Catholique de Lille, France).

Abstract

Place-Based Rights and the Moral Topography of Gentrification

I argue that claims about "wrongful gentrification" often conflate distinct normative situations, and that only a subset of cases are pro tanto wrongful. Drawing on recent philosophical work on occupancy and place-related rights (Stilz's individual occupancy, Moore's individual vs. group incidents of occupancy, and Kolers-style location-specific claims), I distinguish (i) infill and densification with newcomers, where residents may assert individual or collective place-claims but these typically generate qualification (voice, mitigation, compensation) rather than exclusionary vetoes against new construction; (ii) quasi-territorial/collective place-rights, which ground procedural standing and limited stewardship powers without entailing dominion over entry or price; and (iii) state-led "population replacement", such as intentional clearance, renewal, or redevelopment, that presumptively wrongs residents by breaching occupancy rights and undermining equal civic status, especially under constrained exit options or path-dependent attachments.

I then contrast these with (iv) market-driven amenity shifts that are often harmful yet not per se wrongful, unless coupled with coercive tools (such as evictions, exclusionary design, or policing externalities) or the foreseeable denial of reasonable exit/voice. Empirically, I integrate contemporary findings that displacement effects vary by context and mechanism, while highlighting state-driven and health-mediated harms as especially severe. The upshot is a calibrated doctrine: cities owe robust voice, due process, and targeted compensation/relocation guarantees in (iii), qualified mitigation and inclusion in (i)–(ii), and remedy only for specific coercive or rights-violating mechanisms in (iv). This clarifies when gentrification goes wrong and when justice requires opening cities to newcomers through fair densification rather than defensive exclusion.

Jason Flato

Affiliation

Georgia State University-Perimeter College

Bio

Professor of Philosophy at Perimeter College, Georgia State University.

Abstract

Metaphilosophy: Social Domination and the Right to Housing

The paper argues there is an impasse between the moral intuitions of egalitarian theories and the brute logic of the housing market which raise a deeper philosophical question: how can a just society gain control over the social processes that shape people's life chances? Here, this paper turns to early Frankfurt School critical theory. Their attention to irrational underpinnings of contemporary bourgeois society and to the ways in which social domination reproduces itself within the institutions of liberal democracy make their approach apropos for grasping the contemporary housing crisis.

These thinkers believed that a genuinely democratic society would be one in which individuals were not subject to blind economic forces but could participate meaningfully in shaping their world. They envisioned democracy not just as a political form, but as a normative project of human emancipation—an effort to render society more rational by bringing it under collective and reflective control. This paper aims to flesh out a metaphilosophy of housing. By drawing on the Frankfurt School's commitment to critical rationality, it becomes possible to reimagine housing not merely as a technical problem of allocation, but as a fundamental question of justice, freedom, and democratic life.

Bartosz Biskup

Affiliation

European University Institute

Bio

Bartosz Biskup is a Max Weber Fellow at EUI and a former postdoctoral researcher in a project on housing, philosophy and Community Land Trusts at the Université de Tours. Bartosz's research focuses on the philosophy of family law, Queer & Law, and the philosophy of housing. He received his PhD (cum laude) in Philosophy of Law from Jagiellonian University in Cracow.

Abstract

The (Radical) Idea of the Right to Housing

This paper discusses three ways the right to housing has been interpreted: along Neoliberal, Welfarist, and Socialist lines. I argue that only the latter has a comprehensive answer to the "housing question." I use the concepts of decommodification and the relational understanding of the social ontology in order to argue that current (received) legal interpretations of the right to housing have a critical political potential, as proposed by Marxists. *Pace* some scholars and philosophers, I argue that the housing question should not be tackled by legal means like universal legal tenure to housing units, but by including this right in a broad discussion about the Right to the City.

Olena Bila & Jagoda Puchała

Affiliation

Jagiellonian University

Bio

Olena Bila — Master's student in law at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków; enrolled in the School of Ukrainian Law (organized by UJ, NaUKMA, and LNU). Current research: civil law and real estate, environmental law. Academic interests: psychology & law, human rights law, corporate law.

Jagoda Puchała — Master's student in law at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków; completed the School of French Law (UJ & Université d'Orléans); enrolled at the China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL) exchange program. Current research: theory of law, human rights law, international law. Academic interests: legal philosophy, European law, anti-trust law.

Abstract

Towards an Organic Right to the City: Reconsidering Urban Development in Poland

This study proposes a reconceptualization of urban development, moving from a private-interest-driven paradigm toward one oriented around the community interest. The "right to the city" as Henri Lefebvre understood it — meaning a privilege of ones inhabiting the city, to actively decide about the shape the city should take, is an inherently holistic process. It encompasses the actual shaping of the urban landscape itself – a right to co-create the city as a living environment. In Poland, this right has been progressively curtailed in favour of private developers, who are now the dominant agents of urban transformation. Their interests rarely align with the needs of local communities, and the legal framework disproportionately supports such actors while neglecting grassroots, community-driven initiatives.

Historical patterns of urban growth – from medieval towns developing organically to modern examples of pioneer urban communities – suggest that cities flourish when their form emerges through gradual, participatory processes. The post-communist transition, however, left little room for reflection on urban policy: housing became a commodity, and successive legislative acts entrenched the primacy of private development. This has resulted in rising housing inequalities and the erosion of any meaningful community influence on the city's evolution.

Using Poland as a case study, this paper argues that the concept of an "organic right to the city" can help bridge this gap providing a legal-philosophical reorientation that would not merely mitigate gentrification, but cultivate the conditions for cities to become again the result of collective, organic creation. Conceptually, it shifts the discourse from a static "right to access" towards a dynamic right to co-evolve with the city. Legally, it invites reconsideration of property rights, development permits, and urban governance models to include forms of community tenure, transitional zoning, and participatory planning as expressions of this right.

Jacobo Centanaro

Affiliation

Université de Tours / Université Gustave Eiffel

Bio

PhD student on Latin American Studies at the Université de Tours and the Université Gustave Eiffel. Interested in cinema, literature, and political ecology.

Abstract

Observing Social and Spatial Inequalities on Film: A Case Study of the Transformation of Two Major Colombian Cities

In 2016, two Colombian documentaries—*The New Medellín* by Carolina Villar and *Chasing After the Wind* by Juan Camilo Olmos—were released, each exploring recent urban transformations in two of Colombia's most prominent cities: Medellín and Cartagena de Indias.

That same year, Medellín was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize and celebrated as one of the most innovative cities in the world—a striking reversal from its notoriety just two decades prior as one of the most dangerous cities globally. *The New Medellín* critically examines the urban transformations that led to this international recognition by following Manuel, a community leader from a peripheral neighborhood emblematic of the city's renewal.

On the other hand, *Chasing After the Wind* centers on Gustavo, a long-time resident of Getsemaní, a neighborhood in Cartagena's historic center undergoing rapid gentrification driven by the growth of the tourism industry. As tourism expands, traditional inhabitants like Gustavo—largely economically marginalized—face increasing pressure to relocate to the urban periphery, their presence rendered invisible to visitors. The film documents the erosion of local identities and collective memory, mirroring Gustavo's own personal decline.

This intervention aims to analyze and compare the narrative and cinematic strategies employed by these two documentaries in addressing gentrification and spatial inequality in Colombia. I will explore how each film articulates the relationship between urban policy, class domination, and spatial injustice, and examine the extent to which shared dynamics or divergent specificities between the two cities shape both films content and form. This analysis seeks also to explore the role of documentary cinema in critiquing contemporary urban transformations and in defending the right to the city.

Maria Giulia Arciero

Affiliation

Sapienza University of Rome

Bio

PhD candidate at Sapienza University of Rome.

Abstract

Contesting the Right to the City: Can Commoning prevail over Neoliberal Urban Utopias?

The study investigates how legal indeterminacy enables both emancipatory and neoliberal claims to the "right to the city" and examines the implications of this dynamic for democratic urban governance. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's conception of the right to the city, this research integrates critical legal theory to examine how law indeterminacy operates in a bidirectional manner. Rather than treating the "right to the city" as a positive right, the study considers it a dynamic battleground in which different actors deploy legal strategies to promote opposing visions of urban development.

The primary case study is the charter city of Prospera in Honduras, which illustrates how governments enable legal flexibility to attract foreign investment at the expense of democratic participation. Prospera, which operates with extraordinary legal independence on Roatán island, was deliberately designed to appeal to mobile capital seeking regulatory arbitrage. This system replaces public governance with private courts, corporate administration and market-based rule-making, thereby eliminating spaces for community input and democratic deliberation. Capital mobility enables investors to seek out the most favourable legal environments, pressuring governments to sacrifice democratic oversight in order to compete for investment. In fact, Prospera represents only one of the latest examples in a larger tradition of special economic zones created to enhance development and maximize flexibility of productive factors such as land, capital, and workforce.

While community movements exploit legal loopholes to demand democratic participation in urban planning, investors use the same flexibility to circumvent public deliberation entirely and construct neoliberal urban utopias from scratch. Where Lefebvre envisioned the right to the city as collective democratic control over urban spaces, Prospera represents capital's right to develop cities without a policy. The ongoing conflicts between Prospera and the Honduran government, which repealed the founding statute, reveal how capital mobility creates tensions between national sovereignty, local democratic participation and transnational investors seeking regulatory havens.

This study contributes to the academic literature on "Neoliberalism, Governance, and Urban Transformation" from a legal perspective by showing how legal indeterminacy can function as both a tool and a weapon in urban conflicts. The concept of the "right to the city" can, and has been, readily absorbed into the liberal grammar of individual rights, which objectifies the city and undermines its collective dimension. As highlighted by scholars, this inherent ambivalence can be addressed by reframing the right to the city as a collective duty of "commoning," which understands the city as a dynamic process of shared creation rather than a mere object of possession.

Oriane Roty

Affiliation

Université de Tours

Bio

Oriane Roty is a PhD candidate in the ICD Department at the University of Tours, France. She is part of the Trust Issues Project, funded by the French Research Agency, which brings together an interdisciplinary team of researchers to study Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and their adaptation in French law. With a background in philosophy and law from the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, her research focuses on the origins and evolution of these legal frameworks as a response to the housing crisis, analyzing them as products of their social, historical, and legal contexts.

Abstract

Community Land Trusts as Instruments of Urban Justice

Urban spaces bring together all social groups, but with unequal power over the shaping of the city. The spatial boundaries between social classes, however, are never fixed. Gentrification refers to the process by which the arrival of wealthier populations gradually displaces historically working-class residents of central districts (Glass, 1963), ultimately transforming these neighborhoods (Fijalkow & Préteceille, 2006). Although dynamics vary across contexts, the first gentrifiers often belong to the (upper) middle class, occupying an intermediate position in class antagonisms and characterized by higher incomes than those of the original residents as well as significant cultural capital (Smith, 1996; Bidou, 2003). Their arrival reshapes neighborhoods to fit their modes of socialization and consumption, paving the way for intensified real-estate investment and rising property values. As a result, lower-income residents are displaced to peripheral areas, farther from urban centers where employment, education, and cultural opportunities are concentrated.

This process stems from a convergence of factors: the global rise of metropolitan economies, the strategic location of working-class districts (particularly in city centers), speculative practices by developers and investors, and the support of public policies that reshape urban fabrics and amenities to attract incoming populations (Lees & Ley, 2008). Certain policies may, in fact, accelerate gentrification under the guise of promoting culture, urban renewal, or social diversity. Yet alternatives exist. However imperfect, rent control and large-scale social housing have been recognized as mechanisms capable of slowing displacement.

This presentation examines the potential of CLTs to advance the principles of urban justice, with particular attention to spatial justice and the "right to the city." Emerging in the United States in the 1970s from the civil rights movement in rural Georgia, CLTs were later adapted to urban contexts as tools against displacement. By separating land—held in trust by a non-profit entity—from housing units, which are sold or leased to eligible households, CLTs remove land from the speculative market. While residents enjoy extensive rights over their homes at reduced costs, resale restrictions ensure long-term affordability and protect communities from speculative cycles.

Szymon Osmola

Affiliation

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Law School

Bio

Szymon Osmola is a Lecturer in Commercial Law at Edinburgh Law School. His research interests include contract and consumer law, commercial law more broadly, EU law, and legal theory. His research received recognition and support from — among other institutions — the Foundation for Polish Science, the Common Market Law Review, and the National Science Centre, Poland.

Abstract

Housing as Consumption: Promise and Perils

Housing and consumption are closely intertwined in the modern economy. Accordingly, housing — and corresponding mortgage agreements — have been at the forefront of consumer law development around the world. Following the 2008 financial crisis, and the more recent foreign currency loans crisis in Central and Eastern Europe, European Union (EU) consumer law evolved in response to legal and financial challenges faced by borrowers.

This paper investigates how the Unfair Terms Directive (UTD), as interpreted by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), addresses the housing crisis and the corresponding issue of consumer over-indebtedness. It provides an original interpretation of the UTD, and the judicial control of consumer contracts — including mortgage agreements — more generally. It argues that the UTD attempts to improve the quality of consumer choice through establishing the extended choice mechanism.

The paper consists of three parts: analytical, interpretive, and doctrinal. The analytical part explains how the ex post control of contract terms provides consumers with an opportunity to rethink their original, poor-quality choice, and to eventually make a subsequent, exonerating choice. This fiction of a uniform, high-quality choice is established by the so-called extended choice mechanism. The interpretive part of the paper elucidates the normative principle underlying the extended choice mechanism. The paper argues that consumer law considers choices as intrinsically valuable expressions of personal autonomy. Therefore, it posits that the judicial control of standard form contracts, and EU consumer law more generally, is guided by the principle of consumer autonomy. The paper thus opposes the welfarist view, according to which choices are valuable instrumentally as tools of maximising efficiency, or facilitating the (EU) internal market. The doctrinal part of the paper substantiates its analytical and interpretive arguments. It covers fundamental strands of the ECJ case law concerning unfair terms: the consequences of removing unfair terms from consumer contracts, the transparency requirement and the ex officio doctrine.

Despite its local focus, the article's conclusions are more general since factors that undermine the quality of consumer choice — and regulations addressing them — are similar around the world. After the three-part analysis of the UTD, the paper connects the above considerations to the theme of the conference. It concludes that consumer law — and private law more generally — does not take into account and accommodate specific problems related to the housing crisis. Despite some attempts to reinterpret the ECJ's response to the 2008 financial crisis and the later foreign currency loan crisis within frameworks of fundamental rights or distributive justice, consumer law remains focused on interpersonal relationships and autonomy. While it can address some of the housing-related vulnerabilities, private law cannot tackle the housing crisis at the systemic level. The paper leaves it open whether it should be able to do so.

Katarzyna Wiśniewska

Affiliation

Jagiellonian University

Bio

Katarzyna Wiśniewska is a doctoral researcher in legal sciences at the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, Jagiellonian University, and an attorney-at-law. She leads the project "The End of the Consumer – Protection of the Weaker Party in the Digital Market" and is a researcher on the CLEMENTEA project, both at Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Her work spans private law, EU law, consumer protection, law and technology, and Japanese law. She earned a Master of Laws in 2020 from Jagiellonian University, where her thesis on cloud computing and the EU Digital Content Directive was supervised by Prof. Fryderyk Zoll. She also teaches at the Chair of Civil Law. Additionally, she holds a postgraduate certificate in IT Resource Management from the Warsaw University of Technology.

Abstract

The Smart City's Unconscious: pDOOH and Algorithmic Urban Dreams

Billboards in cities aren't just showing ads anymore; they're watching us back. I argue that programmatic digital out-of-home advertising (pDOOH) constitutes an algorithmic unconscious of the contemporary city, one that accelerates gentrification processes through systematic manipulation of collective urban anxieties and aspirations. The existing legal frameworks have not yet addressed this particular form of spatial governance, where the "right to the city" becomes dependent on algorithmic visibility and data profiles.

pDOOH systems use real-time bidding, geolocation tracking and behavioural analysis to present targeted messages on urban screens. Unlike traditional billboards, these systems create what I call "anticipatory urban spaces". These are environments that are created based on predicted demographics and anticipated futures. When pDOOH screens in one neighbourhood change from advertising local services to displaying luxury brands, they not only represent gentrification, but they also actively produce it by materialising algorithmic capital dreams in public spaces.

By developing research on algorithmic manipulation in digital markets, I try to show how pDOOH exploits what psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas calls the "unthought known". It refers to those aspects of our experience that shape our behaviour without conscious perception. pDOOH targets three key urban anxieties: safety (by advertising security services and protected neighbourhoods), authenticity (like promoting craft breweries or artisanal shops) and futurity (by displaying technological innovations and sustainable consumption). On the one hand, these targeted messages attract demographics corresponding to the advertised content – essentially those with sufficient economic position to consume such services. On the other hand, this influx provides justification for further algorithmic optimisation, which in turn accelerates the displacement of existing residents who find themselves in an increasingly weaker position.

Krzysztofa Gašiorowska & Jan Pieniażek

Affiliation

Krzysztofa Gašiorowska: Law Faculty & Philosophy Faculty, University of Warsaw

Jan Pieniażek: Law Faculty, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Bio

Krzysztofa Gašiorowska is a fourth-year law and third-year philosophy student at the University of Warsaw. She is a member of the GrowSPACE Foundation and has contributed to several NGOs focused on children's rights and anti-discrimination. As part of the NeuroSafe Cities project, she conducted field research in Gdańsk, which was later published in the project's final report. Her interests span human rights, immigration, criminal, and European law. She has gained practical experience at the Polish Ministry of Justice and a boutique immigration law firm, and has participated in international law programs in Szczecin, Komotini, and Batumi.

Jan Pieniażek is a fifth-year law student conducting research in the field of children's rights, criminal proceedings, and human rights. He is currently studying the impact of artificial intelligence on criminal proceedings from the perspective of threats to the protection of children's rights. He is preparing his master's thesis on the representation of children in criminal proceedings. He is a social activist for children's rights and the author of publications on education and children's rights.

Abstract

The Gentrification of Experience: How Urban Development Reinforces Barriers for Neurodiverse and LGBTQ+ People

This article interrogates the multifaceted processes of contemporary urban gentrification, moving beyond conventional economic and spatial analyses to introduce the concept of the "gentrification of experience." We argue that urban development, driven by the logic of late capitalism, systematically erects and reinforces profound social, sensory, and affective barriers for marginalized populations, specifically neurodiverse and LGBTQ+ individuals. This process does not merely displace residents but also sanitizes and homogenizes the urban landscape, erasing the unique cultural and sensory textures that allow these communities to thrive.

Grounded in a socio-philosophical framework critical of late capitalism, this paper examines how the relentless push for standardization, commercialization, and aesthetic conformity in urban spaces creates hostile environments. For neurodiverse people, this manifests as a sensory assault: the replacement of quiet, predictable, or richly varied environments with spaces characterized by overwhelming stimuli, minimalist aesthetics devoid of texture, and a lack of accommodating infrastructure. This sensory gentrification curtails their ability to navigate, inhabit, and find comfort in the public sphere.

Simultaneously, for LGBTQ+ communities, this development model accelerates the dissolution of historically significant "safe spaces." Queer bars, community centers, and distinct neighborhoods are supplanted by mainstream, heteronormative commercial enterprises, effectively commodifying and erasing queer identity from the public consciousness. The result is a profound sense of alienation and a loss of spaces crucial for social reproduction, community building, and self-expression.

By analyzing the current urban situation, this article demonstrates that these exclusionary outcomes are not accidental byproducts but inherent consequences of a development model prioritizing profit over people. We contend that the gentrification of experience represents a critical frontier in the fight for urban justice. Moving beyond critique, this paper concludes by proposing concrete, actionable solutions according to the law. These include advocating for inclusive urban planning policies, championing community-led preservation initiatives, and outlining design principles that foster sensory-friendly and identity-affirming spaces. Ultimately, this work calls for a radical reimagining of urban development, one that actively dismantles barriers and centers the lived experiences of all citizens.

Bartłomiej Brzozowski

Affiliation

Jagiellonian University

Bio

PhD student at the Doctoral School of Social Sciences at the Jagiellonian University as part of the Society of the Future program. Graduate of law at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University (2024), where he defended his master's thesis entitled "Exclusion - sexuality - disability. Do people with disabilities have the right to sex?" and Cultural Studies - Cultural Texts at the Faculty of Polish Studies at the Jagiellonian University (2023) with a bachelor's thesis entitled "The Beatnik as an outsider. An analysis of forms of opposition to the affluent society." Currently a student of Inter-faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities, where he is preparing his master's thesis on countercultural utopias. During his doctoral studies, he is conducting an interdisciplinary research project devoted to the relationship between theory of legal interpretation and the theories developed in the field of literary studies as part of the OPUS-25 grant entitled "Metaphilosophy of Legal Interpretation" (PI: Adam Dyrda).

Abstract

Urban Revolution Against Ableism. The Right to the City for People with Disabilities

One area of discrimination against people with disabilities is exclusionary urban infrastructure. The inaccessibility of public buildings, public transport, sidewalks, and streets affects the situation of people who, due to these limitations, cannot fully participate in city life. In the 1970s, disability rights activists criticized urban architecture for being insensitive to the needs of people with disabilities. They called for reforms that aimed to make cities more inclusive spaces. To achieve this goal, activists undertook various political strategies, such as sit-in protests or peaceful marches. Tom Shakespeare, in the article "Disabled People's Self-Organisation: A New Social Movement," describes more radical initiatives aimed at changing urban infrastructure through grassroots activities.

In my speech, I will focus on analyzing the strategy that can be called 'critique through utopia'. Within utopian studies, it is argued that creating alternative social systems is a form of critique of existing power relations. In the case of the struggle of people with disabilities for the right to the city, 'critique through utopia' involves locally created projects that aim to increase the autonomy and independence of people with disabilities. In this speech, I will show that Camp Jened, the summer camp for people with disabilities, may be seen as the 'experimental utopia' in the sense given to this concept by Henri Lefebvre. I will be interested in a specific moment in the history of the camp when hippies became involved in organizing this event. Analyzing the consolidation of unprivileged groups, I will show how it influenced the perception of disability by camp participants and how this coalition challenged the exclusionary urban space.

On the one hand, the presentation will be a cultural analysis of the documentary film "Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution"; on the other hand, it will be a metaphilosophical reflection on the issue of revolutionary subject. Based on Herbert Marcuse's thought, I will demonstrate that people with disabilities can carry out urban reforms by creating utopian spaces. I will refer these theoretical analyses to actual political changes in urban infrastructure, which took place under the influence of the participation of disability rights activists.

Zofia Czaplicka

Affiliation

Cracow University of Technology / Jagiellonian University

Bio

Zofia Czaplicka is a PhD student at Cracow University of Technology (Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning). Her research focuses on the role of light in the city. She also studies Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, with particular interest in the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of space.

Abstract

Urban Lighting; spatial justice and inequality

The nocturnal urban landscape constitutes a distinct spatial and experiential formation, markedly differentiated from its diurnal counterpart. The city at night may be conceptualized as a "second city", characterized by altered atmospheres, rhythms, and modalities of social encounter. Central to its emergence is artificial illumination. While artificial light appeared in urban contexts already in antiquity, its transformative role became particularly pronounced at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The aim of this research is to reflect on spatial justice in the context of nocturnal lighting. The proliferation of artificial light is embedded within a broader paradox: the intensification of urban luminosity, driven by human demands for safety, visibility, and nocturnal sociability, occurs in tension with ecological systems that rely on darkness as a vital condition of survival. This dualism, articulated by Light and others, underscores the geographic contrast between illuminated centers of anthropogenic activity and the residual "pristine darkness" of non-urban environments. Simultaneously, the spatial distribution of light within the city produces uneven geographies of access, safety, and visibility, linking artificial illumination directly to debates on spatial justice and urban inequality.

Urban illumination is not merely a technical or aesthetic phenomenon but also a socio-spatial variable shaping subjective experience. Research on the "geography of fear" demonstrates that lighting significantly influences perceptions of safety, which vary according to factors such as gender, age, and other dimensions of social differentiation. From a spatial justice perspective, these experiences reveal that light functions as infrastructure that both reflects and perpetuates existing social inequalities. Feminist perspectives further highlight the role of illumination as a tool that can both facilitate and restrict equitable access to public space.

Artificial lighting must also be understood within a multispecies framework. Its ecological implications include the disruption of circadian rhythms, reproductive cycles, and migratory patterns among flora and fauna. Consequently, the governance of urban light entails reconciling human psychological and social needs with the preservation of ecological integrity. This negotiation highlights the broader question of justice across human and non-human entities in the nocturnal city.

Anna Młynarska-Sobaczewska

Affiliation

Polish Academy of Sciences

Bio

Anna Młynarska-Sobaczewska has been working in the field of constitutional law. Since 2013 affiliated with the Institute of Law Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The head of the Department of Constitutional Law and European Research since 2016. Her interest fields include theory of constitutional law (legitimacy of public authorities, constitutional adjudication, transitional states), constitutionalism and human rights, particularly freedom of press, freedom of artistic creativity, right to culture and currently: right to housing. She is a PI in research project Right to housing, sponsored by the Ministry of Science.

Abstract

Right to Housing in the City. Forced evictions, revitalisations and segregation of habitants

The right to housing initially refers to the concept of the inviolability of the home—the idea that a person’s residence should be free from arbitrary intrusion. It was observed in ancient times and is an inherent part of both common and civil law. It is also an element of international human rights protection (Article 12 of the UDHR of 1948) and is guaranteed in most constitutions, starting with the Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution.

The right to inviolability of the home means the right to protection from interference — public authorities must not prevent you from entering or living in your home and it is a classic defensive right. Progressive thinking about the right to housing as the right to an adequate standard of living for everyone only emerged with Article 25 of the UDHR, the ICESCR of 1966. However, it has been gaining acceptance in the international order slowly and is rarely regulated in constitutions, especially in countries with significant problems of homelessness and substandard shelters, such as South Africa, Kenya, Ecuador, and Brazil, but also in several European countries: Spain, Portugal, and Belgium. The main problem, however, is the degree of compliance, justiciability, and lack of public housing resources.

Above all, however, it means the obligation to respect the shelter and housing of every human being, also in horizontal relations—between owners and tenants, as well as between people living in their neighborhood.

Against this background, the issue of city use arises strikingly. Clearing cities of slums is the basis for the famous cases of *Government of the Republic of South Africa and others v Grootboom and others*, *Olga Tellis v Bombay Municipal Corporation*, *Chandru v Tamil Nadu State*, *Corumbiara v Brazil*, and the *Moiwana Village* case. In Europe, the issue takes a more veiled form; it is revitalization, planning, or regulations concerning social thresholds as a condition for living in city centers (ECtHR *Garib v the Netherlands*).

What justifies forced evictions and discouraging existing residents from occupying city centers? How can a balance be found between order, safety, and aesthetics on the one hand, and the right to shelter on the other? What can justify such policies and how can conflicts be resolved—who is the subject of these rights, and can aesthetics and safety per se limit the freedom to choose one’s place of residence and the right to shelter? The paper aims to show how and whether this problem can be solved on the basis of constitutional law and international human rights protection.

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Abstract

“Judicial robbery” and horizons for tenant struggles in post-socialist Poland

Poland’s political transformation provides a specific context for urban struggles. As researchers note, due to the complete change in political paradigms with the advent of neoliberalism, many earlier methods of political struggle have become inadequate. Disappointed with the strictly political route, social movement activists often redirected their activities towards legal disputes, believing that this was a path that allowed for equal debate. At the same time, as researchers note, the legal path during the period of economic transformation often served as a tool for the primitive accumulation of the new state.

Joanna Kusiak, drawing a parallel between Marx’s description of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the transition from real socialism to neoliberalism observed in Central and Eastern Europe, notes that in both cases, the mechanism of primitive accumulation proves necessary for the creation of new social relations. The first capitalists enclosed common property in feudal England, and after 1989, a similar process of "reprivatization" of real estate took place in Poland. Choosing the legal path in reprivatization cases allowed for the controversial political process to be bypassed and for decisions to be issued that served as a basis for their successors. Researchers refer to this process as "judicial robbery," pointing out that although legal recourse holds potential for marginalized groups, it can also lead to fundamentally undemocratic resolutions of disputes of significant social importance.

Polish tenant movements, which have largely emerged in response to reprivatization "scandals," face a dilemma in this case regarding the possible use of the law. Their demands, rooted in the social sphere and referring to collective rights, often contradict the dominant liberal logic of individual rights and the primacy of private property protection. For this reason, the question of what significance tenant activists attach to the law becomes crucial. To classify both theoretical approaches and practical actions of movements, we can use the Marxist distinction between three moments of the strategy of struggle against capital: within, against, and beyond. These categories describe, respectively: actions carried out within the framework of existing law (within), actions focused on challenging and confronting it (against), and actions that go beyond its logic, seeking to create alternative solutions (beyond). In this paper, this division will allow for a better understanding of the ways in which Polish tenant movements can situate their practices in relation to the post-socialist legal order.

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