

Elusive conceptualizations of the rights to housing

Housing struggles and unvoiced claims in Athens

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Resignifications of the right to housing in crises

Resistance trajectories:

Housing struggles put forward claims and act against violence, oppression, and displacement or to retain resources that are reduced.

Proactive/Reclaiming trajectories:

Housing struggles seek to have a transformative potential and focus on elaborating new alternatives for housing and for the future.

Re-signifying/Re-conceptualizing trajectories:

Housing struggles that aim to reconceptualize what the right to housing might mean, who are the subjects of the right to housing and what housing imaginaries are entailed in such resignification.

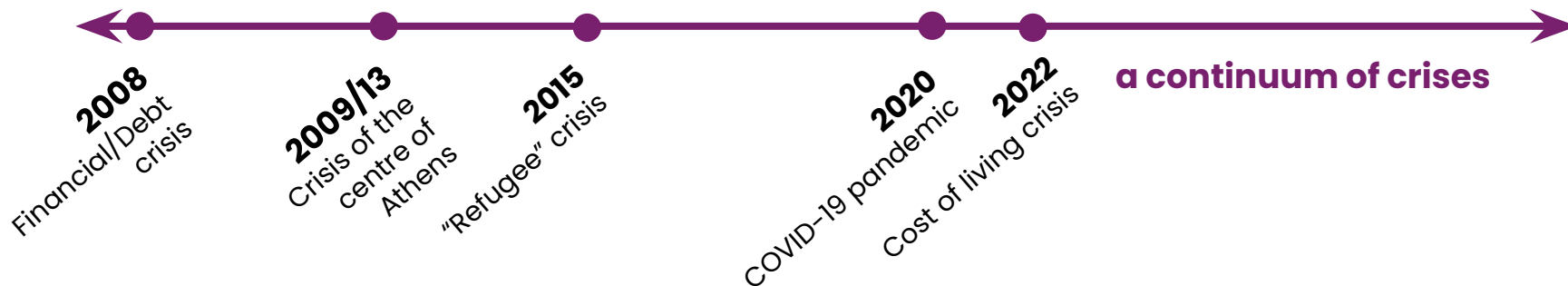
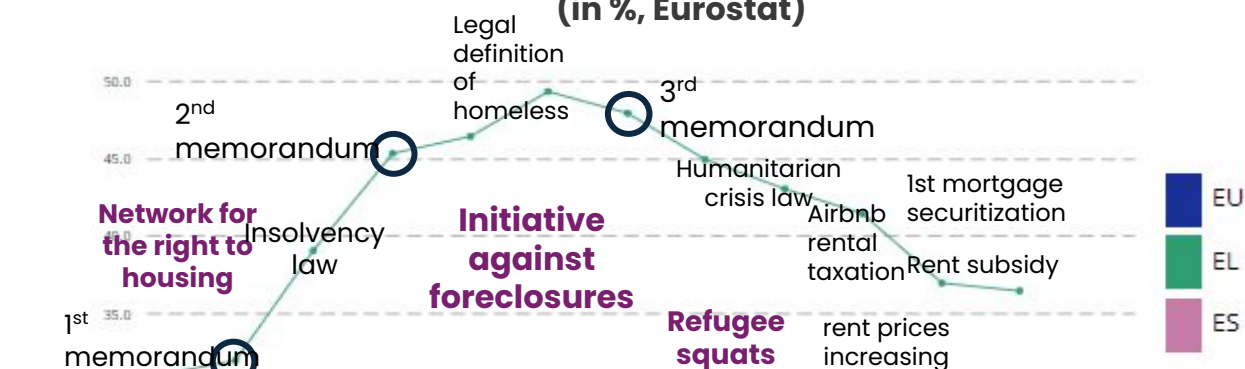
Right to housing in the Greek housing regime

- High homeownership rates;
- But, increasing demand for rent;
- Individualisation of access to housing; mainly market processes;
- Intergenerational solidarity, family networks.

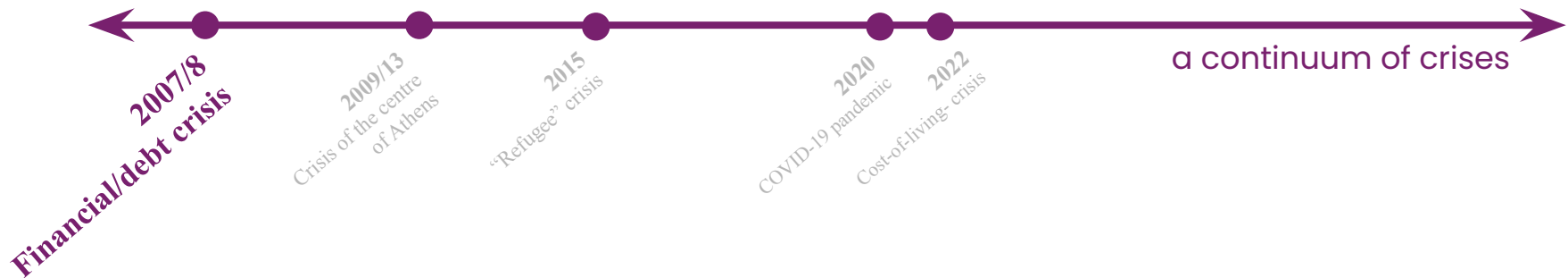
Historically, **the subject of the right(s) to housing was constructed around the notion and practice of being/becoming a homeowner**



Share of households with arrears on mortgage, rent or utility bills (in %, Eurostat)



Shuttering the right to ownership through precarity and indebtment



Housing related reforms:

- Financialization of housing, protection of primary home; Increase in property taxes, already impoverished households;
- Welfare cuts and emergence of a humanitarian/philanthropic sector for extreme poverty, increase in homelessness and emergency housing for people.

Housing struggles:

mostly at the margins of mobilizations and claim-making;

- from 2009 onwards: occupations, self-managed spaces and self-organised solidarity initiatives;
- against the increase of property taxation
- Protests and auction blockades

Right to housing:

institutionally (legally) expressed as the protection of the primary property from foreclosures and auctions.

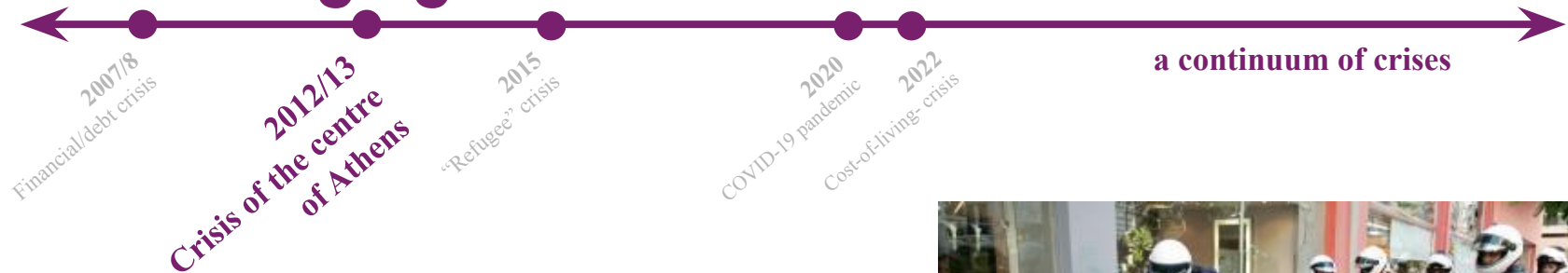
The movement struggles for the protection of the "right to home" aiming to prevent the foreclosure of houses that are the primary residence for those who live in them. This struggle has been criticized by both the government and the media, but also by parts of the left. The criticism from the left stems from the identification of our struggle as a struggle to protect (private) property. This criticism underpins the reluctance of parts of the left to engage in this struggle.

T. Katerini, 2022:233



No house in the hands of bankers

Conflicting rights to the centre of Athens



Housing and other policies:

- Planning tools and spatial interventions in order to overturn the decline of central Athens;
- Emergency social services for the poor and homeless.

Housing Struggles

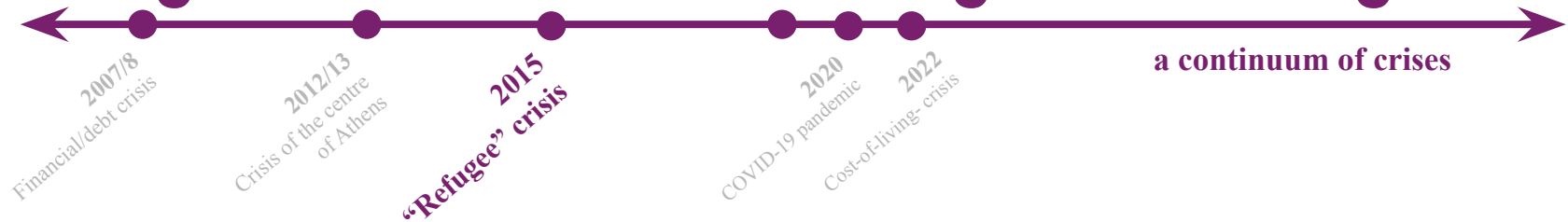
- Residents' committees against housing devaluation;

Right to housing:

- "Defensive" right to the city claims



Refugees' enactments of the right to housing



Housing & other policies:

- emergency shelters, refugee camps, ESTIA housing programme for asylum seekers;
- Humanitarian crisis law & increasing liberalisation of residential protection, 1st law on short-term rental taxation;
- EU-Turkey agreement 2016 - closing of borders.

Housing struggles:

- Solidarity initiatives, squats.

Right to housing:

- claimed and enacted by the refugees themselves and by those in solidarity to them;
- still concerned people in need, not expanded to other subjectivities, not linked to the housing needs or struggles of other social groups.

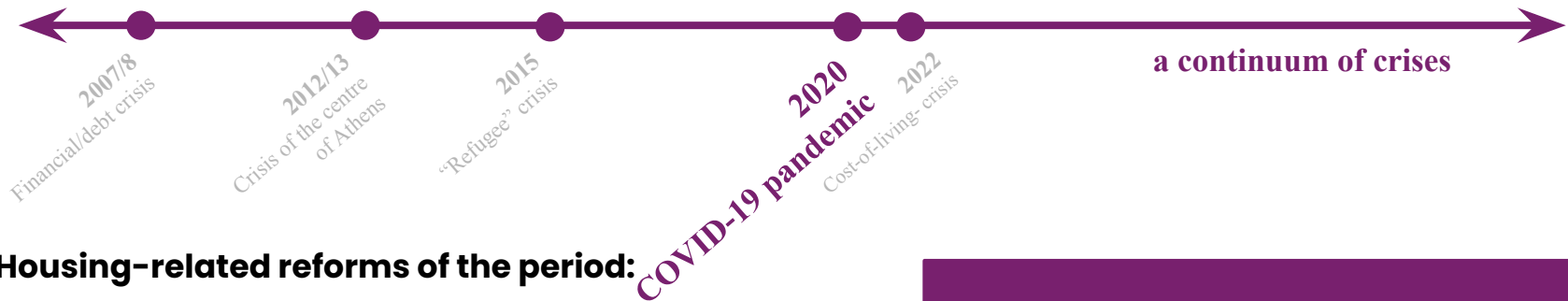




We live and learn together



An existential right to home



Housing-related reforms of the period:

- Stay-at-home campaigns, quarantines;
- 40% rent reduction and moratorium on auctions
- Advancement of debt management institutional machinery: servicers, special purpose agency for vulnerable lenders

Housing struggles:

- Increase of mobilizations against rising rents, touristification and Airbnb in central areas
- Abrupt freeze of all mobilisations; mutual aid and solidarity networks

Right to housing:

- Claiming the right to stay put, against displacement and out-pricing due to rising rents,
- Voices for the fundamental/existential right to a home (how to stay at home without a home)

"The slogan 'stay at home' hides many social and economic inequalities. First of all, which house are we speaking for? As though it is the same to stay home if you are a poor worker or a rich golden boy. If you have all the comforts and luxuries, of course life is much more tolerable inside a house in Glyfada or in Kifisia with a garden or a pool. It is not the same though with a house like hole in Kypseli, which cannot be seen by the sun and has no heating.

...Walking in Acharnon street, if you are a migrant who lives in Agios Panteleimonas with your family or your roommates in a basement or a 50m2 apartment, is 'yarding'. And of course, the stay at home slogan ... constitutes a 'raw cynicism' for the prisoners ..., as for the invisible people of this world, migrants ... in concentration camps... Women ... have become a punching bag. ... Work has moved inside the home... As for all those who suffer from ... mental diseases, the long term stay inside homes becomes very difficult...

(Unreal Estate, 2020:2-4)

the time came for us to ... yell that housing is a basic need. ... We say that 'housing is a right' in order to understand the housing issue as a common issue in which we are totally exposed if we are alone.

(The News of the Tenants, 2022:3).



Tu peux pas payer? Alors paye pas!
GARDE TON LOYER!

Manifestation contre les prix élevés des loyers et pour un accès égal à des logements décents.

vendredi 26 juin 2020, Place Victoria, 19h00

حافظ على الإيجار الخاص بك! من أجل أن تستمر في الحياة!
تحت شعار "لا تستطيع الدفع! لا تدفع..."

تنديدا بارتفاع أسعار الإيجار والحصول على مساكن لائقة على قدم المساواة.

سيتم تنظيم تظاهرة يوم الجمعة 26 يونيو 2020 ، ساحة فيكتوريا ، 19.00

S'ke mundësi të paguash? Mos paguaj!
MBAJI LEKËT E QIRASË!

Demonstratë kundër çmimeve të larta të qirave dhe për banim dinjitoz për të gjithë.

Të Premtën në 26 Qershor , ora 19.00, Sheshi Viktoria (Platia Viktoria)

توان پرداخت نداری؟ پرداخت نکن!
هزینه اجاره ات را نگهدار.

عليه اجاره های گران و برای دسترسی عادلانه به مسکن مناسب

تظاهرات روز جمعه ۲۶ ژوئن ۲۰۲۰
میدان ویکتوریا، ساعت ۱۹:۰۰

Can't pay? Don't pay!

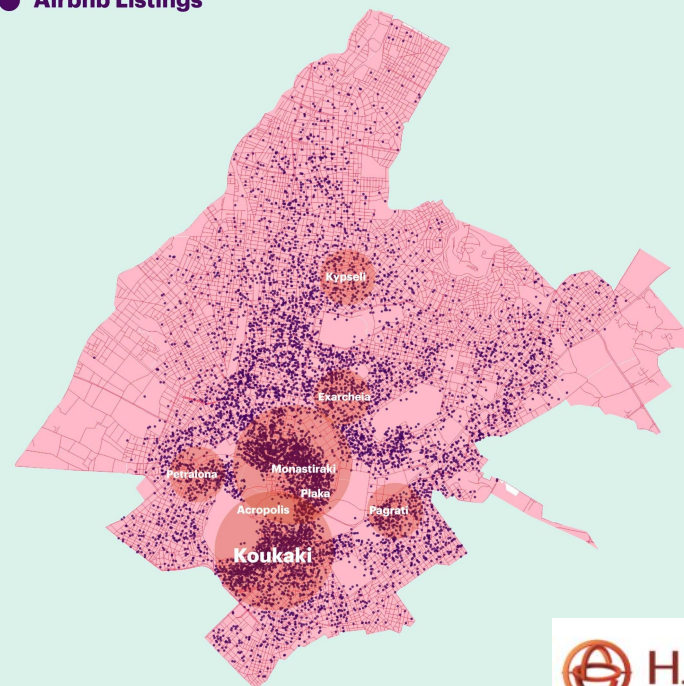
KEEP YOUR RENT!

DEMO against high rent prices
and for an equal access to decent housing

Friday 26th of June 2020, Victoria Square, 19.00



● Airbnb Listings



**livethereal
greekexperience**

**500€salary
400€rent**

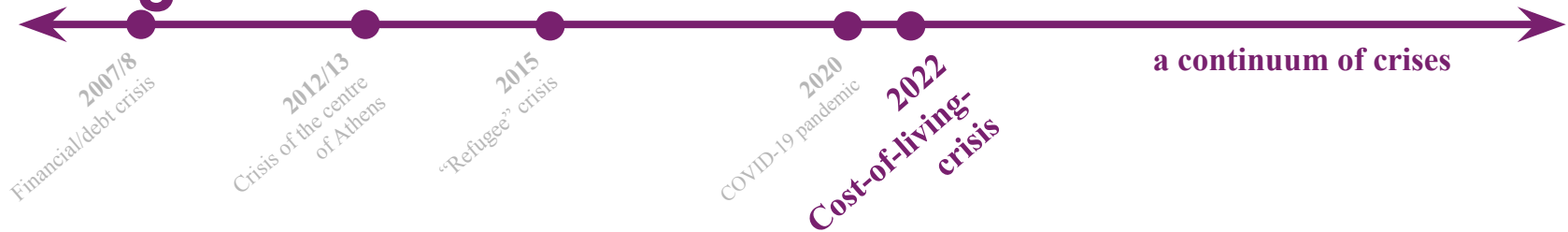


**airbnbraises
ourrents**

#nomoretrolleybags

γρέζι grezi.espivblogs.net

Defending the right to-stay-put and decent living



- **Housing-related reforms of the period**

- Housing Law "My Home" (mortgage subsidies/youth)
- Digital nomads, increase of Golden Visa threshold, short-term rentals taxation
- Debt management companies (servicers)
- Suspension of Refugee urban housing

- **Housing struggles**

- Broader mobilisations and coalitions against auctions
- Defensive struggles against regeneration works and infrastructure (metro)

- **Right to housing:**

- Link with several other claims and struggles: right-to-stay put, right to decent livelihood and basic needs

"In Greece there is no issue of "right to housing". It is an individual matter. The state never had an organised plan for collective housing. Such perceptions are not common. Private access through the market and family networks (transfers, concessions etc), there is no culture of housing as a contested right, a demand. Although it is stated in our constitution, people do not understand its meaning. It is a nice phrase, but how is it specified? For example, the right to housing would mean that you must have adequate and dignified housing, and to pay less than 30% of your income. Maybe such a specification would be useful. ...

In Greece no one will fight for an ideological, abstract stake such as the right to housing. If it does not directly affect their housing situation. It is not my problem, it is your theoretical discussion that does not affect me"

Exarchia Residents Initiative,
Personal interview, 2023, Athens

EXARCHIA

TURIST GUIDE • ΤΑΞΙΔΙΟΤΙΚΟΣ ΟΔΗΓΟΣ



ΕΝΟΙΚΙΑΣΗ ΑΥΤΟΚΙΝΗΤΩΝ • ΑΟΡΕΑΝ ΕΝΑΓΗΣΕΙΣ



UNICORN
RIOT



Hands down from people's houses
Committee against high costs



***We will raise our children here
No metro on Exarchia square***



Prime ministers' visit to "My Home" beneficiaries

Elusive (re)significations of the Right to Housing

From a human rights' perspective: is considered to lack potency due to its weak incorporation in the legal framework

From a social rights perspective: despite constitutional recognition of the role of the state in providing housing, housing policies remain residual and mainly indirect, family and social networks have assumed responsibilities

Shaped by the homeownership ideology: housing rights are often seen as competing established ownership and private property rights and vice versa housing rights are understood as claims for accessing homeownership



No house in the hands of **funds and bankers**
Housing is a right. No auctions and evictions

Elusive (re)significations of the Right to Housing

A field of restructuring by state policies throughout the continuum of crises & **debt stigmatisation**: individual blame for loss of housing due to “fraudulent” debt management, “forbidden rights”: feeling of non-deserving rights

A legitimising political frame: pleaded to legitimise direct –often considered illegal or at the verge of legality– actions and confrontations, invoking injustices by state, power holders, global capital

A political/ideological battle over the deserving subject: at neighbourhood level and within the legal/institutional frame

Yet, the specific content and meaning of the Right to Housing remains to be defined within the movement (and housing policy)



ΚΗΔΕΙΑ

ΤΗ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ
28 ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ ΩΡΑ 13:30
ΚΗΔΕΥΟΜΕ ΤΟ ΛΑΤΡΕΥΤΟ ΜΑΣ

ΜΕΤΑΞΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ

Η πομπή θα ξεκινήσει από το **Δημόσιο Σήμα**
(Πλατειών & Λεωνίδου), όπου και θα καταλήξει.
Θα συνοδεύσουν οι τεθλιμμένες ορχήστρες της
γειτονιάς.

κηδεύουν:

ΟΙ ΚΑΤΟΙΚΟΙ, ΟΙ ΕΝΟΙΚΙΟΙ, ΟΙ ΠΡΩΗΝ ΕΝΟΙΚΙΟΙ, ΟΙ
ΔΙΑΛΥΜΕΝΕΣ ΠΑΡΕΕΣ, ΟΙ ΕΞΟΡΙΣΤΕΣ ΥΠΑΡΧΕΙΣ, ΟΙ
ΑΣΚΕΠΕΙΣ ΚΑΛΛΙΤΕΧΝΕΣ, ΟΙ ΑΣΤΕΓΕΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΙΚΟΤΗΤΕΣ, ΟΙ
ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΕΣ ΥΠΟ ΔΙΩΓΜΟ.

*Θα τηρηθεί αυστηρά πένθιμη περιβολή

The neighbourhood funeral

Thank you for your attention!