SQUATTING TO MAKE ENDS MEET: SOUTHERN ITALIAN MIGRANTS AND THE
RIGHT TO A HOME IN 1970S ITALY AND WEST GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

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This comparative study examines how southern Italian migrants faced social and political exclusion within and outside of their nation-state in the decades following the Second World War. Using Turin, Italy and Frankfurt am Main, West Germany as case studies, I investigate how urban renewal plans and discriminatory rental practices exacerbated housing shortages and induced migrants to live in precarious housing conditions. Taking inspiration from recent conceptualizations of citizenship put forth by historians Geoff Eley, Jan Palmowski, and Kathleen Canning, I show citizenship to be a contingent and contested category. By articulating housing claims and engaging in contest, southern Italian migrants and other disadvantaged residents pushed for an expansion and more equitable administration of institutionalized social service practices. By marching in the streets, going on rent strike, and occupying apartment buildings, migrants' collective actions highlighted governing bodies' failed promises to deliver a baseline standard of living.

Southern Italians, allies, and news media channels frequently used women's and children's voices to amplify migrants' claims to safe and affordable housing, portraying their motivations as apolitical and need-based in a time when internal security grew in importance. As extraparliamentary groups and domestic and international terrorist organizations threatened the existing sociopolitical order in both Italy and West Germany, city council debates became embroiled in questions of legality and whether to evict or accommodate housing occupiers. I complicate dominant narratives that center on tensions between self-identifying activists and

police, as emblemized by conflict over housing in the streets, to show how city administrations began to differentiate between housing occupations conducted out of social need and those they perceived as part of more radical political movements. In turn, migrants and other socioeconomically disadvantaged occupiers were more amenable to negotiations with city officials, pushing for reforms within existing systems rather than more revolutionary changes.

Overall, I argue that migrants challenged the socioeconomic and political practices that treated them as temporary residents or second-class citizens. By occupying the very spaces that had previously symbolized their marginalization, they exerted a right to state aid and assistance while subsequently reconfiguring the social fabric of their neighborhoods and communities. As local administrations reluctantly responded to their claims, they shifted definitions of urban citizenship and enacted reforms that had ramifications for housing and migration policies.

For
– Norma Elise Ebert Fletcher –
who never stopped believing in me
no matter which side of the veil.

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PREFACE

Portions of chapters three and four have been accepted for a peer-reviewed article, "Reformulating Urban Citizenship: Italian Migrants and Housing Occupations in 1970s Frankfurt" in the *Yearbook of Transnational History* vol. 5 (2022).

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AGW   Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend (Westend Action Collective)

AO   Autonomia Operaia (Worker's Autonomy)

ASdC   Archivio Storico della Città (Historic Archive of the City), Turin, Italy

ATC   Archivio Storico Agenzia Territoriale per la Casa del Piemonte Centrale (Historic Archive of the Territorial Agency for Housing of Central Piedmont), Turin, Italy

CDU   Christlich Demokratische Unione Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)

CGIL   Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian General Confederation of Labor)

CISL   Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Confederation of Trade Unions)

CSU   Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (Christian Social Union in Bayern)

DC   Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy Party – Italy)

DOMiD   Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland e.V. (Documentation and Museum of Migration in Germany), Cologne, Germany

EEC   European Economic Community

EU   European Union

FAZ   *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

FNP   *Frankfurter Neue Presse*

FF   Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation), Milan, Italy

FR   *Frankfurter Rundschau*

FRG   Federal Republic of Germany

GESCAL   GEStione CAse per i Lavoratori (Housing Management for Workers)

IACP	Istituto Autonomo Casa Popolari (Autonomous Public Housing Institute)
IfS	Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt (Frankfurt Institute for City History), Frankfurt am Main, Germany
IG	Fondazione Istituto Piemontese Antonio Gramsci Onlus (Piedmont Foundation Antonio Gramsci Institute Onlus), Turin, Italy
ISEC	Fondazione Istituto per la Storia Dell'Età Contemporanea (Foundation Institution for Contemporary History), Milan, Italy
LC	Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle)
MP	Archivio Storico della Nuova Sinistra "Marco Pezzi" (Historic Archive of the New Left "Marco Pezzi"), Bologna, Italy
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano (Communist Party of Italy)
PG	Centro Studi Piero Gobetti (Piero Gobetti Study Center), Turin, Italy
PM	Archivio Primo Moroni (Primo Moroni Achive), Milan, Italy
Polo '900	Archivio e Biblioteca del Polo del '900 (Archive and Library of the Polo del '900), Turin, Italy
RK	Revolutionärer Kampf (Revolutionary Fight)
SDS	Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (Socialist German Student League)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
UI	Unione Inquilini (Tenants' Union)
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Labor Union)
WDR	Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln (West German Broadcasting Cologne)

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, ten Italian families occupied apartments intended for 300 migrants in Taranto, a port city on the heel of Italy's boot, and refused to leave. Italy's top-circulating daily newspaper, the *Corriere della Sera*, described the occupiers as "Italians who feel excluded from aid and assistance" who wished to "stop the arrival of foreigners," thus perpetuating a form of "social war." The occupiers related to police officers that "it is not right for non-EU [European Union] citizens to be helped [while] ignoring many people from Taranto who have been living in discomfort for years."[1] Another occupier told a news reporter, "we have a right to it, we are Italian and have neither housing nor work."[2] Through their comments, the occupiers asserted what they viewed as a right to housing and state aid. In doing so, they drew distinct lines around who was and was not a citizen, tying social services to one's status as either "Italian" or a member of the EU. Their actions gesture toward a growing retrenchment of nationalism and widespread calls for the restriction of free movement – as most recently evidenced by the U.K's "Brexit" from the European Union.

With an influx of migrants and refugees in recent years, the idea of "Fortress Europe" has gained notoriety, evoking images of a stronghold whose boundaries are enforced and continually policed to prevent intruders from entering. Indeed, news articles in Italy – one of the primary contact points for those trying to enter the EU by water – seem to imply that tensions about migration are a relatively recent phenomenon and apply to those who originate in far-away lands

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[1] Claudio Del Frate, "Taranto: 'No case agli immigrati' – E 10 familie italiane le occupano," *Corriere della Sera*, March 17, 2017, https://www.corriere.it/cronache/17_marzo_17/taranto-no-case-immigrati-10-famiglie-italiane-occupano-9bac473a-0b2e-11e7-82ab-c3e0ac11ad0a.shtml.

[2] Bepi Castellaneta, "Taranto: famiglie di italiani occupano le case dei migrant: 'Ne abbiamo più diritto noi," *il Giornale*, March 18, 2017, https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/taranto-famiglie-italiani-occupano-case-dei-migranti-ne-1376391.html.

such as Eritrea, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, and Senegal.[3] Public debates on migrants' and

refugees' supposed draining of jobs and social services, as emblemized by the Italian occupiers

in Taranto, have continued to divide Italians (and other Europeans). These newly-debated

questions of border control enforcement on the geographical boundaries of Europe overlook the

fact that in the not too distant past, southern Italian migrants themselves were subject to

sociocultural barriers within Europe and even within their very own country – internal

boundaries that impeded their access to safe and affordable housing. Placards reading "We don't

rent to southerners" in cities such as Milan and Turin were mirrored with those stating "We don't

rent to foreigners" in Munich and Frankfurt am Main in West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s

in response to the influx of southern Italians who had traveled north for employment.

　　In many ways, occupying as a way of asserting one's perceived right to housing was not

a new phenomenon for Italians. This project focuses on how southern Italian migrants in the

1970s used housing occupations and other forms of housing activism as a way of articulating

claims to better social, economic, and political circumstances. The difference between housing

occupations in the 1970s and the more recent example from 2017 is that southern Italians were

instead occupying for an *expansion* of social services and the protections of the welfare state in

the 1970s, rather than a *restriction*, as was the case in 2017. Viewed as outsiders in the decades

following the Second World War both within and outside of their own nation-state, southern

Italian migrant occupiers in the 1970s sought for their perceived rights of liberal citizenship to be

realized both within the context of Italy and the European Economic Community (EEC) – rights

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[3] In a 2019 survey conducted by *Corriere della Sera*, only 19% of Italian respondents were in favor of allowing water landings of vessels containing migrants, whereas 51% indicated "preventing any landing in our territory." See Nando Pagnoncelli, "Le colpe dell'emergenza migrant? Il 60% punta il dito contro l'Europa," *Corriere della Sera,* January 11, 2019, https://www.corriere.it/politica/19_gennaio_11/colpe-dell-emergenza-migranti-salvini-conte-dimaio-dacb3282-15e0-11e9-9cd3-6f68d3bb44a0.shtml.

based on a standard of living that was normalized in the preceding decades and promised by the modern welfare state. Just as the *Corriere della Sera* labeled the conflict between Italian occupiers and non-EU migrants a "social war" in more recent years, newspapers in northern Italy in the 1970s characterized occupations involving southern Italian migrants and other disadvantaged tenants a "war between the poor" among compatriots of the same country.

By comparing two industrial cities – Turin, Italy and Frankfurt am Main, West Germany – this study uses housing occupations and other protest actions as an understudied lens to illuminate how southern Italian migrants faced social and political exclusion both within their nation-state and within what was then the EEC throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Though south to north migration patterns post-WWII began in the 1950s, early southern Italian migrants – often referred to as *meridionali* due to their point of origin in the south – were frequently billeted in single bunks when they first arrived, at times provided by their employers. However, as they either married or sent for their families to join them, migrants had to procure family accommodations. Thus, this study begins in the 1960s when housing became one of the most pressing problems for migrants due to the strain of family formation or reunification. I also selected the 1960s as urban renewal plans pursued by many city administrations in the latter part of this decade further exacerbated housing shortages as low-income housing areas were slated for redevelopment. Newly zoned business areas, combined with cultural discrimination, often relegated *meridionali* to apartments that they shared with other families, run-down buildings with little to no heating or running water, or even converted animal stalls – all of which they generally paid more for in comparison to long-time residents. Some *meridionali* and others who shared their socioeconomic circumstances pushed back on precarious housing conditions by engaging in collective action, namely rent strikes and housing occupations, drawing on strategies

and tactics popularized by the protest movements of the late 1960s. The importance of these activists as both allies and models to migrants' actions in the 1970s offers a third and final reason this study starts when it does.

I argue that migrants' actions had implications beyond the immediate need for safe and affordable shelter; rather they helped to articulate a critique of migrants' position within the existing sociopolitical order while simultaneously pressing for an expansion of access to the so-called modern welfare state. By taking inspiration from what historian Kathleen Canning has recently conceptualized as "participatory citizenship," I show how migrants' protest actions reformulated definitions of citizenship and subsequently who had access to the aid and protection of social services.[4] By marching in the streets, occupying municipal offices, and taking over apartment buildings, *meridionali* and other socioeconomically disadvantaged residents enacted with Judith Butler has characterized as an "embodied form of calling into question the inchoate and powerful dimensions of reigning notions of the political," the social, and the economic.[5] Instead of acting as the temporary residents or second-class neighbors that other community members construed them as, *meridionali* redefined the boundaries of citizenship and belonging as they articulated their claims to the right to housing and engaged in contest in order to realize their aims.

Why Southern Italian Migrants? The Case for a Comparative Study

Why did *meridionali* leave their hometowns? Southern Italy and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia have historically been areas of emigration due to long-standing socioeconomic

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[4] Kathleen Canning, "Reflections on the Vocabulary of Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany" in Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008), 214-232.
[5] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2015), 9.

disparities.[6] In fact, the concept of the "Southern Question" first appeared in a small daily broadsheet in Naples in 1864.[7] The "mezzogiorno," or term for the southern regions that had previously comprised the regions of the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, was continually characterized by weaker economic development, a reliance on agricultural production, higher birthrates, lower rates of literacy, and the influence of unofficial governing bodies. In part due to some of these economic and logistic differences, cultural distinctions between northern and southern Italy did and continue to be superimposed over inhabitants' mental geography. Consistently compared with the "industrious modernity of the north," the *mezzogiorno* "was inferiorised as the racialized object of anthropological and biological categories" and viewed as having more in common with Africa and the Arab world.[8] As a result, northerners often expressed their biases toward their southern compatriots in terms of reproduction, cleanliness, criminality, and public order.

Given its long and divisive history, it is no surprise that following the Second World War, the effects of a rapid industrial expansion in northern Italy failed to trickle down in equal parts into places like Calabria, Puglia, Campania, Abruzzi, the Basilicata, and the islands of Sardinia and Sicily. Postwar conditions only exacerbated the socioeconomic position of southern Italians. In the recollections of southern Italian migrants, most refer to the seeming impossibility of bettering one's economic position if one were to remain in their place of origin. In recounting her childhood in Calabria, for example, Vincenza Brancato related, "You worked in the fields.

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[6] For an excellent overview of Italian emigration, including questions of creating an Italian identity when such a large number of its population lived outside of its geographic boundaries, see Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[7] Guido Pescosolido, "Italy's Southern Question: Long-standing Thorny Issues and Current Problems," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 24, no. 3 (2019): 442.

[8] Iain Chambers, "The 'Southern Question'…Again," in Andrea Mammone, Ercole Giap Parini, and Giuseppe A. Veltri, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Italy: History, Politics, Society* (London/New York: Routledge, 2015), 14. See also John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1960-1900* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

There was no other possibility."[9] The lack of opportunities in their hometowns thus spurred the exodus of able-bodied workers from the *mezzogiorno* for many generations.

Figure 0.1 A "Sun Train" Traveling from Palermo to Turin[10]

Turin is one of the case studies for this project because it was one of several popular internal destinations for *meridionali* during the so-called "boom years." Between 1955 and 1975, four million southerners left rural and sparsely populated towns for industrial centers within Italy, such as Turin.[11] Due to the demand for labor, the Turin-based automobile giant Fiat even organized special trains, called "sun trains," to bring *meridionali* workers to their plants. By the mid-1960s, Fiat accounted for 80% of Turin's industrial activity, tripling its workforce between 1953 and 1971.[12] Between 1951 and 1961 the city of Turin, which had previously been a small satellite city, grew from 720,000 inhabitants to 1,025,000 inhabitants, an increase of 42.5% in

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[9] Interview conducted by author with Vincenza Brancato and Giovanna Graneuto in Frankfurt, October 11, 2018.
[10] Image labeled as public domain, accessed April 7, 2021, https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Treno_del_sole.jpg.
[11] Nazareno Panichella, *Meridionali al Nord: Migrazioni interne e società italiana dal dopoguerra ad oggi* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2014), 55-56.
[12] Centro On Line Storia e Cultura dell'Industria and ISMEL – Istituto per la Memoria e la Cultura del Lavoro dell'Impresa e dei Diritti Sociali, "Torino e le Fabbriche: Percorsi multimediali sulla storia industrial della città," 11, accessed January 25, 2021,
https://www.fondazionescuola.it/sites/default/files/allegati_iniziative/laygt_torinofabbriche_03.pdf.

one decade.[13] By 1971, it had grown over 50% once more, reaching over 1,800,000 residents.[14] The rapid increase of residents, combined with a public housing system riddled with problems, meant that the industrial center quickly faced a housing crisis.

Meridionali did not only migrate internally, but frequently left the borders of their nation-state for employment. West Germany was a popular destination due to its proximity to Italy, as well as its high demand for workers. Moreover, industry in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in certain regions was growing at such high rates, it became difficult to supply the labor power needed to keep up. To supplement the small number of West German workers available, the FRG signed its first bilateral labor agreement with Italy in 1955, followed by other nations in subsequent years, making it even easier for southern Italians to travel north through official recruitment. As noted by historian Rita Chin and others, West German government and business leaders anticipated that workers would quickly return home once the economy stabilized; they were so convinced that this would be the case that native residents termed Italian and other foreign workers "*Gastarbeiter*," literally "guest workers," based on the assumption that their stay was only temporary.[15] Italian nationals comprised the largest group of foreigners in the FRG until 1970, when they numbered 573,600.[16]

Alongside Wolfsburg, Cologne, and Stuttgart, Frankfurt am Main and its outskirts was one of the West German cities drawing a large number of *Gastarbeiter* for both the construction and automobile industry, which is one of the reasons for selecting it as a case study. In 1961, 20,000 migrants lived in Frankfurt, and that number quickly doubled to about 40,000 in just two

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[13] Nicola Tranfaglia, ed., *Gli anni della repubblica: Storia di Torino* V. IX. (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1999), 54.
[14] Città di Torino – Direzione Servizi Civici – Settore Stattistica e Toponomastica, "I numeri dell'immigrazione Italiana a Torino, 1910-2011," (Città di Torino, 2011), 28, accessed December 30, 2020, https://www.ilmattinodifoggia.it/userUpload/immigraziane_torino_2011.pdf.
[15] Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 47.
[16] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*, 62. Italians would soon be overtaken by Turkish workers the very next year, with the Turkish population rising to 652,8000 in 1971.

years.[17] Due to the large number of Italian immigrants in the city, the Italian general consul

proposed the building of a "centro italiano," or Italian center, in 1961 to provide "a piece of

home," such as books, films, and recreation areas.[18] The number of Italian and other migrants

continued to grow in ensuing years. By 1971, one of Frankfurt's newspapers, the *Frankfurter*

Rundschau (FR), reported that one in every seven Frankfurters came from outside of the

Republic in an article entitled "More Foreigners Than Ever Before."[19]

      I selected Turin and Frankfurt as case studies due to their economic and demographic

similarities. Both served as popular points of destination for *meridionali* and had industries in

need of low-skilled workers, including companies such as Fiat in Turin and the Philipp

Holzmann construction company in Frankfurt. In addition, each was the site of significant

housing occupations in which *meridionali* took part. Though a vast amount of scholarship on

squatting focuses on housing occupations in Rome and West Berlin, I deliberately chose to move

away from these cities for several reasons. First, they are already at the center of extensive

research.[20] Second, the timeframes and characterization of occupations in Berlin and Rome are

not suitable for comparison. There is little evidence that many Italian migrants took part in

[17] Ernst Karpf, *Eine Stadt und ihre Einwanderer: 700 Jahre Migrationsgeschichte in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2013), 131.

[18] Karpf, *Eine Stadt und ihre Einwanderer*, 141-144.

[19] "Mehr Ausländer als je zuvor," *Frankfurter Rundschau* (FR)*,* April 6, 1971.

[20] For studies on Berlin, see Rainer Nitsche and Otto Glagau, *Häuserkämpfe: 1872, 1920, 1945, 1982* (Berlin: Transit, 1981); Harald Bodenschatz, Volker Heise and Jochen Korfmacher, *Schluß mit der Zerstörung? Stadterneuerung und städtische Opposition in West-Berlin, Amsterdam und London* (Gieβen: Anabas-Verlag, 1983); Roger Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany: Movements on the Left and Rights Since the 1960s* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); Andrej Holm and Armin Kuhn, "Squatting and Urban Renewal: The Interaction of Squatter Movements and Strategies of Urban Restructuring in Berlin," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 644-658; Alexander Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations: The Spatial Politics of Squatting in Berlin* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); Armin Kuhn, *Vom Häuserkampf zur neoliberalen Stadt: Besetzungsbewegungen und Stadterneuerung in Berlin und Barcelona* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2014); Niko Rollmann, *Der lange Kampf: die "Cuvry"-Siedlung in Berlin* (Berlin: Selbstverlag Niko Rollman, 2016); azozomox and Armin Kuhn, "The Cycles of Squatting in Berlin (1969-2016)," in Miguel A. Martínez López, ed., *The Urban Politics of Squatters' Movements* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018). For studies on Rome, see Maurizio Marcelloni, "Urban Movements and Political Struggles in Italy," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 3, no. 1-3, 2nd ed. (1979): 251-268; Cristiano Armati, *La scintilla: dalla valle alla metropoli, una storia antagonista della lotta per la casa* (Rome: Fandango libri, 2015).

occupations in West Berlin; instead, most studies center on Turkish or Kurdish migrant participants beginning in the 1980s when they focus on migrants at all. Moreover, due to Rome's position as Italy's capital, it was the site of rural to urban migration but has historically boasted a cosmopolitan identity. As a result, occupations in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Rome were characterized as "class conflict;" there were not as many distinctions between southern immigrants and long-time residents as there were in the north, thus making registers of discrimination less comparable than somewhere like Turin.[21] Third, the aforementioned cities are not representative of housing struggles elsewhere – West Berlin was an exceptional case due to its position on the front lines of the Cold War and the Vatican and Catholic leadership featured prominently in responses to occupiers in Rome.

In terms of focusing on southern Italians, the fact that economic conditions spurred *meridionali* to migrate both internally and externally allows for a tighter historical comparison across country boundaries. Moreover, concentrating on one particular migrant population limits the number of variables being compared, granting better access to the determinants of marginalization and the outcomes of *meridionali*'s resistance to it. In addition, as members of the EEC, Italians were theoretically better protected than their Turkish, Spanish, or Yugoslav counterparts in the FRG. Consequently, they were supposedly entitled to similar residency rights and protections as in their homeland, also establishing a more comparable plane with regard to their claims to housing rights. By examining the experiences of *meridionali* in two nation-states, one of which was their own, I am thus more easily able to demonstrate similarities and differences between registers of housing discrimination and how migrant occupiers articulated

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[21] See, for instance, Maurizio Marcelloni, "Roma: momenti della lotta per la casa" in Adreina Daolio, ed., *Le lotte per la casa in Italia: Milano, Torino, Roma, Napoli*, 2nd ed. (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976), 85-124. Though my study is also one of class conflict, those socioeconomic classes were often coded in terms of regional identity.

their claims. Furthermore, connections across the border, such as the transnational *Unione Inquilini* (Tenants' Union) spotlight instances of shared information or borrowed tactics for migrant tenants pushing back on their exclusion.

Having case studies in two nation-states also foregrounds differences in housing legislation and the reaction of state actors to housing occupations. Though city administrations in both contexts eventually made concessions for migrant and other occupiers, federal housing reform and approaches diverged. In a slight twist of irony, this study highlights how *meridionali* in the FRG had access to a more equitable subsidy-based housing system beginning in 1971 even as West German social policy embraced neoliberalism much sooner, as opposed to *meridionali* in Italy who often had to wait on long lists to be assigned to public housing. Finally, my comparative perspective partially answers the call of historian Lutz Raphael, who, when referencing the migration patterns of *meridionali* in a brief overview of political, social, and economic transitions in the FRG and northern Italy in the 1970s, posited that "in both countries the recent history of this social subgroup of the industrial working class has yet to be written."[22]

Challenges and Contributions to the Literature

The motivations, experiences, and end goals of migrant housing occupiers in Italy and the FRG (and elsewhere) have been understudied. As a former West German activist who wishes to be known simply as amantine reflected in 2011, "the migrant share of the housing struggle…has been little or not at all respected," including by amantine themself.[23] For example, researchers have given little nuance to the types of alliances formed within occupation communities or

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[22] Lutz Raphael, "The 1970s – a Period of Structural Rupture in Germany and Italy?" in Martin Baumeister, Bruno Bonomo and Dieter Schott, eds., *Cities Contested: Urban Politics, Heritage, and Social Movements in Italy and West Germany in the 1970s* (Frankfurt/M: Campus, 2017), 47-48.

[23] amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf*, (Münster: UNRAST-Verlag, 2011), 207. amantine does not capitalize their name.

diverging outlooks on occupiers' negotiations with city officials. As a result, migrants'

experiences are frequently overshadowed by broader narratives produced by native-born students

or self-identifying activists who did not face the same level of difficulty finding housing in the

first place or the possibility of being deported as a consequence of their participation. At times,

participants or supporters with more overtly radical goals referenced migrant occupiers, such as

the "Italians down the hall" or the "*meridionali* in the building" without saying much else about

the occupiers who may have acted differently than themselves. As historians Freia Anders and

Alexander Sedlmaier have recently pointed out in their discussion of squatting movements

throughout western Europe during the 1970s and 1980s, "the fruits of this research often entered

the politics of activists" – in large part because a significant portion of the secondary literature

and primary sources available have been produced or influenced by activists themselves.[24]

When migrant participants are brought into the picture, they are often characterized as the

"new proletariat," a sub-population supported or aided by extraparliamentary or otherwise

politicized groups. In fact, literature on the Turinese context is dominated by *Lotta Continua*, an

extraparliamentary group that formed in Turin in 1969 whose initiative "We're Taking Over the

City" promoted radical strategies for eventually wresting power from authorities. In general,

Lotta Continua viewed housing occupations as a steppingstone; a number of their own

publications specifically refer to the action as a tool in inciting a far-reaching revolution.[25] There

is one slim volume about the largest housing occupation in Turin, the Falchera, entitled

L'Occupazione fu bellissima (The Occupation was Beautiful) written from the perspective of

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[24] See the Introduction of Freia Anders and Alexander Sedlmaier, eds., *Public Goods versus Economic Interests: Global Perspectives on the History of Squatting*, New York: Routledge 2017, 6.
[25] For books discussing *Lotta Continua*'s role in housing occupations, see Luigi Bobbio, *Storia di Lotta Continua* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1988); Elena Petricola, *I diritti degli esclusi nelle lotte degli anni settanta. Lotta Continua* (Rome: Edizioni Associate Editrice Internazionale, 2002); Stefania Voli, *Quando il privato diventa politico: Lotta Continua 1968-1976* (Rome: Edizioni Associate, 2006); and Aldo Cazzuollo, *I ragazzi che volevano fare la rivoluzione, 1968-1978: storia di Lotta Continua* (Milan: Mondadori, 2015).

women who identified with the nascent second-wave feminist movement. In a similar vein, the two female activist authors treat occupiers as subjects to be helped and the text is written with specific sociopolitical aims in mind. Finally, three individuals who participated in the housing protest movements in Turin co-authored one small book chapter in a 1976 edited volume entitled *Le lotte per la casa in Italia* (*The Struggles for Housing in Italy*). Though their contribution looks at smaller occupations preceding the Falchera in Turin and emphasizes that most participants were migrants, its range is limited to six months in 1970.[26] As a result, my research extends this timeline beyond the two occupations discussed by participants in the book chapter in *Le lotte per la casa in Italia* to broaden our understanding of migrants' initiatives for expanding equitable access to affordable housing in Turin through occupation and other tactics.

Activists have also been the primary focus in the literature surrounding housing occupations in Frankfurt. The *Häuserrat* – a council for occupied houses and those on rent strike in Frankfurt – is the entity most featured in Frankfurt-specific scholarship. The Häuserrat's own publication that features the accountings of mainly radicalized students and self-identifying activists – entitled *Wohnungskampf in Frankfurt* (*Housing Fight in Frankfurt*) – is most widely referenced and cited among researchers.[27] As forced clearings of occupations led to violence in the streets, most publications focus on the temporary barricades and violence associated with housing protests in the early 1970s, including the Häuserrat's. The occupations that led to an escalated level of conflict were chiefly led by students and the "spontaneist" *Frankfurter Revolutionärer Kampf* (Frankfurt Revolutionary Struggle). Also known as *Spontis*, some anti-institutional and anti-doctrinaire activists associated with the *Frankfurter Revolutionärer Kampf*

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[26] Di Guido Piraccini, Eugenio Musso, and Ricardo Roscelli, "Cronaca delle lotte per la casa nei quartieri di Torino (gennaio-agosto 1970)," in Adreina Daolio, ed., *Le lotte per la casa in Italia*, 66-84.
[27] Häuserrat Frankfurt, eds., *Wohnungskampf in Frankfurt* (Munich: Trikont-Verlag, 1974).

believed that "protests that did not employ violent means were bound to be ineffective" in countering the structural violence of the state.[28] This viewpoint thus exacerbated tensions between many of the housing occupations and state-affiliated entities, such as the police.

As a result of the visibility of *Spontis* and Frankfurt students, most scholars use the lens of groups who saw themselves as acting in certain politicized registers, subsequently failing to look at migrant occupiers on their own terms. This literature includes research by contemporaneous researchers such as Axel Wenzel and Jürgen Roth, as well as by present-day scholars such as Alexander Sedlmaier and amantine, both of whom acknowledge their source base as activist-driven and only include Frankfurt as one of many sites of contention.[29] The historian Sven Reichardt even goes so far to claim that "the Frankfurt housing occupiers were tightly tied to the urban Sponti culture," leaving little room for other motivations and participants.[30] The edited anthology, *Häuserkampf 1: Wir wollen alles – Der Beginn einer Bewegung*, shares the dominant narrative of activists in its introduction to housing occupations in Frankfurt, then jumps to occupations in the 1980s which were much more politically motivated.[31] Similarly, co-authors Barbara Sichtermann and Kai Sichtermann recently released a book filled with a plethora of oral interviews; as musicians part of the rock band *Ton Steine*

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[28] Alexander Sedlmaier, *Consumption and Violence: Radical Protest in Cold-War West Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2014), 161.

[29] Axel Wenzel, Jürgen Roth and Häuserrat Frankfurt, *Frankfurt. Zerstörung – Terror – Folter. Im Namen des Gesetzes. Flugschrift Nr. 1* (Frankfurt, Megapress, 1974); Jürgen Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt: die Zerstörung einer Stadt* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1975); amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf*; amantine, *"Die Häuser denen, die drin wohnen!": kleine Geschichte der Häuserkampfe in Deutschland* (Münster: Unrast, 2012); Sedlmaier, *Consumption and Violence*. See also Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Fischer in Frankfurt. Karriere Eines Außenseiters* (Hamburg: Hamburg Edition, 2001) which outlines the experience of Joseph Martin "Joschka" Fischer, one of the most prominent *Spontis* who participated in the Frankfurt housing occupation scene and who later went on to serve as Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany.

[30] Reichardt draws this conclusion from an essay by Wolfgang Karushaar. See Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Suhrkampf, 2014), 514. His discussion of occupations in Frankfurt also focus primarily on those involving students and other self-identifying activists.

[31] Willi Baer and Karl-Heinz Dellwo, eds., *Häüserkampf I: Wir wollen alles – Der Beginn einer Bewegung* (Hamburg: Laika Verlag, 2012).

Scherben who took part in housing occupations, their book is overwhelmingly skewed to the West German experience.[32]

Literature that focuses on the activist perspective, such as the works mentioned above, fails to account for occupations independently initiated by migrants without soliciting the help of said groups and/or migrant occupiers who intentionally distanced themselves from overtly political associations as many city officials became increasingly concerned with internal security. My research has found that most migrant and other marginalized tenants pushed for access to state aid and were thus willing to negotiate with city administrations for assistance. However, very little scholarship has concentrated on migrants within the Frankfurt housing occupation movement. One brief article by Serhat Kerakayali and portions of one chapter in a monograph covering 700 years of migration to Frankfurt by Ernst Karpf are notable exceptions that incorporate aspects of the migrant experience.[33] Also of note is a 1980 published volume, *Stadtzerstörung und Stadtteilkampf* by Ernst Stracke, which mentions migrants on occasion, but mainly treats housing occupations as grounded in West German social movements.[34] I move research beyond Kerakayali, Karpf, and Stracke's work by reinserting more of the migrant viewpoint and examining occupations initiated by *meridionali* that are not discussed by any of the above three authors. As a result, this study views migrant housing activism as part and parcel to both housing occupation and postwar history, rather than a side story.

As a whole, a large share of research specific to housing occupations in West Germany, Italy, or western Europe more generally focuses on urban occupiers who pursued an alternative

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[32] Barbara Sichtermann and Kai Sichtermann, *Das ist unser Haus: Eine Geschichte der Hausbesetzung* (Berlin, Aufbau, 2017).

[33] Serhat Kerakayali, "*Lotta Continua* in Frankfurt, *Türken-Terror* in Köln: Migrantische Kämpfe in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik," *grundnisse: zeitschrift für linke theorie & debatte*, accessed December 8, 2020, http://www.grundrisse.net/grundrisse14/14serhat_karakayali.htm. Ernst Karpf, *Eine Stadt und ihre Einwanderer*.

[34] Ernst Stracke, *Stadtzerstörung und Stadtteilkampf: Innerstädtische Umstrukturierungsprozesse, Wohnungsnot und soziale Bewegungen in Frankfurt am Main* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1980).

milieu, or what some occupiers termed more "autonomous" forms of living.[35] One of the most

prolific researchers of urban squatting movements, Alexander Vasudevan, frames occupations as

spaces of "collective world-making – a place to quite literally build an alternative habitus."[36] In

addition to prioritizing the experiences of those who viewed occupation as a tool to counter

dominant modes of production and social organization, Vasudevan and other researchers often

depict non-migrant occupiers as spearheading housing occupations, generating a viewpoint

steeped in paternalism that discounts the initiative and agency of migrant occupiers.[37] The focus

on autonomy and non-migrant occupiers has subsequently led some scholars to characterize

squatting in the Global North as "an expression of the youth and/or autonomist movements that

emerged simultaneously" who had a "political agenda" in contrast to broad-based movements in

the Global South triggered by social need and claims to rights.[38] Indeed, the work of Pierpaolo

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[35] Some examples of activist-driven narratives that center on autonomy or alternative lifestyles include the following: Geronimo, *Feuer und Flamme. Zur Geschichte der Autonomen* (Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv 1990); George Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1997); Andrej Holm and Armin Kuhn, "Squatting and Urban Renewal: The Interaction of Squatter Movements and Strategies of Urban Restructuring in Berlin," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 644-658; Andres Suttner, *"Beton brennt": Hausbesetzer und Selbstverwaltung im Berlin, Wien und Zürich der 80er* (Vienna: LIT, 2011); Hans Pruijt, "The Logic of Urban Squatting," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37 (2013): 19-45; Squatting Europe Kollective, ed., *Squatting in Europe: Radical Spaces, Urban Struggles* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013); Squatting Europe Kollektive, ed., *The Squatters' Movement in Europe: Commons and Autonomy as Alternatives to Capitalism*, (London: Pluto Press, 2014); Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft*; Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Das alternative Milieu: antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010); Pierpaolo Mudu and Sutapa Chattopadhyay, eds., *Migration, Squatting and Radical Autonomy* (New York, Routledge, 2018).
[36] Alexander Vasudevan, "The Autonomous City: Towards a Critical Geography of Occupation," *Progress in Human Geography* 39, 3 (2015): 318.
[37] For instance, Vasudevan refers to the housing occupiers in West Germany as those who "responded to critical housing shortages through the occupation of empty buildings and the development of tactics to support working-class and migrant communities who often have suffered severe housing deprivation." This type of portrayal implies that non-migrant occupiers spearheaded housing occupations, leaving out the experiences of migrant occupiers who independently occupied or instigated their own occupations prior to or without the support of non-migrant occupiers. See also Alexander Vasudevan, "Dramaturgies of Dissent: The Spatial Politics" of Squatting in Berlin, 1968-" *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 3 (2011): 282-303; Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations: The Spatial Politics of Squatting in Berlin* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015) and Vasudevan, *The Autonomous City: A History of Urban Squatting* (New York: Verso 2017).
[38] Anders and Sedlmaier, *Public Goods versus Economic Interests*, 6; Aguilera and Smart, "Squatting, North, South and Turnabout," 33.

Mudu and Gianni Piazza examines one particular form of occupation, in which youth created autonomous spaces by taking over social centers in Italy and elsewhere.[39] The dominant narrative of autonomy and alternative living gives little space to differing motivations that co-existed within occupation communities, such as some migrant occupiers who wished to remain in private family units or who were amenable to state assistance.

My work amplifies migrants' voices within occupation movements in Frankfurt and Turin in order to complicate the narrative that housing occupations in western Europe were a tool for social and political upheaval. This is not to deny that some migrants identified as activists or that their actions resulted in political or social changes. Rather, one of my overarching conclusions is that migrants and other occupiers of low socioeconomic status pushed for *reform* over *revolution*. It is in this vein that I see overlap with the motivations of housing occupiers in the Global South, namely that migrants occupied in order to protest their precarious living conditions and pressure municipal authorities to extend or remedy the administration of social services rather than attempting a "radical challenge" to existing political structures or "conventional ways of everyday life."[40] Though scholars Thomas Aguilera and Alan Smart view need-based occupation as a generalized difference between squatting movements in the Global North and the Global South, I complicate this distinction by arguing that migrant occupiers in Italy and the former FRG were motivated in ways similar to those demanding access to shelter in countries such as Chile, Brazil, India, Thailand, and elsewhere.[41] Indeed, migrant and other

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[39] Representative examples include Gianni Piazza, "Il movimento delle occupazioni di squat e centri sociali in Europa. Una introduzione," *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 5, no. 1 (2012): 5-18; Pierpaolo Mudu, "I Centri Sociali Italiani: Verso Tre Decadi di Occupazioni e di Spazi Autogestiti," *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 5, no. 1 (2012): 69-92; Pierpaolo Mudu, "At the Intersection of Anarchists and Autonomists: Autogestioni and Centri Sociali," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 11, no. 3 (2012): 413-438.
[40] See Thomas Aguilera and Alan Smart, "Squatting, North, South and Turnabout: A Dialogue Comparing Illegal Housing Research," in Freia Anders and Alexander Sedlmaier, eds., *Public Goods versus Economic Interests: Global Perspectives on the History of Squatting* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 39.
[41] See Aguilera and Smart, "Squatting, North, South and Turnabout."

socioeconomically disadvantaged occupiers related to me in oral interviews that they preferred the term "occupier" to "squatter," as the latter was frequently more connected with individuals and groups with more overt or radical sociopolitical goals, or was tied to a negative connotation of illegitimacy.[42] In spite of their differences, however, migrants did occupy with activists with more radical agendas and received resources and assistance from extraparliamentary groups. As a result, my research also explores the complicated relationship between migrant occupiers and more socio-politically radicalized occupiers or allied groups.

In addition to adding migrant occupiers' narratives to the literature on housing occupations, I also contribute to the historiography of internal and external Italian migration. As previously mentioned, historian Lutz Raphael has already pointed to the dearth of scholarship on the history of Italian migrants to northern Italy and West Germany.[43] Through a comparative perspective, I seek to begin to change this. My investigation of *meridionali*'s housing claims in Turin builds on nationally-bounded migration scholarship, showing how one does not necessarily need to leave one's country of origin to face discrimination and barriers in realizing the rights and privileges of citizenship. As such, this study joins prior studies conducted by Michelangela Di Giacomo, Stefano Gallo, Nazareno Panichella detailing the experiences of individuals from *mezzogiorno* once they reached northern Italy.[44]

Scholarship on Italian migrants in West Germany has often concentrated on the Volkswagen factory in Wolfsburg, such as the monograph undertaken by Grazia Prontera.[45] As

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[42] To honor their perspective and preference, I rarely use the term "squatter" unless using historical actors' own terminology.

[43] Lutz Raphael, "The 1970s – a Period of Structural Rupture in Germany and Italy?," 47-48.

[44] Michelangela Di Giacomo, *Da Porta Nuova a Corso Traiano: movimento operaio e immigrazione meridionale a Torino, 1955-1969* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2013); Stefano Gallo, *Senza attraversare le frontiere: le migrazioni interne dall'unità ad oggi* (Rome: Laterza, 2012); Nazareno Panichella, *Meridionali al Nord*.

[45] Grazia Prontera, *Partire, Tornare, Restare? L'esperienza migratoria dei lavoratori italiani nella Repubblica Federale Tedesca nel secondo dopoguerra* (Milan: Edizioni Angelo Guerinin e Associati, 2009),

pointed out over a decade ago by Gustavo Corni and Christof Dipper, however, there is a general

paucity of research on Italian migrants in West Germany and what exists is largely subsumed

into overviews of migrant workers in the FRG more broadly.[46] Little has changed in this regard.

One notable exception is Roberto Sala, who analyzes West German media directed toward

Italian immigrants.[47] The reason for this is clear. The history of *Gastarbeiter* in the FRG is most

closely associated with Turkish immigrants, who were the largest migrant population that

remained after West Germany's official recruitment of foreign labor stopped and the immigrant

group that remains most distinct in terms of religious and cultural differences. The majority of

Italian migrants may have returned home in the mid-1970s, however the reforms they influenced

continued to effect immigrants of other nationalities in subsequent decades. By examining the

experiences of Italians in Frankfurt, I thus broaden the scholarship on labor migration to West

Germany by adding to recent research on Turkish guestworkers completed by Rita Chin, Sarah

Thomsen Vierra, Lauren Stokes, and Brian Van Wyck.[48]

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[46] See Gustavo Corni and Christof Dipper, *Italiener in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Kontakte, Wahrnehmungen, Einflüsse* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2012). For broader narratives see Klaus Bade, ed., *Auswanderer – Wanderarbeiter – Gastarbeiter: Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19 Jahrhundert* (Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae, 1984); Ernst Klee, ed., *Gastarbeiter: Analysen und Berichte* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkampf, 1981); Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers*, translated by William Templer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

[47] See Roberto Sala, *Fremde Worte: Medien für 'Gastarbeiter' in der Bundesrepublik im Spannungsfeld von Außen- und Sozialpolitik* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2011); Roberto Sala and Giovanna Massariello Merzagora, *Radio Colonia: Emigrati italiani in Germania scrivono alla radio* (Milano: UTET SpA, 2008). Roberto Sala has also written one journal article of a general overview of Italian migration to the FRG, "Vom 'Fremdarbieter' zum 'Gastarbeiter:' Die Anwerbung italienischer Arbeitskräfte für die deutsche Wirtschaft (1938-1973)," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 55, no. 1 (2007): 93-120.

[48] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*; Sara Thomsen Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany: Immigration, Space, and Belonging, 1961-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Lauren Stokes, *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Brian Van Wyck, "Turkish Teachers and Imams and the Making of Turkish German Difference," (PhD dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, 2019).

Why Occupy?

One of the main research questions guiding this investigation centers on motivation: why would migrants engage in such risky forms of protest (rent strikes and occupations) when they faced forcible eviction, imprisonment, or potentially deportation as a consequence of their involvement? In order to answer such a complex question, this project evaluates the socioeconomic barriers that *meridionali* faced in obtaining decent housing, especially in terms of discrimination and availability. I also evaluate migrants' living conditions once they were able to find somewhere to stay. In doing so, I argue that migrants engaged in occupations because it often seemed their only recourse due to the precarious living conditions they inhabited.

As will be discussed in chapters one and two, price, availability, and conditions of housing were cause for concern for many *meridionali* in both Italy and West Germany. As both cities embarked on plans to redevelop run-down city centers, areas that had previously provided low-income housing were bought up by investors hoping to attract businesses and tenants seeking luxury housing. In the West German context, federal social housing policy had already begun to move toward privatization, favoring housing subsidies instead of widescale public housing construction. As migrants were prohibited from even applying for state-sponsored rental assistance until 1971, two of the only options available for housing in Frankfurt were to live in buildings divided up into small rooms rented at astronomical prices or to temporarily live in dilapidated buildings that were slated for demolition but which investors still rented out while waiting for the necessary permits. A 1972 study commissioned by the city of Frankfurt reported that only 30% of foreign families lived in apartments that met a standard of living comparable to their West German neighbors, defined as having electricity, running water, "washing facilities,"

sufficient heating, and a toilet.[49] In addition, 79% of migrant respondents conveyed that the rent was too high, and 57% that the living space was too small.[50]

Comparatively speaking, *meridionali* in Turin faced similar challenges in terms of price and access, even though they qualified for public housing and state assistance as formal citizens. In 1972, many apartments in downtown Turin were rented at 30,000 lire/month, almost the equivalent of an entire month's salary at Fiat.[51] Public housing was not significantly more economical; though housing production in the private sector increased in the late 1960s and early 1970s, building in the public sector declined, making rents particularly high in newer public housing.[52] According to a report "The Housing Problem" issued by one of Italy's major labor union confederations, CISL (Italian Confederation of Worker's Trade Unions), public funding for housing decreased from 7% in 1968 to 3.3% in 1973, the same year in which only 4,286 apartments were built in Turin despite its population more than quadrupling in the twenty years prior.[53] Hampered by scandal within the state-affiliated housing association and a deadlock in parliament, Italy as a whole had the second highest per capita housing shortage of all western and eastern European countries in 1972, completing only 4.8 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants in that year.[54] It was in such desperate straits with seemingly little help from social services in either nation-state that migrants took their situation into their own hands and instigated or participated in housing occupations.

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[49] Maria Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt: Eine empirische Untersuchhung am Beispiel Frankfurt* (Frankfurt/M: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 151.
[50] Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt*, 156.
[51] Adreina Daolio, "Le lotte urbane per la casa" in Francesco Indovino, ed., *Lo spreco edilizio* (Venice: Marsilio, 1972), 206.
[52] Marcelloni, "Urban Movements and Political Struggles in Italy," 255.
[53] Polo '900, Collection: Vera Nocentili, File: BXII F 117/B 1972-76.
[54] Thomas Angotti, *Housing in Italy: Urban Development and Political Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), 7-8.

On the Meaning of Space

Because migrant residents faced significant challenges in obtaining adequate living spaces, they used public and private spaces to make their claims to better housing access and aid. The urban context is thus crucial to understanding occupations and related activities as particular forms of embodied and collective action. City redevelopment plans induced migrants' housing precarity and spurred alliances with other groups opposed to the ill effects of urban renewal, as felt particularly in specific neighborhoods. Migrants on rent strike marched through the streets and carried signs declaring that rent should only equate to 10% of one's salary. Occupations took place in physical spaces within bounded geographical communities. Painted sheets hung from balconies where passers-by could read them. Furthermore, leaflets, flyers, underground publications, and other communications were handed out or attached to telephone poles or other objects located in public spaces. In examining these collective actions within urban spaces, I borrow from the theoretical contributions of anthropologists and urban sociologists, such as Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells, David Harvey, and James Holston, to consider the role of space and the means whereby groups of people use urban spaces to assert what Lefebvre first termed "the right to the city."

Acknowledging Henri Lefebvre's contention that space is social, political, and productive, I map out how and where occupations, rent strikes, and marches took place, including discussions of spaces within occupation communities. I consider space itself as a historical force, shaping identities and being shaped by the human interactions that take place within it. As James Holston posits, "the city remains a vital site for the development of citizenship as the lived space not only of its uncertainties but also of its emergent forms" because it is where individuals of different socioeconomic class, political affiliation, race, gender, culture,

etc. rub shoulders on a day-to-day basis.[55] This study falls in line Manuel Castell's 1983 proposition that "only by analyzing the relationship between people and urbanization will we be able to understand **cities and citizens** at the same time. Such a relationship is most evident when people mobilize to change the city in order to change society."[56] As migrants mobilized to change the city by occupying spaces and making demands for decent housing, they simultaneously changed society by insisting on greater recognition within their new communities. As a result, I extend and expand historian Raika Espahangizi's claim that migrants "made forceful use of their rights, made direct demands towards the municipalit[ies]…and therefore acted as citizens of the city, who had a right to normal housing."[57]

Of Rights and Responsibilities

Occupiers often portrayed their housing claims in terms of "rights" – or the "right" to safe and affordable housing. Who was responsible for guaranteeing said rights? Where did these rights come from? Article 25 of the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services" in addition to "the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."[58] As historian Samuel Moyn highlights, however, it was not until later that human rights would become the predominant language of those seeking to address socioeconomic disparities; at the beginning of the 1970s, it was still a nascent register for putting forth one's

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[55] James Holston, ed., *Cities and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), viii.
[56] Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), xvi. Bolding included in original text.
[57] Raika Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations: Frankfurt in the 1960s and 1970s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 2 (2014): 202.
[58] United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," accessed March 7, 2021, https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/.

claims.[59] Still, this study highlights how rights languages began to transition from political registers to more moral ones on the ground, with migrants frequently reaching for "humane," "civilized," "sufficient," or "safe" to describe the living conditions that they deserved and which they linked to individual dignity and promised social protections. It was a language that,among other things, helped distance them from more radicalized political groups who also occupied. As a result, migrant housing occupiers illuminate, in part, why and how individuals and groups shifted toward the language of human rights in the latter 1970s when "appeal[s] to morality could seem pure even where politics had shown itself to be a soiled and impossible domain."[60]

That being said, the idealized social rights included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights had both a longer history and a contemporaneous need to be recognized and administered by governing apparatuses. In this particular context, the growth of the modern welfare state in the decades following the Second World War built on earlier social insurance programs and rights regimes that sought to offer varying degrees of social protection. Both the Italian "stato sociale" and German "Sozialstaat" are semantically different from the internationally used term "welfare state" as they refer more to a "social state." Each system offered government services that promised to secure a basic standard of living that rested on "legal regulations and protections such as labor laws protecting workers…and housing laws protecting tenants from unlawful eviction and regulating rent increases."[61] Another way to define the aim of the social state is by using T.H. Marshall's idea of "sufficientarism," the purpose of

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[59] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2010).
[60] Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 7, 170.
[61] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000: Recovery and Transformation after Two World Wars*, translated by Liesel Tarquini (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 251. For a monograph specific to the FRG's "Sozialstaat," see Peter C. Caldwell, *Democracy, Capitalism, and the Welfare State: Debating Social Order in Postwar West Germany, 1949-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). For a monograph that compares Italy's "stato sociale" with other European welfare states, see Fulvio Conti and Gianni Silei, *Breve storia dello Stato sociale* (Rome: Carocci editore, 2005).

which was to advance "equality between citizens" by "rais[ing] the level of income or material well-being of those who are below the sufficiency threshold."[62]

In addition to attempts to codify basic living standards within social policy, mass consumption and mass media in the postwar decades also normalized the idea of a sufficient – or even comfortable – standard of living. In other words, "a certain way of living became concretely visible and conceivable to more and more people within a society," and it became "natural to think of it as something everyone had a right to."[63] Frequently propagated by what historian Victoria de Grazia has deemed "America's Market Empire," a sufficient standard of living no longer referred to "the absolute minimum necessary for workers to survive," but an "adequate, healthy and decent standard of living," one measure of which was "one family dwellings and [high] home ownership rates."[64] Though many European elites pushed back on this market-driven method of evening out inequalities, the combination of a permeating American consumerist culture and the linkage between "basic" or "universal" rights and a "decent" standard of living became widespread on both sides of the Atlantic.

The guarantee of a certain standard of living and working conditions was also an important stipulation for Italian trade union leaders in considering any bilateral agreement for workers leaving Italy. In 1947, the secretary of the Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), Giuseppe Di Vittorio, wrote in *L'Unità*, the official newspaper of the Italian Communist Party: "I believe that the Republic, on the one hand, and the Italian General Confederation of Labor, on the other, can allow and encourage Italian emigration abroad only in cases in which

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[62] Maija Aalto-Heinilä, "Social rights and equality: From universal formalism to individualized conditionality," in Toomas Kotkas and Kenneth Veitch, eds., *Social Rights in the Welfare State: Origins and Transformations* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 82.

[63] Aalto-Heinilä, "Social rights and equality," 82.

[64] Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 101-102; Margaret Reid, *Consumers and the Market* (New York: F.S. Crofts, 1939), 22-24 as quoted in de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 102.

they are able to ensure effective protection for the Italian worker and guarantee primordial rights."[65] His use of the term "primordial" seems to designate a specific understanding of natural or basic rights necessary for life. Thus, the 1955 bilateral agreement between Italy and the FRG guaranteed "wages in keeping with union wage agreements and protected contract length, assurance of suitable living quarters, and the right to transfer wages abroad," at least in theory. Initially companies were the entities assigned the responsibility to provide "suitable living quarters" for their employees. However, the definition of "suitable" was so nebulous that housing conditions often varied, at times due to perceived cultural differences and discrimination that resulted in sub-par accommodations and because of a lack of federal or regional guidelines. Moreover, migrant workers' families could not join them until "proving to the authorities that sufficient living space was available."[66] This stipulation was often not proactively enforced, meaning that migrant worker families often procured dismal living spaces at high rates on the private market in order to reunite their families.

Furthermore, though the 1957 Treaty of Rome which formally established the European Economic Community gestured toward idealized social rights in line with broader movements toward greater socioeconomic protection, it, too, fell short. According to historian Rita Chin and others, "citizens of Common Market countries [of which Italy was a part] enjoyed virtually the same labor and residency rights as their German counterparts."[67] However, though the member countries agreed to the free movement of individuals across national boundaries, even that was "subject to limitations justified on grounds of public policy, public safety, and public health"

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[65] As quoted in Grazia Prontera, *Partire, Tornare, Restare?*, 55. This monograph is also a great resource for outlining how the labor recruitment process worked.
[66] Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*, 206.
[67] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*, 50. Historian Ulrich Herbert also makes this same claim in *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*, 214.

according to article 48.[68] In addition, the treaty did not explicitly stipulate housing rights. The only time they are mentioned is in rather vague language in articles 117-118 which state that "the member states agree on the need to promote the improvement of living and working conditions of the workforce." This was to be done through the "harmonization of social systems," yet when the aspects of social services are spelled out, all referred to work and not to housing.[69]

Moreover, later EEC regulations placed the onus of housing responsibility on the immigrant, rather than government-affiliated institutions. EEC regulation 34/64, enacted in March of 1964, stipulated that in order for a worker's family and dependents to be able to reside in a member state outside of their country of origin, "the worker must have accommodation for his family that is considered normal for national workers in the region in which he is employed."[70] Chapter four shows how Frankfurt officials used stipulations such as this, in addition to the 1965 Foreigner Law (which would apply to non-EEC citizens), to threaten migrant occupiers with deportation or removal from the boundaries of the FRG.

As a partial result of these legal and policy loopholes, I indicate that in many ways, migrants' participation in housing occupations points to a questioning of state and supra-state legitimacy – though the guarantee of social rights or a basic standard of living was promised (at times nebulously) vis-à-vis the "social state" or an imagined European community, individual states and the EEC were failing to deliver.[71] As will be illustrated, this failure is particularly

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[68] EU Law Database "EUR-Lex," *Trattato che istuisce la Comunità Economica Europea e documenti allegati*, 51, accessed January 12, 2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11957E/TXT&from=EN.

[69] EU Law Database "EUR-Lex," *Trattato che istuisce la Comunità Economica Europea e documenti allegati*, 99, accessed January 12, 2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11957E/TXT&from=EN.

[70] Gazzetta Ufficiale delle Comunità Europee, "Regolamento n. 38/64/CEE del Consiglio del 25 marzo 1964," accessed March 2, 2021, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bff341e9-c5c6-403e-bba8-e466d67ccf89/language-it.

[71] For EEC attempts to conceive of and ensure "full social and economic rights" for member citizens over time, see Fiorella Dell'Olio, *The Europeanization of Citizenship*. In addition, Yasemin Soysal argues that social rights were

apparent in the Italian case, showing the "stato sociale" to be bound to the legacy of the Fascist welfare state, continuing to favor "particularism to universalism" and addressing the needs of select groups of people who met certain criteria rather than succeeding at establishing a wider-ranging safety net.[72] Migrants and other disadvantaged tenants pushed for an expansion of the welfare state that increased access in more equitable ways, often pointing to their own lived instances of injustice to show how governing systems were still beholden to past administrative patterns or entrenched national boundaries that they were attempting to supersede.

Of Citizenship and Performance

The central analytical concept within this study centers on recent interventions by historians Jan Palmowski, Geoff Eley, and Kathleen Canning who encourage scholars to view citizenship as a process that is created from the ground up, rather than from the top down. This form of approach considers citizenship to be a "critical arena in which attributes of belonging [are] contested."[73] As such, I rely on Kathleen Canning's phrase "participatory citizenship" to illustrate its "contingent construction and contested practices" in relation to migrant participants within housing occupations and their claims to greater recognition within the social order. Each chapter examines one or more of the characteristics of participatory citizenship, namely how "those lacking full or formal citizenship rights articulated claims, engaged in contest, or made their own meanings of citizenship."[74] Consequently, I focus on the registers wherein migrants voiced their housing claims and their actions of instigating/participating in rent strikes and housing occupations. I argue that these claims-making processes went far beyond the immediate

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given in what would become the EU much sooner than political rights. See Yasemin Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[72] Conti and Silei, *Breve storia dello Stato sociale*, 114.

[73] Eley and Palmowski eds., *Citizenship and National Identity*, 10.

[74] Canning, "Reflections on the Vocabulary of Citizenship," 216.

need for shelter, rather had important consequences for definitions of urban citizenship, rights, and belonging, whether intended or not.

Though the concept of "participatory citizenship" is an overarching framework for my study, I rely on other theoretical tools to understand how and where migrants pushed for greater social and political inclusion. Drawing from Judith Butler's theorizations of collective performances, I demonstrate how housing protests and "acting in concert" symbolized "an embodied form of calling into question the inchoate and powerful dimensions of reigning notions of the political," and, I would add, the socioeconomic.[75] By occupying, migrants and other marginalized populations "spoke" politically, calling various forms of legitimacy into question: the legitimacy of ethnic and cultural discrimination; the legitimacy of urban renewal plans; the legitimacy of the economic transaction between landlord and tenant; and the legitimacy of the nation-state and supranational EEC in delivering on the promises of the welfare state.[76] Catalyzing such actions was migrants' shared experience of socially and politically induced precarity, in which they suffered from "failing social and economic networks of support more than others" due to their status as outsiders.[77] Thus, their demands to decent housing and state aid represented a claim to a "more liveable set of economic, social, and political conditions."[78]

Migrants did not act alone or in a vacuum while protesting their conditions and attempting to reformulate their identity in relation to other social groups and to the state.[79] As such, it is useful to also think through Sidney Tarrow's political opportunity structure to better understand how migrants and other disadvantaged occupiers participated in "contentious

[75] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly,* 9.
[76] Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," (2011), accessed February 10, 2021, https://transversal.at/transversal/1011/butler/en.
[77] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 34.
[78] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 11.
[79] Eley and Palmowski eds., *Citizenship and National Identity*, 5.

politics" to obtain the rights of citizenship to which they felt entitled. Though the housing

occupations I examine are specific to both their time and place, Tarrow's four broad sets of

factors within the political opportunity structure model are well-suited to understand how they

were effective. According to Tarrow, collective action can gain momentum when 1) groups

experience threat and perceive opportunities; 2) local allies join themselves to those opposing an

existing order; 3) the vulnerability of opponents is exposed; and 4) the protest movement taps

into embedded social networks, creating shared identities and frames of action.[80] In both

Frankfurt and Turin, discriminatory rental practices and substandard housing conditions

threatened physical well-being, whereas widespread opposition to the ill effects of

redevelopment provided opportunities and exposed the vulnerability of city administrations.

Furthermore, news coverage that placed additional blame on companies, individual landlords, or

public housing entities opened further opportunities for an opponent to be defined. In addition,

local citizens' initiatives, tenants' unions, and other organizations lent support to migrants'

protest actions, creating shared identities with others of low socioeconomic status or those who

similarly felt threatened by urban renewal. These support networks would prove exceptionally

useful when engaging in contest; furthermore, closer association between migrants and long-time

residents meant that informal meanings of identity and belonging began to be reformulated even

before political recognition.

On Protest Scripts and the Changing Sociopolitical Stage

The extent to which migrant and other housing occupiers were able to challenge

exclusion or demand an extension of substantive social rights was largely dependent on the

sociopolitical landscape. National and regional shifts in the relationship between governing

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[80] Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 33.

authorities, communities, and individuals in the postwar decades significantly shaped how migrants and allied groups thought about themselves and the language and precedents they reached for in contesting existing social or political structures. The larger context, including histories of protest or opposition, also influenced how city administrations responded.

In both Italy and the FRG, the Christian Democrats dominated political leadership until roughly the mid-1960s, when both "opened" to coalitions with the political left.[81] Another shared characteristic of national politics in the immediate post-war years in both nation-states was a close alignment with western Allies, especially the United States, that further solidified anti-Communism as a pillar of their social and political policy. Moreover, the economic boom that both societies experienced ensured Christian Democrats' success for some time. At the same time, the refusal of both the CDU (Christian Democratic Union in the FRG) and the DC (Christian Democratic Party in Italy) to share leadership with the left for close to two decades encouraged strong, unified oppositional parties, namely the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) and the PCI (Italian Communist Party).[82] Both the SPD and PCI faced serious electoral hurdles, however, that ultimately pushed them both toward the center in the 1950s. In 1959, the SPD adopted the Godesberg Program that renounced its Marxist framework of class struggle and resigned itself to reforming rather than overthrowing capitalism. The move arguably brought the party's rhetoric in line with its postwar practice and aimed first and foremost to open the way to becoming a "people's party" (rather than a workers' party) able to win elections and thereby press for greater social reform. The PCI under the leadership of Palmiro Togliatti, on the other hand, moved to distance itself from Stalinism in 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev (First

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[81] In the mid-1960s the SPD finally became a junior partner at the national level. In Italy the DC opened up to the PSI, or the smaller Italian Socialist Party. The PCI would not share national leadership until the late 1970s.
[82] The CDU was technically the CDU/CSU, with its affiliate the Christian Social Union in Bayern. It is frequently referred to simply as the CDU.

Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) exposed Stalin's involvement in the

Great Purges and ushered in a period of de-Stalinization. After Togliatti's death in 1964, the

party decided to move toward the center under the leadership of Giorgio Amendola – a PCI

deputy in Parliament who had been exiled to France for opposing Mussolini during the Second

World War – in order to similarly broaden their base of support.[83]

Both before and after the oppositional parties realigned to capture more of the popular

vote, they created social norms and cultures that bled into everyday life. In West Germany,

teachers often posted SPD (or other party) memorabilia in their classrooms, and politics were

either discussed or banned at the dinner table, depending on family dynamics. Party affiliation

did not just matter at election time, rather manifested in everyday social interactions as

individuals took on the role of "political party agents" of their own accord.[84] The PCI in Italy

proved exceptional in its social and cultural reach. As a counter to the Catholic church's close

connection with the DC, which could use parishes and other church organizations for political

advancement, the PCI established a staggering number of leagues and community organizations

to involve politics in the everyday. As a result, many Italians felt they were "born" as

Communists just as one was "born" Catholic. This perception was further solidified by events

such as the *feste dell'Unità*, or annual local festivals which emblematized the strong subculture

that exalted the values of egalitarianism and class solidarity at the municipal and regional

levels.[85] A language of rights circulated within these milieus, one that continued to resonate

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[83] For overviews of the FRG and Italy's sociopolitical history, see Peter C. Caldwell and Karrin Hanshew, *Germany Since 1945: Politics, Culture, and Society* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018) and Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

[84] Claudia C. Gatzka, "Die Blüte der Parteiendemokratie. Politisierung als Alltagspraxis in der Bundesrepublik, 1969-1980," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 58 (2018): 201.

[85] See Stephen Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943-1991* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

alongside other rights claims, such as those that disadvantaged housing occupiers would put forth.

The parties of the political left also exerted significant influence on social policy. Both the SPD and PCI pressed for extensive social reforms and booming industrial gains meant that in the 1950s, a combination of policy and material well-being allowed for the significant expansion of social services and higher standards of living. In West Germany greater security was most visibly seen in the extensive social insurance program that the CDU in government largely borrowed from the SPD. In contrast, social services in Italy remained fairly exclusionary and clientelist based on what historian Paul Ginsborg has deemed the DC's "archipelago" of a governance structure.[86] The PCI consequently remained at the forefront in advocating for a new system to ensure social services.

For disadvantaged workers, either their party affiliation or their labor union (the former often dictating the latter) served as the institution they turned to for material help or support. Even though workers' unions were strong in the FRG, they largely toed the line, with some theorists claiming that consumer culture "deadened" them to agitation. Moreover, migrant workers soon became those receiving the worst end of the stick when measured by wages and conditions. The story is vastly different in Italy's north, where near-full employment gave workers the confidence to engage in a large number of strikes in the late 1950s and especially throughout the 1960s. *Meridionali* became a leading force in the new militancy in the factories – they highly criticized the disparities that forced them to leave their hometowns in addition to low wages in a time of seemingly plenty, thus initiating protest strategies, new forms of organization (such as factory councils), and establishing relationships that some housing occupiers would

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[86] See chapter five of Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*.

draw on in the near future.[87] At times labor unions would adapt to these new methods, and at other times grassroots forms of organization began to replace the structures of the labor unions.

In the 1960s, many old leftists and younger West Germans and Italians grew disillusioned with the SPD and PCI's political compromises and the lack of widespread structural reform initiated by CDU or DC coalitions. For them, the parliamentary left's cultural influence and political pressure did not go far enough. The decade was consequently rocked by protests as activists pointed out the disconnect between social values and the lived experience. The specter of fascism also loomed large here as Nazi war crimes forcefully entered the public, particularly following the televised Eichmann trial (1961) that came in the wake of the earlier Auschwitz trails in the late 1940s. Though Italians could fall back on dominant and somewhat mythical narratives of the Resistance as a powerful moral presence, in West Germany many students and others faulted older generations for failing to confront their Nazi past. Beyond protesting the perceived authoritarianism that persisted within their own nation-states, activists also challenged the Vietnam War and the imperialism of other countries, notably the United States. Due to the rise of mass communication, connections with the Third World became every more present and centered in protesters' mental geography.[88]

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[87] See Nicola Lisanti, *Il movimento operaio in Italia, 1860-1980: Dall'Unità ai nostri giorni.* (Rome: Riuniti, 1986); Andrei Markovits, *The Politics of West German Trade Unions: Strategies of Class and Interest Representation in Growth and Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018); and Gino Bedani, *Politics and Ideology in the Italian Workers' Movement: Union Development and the Changing Role of the Catholic and Communist Subcultures in Postwar Italy* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995).

[88] See Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958- c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2003); Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012); Timothy Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Anti-Authoritarian Revolt, 1962-78* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015);

1968 served as a watershed moment across western Europe and elsewhere as both the

Italian and West German states broke up protests with force, only fueling accusations of

authoritarianism. In addition to political opposition, various groups embraced the concept that

"the personal is political," striving to rethink how one related to another and engaging in social

and cultural practices that sought to undermine or counter mainstream sociocultural mores. Due

to the increased activism in Italy's factories, it is important to note that in Italy, the 1968

movements saw much more collaboration between student and blue-collar activists, whereas in

the FRG they were largely limited to the universities. 1968ers conducted sit-ins at universities,

occupied public spaces in addition to classrooms, and staged large-scale demonstrations in the

streets. They experimented with new ways of living and engaging with the surrounding

community, embracing alternative milieus that shaped their views of sexuality, the clothes they

wore, the music they listened to, and the spaces they called "home."[89] They also continued

building on previous protest strategies by printing and distributing leaflets, establishing "gray" or

non-official newspapers and communication channels that discussed their ideologies and

countered mainstream information materials. Housing occupiers would heavily borrow from the

language, communication means, and protests strategies solidified by the 1968er protests in

ensuing years, including allying themselves with some of the extraparliamentary groups that

emerged from this oppositional context in both nation-states.[90]

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[89] See Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft*; Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Das alternative Milieu: antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010).

[90] See Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, Detlef Junker, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *Die 68er Bewegung: Deutschland, Westeuropa, USA* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2001); Stuart Hilwig, *Italy and 1968: Youthful Unrest and Democratic Culture* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009); Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, eds., *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall, eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); and Ben Mercer, *Student Revolt*

As mentioned, one of the most involved groups in housing occupations birthed in the aftermath of 1968 in Italy was *Lotta Continua* (LC). LC originated when students and workers in Turin collaborated to paralyze the auto industry in Turin for 40 days in 1969. One of their first flyers invoked the idea of a "continual" or "continuous" struggle – or *Lotta Continua*.[91] The name stuck. After 1969, LC felt that workplace activism had hit a "ceiling" and risked "being suffocated by its own achievements," according to a publication from one of their national conventions.[92] As a result, LC "shift[ed] attention from the factory…to the social terrain."[93] They consequently turned their focus from factories to spaces such as homes, schools, community centers, and parks, claiming that "the oppression of the worker is perpetuated even outside the factory: in all areas of his life he finds himself having to face the 'master' who, in other guises, perpetuates his role."[94] Beyond northern Italy, LC even moved into Frankfurt and other cities in West Germany that had a high percentage of Italian *Gastarbeiter*.[95]

Though drawing on theories of autonomy that far preceded the 1968 protest movements, the group *Autonomia Operaia* (Worker's Autonomy - AO) espoused similar strategies as LC in order to improve socioeconomic conditions for workers, but with a focus even more on the local than LC.[96] Steeped in conceptions about "spontaneity," or spontaneous mass behavior that would catalyze more concerted collective action and organization, AO emphasized the grassroots nature

in 1968: France, Italy and West Germany (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Horn's *The Spirit of '68* is equally applicable here as well.

[91] Luigi Bobbio, *Storia di Lotta Continua* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1988), 76-77. For another overview of the history of LC, see Aldo Cazzuollo, *I ragazzi che volevano fare la rivoluzione, 1968-1978: storia di Lotta Continua* (Milan: Mondadori, 2015).

[92] As quoted in Bobbio, *Storia di Lotta Continua*, 139.

[93] Bobbio, *Storia di Lotta Continua*, 140.

[94] Stefania Voli, *Quando il privato diventa politico: Lotta Continua 1968-1976* (Rome: Edizioni Associate, 2006), 79.

[95] For an overview of three extraparliamentary political groups in Italy (Avangaurdia operaia, Lotta continua, and the PdUP), see Davide Degli Incerti, *La sinitra rivoluzionaria in Italia: Documenti e interventi delle tre principali organizzazioni: Avanguardia operaia, Lotta continua, PdUP* (Rome: Savelli, 1976).

[96] For an overview of the concept of "autonomy" as it relates to AO and other groups, see Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2017).

of protest.[97] AO viewed the neighborhood as a crucial site of contest and as a juncture of social oppression; its goals included "fighting against evictions, for the occupation of vacant houses, for the reduction of rent and expenses, trying to establish where possible a constant presence in the neighborhood aimed at making the struggle itself possible."[98] In ways much different than LC, AO espoused reform as a revolutionary gain, viewing concrete socioeconomic gains as an end goal rather than a steppingstone. In fact, one of AO's priorities foregrounded "the affirmation and extension of civil rights, political rights, and social rights."[99]

In Frankfurt (and elsewhere in West Germany), two groups heavily influenced by Italian extraparliamentary organizations such as LC and AO also engaged in the housing scene. As previously mentioned, the *Spontis* prioritized "spontaneous" action and emotion in response to what they viewed as an overly theoretical or doctrinaire thread that had bound 1968 protesters. Still, they also espoused anti-authoritarianism and pursued oppositional tactics even as many of them remained divided on the question of violence. The *Spontis* composed a large portion of the Frankfurt *Häuserrat* and the group *Revolutionärer Kampf* (RK), both of which were associated with the more confrontational housing occupations and the ensuing forced evictions carried out by police. While the *Häuserrat* remained closely tied to the university and student activists, RK continued to be interested in the working class, seeing migrants as the most marginalized workers.[100]

Due to the *Häuserrat*'s and RK's more combative tactics, however, many migrant occupiers distanced themselves from these groups as they based their claims more on the terms

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[97] Comitati autonomi operai di Roma, *Autonomia Operaia: Nascita, sviluppo e prospettive dell''area dell'autonomia' nella prima organica antologia documentaria* (Rome: Savelli, 1976), 11.
[98] Comitati autonomi operai di Roma, *Autonomia Operaia*, 62.
[99] Paolo Ceri, "L'autonomia operaia tra organizzazione del lavoro e sistema politico (1977)," *Quaderni di sociologia* 25/27 (2001): 287-306.
[100] Häuserrat Frankfurt, eds., *Wohnungskampf in Frankfurt*.

of rights or morality, pushing more for recognition within the existing institutions rather than aiming to overthrow sociopolitical systems. As a result, this study prioritizes involvement of the *Jusos*, or members of the SPD aged 35 years and younger, who, if anything, pushed for their party to move back to its Marxist roots. During the 1970s they were highly vocal, particularly in Frankfurt, and though diverse in composition, were more attuned to migrants' material plight than their new left counterparts.

Two other important aspects of the late 1960s and early 1970s merit mention to understand the climate in which migrants and other housing activists found themselves and what motivated (or tempered) local city officials' responses. The first is the issue of domestic (and international) terrorism that emerged in the early 1970s. 1968 also served as a splintering when a series of violent events – arson (two department stores in Frankfurt), shootings, bombings (in Milan in 1969 by far-right terrorists) – forced protesters in multiple directions. Though some would throw their weight behind institutional political parties, such as the PCI in Italy or Willy Brandt's SPD in the FRG, others instead transferred their energies to extraparliamentary movements, and still others gravitated toward terrorism. Both public opinion and official measures were influenced by the growing threat of violence and/or domestic terrorism that increased in the handful of years during which the first waves of housing occupations (c. 1969-1974) took place. Though social and protest movements catalyzed their fair share of conflict and violence on the streets and in the public arena, domestic terrorist groups such as the Red Army Faction (RAF) in the FRG and the Red Brigades (BR) in Italy threatened internal security to an even greater extent.[101] Terrorism exposed still-unresolved tensions that had coalesced in 1968

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[101] See Christopher Cornelißen, Brunello Mantelli, and Petra Terhoeven, eds., *Il decennio rosso: contestazione sociale e conflitto politico in Germania e in Italia negli anni Sessanta e Settanta* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012) and Petra Terhoeven, *Deutscher Herbst in Europa: Der Linksterrorismus der siebziger Jahre als transnationales*

and led to an unprecedented expansion of policing and infringement of civil rights not witnessed since fascism.

Though other western European states also had concerns about security and social, political, and economic stability, historian Marcia Tolomelli posits that these issues were "most inflamed and intense" in Italy and West Germany during the 1970s due to their shared culture of violence.[102] With both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy looming in the recent past, accusations of authoritarianism when cracking down on occupations carried particular weight as each postwar republic (re-)learned democracy.[103] Thus, even left-leaning city administrations had to walk a fine line between accommodating occupiers through social reform and prioritizing the rule of law. This was particularly true of Frankfurt, which was consistently headed by SPD city administrations from 1946-1977, and proved the site of considerable unrest.

Finally, economic factors that limited the number of resources at policymakers' disposal hampered some efforts at broad-scale social reform. In 1973, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) issued an embargo on the export of petroleum, thus triggering an "oil shock" that further exacerbated budgets that were stretched too thin. Though 1973 was the culminating point, the reality was that Fordist economic model had already begun to splinter in the preceding decade. That the majority of housing occupations under examination took place between 1969 and 1974 when the welfare state and industrial sector began to be perceived as in a state of crisis thus highlights the impending transition to post-Fordist, neoliberal solutions: national leaders desperately tried to retain economic sovereignty even as

Phänomen (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2014); and Marica Tolomelli, *Terrorismo e società. Il pubblico dibattito in Italia e in Germania negli anni Settanta* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2006).
[102] Marica Tolomelli, *Terrorismo e società*, 7.
[103] See Karrin Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and Lauren McLaren, *Constructing Democracy in Southern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Italy, Spain, and Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

markets continued moving toward globalization, raising the frequency of economic downturns.[104] Already in the 1970s, then, state officials began transitioning social service administrations toward "deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision" as nation-states adopted neoliberal frameworks to deal with economic and other crises.[105]

To summarize, migrants confronted a messy and ever-changing sociopolitical landscape as they pressed for greater housing rights and protections in a period when previously established practices and patterns were in a moment of considerable flux. Though political parties still provided a foundational stone for the language and milieus of social rights, it was the 1960s protest movements and resulting extraparliamentary groups who most directly gave housing occupiers a springboard for making their claims. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, migrants would either adopt or distance themselves from the vestiges of such movements, in large part depending on the stance of city administrations and/or their willingness to negotiate. Once domestic terrorism posed a significant threat to internal security, both migrants and other disadvantaged occupiers and city officials would begin to differentiate between more politically confrontational occupations and those oriented around social need.

Sources

To uncover migrant occupiers' motivations, experiences, and desired outcomes, my study is based on a mixture of textual analysis and oral interviews. Flyers and leaflets circulated by occupied communities serve as a particularly large source of information as "illegal" residents attempted to garner support and solidarity with their surrounding neighbors. This method of

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[104] Niall Ferguson, "Crisis, What Crisis? The 1970s and the Shock of the Global" in Niall Ferguson et. al., eds., *Shock of the Global: 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2010), 18. Neoliberal trends are also discussed within other chapters in this anthology.
[105] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

communication was also heavily used by the sociopolitical movements that swept through both nation-states throughout the sixties and seventies. Considering that many individuals who allied themselves with housing occupations were involved or had connections with said movements, it is little surprise that it was adopted as a form of communication for occupied communities.[106] It should be noted that many of these circulated materials were produced by activists. I consequently read these sources "against the grain" to isolate references, quotations, and alleged contributions by migrants who co-occupied with other native-born tenants. Furthermore, local neighborhood initiatives would also circulate open letters or flyers, helping to further contextualize who was involved in housing protests and how their actions aimed to influence local opinion.

A large portion of these informally distributed documents have been preserved in personal collections housed at various archives in Bologna, Turin, Milan, Frankfurt, and Cologne. The lion's share of archives I consulted were non- or not-for-profit enterprises, run mainly by volunteers, and maintained strong ties to a left-leaning political agenda. In Italy, the archives were frequently named after activists of the political left, such as the "Historical Archive of the New Left 'Marco Pezzi'" in Bologna, the "Piero Gobetti Study Center" in Turin, and the "Primo Moroni Archive" in Milan. At times the collections were not numbered or curated. At the Primo Moroni Archive, I was directed up a set of stairs to comb through stacks of boxes full of books and documents, for instance. At the Piero Gobetti Study Center, the student intern informed me that I was one of the first to look at a particular collection as there was no other record of someone requesting the documents. Though the slant of a large number of materials reflected the interests of those who collected them, namely long-time residents who

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[106] See, for instance, Timothy Brown's chapter entitled "Word" in *West Germany and the Global Sixties*, 116-154.

viewed themselves as activists, they nonetheless preserved a wealth of information about housing occupations and allied extraparliamentary groups. Through a textual analysis of flyers and pamphlets produced by occupiers and neighborhood action committees, I identified migrant occupiers' and other socioeconomically disadvantaged residents' housing claims and to whom they addressed their concerns.

In Germany, I pursued similar opportunities at an independent bookshop and archive geared toward collecting materials that also engaged with left-leaning activist movements, such as the self-run "Infoladen – ExZess" information shop in Frankfurt. In scouring leaflets pertaining to the West German context, they were at times printed in multiple languages, speaking to the audiences towards which they were directed, namely both West German and migrant populations. Often signed by the groups who produced them in both cities, flyers show connections and solidarities between other occupations or other allies, such as neighborhood committees/citizens' initiatives, tenants' unions, or extraparliamentary political organizations. Furthermore, there are rare occasions of migrants identifying themselves as the authors either of an entire communication or a portion in the form of included quotations. As such, flyers, leaflets, and underground newsletters or publications provide a window into the ideas and motivations of occupiers, including how they viewed their actions.

News media help contextualize occupiers' claims, and serve as a baseline analysis for general trends in public opinion. Newspapers form the bulk of my sources as they were still a highly accessed source of information in the 1970s, even as television gained popularity.[107]

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[107] During this time, around 70% of the adult population (aged 16-70) in West Germany had access to a regional newspaper subscription, according to Rüdiger Schulz, "Nutzung von Zeitungen und Zeitschriften" in Wilke, Jürgen, ed., *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Bohlau, 1999), 410. Moreover, Italy would break its record for number of newspapers sold at the end of the 1970s, as found in Matthew Hibberd, *The Media in Italy: Press, Cinema, and Broadcasting From Unification to Digital* (Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill Open University Press, 2008), 62-63.

Frankfurt's Press and Information Office gathered a large number of newspaper clippings that related to housing occupations in collections stored at the Frankfurt Institute for City History, whereas other individuals saved articles within personal collections. In addition to newspapers, chapter two analyzes one particular radio broadcast directed at Italian immigrants in the FRG, the letters and transcripts of which are partially maintained at the Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Germany housed in Cologne. In various forms, news reporters often included quotations from migrants either occupying or on rent strike. Along with being a source of information, I also consider the role of journalists, broadcasters, and editors in shaping public and legislative reaction, such as the Turin-based *La Stampa* referring to occupations as part of a larger "war among the poor," or the differing ways that conservative- or left-leaning papers in Frankfurt covered the same stories. On many occasions, reporters incorporated women's and children's voices to engender emotional sympathy within their readers, or to portray protesters' motivations as apolitical and less threatening. More than objective bystanders, news producers mediated and inflamed public debates over the legitimacy or illegitimacy of occupation as a form of collective protest against discrimination, urban redevelopment, and how the welfare state was administered – debates that were reflected in city council meetings.

Migrant occupiers' and allied individuals' voices themselves, as accessed through oral interviews, are effective in illuminating the experiences of daily life, including tensions and barriers, as well as successes. Drawing from over eighteen interviews that I conducted in Turin, Milan, Frankfurt, and Cologne, I uncover migrants' perspectives and complicated relationships within and outside of occupied communities. In order to locate interviewees, I asked archive facilitators if they had any knowledge of participants who would be willing to be interviewed, resulting in a handful of contacts. Other interviews emerged out of chance encounters, such as

attending a discussion at Turin's "Casa delle donne" (a women's organization and archive that emerged out of second-wave feminist movements in the 1970s) or from a conversation about a particular book in a commercial bookstore in Frankfurt. Once I was able to contact one person with connections to an occupation, a "domino effect" followed as individuals referred me to others whom they knew, allowing me to approach other potential interviewees.

There is, of course, the pitfall of "memory's insistence of creating a history itself," particularly as former occupiers have lived through the outcomes and ramifications of their involvement over subsequent decades.[108] Nonetheless, though limited and personalized, oral interviews provide a context for understanding the news accounts and printed materials that claim to discuss their experiences and actions. I thus attempt to corroborate interviewees' accounts with other printed materials or with other interviewees' recollections to craft a more complete picture. In addition, oral interviews provide a level of detail about addressing immediate needs within shared spaces, modes of organization, and relationships with those within and outside of occupations that are absent from written or news materials.

To understand the role of city planning in exacerbating housing shortages and the reaction of state officials to occupations, I conducted research within each city's respective official archive – The Frankfurt Institute for City History and the Historic Archive of the City in Turin. The documents I assessed centered on city redevelopment plans, recorded city council meetings, the findings of city-appointed committees, and the collections of the four different mayors who were in positions of leadership during the occupations addressed in my research. One of my more unanticipated findings was the level of discord and internal division within city administrations; leadership in both cities differentiated between types of occupiers, including

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[108] Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968.* Translated by Lisa Erdberg (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1996), 23.

"deserving" versus "undeserving," or those who occupied out of "social need" versus "more political in nature." Through document analysis, I highlight the messy and uneven response of localized governing bodies, which helps explain the reluctant accommodations they made for some occupiers. My deeper investigations into the oscillation between eviction and assistance stands in sharp contrast to conclusions other researchers have made about state responses, many of whom view city concessions as part of a larger hegemonic move to placate occupiers, resulting in a "professionalizing, institutionalizing, integrating and pacifying effect on certain parts of the movement."[109] Though this may indeed have been the case in latter decades, specific city administrations' responses in the 1970s were much more riddled with indecision and backtracking than some scholars suggest.

Chapter Organization

The chapters are organized around general ways of negotiating belonging and challenging the parameters of citizenship. Chapters One and Two center on how migrants articulated their housing claims, namely by pointing to inequalities in rent price, condition, and the lack of state assistance. Chapter One lays out the socioeconomical and political factors that contributed to migrants' precarious living circumstances. It moves from macro- to micro-level forces, namely national social housing policies that determined access to state aid, how urban renewal plans exacerbated availability in both Turin and Frankfurt, and the discrimination migrants faced in obtaining housing based on perceived differences in culture.

Chapter two explores how media engaged in discourses about migrant living conditions, both from the perspective of mainstream news reporters and by looking at migrants' responses as manifest by a foreign language radio program broadcast from Cologne, West Germany. The first

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[109] Kuhn, *Vom Häuserkampf zur neoliberalen Stadt*, 133-134.

half of the chapter investigates how migrants' claims to housing were validated by news reports that distributed blame for poor conditions among companies, speculators/landlords, and city municipalities. While paying particular attention to reporters' slants and biases, the overarching consensus in news media was that large numbers of migrants were living in poor housing conditions and had little legal recourse or socioeconomic support. The second half explores migrants' housing claims much more directly by analyzing evaluating letters sent to the moderator of the radio program, "Radio Colonia," many of which addressed housing conditions and affordability in both West Germany and Italy.

The last three chapters shift to focus on action, namely how migrants and allied groups engaged in contest and made their own meanings of citizenship. Chapter Three compares and contrasts local initiatives that lent resources and created opportunities for migrants to press their claims; in Turin these took the form of neighborhood committees whereas in Frankfurt one specific citizens' initiative – the *Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend* (Westend Action Collective – AGW) – played a particularly important role as it was located in the neighborhood most threatened by redevelopment. The chapter then examines the transnational Italian-based *Unione Inquili* (Tenants' Union), which assisted Italian migrants and other low-income tenants in both cities as they launched a series of rent strikes. Migrants' refusal to pay rent served as a visible act of protest against what they perceived as inequitable housing practices, simultaneously contesting the socioeconomic relationships symbolized through the transaction of paying rent.

Chapters Four and Five home in on housing occupations as a way of contesting the administration of social services and forcibly asserting an embodied right to what were generally accepted to be basic needs. The chapters are broken up geographically in order to allow for a deeper reading of specific contexts, including the spaces involved and the interactions between

occupiers, other community members, and political entities. Chapter Four centers on Frankfurt, exploring internal dynamics and community reactions to the first occupation in the FRG of this time period – house 47 of Eppsteiner Straße in 1970 – in which Italian migrants took part. When analyzing the reaction of city authorities as occupations increased in number, I show how SPD leadership differentiated between threatening and non-threatening occupations, the former leading to the violent street conflicts most generally associated with housing occupations in Frankfurt. Instead of lingering on the occupations most prevalent in the literature that were predominantly led by young West German students and affiliates, the chapter concludes by evaluating Italian-instigated occupations in 1973. In contrast to forcible clearings, the city administration engaged in reluctant and uneven negotiations with Italian migrant occupiers whom they viewed as acting out of social need.

Occupations in Turin are the focal point of the last chapter, chiefly the occupation in the Falchera neighborhood in 1974 that consisted of over 600 families. In contrast to Frankfurt in which occupations took place in private housing and individual buildings, occupations in Turin most often took place in sweeping housing complexes. By physically taking over spaces even more closely tied with the *stato sociale*, migrants and other socioeconomically disadvantaged residents criticized local and regional social services, and, by association, the legitimacy of Italy's welfare state. Initially under the leadership of a DC-led coalition, Turin's city representatives similarly debated questions of legitimacy, this time centering on "deserving" and "undeserving" citizens on the premise of legal and illegal actions. With the death of the Falchera occupation's leader in the wake of an unfulfilled agreement between occupiers and city leadership, the situation drastically shifted in Falchera residents' favor. The transition to a PCI-

led coalition in the following election resulted in greater government intervention in providing immediate aid and long-lasting reforms to how public housing was assigned.

Just as *meridionali* began gaining access to social services and greater recognition as social and urban citizens in their new communities, many of them started to return home. The fallout of the 1973 oil crisis exposed pre-existing cracks in the dominant economic system that had spurred the same industrial growth that had brought many migrants to Turin and Frankfurt in the first place. In 1975, those returning to Italy and to their southern hometowns "outnumbered emigrants for the first time in modern memory."[110] And though the West German *Sozialstaat* and the Italian *stato sociale* continued their transitions to a neoliberal form of limited government intervention, for a brief number of years migrants showed the reckoning and reform in social services that can result from collective action. What follows in these pages is how they gathered together in an embodied demand for a recognition of rights no longer bound by cultural distinctions or the borders of the nation-state.

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[110] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 457.

CHAPTER ONE

Producing Precarity: National Social Housing Policies, City Redevelopment Plans, and Discriminatory Rental Practices

Giuseppe M. was an Italian migrant who wrote to the moderator of an Italian-language radio program in the Federal Republic of Germany at the end of 1969. In his letter, he explained that for eight months he had been searching for housing in Düsseldorf, with no success. When he asked his German colleagues for advice, they indicated that his numerous children were the impediment preventing him from finding a landlord willing to rent to him. He closed his letter by lamenting "in order to find a house, I will have to sell off my children."[1] Just a handful of weeks later in January of 1970, a large number of families illegally occupied 70 apartments on a block in Turin, a large number of whom had immigrated to northern Italy from the south. Reporters from the conservative newspaper, *La Stampa*, asked the families their reasons for violating the law. Many of them gave the same response, "We cannot find anywhere to rent; everyone tells us we have too many children."[2]

Coded in long-standing perceptions of differences in culture, such as having a prolific number of children, southern Italian migrants faced social discrimination in obtaining housing both within and outside of their country of origin. At first, individuals could often share rooms or were provided a bunk in company-sponsored accommodations, though the quality of conditions varied greatly. Once migrants looked for housing on the private market when they married or sent for their families, the ability to find housing was only further compounded. Placards reading "we don't rent to foreigners" in Frankfurt were mirrored by those that said "we don't rent to southerners" in Turin. Migrants' ability to challenge individual and systemic discrimination was

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[1] DOMiD, Collection: GFM 005, File: E 894,3.
[2] "Le case popolari occupate di forza," *La Stampa*, January 14, 1970.

limited by a lack of language skills, legal understanding, or having work contracts tied to

residency.[3] Moreover, the difficulty in finding housing was further compounded by urban

redevelopment plans that resulted in increasingly gentrified neighborhoods as developers

demolished buildings that had once served as affordable low-income housing near city centers to

make space for businesses and luxury apartments that former tenants could no longer afford.

With migrant workers continually arriving in large numbers, including their families or

dependents, city-affiliated housing changes exacerbated the housing situation in the 1960s as

family living became more prevalent. Thus, once families joined the mix, migrants often faced

multiple layers of disadvantage in finding a home based on availability, their socio-economic

position, and their status as outsiders.

Before we can understand the *actions* of southern Italian migrants in pushing back on

exclusion, namely rent strikes and housing occupations, we must first understand their

motivation. Judith Butler's relatively recent interventions on theorizing embodied forms of

collective action illuminate similar movements in the 1960s and 1970s, namely how individuals

banded together to obtain "a more liveable set of economic, social, and political conditions no

longer afflicted by induced forms of precarity."[4] As such, precarity can be a powerful

"galvanizing condition" that leads to further demands for change.[5] Borrowing from Butler, I

view precarity as a key motivator for migrants to assemble in the streets and to occupy

apartments. The point of this chapter is thus two-fold: 1) to examine how social housing policies

at the national level and city redevelopment plans at the local level frequently disadvantaged

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[3] Even in Italy, differences in dialect and literacy and education levels could widen the difference between native-born and southern migrant. Similarly, companies such as Fiat did tie housing with work contracts, much along the lines of West German work and residency permits.

[4] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2015), 11.

[5] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly,* 9.

migrant tenants or were ineffectual at protecting low-income residents in spite of widespread

trends tying public authorities' responsibility even more tightly to individuals' welfare; and 2) to

illustrate the socially and economically induced precarity experienced by southern Italian

migrants in both Turin and Frankfurt and how their claims of injustice highlight how their

circumstances were "unlivable."

In terms of organization, this chapter moves from macro-level to micro-level forces that

created challenges for migrants in obtaining affordable and decent housing. The first section

traces changes within national social housing policies in the decades following the Second World

War to understand the different approaches that policymakers took to implement the social state

as it related to living conditions. Related to social policy, the next section then demonstrates how

city redevelopment plans aggravated housing conditions and availability at the local level,

including the difficulties that city officials confronted in administering the social state in an ever-

shrinking and competitive housing market. The third section shifts to investigate the

sociocultural discrimination migrants faced in trying to find housing in an already overburdened

market, centering on interpersonal interactions and exploring the physical conditions of their

living spaces. All in all, the dehumanization migrants experienced, coupled with the lack of

social networks and the failure of state aid, made them particularly vulnerable to the fluctuations

of the housing market at a time when it was stretched beyond its capacity.

Understanding the West German "Sozialstaat": Housing Construction and Renter Assistance Programs

In contrast to the public housing approach in Italy, West German housing policy already

began to move toward privatization in the 1960s and 1970s. Though the state drastically

increased spending as reflected by the proportion of its GDP allocated to social services, in terms

of housing the state gradually adopted a more "hands-off" approach that prioritized private

construction, rather than large-scale public housing complexes. This section traces this trend from intensive state intervention to rebuild houses and apartments in the late 1940s to when housing subsidies were extended to migrant residents – notwithstanding their status as informal residents – in 1971. By so doing, one is better able to grasp what means were available to those of low socioeconomic status, and how one was to access state aid if one qualified.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the West German state was directly involved in housing construction as "over 1/5th of the pre-war housing stock had been either completely destroyed or rendered uninhabitable;" in large cities or towns, that figure could be higher than 50%.[6] As a result, the state embarked on a massive rebuilding program. In 1950, for instance, 70% of the 372,000 dwellings built were designated as social housing.[7] In addition, national rent control measures that froze prices at 1936-equivalent levels remained in effect throughout much of the 1950s. However, due to the perception that this form of government intervention too closely resembled the controlled economy of the Third Reich, Adenauer and other national leaders intentionally promoted their measures to pivot toward a "social market economy." Though the Christian Democrat model still espoused a free market, it was hemmed in by social policies that established fair competition and protected individuals via the social state. Thus, housing legislation began to "curtail" federal and regional oversight in by creating incentives for private landlords to rent "at cost" or for companies to invest in construction, such as the Housing Construction Premium Act of 1952. Subsequent laws aimed at assisting residents of all income levels in becoming owners of residential apartments.[8] This shrinking of direct state intervention

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[6] Graham Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies in West Germany and Britain: A Record of Success and Failure* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1977), 9.
[7] C.H.M. Hass-Klau, "The Housing Shortage in Germany's Major Cities," *Built Environment* 8, no. 1 (1982): 61.
[8] Hans F. Zacher, *Social Policy in the Federal Republic of Germany: The Constitution of the Social*, vol. 3 (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), 193-194.

did not mean a reduction in the amount of funds being spent on social services; by 1953, roughly 20 percent of the GDP was earmarked for social expenditure, higher than Great Britain (12.5%) and Sweden (13.5%).[9]

Once the state became less involved in actual construction, between 1950 and 1974 about two-thirds of rented housing were built by private landlords, and the other third by "non-profit housing enterprises."[10] Essentially, non-profits were not subject to taxation and received a small subsidy. Moreover, they were "legally obliged to be separate from construction enterprises," meaning that construction companies still earned a profit for their buildings.[11] However, the rent was still influenced by the market, in some ways, as the units were then rented out at "cost-covering" prices.[12] Still, economist Graham Hallett claimed that in the 1970s, this model was "strongly defended…after the experience of comprehensive State control under the National Socialists." He also posited that independent non-profits provided an "objective competitive check" and were "more efficient than direct action of local authorities."[13]

Pressured by the SPD's extensive policy program that more closely aligned with socialism and paralleling other western European trends, Adenauer and the Christian Democrats continued to prioritize social policy to reduce the attractiveness of Communism. Especially when considering the materialistic needs of residents in the post-war era, social policy became key to party politics as "the social benefits provided by the state became the fundamental prerequisite for political integration and legitimacy." Social policy consequently became the third pillar of their political platform, along with western integration and economic recovery.[14] Rather than

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[9] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Twentieth-Century Germany*, translated by Ben Fowkes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 529.
[10] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 14.
[11] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 63.
[12] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 66.
[13] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 67.
[14] Herbert, *A History of Twentieth-Century Germany*, 531-532.

constructing housing directly, the West Germany system also began to favor rent assistance, but in a different form. Rent control began to be abolished in the 1960s – once a district's housing shortage fell below 3%, rent freezes were lifted.[15] To protect individual tenants from the fluctuations of the market and inflation, social policy moved toward housing subsidies. At first subsidies were tied to residential dwellings, but then shifted to be connected to individuals rather apartments or homes – but only individuals who were formal residents, thereby excluding migrants. Some stipulations for individual subsidies were first laid out in the Federal Rental Law of 1955, it was only when the Christian Democrats lost their position at the head of government for the first time in 1969 and were replaced by the Social Democrats that subsidies were significantly expanded. In 1970 the *Wohngeldgesetz* (Housing Benefit Act) made them a permanent part of official housing policy.[16] For instance, no longer did individual subsidies only apply to certain types of housing, rather to "all housing" based on square meters and family size and income without restriction of housing category. The rationale for the *Wohngeldgesetz* was to help residents "avoid social hardship" and "to make [it] financially possible for an occupant [to obtain] a basic minimum of living space."[17]

The 1970 expansion of subsidies in the *Wohngeldgesetz* is emblematic of a European-wide trend of significantly investing in social service expenditures as labor parties gained more political clout; each nation-state increased their social expenditures over tenfold.[18] At the first Social Democratic chancellor, Willy Brandt and his government ushered in an ambitious program of social and political reforms aimed at expanding the welfare safety net, which included measures such extending the healthcare system and the program allotting sick pay to

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[15] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 9.
[16] Zacher, *Social Policy in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 208; Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 10.
[17] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 10.
[18] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000*, 257.

workers, and "allocating more for publicly supported housing."[19] To give a sense of scale, between, under the Christian Democrats the social budget increased by 9.5 percent annuall, but from 1970 to 1973 it increase by roughly 14 percent annually – or from 25.5 percent to 33.4 percent of the GDP.[20]

However, up to the early 1970s, most non-citizens did not receive many benefits from this amount of spending in West Germany. As historian Andreas Fahrmeir underscores, "the West German system of social insurance discriminated against non-citizens in a number of ways."[21] For example, although all recruited workers were medically screened, they paid the same social insurance premium as formal citizens even though they rarely had cause to use its medical services, and very few would receive pensions as they frequently returned to their country of origin prior to completing the required number of years employed. The disparity in state aid based on immigration status began to shift ever so slightly in the late 1960s, however. In addition to the SPD government's commitment to extending the social state for its own citizens, another reason for including immigrants stemmed from the beginnings of the "delegitimization of racism." Although immigrants still faced and would continue to face cultural discrimination, a decrease in territoriality became ever more evident (especially by the 1970s) once "economic needs had reduced the boundaries between citizens and aliens and made populations more ethnically diverse in practice," if not in perception.[22] It must be emphasized that a recognition of this trend would take many decades to gain traction on the ground, however.

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[19] Caldwell, *Democracy, Capitalism, and the Welfare State*, 139.
[20] Herbert, *A History of Twentieth-Century Germany*, 713.
[21] Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 199.
[22] Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept*, 201.

The idealized goal of breaking down national boundaries also began to be reflected at the international level. With an influx of new and younger leadership within the European Community by 1969 – in addition to Brandt, Charles de Gaulles's successor, French president Georges Pompidou – EEC member states agreed to actively work toward the single market, influenced by changes at the national level.[23] In addition to setting out steps for the "gradual establishment of an economic and monetary union" via a commission set up under the leadership of Luxembourg Prime Minister Pierre Werner, member states reaffirmed and promoted mechanisms, such as the European Social Fund, that correlated social policies between member states. [24] The 1969 summit and ensuing meetings between then and 1974 thus confirmed the desire to realize closer ties between EEC members while paving the way for other countries to join the Community – the United Kingdom being one of the first 1973 in spite of its rejection to an earlier invitation to become a member-state – though it would take a great number of years to gain real momentum. At the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, then, the West German *Sozialstaat* found itself in a period of transition as governing agencies sought to implement Brandt's vision for an expanded safety net which influenced significant international currents trending toward closer economic, political, and social integration within the European Economic Community.

The Tenancy Protection Act of 1971 arguably emerged as a result of this national and international shift as social services were extended as a whole and explicitly to members of an ever more connected European Community. On November 8, 1971, a public radio program

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[23] See Jan-Henrik Meyer, "Der Haager Gipfel 1969. Von den Krisen der Europäischen Gemeinschaften der 1960er-Jahre zum europäischen politischen System," in Rüdiger Hohls and Hartmut Kaelble, eds., *Geschichte der europäischen Integration bis 1989* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016), 163-174.

[24] For a brief overview of the Werner Commission, see Dieter Lindenlaub, "Vom Wechselkursverband zur gemeinsamen Währung. Stufen und Probleme der europäischen Währungsintegration seit dem Zerfall des Bretton Woods-Systems fester Wechselkurse Anfang der 1970er-Jahre" in Rüdiger Hohls and Hartmut Kaelble, eds., *Geschichte der europäischen Integration.*

aimed at Italian migrant workers in the FRG announced that one of the program's moderators

would explain information about the 1971 Act as it related to *Gastarbeiter*. The broadcasters

communicated that non-West German citizens would have access to housing subsidies "on

condition that they have their permanent residence in Germany."[25] Not only did this new

provision widen the doors of access to social services, it also served as a limited

acknowledgement that some migrant workers and their families were beginning to stay in the

FRG on a longer-term basis, rather than temporarily filling in gaps in regionalized labor markets.

This recognition meant that West German policymakers affirmed housing "as a necessary good"

and passed legislation to "ensure equality of law with local citizens."[26] In essence, participatory

citizenship and the administration of the welfare state were also relational; in an idealized

guarantee of a sufficient standard of living, all (permanent/fixed) residents would theoretically

have access to a baseline level of protection and aid.

In sum, West German housing policy was a mixture of increasing privatization even as it

expanded between the 1950s and the 1970s. Though the state became less involved in direct

housing construction, instead offering subsidies and other incentives to individuals and private

companies, governing officials continued to extend renter protection to tenants. At first these

provisions were tied to domicile, but then stemmed from a series of calculations that accounted

for living space, quality, family size, and income. For migrants, most housing aid remained out

of reach until the 1971 Tenancy Protection Act. In addition to rent assistance, the 1971

legislation also included stipulations for eviction, changing rent prices, and further protections

for renters in relationship to their landlords. Though it would still take sociocultural practices

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[25] In Italian, the term "residenza stabile" also refers to a fixed residence, which is semantically slightly different from the term "permanent residence."
[26] DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.

many years to catch up, the formalized mechanisms for more equitable access to housing protections began to fall into place.

Understanding the Italian "Stato Sociale": Rent Freezes, Public Housing, and Law 167

In contrast to the West German welfare state, government spending on social services in Italy lagged. Moreover, Italy's strategy for providing housing was to construct and then assign families to public housing. On February 24, 1949 the Italian parliament approved law 43, proposed by the Christian Democrat Amintore Fanfani, the Minister of Labor and Social Security. Often referred to as Ina-Casa, one of the programs included in the legislation was meant to "facilitate the construction of houses for workers."[27] Ina-Casa was financed through a "mixed system" in which the state, employers, and employees contributed – the latter "through a deduction from their monthly salary."[28] Though managed by a centralized entity, localized "contracting stations" facilitated the construction of large public housing complexes and administered the rental housing.[29] In the fourteen years it was in place, Ina-Casa only built 355,000 total dwellings, or 10% of all housing built between 1951 and 1961.[30]

After Ina-Casa was dissolved in 1963, though, public housing construction continued to grossly fail to keep up with need, accounting for only 3% of all housing construction. One of the ways by which parliament attempted to catalyze the construction of public housing was through a piece of 1962 legislation, entitled Law no. 167. In short, the law allowed towns and cities to zone certain areas with a requirement that 60% of housing built be set aside for public housing needs. However, a renewed clause in 1968 took away any teeth municipal officials had to

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[27] Paola Di Biagi, ed., *La grande ricostruzione: Il piano Ina-Casa e l'Italia degli anni cinquanta* (Rome: Donzelli editore, 2001), xxiii.
[28] Paola Di Biagi, "La 'città pubblica' e l'Ina-Casa" in Di Biagi, ed., *La grande ricostruzione*, 12.
[29] Paola Di Biagi, "La 'città pubblica' e l'Ina-Casa" in Di Biagi, ed., *La grande ricostruzione*, 13.
[30] Paola Di Biagi, "La 'città pubblica' e l'Ina-Casa" in Di Biagi, ed., *La grande ricostruzione*, 18.

enforce the zoning requirements. Due to protests over housing by the PCI, various labor organizations, and the extraparliamentary left, Italy's legislature was finally pressured into setting aside a large amount of funds for the development of 167 sites, but in 1977, no funds had been used to that point.[31]

Though both the zoning and funding legislation would have theoretically promoted the building of public housing, the institutions responsible for implementing social policy continued to face challenges. One of the foremost public housing entities that had replaced Ina-Casa – GESCAL (GEStione CAse per i Lavoratori, or Housing Management for Workers) was not only ineffective, but plagued by scandal, including accusations of funneling money outside of Italy and lining the pockets of select politicians. It was dissolved in 1971 and absorbed by the IACP – a centralized Autonomous Public Housing Authority that collaborated with an IACP satellite in each region to oversee the construction of housing and the distribution of regional and federal funds.[32] However, the IACP also struggled to build adequate numbers of housing complexes. In Turin, for example, the IACP constructed 1500 apartments in 1972-1973, and an additional 2400 by 1974. However, this meant little when over 40,000 migrants were arriving in Turin each year.[33]

In addition to the dearth of public housing construction, migrants also confronted the problem of actually being assigned an apartment. As mentioned, in the Italian system a certain percentage of each worker's wages went to a public housing fund, which was then used for the building and maintenance of public housing. Individual workers still had to apply for housing,

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[31] Thomas Angotti, *Housing in Italy: Urban Development and Political Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), 18-19.
[32] Angotti, *Housing in Italy*, 19.
[33] ASdC, Collection: Consiglio Comunale – Sessioni Straordinari, Folder: 14 Ottobre 1974 Comunicazioni del sindaco.

and their qualifications were based on a point system. If one gained enough points due to income, family size, and conditions of current housing, they were then entered into a competition or lottery. There were always more qualified applicants than numbers of apartments, meaning that one often waiting years before receiving an assignment. In addition, one had to continually re-apply; if you were not selected during a competition, the applicant pool reset for the next selection.[34]

To offer renters assistance and a modicum of protection, Italy passed seven different rent freezes between 1947 and 1977.[35] However, the results of the freezes were to create a large gap between new and old tenants as developers generally charged higher prices for new accommodations – according to one scholar, some new tenants paid as much as 10 to 15 times the amount of rent as those in older housing with the same square footage.[36] Due to loopholes, some landlords also tried various means to vacate their apartments, remodel them, and then impose larger rent increases then those allowed under the rent freeze stipulations. In addition, the freezes only applied to certain types of housing and were not all that effectual at providing an economic buffer. For instance, the 1973 rent freeze limited annual rent increases to a flat 10% per year, but with skyrocketing inflation due, in part, to the oil crisis, the increase was still "well above the average family income."[37] Freezes could often also hurt smaller landlords who only rented a small number of units that they had invested in as a form of social security or retirement fund.

Finally, in spite of more money generated by Italy's own economic miracle (especially prevalent between 1958 and 1963), its national social spending percentage of the GDP – 33% in

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[34] Angotti, *Housing in Italy*, 50.
[35] Angotti, *Housing in Italy*, 15.
[36] Angotti, *Housing in Italy*, 16.
[37] Angotti, *Housing in Italy*, 16.

1970 compared to the FRG's 42% in 1973 – was well below the average of the other EEC

countries in 1970 and would not reach the EEC average until 1983.[38] Moreover, the government

remained heavily involved in social services, leading some scholars to refer to a Democratic

Christian "colonization" of "a protean range of public services and state-controlled or state-

subsidized products," particularly until the mid-1960s.[39] Their involvement meant that there was

less initiative or competition on the housing market, creating a larger gap between higher and

lower cost accommoddations. Even after the Ina-Casa program was dissolved, housing continued

to be centralized, with state-affiliated entities, even if managed regionally, reporting to a national

hub. In contrast to housing subsidies, then, the Italian welfare state relied heavily on large swaths

of public housing and federally mandated rent freezes in order to provide living spaces and try

and protect tenants from the fluctuations of the market.

The fruit born of numerous attempts at a national social housing policy in Italy, then, was

often one of frustration. Scholars and public opinion alike have "accused" Ina-Casa as "being an

artifice that marginalized the weaker social classes" that instead drove urban expansion and

increased rent prices."[40] Beyond the specific Ina-Casa plan, many researchers have characterized

the Italian social state as being a "clientelist system" that favored particular groups over

universal responsibility, such as benefitting the middle class to a greater degree than those who

were socioeconomically disadvantaged.[41] For tenants, up until the late 1960s when neighbors

began to organize on their own, there had been little to no opportunity "for neighborhood

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[38] Barbara Pistoresi, Alberto Rinaldi, and Francesco Salsano, "Government Spending and its Components in Italy, 1862-2009: Drivers and Policy Implications," *Journal of Policy Modeling* 39 (2017): 1122.
[39] Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 361.
[40] Paola Di Biagi, "La 'città pubblica' e l'Ina-Casa" in Di Biagi, ed., *La grande ricostruzione*, xxiv.
[41] See Massimo Paci, "Il Sistema di Welfare italiano tra tradizione clientelare e prospettiva di riforma" in Ugo Ascoli, ed., *Welfare State all'italiana* (Bari: Laterza, 1984), 293-326. For a discussion of the "clientelist" social state specific to Turin, see Davide Tabor, "Le politche sulla casa e gli assegnatari tra dopoguerra e anni Settanta. Il caso di Torino," in Daniela Adorni, Maria D'Amuri, and Davide Tabor, eds., *La casa pubblica: Storia dell'Istituto autonomo case popolari di Torino* (Rome: Viella, 2017), 153-187.

participation in local planning and administration."[42] Added to the difficulties in obtaining public

housing once it was built, it is little wonder that housing became a central symbol around which

marginalized individuals and groups rallied for an expansion and more equitable access to social

services.

Adding Fuel to the Fire: City Redevelopment Plans, Availability, and Affordability

Compounding policymakers' attempts to provide and administer social housing was the

emergence of local urban renewal plans. As historian Helmut Kaelble points out, the 1950s and

1960s also became the "golden age of European city planning, which grew out of an unusual

optimism for planning and progress in a time of unusual economic prosperity."[43] Urban planning

was both built on this enthusiasm and for more practical reasons – as economist Horst Tomann

noted in the West German context (and is equally or even more applicable to the Italian context),

"derelict housing in inner cities had become more widespread during the 1960s" due to rent

controls and freezes which provided less incentives for landlords to repair or remodel their

properties.[44] In their attempts to "upgrade," "modernize," and tackle what they referred to as

"urban decay," many city planners devised blueprints for revitalizing old, run-down, or hastily

re-built city centers, providing "new private spaces" and "larger apartments with more privacy

for all family members," in addition to encouraging more business enterprises.[45] In both

Frankfurt and Turin, most of the areas slated for urban renewal had long provided affordable

housing for low-income residents, or those who ranked lower in the social order – spaces and

areas that migrants and their families would gravitate more once they moved north.

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[42] Angotti, *Housing in Italy*, 21.
[43] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000: Recovery and Transformation after Two World Wars*, translated by Liesel Tarquini (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 281.
[44] Horst Tomann, "The Housing Market, Housing Finance and Housing Policy in West Germany: Prospects for the 1990s," *Urban Studies* 27, no. 6 (1990): 920.
[45] Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe*, 280.

The effect of redevelopment was to push migrants either to the peripheries of the city, or from one temporary accommodation to the next as developers slated buildings for demolition. City redevelopment plans consequently heightened precarious situations for those of low socioeconomic status, migrants in particular. In considering their circumstances, I posit that migrants "suffer[ed] from failing social and economic networks of support more than others" because of unequal access to formal institutionalized practices and because they had fewer informal networks of family and friends, being far from their hometowns. In implementing urban renewal, planners and real estate developers enacted the forces that Butler points to as those which produce precarity; in other words, those involved in city redevelopment "differentially exposed" migrant populations, increasing their risk of "of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and vulnerability to violence without adequate protection or redress."[46] In spite of some city administrators' efforts to redevelop in a responsible manner, economic strain and unprecedented numbers of population growth from migration to Frankfurt and Turin in particular meant that low-income housing was in greater demand than could be met, particularly with city centers undergoing massive transformation.

Frankfurt:

In the case of Frankfurt, municipal officials and business leaders had the common goal of transforming the city into an epicenter of European trade, with a new skyline to complement its improved image. In 1967, the planning department head Hans Kampffmeyer introduced a "Five-Finger Plan" (Figure 1.1) that divided the city into sections with desired developmental outcomes.[47] The department labeled the plan as such due to its resemblance of a splayed hand

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[46] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 34.
[47] Skyline Atlas, "Fingerplan," accessed January 25, 2021, https://www.skylineatlas.com/development-plans/fingerplan-1968/.

imposed over the existing map of Frankfurt. Along the strips marked in red on Figure 1.1, city

planners would allow intensive building, including skyscrapers. They required a minimum of

2,000 square meters for each high-rise, thus launching a period of widespread speculation and

buying up of land for those who intended to build towering luxury apartments or office

buildings. Landlords who had previously rented out their spaces as living quarters were thus

offered attractive prices as land value skyrocketed. Some neighborhoods felt these effects more

than others; the Westend neighborhood in particular was one of those most impacted (see yellow

area of Figure 1.1). A long-time working-class district, Westend was home to over 40,000

inhabitants in the mid-1960s.[48] Slated as a "city expansion area," developers quickly purchased

apartment buildings that would be demolished to make room for the construction of high-rises.

The demand drove rent prices up and low-income inhabitants from their homes, many of whose

families had lived there for generations.
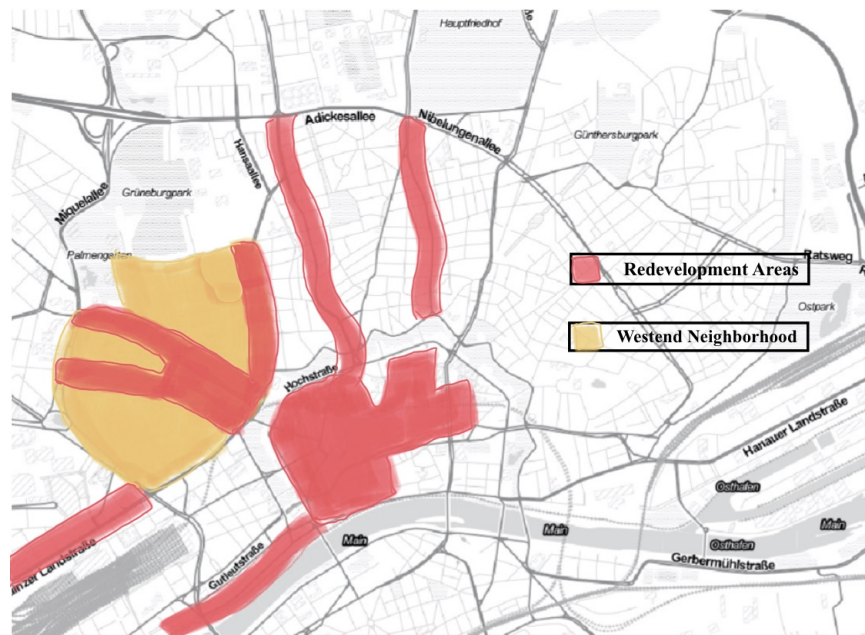
Figure 1.1 Frankfurt's "Five-Finger" Redevelopment Plan

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[48] Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend (AGW), "Geschichte des Westends," accessed January 25, 2021, http://www.aktionsgemeinschaft-westend.de/geschichte-des-westends/.

In addition to others of low socioeconomic status, migrants acutely experienced the consequences of redevelopment. In 1961, only 31,389 non-FRG citizens lived in Frankfurt. By 1972, that number of migrants increased by 81% to comprise 102,721 of 678,545 total city residents, or roughly 15% of the population.[49] One observer, Jürgen Roth, noted that redevelopment drove interest rates so high that even small construction companies could not afford to build near the city center – one needed to be backed with an investor with significant resources.[50] Moreover, rent prices skyrocketed, forcing low-income residents – both West German and migrants – to leave the older neighborhoods and live "on the outskirts of the city, the margins of communication, the fringes of social existence."[51] For those who did remain closer to the city center, they often paid higher sums for poor quality living spaces. For instance, an Italian-language monthly newsletter distributed in both Italy and the FRG chronicled how this affected Italian migrants in West Germany in January of 1973, showing migrants' position in relationship to other native-born residents. They reported, "Houses waiting for demolition permits are rented at astronomical prices to immigrants. [In a house] where there were previously four German families who paid 500 DM (90,000 lire) in rent, the landowners now charge 10,000 DM (1,800,000 lire) for the same house, renting it room by room in addition to the attic and the cellar."[52]

As seen by the above example, not only were rents increased, apartments were often divided into smaller units in response to the housing shortage, straining old plumbing and electrical systems if they even existed. According to a 1974 report written by the Press and

[49] Ernst Stracke, *Stadtzerstörung und Stadtteilkampf: Innerstädtische Umstrukturierungsprozesse, Wohnungsnot und soziale Bewegungen in Frankfurt am Main* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1980), 108. Jürgen Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt: die Zerstörung einer Stadt* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1975), 13.
[50] Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt*, 13.
[51] Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt*, 13.
[52] "Chi ha paura di chi?" *Il giornale dell'unione inquilini*, January 1973. Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (FF), Collection: Unione Inquilini.

Information Office of the City of Frankfurt, city officials acknowledged the disparate ways in which these practices affected specific neighborhoods and specific inhabitants: "In Frankfurt's Westend in particular, however, there were numerous large apartments that could be replaced by smaller ones, often already practically divided up under the pressure of the housing shortage…If an apartment became vacant, the homeowners filled these rooms practically up to the ceilings with people looking for accommodation, mainly foreign workers."[53] It is important to note how the compilers of the report highlight the position of "foreign workers," underscoring how they were particularly vulnerable to paying high rent prices for smaller spaces.

Concerned about the living conditions of migrant residents, Frankfurt city officials allocated 100,000 DM for a detailed study on housing conditions for migrant workers, which was published the year prior. Tasked with the project, researcher Maria Borris highlighted discrepancies in renting living spaces to migrants. Contrary to popular perceptions, only 61% of the 2,688 migrants they interviewed had children, and of those, only 39% had three or more children.[54] She reported that 23% of foreign families paid *over* 350 DM in rent, in comparison to just 9% of West German families consigned to pay such high sums.[55] In 1972, the average West German industrial worker's wage was around 1300 DM per month, though one can infer that the foreign worker was often paid less than his or her German colleague.[56] One Italian migrant, for instance, reported only earning 850 DM per month in that same year.[57] In addition, the quality of

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[53] Rudolf Heinrich Appel, *Frankfurt am Main: Stadtentwicklung und Wohnprobleme*, commissioned by the Press and Information Office of the City of Frankfurt (Frankfurt/M: Franz Jos. Henrich, KG, 1974), 38.

[54] Maria Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt: Eine empirische Untersuchung am Beispiel Frankfurt* (Frankfurt/M: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 91. Migrants included individuals from Greece, Italy, Turkey, Spain, and the former Yugoslavia.

[55] Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt*, 152.

[56] U.S. Social Security Administration, "Social Security Abroad: Earnings Index and Old-Age Benefits in West Germany," *Social Security Bulletin,* 1977. https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v40n3/v40n3p34.pdf. Accessed April 1, 2019.

[57] Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt (IfS), Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext. V 183 / 2. Konkret Nr. 12, 31 May 1972.

migrant living spaces was much poorer – 89% related living in the same room as individuals or groups whom they had not known prior to arriving in Frankfurt.[58] Furthermore, 79% of respondents conveyed that the rent was too high, and 57% that the living space was too small.[59]

Some journalists used Borris's figures to supplement and support their reporting on the housing situation in Frankfurt. In January of 1973, the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* printed an article with the title "Foreigners Often Live as if in a Ghetto." Reporters cited Borris's statistic that "almost two thirds of foreign workers live in houses that are exclusively occupied by compatriots or members of other nations" to highlight that the geographic separation between native-born and non-native residents was beginning to result in the formation of ghettos.[60] In essence, processes of gentrification clustered minority populations together, largely because their lack of social support led them to areas with poor living conditions at inequitable prices. For some politicians and portions of the general public, large concentrations of migrant individuals and families raised alarm bells due to the potential for conflict between native residents and newcomers. For the few already thinking about integration – however temporary – the separation also prevented migrants from adapting in terms of language, custom, or culture.[61]

Indeed, other news reporters marshalled the even more negative connotations of the term "ghetto" to highlight the possibility of said social conflict. After a series of migrant worker-initiated strikes, notably at the Ford factory in Cologne, the mainstream weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* ran an article characterizing the increasing number of Turkish workers as an "invasion," entitling it "The Turks are Coming – Save Yourselves, if You Can." The journalists

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[58] Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt*, 134.
[59] Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt*, 156.
[60] "Ausländer leben oft wie im Getto," *Frankfurter Neue Presse* (FNP), January 17, 1973.
[61] See also Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers*, translated by William Templer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 238.

made a direct comparison to the term's racist association in the U.S. in the article summary, claiming that "cities such as Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt are having difficulties dealing with the invasion: ghettos are appearing, and already, sociologists are predicting the decay of cities, crime and social poverty like in Harlem."[62] This article demonstrates the complexity of migration debates within the FRG, or how the nation-state had to begin to acknowledge that their labor recruitment would not consist simply of workers coming, contributing their labor, and then returning home. Instead, a number of social and political questions began to arise that previously had been ignored as the FRG refused to be characterized as a country of immigration.

In the West German context, then, the term "ghetto" had both geographic and social nuances, not only for Turkish migrants, but migrants more generally. The spatial aspect referred to "overstrained foreigner districts," or housing slums to which many migrants found themselves relegated due to their position as social outsiders with few other networks to provide a safety net. In addition, by hearkening back to images of race riots in U.S. cities throughout the 1960s, the employment of the term also reflected the fear of social conflict, as circumscribed by racial and cultural discrimination.[63] Though Italian immigrants may have been more familiar to West Germans than Turkish immigrants based on similar religious ties, native residents still displayed bias and prejudice that prioritized dissimilarities rather than what they had in common, as will be illustrated in later sections.

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[62] "Die Türken kommen – rette sich, wer kann," *Der Spiegel*, July 30, 1973, accessed January 25, 2021, https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41955159.html. An alternative translation for this title is "The Turks are Coming – Every Man for Himself."

[63] Raika Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations: Frankfurt in the 1960s and 1970s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (2014): 184-185. For an in-depth analysis of the racial correlation between the term "ghetto" and West German debates on integration and containment, see Maria Stehle, "Narrating the Ghetto, Narrating Europe: From Berlin, Kreuzberg to the Banlieues of Paris," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 3, no. 3, (2006): 48-70.

Often, city planners and administrations did not fully anticipate the consequences of their involvement and their role in amplifying gentrification processes that exacerbated housing crises for low-income inhabitants, such as the creation of so-called "ghettos." Sociologist Andrej Holm points to what critical studies began to label as the "public start-up financing for gentrification" in the 1980s – or when government planning and incentives reduced the risk for private investors to help fund redevelopment.[64] Though criticism in academic circles became more profuse in the 1980s, there is ample evidence of residents already beginning to push back on the perceived collusion between city planners and real estate investors in Frankfurt and Turin in the 1970s as affordable housing options dissipated while redevelopment moved forward, as will be demonstrated.

In the 1970s, the SPD more forcefully advocated for a reevaluation of urban renewal plans, recognizing the costs to disadvantaged residents. The Tenancy Protection Act already included provisions prohibiting *Zweckentfremdung*, or the use of living space for purposes other than housing.[65] During the local election campaign of 1972, Frankfurt's SPD promoted plans to further curb speculation, using the slogan "We want a human city. There is no room for speculators."[66] Their idea of a "human city" was codified in what they referred to as the "Social Obligation Paper" that passed in July of 1972. In addition to levying fines of up to 1,500 DM per square meter for apartments not used for "residential use," the law also protected "foreign" residents from being expelled if their deportation was based on information gained from

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[64] Andrej Holm, *Wir Bleiben Alle! Gentrifizierung – Städtische Konflikte um Aufwertung und Verdrängung* (Münster: Unrast, 2010), 11-12.

[65] Bundesgesetzblatt Teil 1, Nr. 110, "Gesetz zur Verbesserung des Mietrechts und zur Begrenzung des Mietanstiegs sowie zur Regelung von Ingenieur- und Architektenleistungen," (November 4, 1971), accessed April 14, 2021, https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?start=%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl171s1745.pdf%27%5D#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl171s1745.pdf%27%5D__1618497019958

[66] Rainer Molling, Dorothea Reinig ,and Horst Schäfer. *Hippie Okul: Bericht über ein außerschulisches Projekt mit türkischen Kindern in Frankfurt-Bockenheim* (Frankfurt/M: Jugend und Politik, 1975), 29.

landlord/renter litigation.[67] This latter stipulation was later deemed not legally permissible by the region of Hessen, to which Frankfurt belonged. In spite of its theoretical underpinnings of creating more equitable renewal processes, many extraparliamentary groups accused the "Social Obligation Paper" of being just that, only paper. In 1973 the *Jusos*, members of the SPD less than 35 years of age, declared that the "Social Obligation Paper" was not being upheld in a written statement of support of housing occupations as acts of "self-help." They further proposed an eviction freeze and no more building permits until a new redevelopment plan was put forward.[68] 1973 proved to be a bad year for the SPD's "human city" as the "Social Obligation Paper" was also overturned in court; the judges claimed it would "endanger the freedom of action of citizens and property interests as well as public interests" to an "indefinite extent."[69]

In spite of some SPD policymakers' best efforts, then, rampant speculation that was in part underwritten by urban renewal plans only further decreased the availability of affordable housing, especially in the Westend neighborhood and near the city center. As will be illuminated in the next chapter, public opinion and journalistic interventions viewed a number of entities as culpable, including the city administration itself. Moreover, even though SPD programs in the 1970s tried to ameliorate the negative aspects of urban redevelopment, much of the damage had already been done as buildings had already changed hands within the private market. The fact of the matter is that there were not enough living spaces to rent that were affordable and in decent condition, and renewal plans only exacerbated the housing situation, driving up the prices of a diminishing stock.

Turin:

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[67] IfS, Collection: 1970-1974: City Acts, Folder: Rechtsamt, Signature: 29.
[68] "Geballte Wohnprobleme," *FR*, September 5, 1973.
[69] Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt*, 75.

Frankfurt was not the only city facing challenges in funding its redevelopment plan, nor

dealing with the implications of low-income housing being sold off to make space for new

luxury apartments and businesses. Between 1951 and 1961, Turin's population grew from

720,000 inhabitants to 1,025,000 inhabitants – or an increase of 42.5%.[70] By 1971, it had grown

over 50% once more, reaching over 1,800,000 residents.[71] According to historian Stefano Musso,

Turin became the industrial metropolis that housed the "largest concentration of workers in the

country," many of whom had relocated from the south.[72] In a city council meeting in Turin on

June 3, 1974, representative Martinat minced no words in spelling out the pressure this growth

placed on the city's infrastructure and financial situation. Due to the fact that Turin's industry

was expanding at significant rates, housing was not keeping up, nor could the city rely

completely on privately built housing to cover the need. In fact, Turin's city center was plagued

by "persistent physical and social decay," which the local newspaper *La Stampa* complained as

being an "immense dormitory area."[73] In addressing these concerns, Martinat related:

> One thousand billion [lire] are needed for the construction of houses; the city does not
> have the money, nor the province – the region even less so, not to mention the federal
> government. There are protests in the city because there are no houses; in spite of rent
> freezes, prices continue to skyrocket…some sort of solution needs to be found.[74]

Martinat's evaluation of the city's financial situation highlighted the lack of funds available to

build more public housing or provide the necessary manpower to crack down on inflated rent

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[70] Stefano Musso, "Il lungo miracolo economico. Industria, economia è società (1950-1970), in Nicola Tranfaglia, ed., *Storia di Torino, vol. IX, Gli anni della Repubblica* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1999), 54.
[71] Città di Torino – Direzione Servizi Civici – Settore Stattistica e Toponomastica, "I numeri dell'immigrazione Italiana a Torino, 1910-2011," (Città di Torino, 2011), 28, accessed December 30, 2020, https://www.ilmattinodifoggia.it/userUpload/immigraziane_torino_2011.pdf.
[72] Musso, "Il lungo miracolo economico," 86.
[73] Alessandro de Magistris, "L'urbanistica della grande trasformazione (1945-1980)," in Tranfaglia, ed., *Storia di Torino*, 225
[74] Archivio Storico della Città (ASdC), Collection: Consiglio Comunale – Sessioni Straordinari, June 3, 1974, transcribed meeting notes. Martinat was a representative of the MSI (*Movimento Sociale Italiano)* or Italian Social Movement Party, the remnants of the party put together by Mussolini which continued to represent the political far-right. His comments on cost were part of a protest against the city's proposal to seize empty housing to provide living spaces for low-income residents.

prices in these same areas, in spite of the legal protections against rent hikes already in place. In 1972, Italy recorded the second highest per capita housing shortage of all European countries, completing only 4.8 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants in that year.[75]

Even within their own country, then, southern Italian migrants found themselves forced to the fringes of cities, or in a situation of "separation and isolation." Akin to practices in the Westend neighborhood of Frankfurt, historian Elena Petricola posits that old, run-down housing in Turin and Milan comprised the "receptacle for immigrant working-class families and marginalized individuals (unemployed, prostitutes, criminals), becoming sorting areas for those who had just arrived." Petricola, too, invokes the term "ghetto" to describe these conditions from – areas overcrowded with new arrivals and avoided by other long-term residents. She refers to a state of "oligopoly" in which the housing market was so small due to the dire housing shortage that landlords could charge excessively high amounts of rent without renovating or maintaining their properties.[76] In essence, not only were migrants grouping together in dilapidated buildings, but they were paying excessively for their living spaces.

The left-leaning newspaper ran by the Italian Communist Party – *L'Unità* – reported a typical scene in the "ghetto" for migrants in Turin on April 20, 1972, entitling their article, "22.000 lire a month for a house declared uninhabitable in 1961!" Ten years prior, when health care officials declared a building unsafe due to walls "swollen with humidity," lack of utilities, and stairs that "threatened to collapse," forty apartments were sealed and the building sold off. Despite the intimations of the city that the new owner redevelop the property into public housing, the owner instead rented out the rooms at a high profit. The rationale reached by *L'Unità* was as

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[75] Thomas Angotti, *Housing in Italy: Urban Development and Political Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), 7-8.

[76] Elena Petricola, *I diritti degli esclusi nelle lotte degli anni settanta. Lotta Continua* (Rome: Edizioni Associate Editrice Internazionale, 2002), 174-176.

follows: "These 'slums' in the suburbs, whether they are habitable or not, cost nothing in maintenance and in a city where rents skyrocket, it is not difficult to find families willing to live there."[77]

The map below (Figure 1.2) shows how migrants in Turin were commonly relegated to the peripheries of the city. Moreover, the city center was the topic for debate for many years; the president of a construction league defined the lack of planning and administration as "passive."[78] Due to the lack of strategic planning (or more likely city administrations having been simply overwhelmed by the number of new arrivals flooding their city), many migrants and low-income residents had moved into the dilapidated quarters that had previously been grand villas and large buildings but had not been maintained. Their living situation changed when city planners, in combination with investors, launched a series of projects to redevelop and transform the downtown area, resulting in "some sectors of the population [being] progressively expelled" from the city center as Turin transitioned from "a 'company town' to a metropolitan area controlling a much larger cycle of production, both national and international" in the 1960s.[79] One strategy for "expelling" residents was to offer a monetary incentive to encourage tenants to move out sooner: amounts that seemed generous in the immediate context, but would be a pittance when calculated in the overall financial gain for investors.

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[77] "22.000 lire al mese per una casa dichiarata inabitabile nel 1961!" *L'Unità*, April 20, 1972.

[78] "É sempre mancata una politica efficace per il risanamento del 'centro storico,'" *La Stampa*, Semptember 27, 1973.

[79] Guido Laganà, Mario Pianta, and Anna Segre, "Urban social movements and urban restructuring in Turin, 1969-76," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 6, no. 2 (1982): 227. The authors further suggest that "The centre was thus affected by an economic and spatial restructuring which intensified the local social contradictions, eventually leading to the development of urban conflict" (227). One of the social contradictions they refer to is the second-class treatment offered to southern Italian migrants, for instance.
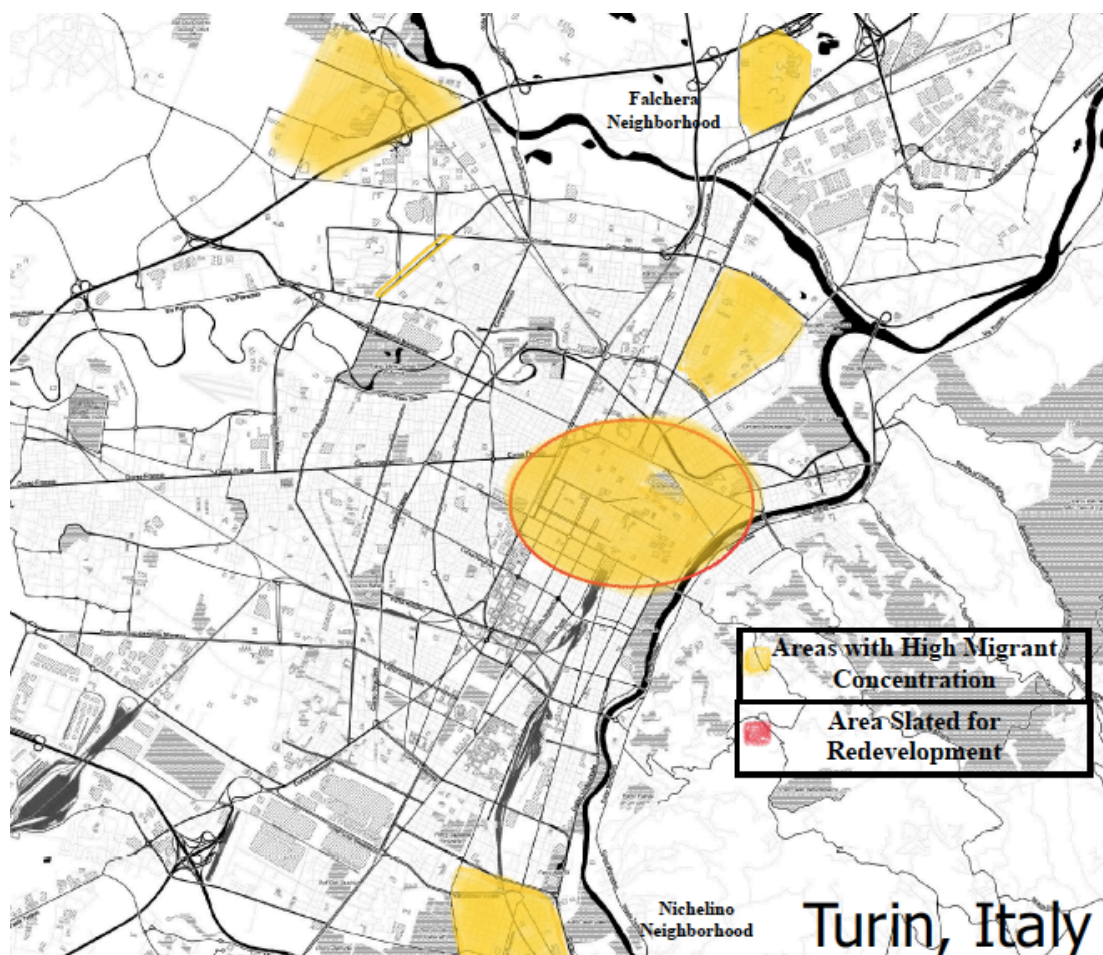
Figure 1.2 Map of 1970s Turin

In the meantime, Turin's city administrators pursued desperate means to provide housing

for the rising numbers of inhabitants. It was already clear that they could not heavily rely on the

regional IACP. Already in 1962 the regional president, Mario Dezani, admitted that their

capacity to build or rent was nowhere near the level of demand. He wrote to the local *La Stampa*

that they received an average of 50 requests a day, requests that "very often reveal conditions of

extreme material, physical and even moral distress."[80] In response to the shortage of public

housing, the city administration decided to "open up…former industrial warehouses or former

barracks [to be] used to house immigrants who could not find a different housing situation" in

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[80] *La Stampa*, dated May 17, 1962. As quoted in Tabor, "Le politiche sulla casa," 159-160.

1965.[81] The lack of low-income housing is most visible in the numbers; between 1945 and 1977, 262,225 dwellings were built, 16.2% of which used public funding.[82] However, when the population had grown by over one million individuals in that same time frame, 262,225 dwellings (not all of which were low-income, especially the 83.8% privately constructed) seem hardly adequate, especially when previously low-income residential areas were being redeveloped in the city center.[83]

In both Turin and Frankfurt (and elsewhere), city redevelopment plans and municipal authorities' initial inaction to protect low-income housing exacerbated shortages and contributed to speculative practices. A lack of foresight and the incentive of profit meant that as buildings were demolished, affordable housing disappeared along with the brick and mortar. This trend hit migrants and migrant families particularly hard. Due to their disadvantaged social position, they paid astronomically high rents for living spaces in disrepair. They found themselves on both geographic and social margins as they inhabited poor quality living spaces, if they were lucky enough to obtain housing in the first place.

Discriminatory Rental Practices: Using Cultural Differences to De-Humanize Southern Italians

As if the strain redevelopment plans placed on the housing markets was not enough, bias and discrimination only made it more difficult to find an affordable apartment with decent living conditions. In everyday practice, migrants faced *social* precarity due to perceived differences in culture and customs in both Turin and Frankfurt. Landlords often codified their prejudices in

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[81] Tabor, "Le politiche sulla casa," 161.
[82] Tabor, "Le politiche sulla casa," 170.
[83] Città di Torino – Direzione Servizi Civici – Settore Stattistica e Toponomastica, "I numeri dell'immigrazione Italiana a Torino, 1910-2011," (Città di Torino, 2011), 28, accessed December 30, 2020, https://www.ilmattinodifoggia.it/userUpload/immigraziane_torino_2011.pdf.

long-standing characterizations that created internal social boundaries, such as conjectured levels of cleanliness or number of children. Even within one's country, southern Italians were viewed as undesirable due to subjective notions of incompatibility that pushed migrants and their families to economic, community, and geographical margins.

One of the more visible ways in which migrants were discriminated against was their characterization as less than equal. Residents and potential landlords often used derogatory labels that created separation between themselves and new arrivals, even when born in the same country. Northern Italian bias in refusing to rent to their southern compatriots, for example, was not always subtle. At times, property owners visibly posted signs reading "It is forbidden to rent to red-necks" on the doors of their buildings.[84] The derogatory use of the term "red-neck," associated with the Italian word "*terroni*" which is derived from the word for "*terra*" or "earth," clearly linked southerners to the land and even to the historical categorization of peasantry. Indeed, perceived differences between northern Italy and southern Italy was not a new phenomenon. In his examination of socio-economic conditions before Italian unification to present day, economist Emanuele Felice argues that "a socio-institutional divide between Italy's North and South existed before unification and, in some respects, grew even stronger after unification. Such a divide ultimately affected human and social capital, policy outcomes, institutional performances, and thus economic growth."[85] Factors such as the ones Felice highlights created stereotypes that depicted northern Italians as industrious, intelligent, and progressive, albeit a bit more reserved or cold in personality. On the other hand, northerners

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[84] Centro Studi Piero Gobetti (PG), Collection: Emilio Cavalleris, File: "Assemblea autonoma alfa romea: Ti spremono e ti buttano, October 1974," 7-9.
[85] Emanuele Felice, "The Socio-Institutional Divide: Explaining Italy's Long-Term Regional Differences." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 49, no. 1 (2018): "The Socio-Institutional Divide," 44.

often viewed southern Italians as warm and open, but lazy, backward, or uneducated based on their employment and cultural and political values.[86]

If a southern Italian migrant took to looking in the newspapers to search for a home instead of risking being snubbed in person, they could still confronted advertisements that read, "Apartment for rent. Southerners not accepted." In an interview with Emanuela Locati, who grew up in northern Italy, she recalled the climate of prejudice from when she was studying law in Turin. She related, "There were signs reading 'For rent but not for southerners'…it made you think of those [placards] which at one time read 'not for Jews.' You don't see that type of thing today."[87] Her allusion to the persecution of Jews during the Second World War is particularly informative. It demonstrates that southern Italians were truly considered a separate and distinct people that were treated differently; a group often pushed to the margins through social and cultural ostracization.

Italians in the FRG also had to confront similar signs prohibiting their entering certain spaces. In an interview in 2005, Paolo R. recalled certain locales posting either "Entrance prohibited to Italians" or "No foreigners allowed." He reflected, "It practically reminded me of Hitler's days when they said 'Jewish dogs' could not enter certain shops."[88] Similar to Emanuela's reflections, the connection to racial persecution underscores the degree of perceived exclusion – certain spaces were clearly marked to either include or ban those who socially belonged (or not). This categorization was often challenged by migrants, who violated formal and informal boundaries in an attempt to shift the lines that had been demarcated. For example,

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[86] Iain Chambers, "The 'Southern Question'…Again," in Andrea Mammone, Ercole Giap Parini, and Giuseppe A. Veltri, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Italy: History, Politics, Society* (London/New York: Routledge, 2015. See also John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1960-1900* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
[87] Interview with Emanuela Locati, conducted by author in Turin on January 18, 2018.
[88] Paolo R., interview by Aurora Rodonò, September 05, 2005, DOMiD, Recording: IN 53.955, cassette tape.

Paolo R. said he still frequently entered the bars, coffee shops, and stores anyway and although he was usually escorted out, it never came to physical violence.

Similar to Emanuela Locati's reflections in Turin, some West Germans also made the comparison of the national or ethnic discrimination of migrants to the exclusion of Jews from Nazi Germany's social, political, and economic circles. One Stefan Keßler wrote an opinion editorial within a Catholic newspaper entitled, "How Many Must Die?" He wrote protesting the decision of the Federal Court of Justice to not consider slogans such as "Foreigners Out!" as incitement of the people. He related, "I find it frightening that in a country where the slogan "Jews Out!" was a symbol for pogroms and mass persecutions in the past, today one of the highest federal courts underestimated the danger of xenophobic slogans."[89] In both nation-states, then, migrants and long-time residents likened the characterization of Jews as an entirely separate and undesirable group of people to the discrimination faced by migrants, hinting that such practices had the potential to progress to more fatal and widespread consequences.

Additional ways by which landlords classified southern Italian migrants as inferior centered on cleanliness and reproduction. One woman remembers a Turinese claiming that if one were to rent to a migrant, "there will be chickens in the bathtub."[90] Another native-born Turin citizen even took the initiative to write the mayor to inform him of how immigrants' lack of cleanliness was adversely affecting the city as a whole. The author distinguishes between northern and southern Italians, labeling the former "Piedmontese survivors" who are now a "clear minority" and the latter as "bullies" and "incompetent." They go on to claim that they are not trying to invoke "regionalism," rather "simply make a distinction between ways of

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[89] DOMiD Collection: M/Z1/004/040 – Zeitungsausschnittsammlung von 05.09.1983 bis 31.12.1984. The article was dated May 5, 1984. The title is only listed as "St. A" and another article in the folder is entitled: "Catholics: Political Rights for Foreigners Without Fear."
[90] Interview with Anna Piazzola, conducted by author in Turin on February 3, 2018.

behaving." According to the letter, the mayor must only "look at the dirty state of the streets" and he would "know very well that immigrants and foreigners do not use the plastic [trash] bags that you, very commendably, have installed at every corner." Even graver still, the author claimed that this was evidence that "Turin is unfortunately no longer Turin."[91] Other letters to the mayor corroborate this perspective, with other long-time residents denouncing "dirty scoundrels" and asking the mayor to "send these poor people (or who claim to be poor) back to where they came from."[92]

In a similar vein, children often represented cultural differences assigned to families from the south and served as a principal reason for refusing a contract. Another woman who emigrated north from the island of Sardinia with her husband described looking for a house for months because "no one wanted to give us a place because we were immigrants and had kids."[93] Historically, families in southern Italy did have more children than the north. In his survey on the role of the family in Italian society and culture, historian Paul Ginsborg highlights that behind "national statistics there lay a distinct difference between the Centre-North of the country on the one hand, and the South on the other." For instance, most northerners had a single child from 1920 onward, usually by a mother over the age of thirty. In contrast, most families in the south had at least two children, were married younger, and had their children in quick succession.[94]

Beyond sheer numbers, reproduction served as a code for discrimination based on additional cultural dissimilarities surrounding family formation and values. Many northerners perceived the Catholic Church as having too strong of an influence on Southern Italians. During

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[91] Piero Giodanino, *Diego Novelli: Lettere al Sindaco* (Turin: Societa' editrice internazionale, 1979), 211.
[92] Giodanino, *Diego Novelli*, 96, 212.
[93] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Subfile: Fabio Levi, *Lotta Continua n. 68, June 30, 1972.*
[94] Paul Ginsborg, *Italy and its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State, 1980-2001* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 69.

the early 1970s, debates over contraception and abortion, for instance, flooded the public sphere. The Catholic church adamantly pushed back on education about the pill, or even a woman's right to divorce her husband.[95] Thus, northerners viewed southern Italians as overly religious, or even ignorant, uneducated, and unduly influenced by their faith. Immigrants were certainly viewed as more traditional and backward. This type of perspective also influenced West Germans in Frankfurt, the majority of whom were Protestant.

In West Germany, social exclusion also centered around differences in family size. One could view a co-worker as a good colleague or even a friend while at the same time writing off all migrants as foreigners who did not share the same culture or values, often represented in terms of reproduction. In relating his experiences as a *Gastarbeiter* many years after his "integration" into West German society, Giuseppe La Torre cited this disjuncture and how it resulted in inequitable treatment. He described that in the 1960s whenever the same German colleagues that he got on well with at work ever received word that an Italian family was to move into their building, they would exclaim, "Italians in the building? It would be a disaster! They have so many kids and make so much noise!"[96] Their comments represented a disconnect between their personal relationship with Giuseppe and Italian migrants more generally.

Relating family size with noise and other undesirable characteristics was also portrayed in a 1981 film by Hans Andreas Guttner, a German-Austrian filmmaker whose documentaries were among the first to be featured in movie theaters. His production "*Familie Villano kehrt nicht zurück*" (The Villano Family is Not Going Back) documented the experiences of one Italian migrant family in Germany. An hour in, the frame pans to the father looking through

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[95] The referendum on divorce passed in December of 1970. Law 553 that previously made oral contraception a crime was repealed in 1971. Legislation on abortion was introduced by law in May of 1978 and confirmed by referendum in 1981.
[96] Christoph Nonn, *Kleine Migrationsgeschichte von Nordrein Westfallen* (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 2011), 105.

housing advertisements in an effort to find a larger apartment. In addition to their own family, his

brother had traveled to West Germany for employment; as a result, ten of them were living in

three small rooms. When he looks up at the camera, he says, "My biggest problem is our small

apartment. I read through the ads in the paper and call, but as soon as people hear that there are

ten of us, they say no because there are too many of us and we will be too loud."[97]

Ulmenstraße 20: Mieter weigern sich, mehr als zehn Prozent ihres Lohns für die Wohnung zu zahlen. „Wir sind keine Schafe, sondern Menschen", heißt es auf den Protestplakaten. (FR-Bild: Winkler)

Figure 1.3 "To Encourage the Tenants: Examples from Milan." Children participate in a demonstration against high rent prices and unsanitary conditions in Frankfurt.[98]

The perception of it being disadvantageous to rent to large or potentially prolific southern

Italian families analogized migrants and children to animals, or nearly animals. In the above

photo of a demonstration by migrants in Frankfurt (Figure 1.3), the children are prominently

holding or standing in front of the signs for passers-by to read in Italian, German, and Turkish.

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[97] Hans Andreas Guttner, *Familie Villano kehrt nicht zurück,* (1981), VHS, DOMiD, File: VI 0029.
[98] "Die Mieter munter machen: Beispiele aus Mailand," *FR,* August 30, 1971. IfS, Collection: PIA-Sammlung. S6b-38/1.274. Reproduced with permission.

One of the leaders for the Italian-based Tenant's Union is the man in the very back, Giuseppe Zambon. Originally formed in Milan, the organization would soon spread throughout northern Italy and into West Germany. The signs read: "We are not sheep, but humans. As such, we refuse to pay the rent prices that thieves – the landlords – would like us to pay." In this display, migrants literally re-asserted their humanity, equating rent prices with being treated like animals.

The spaces in which one lived could indeed be equated to areas traditionally reserved for animal stock. When some southerners ran into difficulty finding accommodation in northern Italian cities, they often turned to the countryside, living on social and physical peripheries of the city. In an interview with Giorgio, he described these types of communities on the outskirts of industrial cities, such as Milan. He related:

> Since they knew how to farm, they took up houses in those areas, or abandoned farms. They went there in groups of 40…well, maybe not 40 but 4 or 5 families would go and start living off the land…They knew how to farm but didn't know how to work in factories. They made it work, but they were living like dogs, understand? And then there was the distance…they didn't have cars so they took the trams. That meant getting up at 4am to eat and get ready, then walking or biking a distance to even get to the tram that took them to Pirelli or Albicocco…[99]

In a very literal sense, these migrants lived on the margins, separated both physically and by their social and cultural differences. They "lived like dogs," in that their entire day was spent on survival and subsistence in makeshift structures out in the open, rather than in areas served by public utilities and access to transportation.

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[99] Interview with Giorgio, conducted by author in Milan on March 6, 2018. Albicocco is the name for an entire complex involved in producing the metal and rubber pieces for industry, including the automobile industry. The Pirelli tire factory also belonged to this industrial complex. Today, it has been redeveloped into a university. For a discussion of the phenomenon of large swaths of residents living on the urban peripheries of Milan, called "Corea," see Franco Alasia and Danilo Montaldi, *Milano, Corea. Inchiesta sugli immigrati* (Milan: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 1960).

Southern Italians in Germany also found themselves in similar living conditions, mainly through the pressures of the housing market. One father who lived in Kalbach, just northeast of Frankfurt, also drew a parallel between living in former animal stalls and living like animals. When his wife wrote to him that she could no longer stand for the family to live apart, he searched for a flat but could only find old pig stalls that a farmer was willing to rent for 200 DM. At first, he lived with the pigs while he put 500 DM into renovating the area, building a toilet out of roofing materials and putting up wallpaper. His job was to muck out the stalls in the evenings in addition to paying rent. In spite of his efforts to improve the quarters, he described them as follows:

> When my wife came with the children, I said: the pigs have to go…It reeked. He took the pigs away, but the stench was there and the manure… These nine months we lived like dogs. The water was so terrible; it wasn't in the house, only in the field, and in the winter it was frozen. I had to thaw the ice with warm water. I did not think people could live like that.[100]

By relating their quality of life to that of dogs, as well as his comment "I did not think people could live like that," this Italian man implied that their un-human, if not inhumane, treatment went against a sufficient or basic standard of living.

Notions about living conditions, reproduction, and cleanliness led many migrants to be viewed as others by fellow residents. This ostracization was codified in practices such as placing placards in front of apartments for rent or in hanging up the phone once one heard how many members were in a prospective renter's family. Still, migrants pointed out the injustice of their treatment, often relating their situation to that of animals. Though many migrants wished to save money to send back to their families, or for future investment in a home in the *mezzogiorno*, there clearly was a line between being economical and bearing the brunt of discrimination.

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[100] Ernst Klee, ed., *Gastarbeiter. Analysen und Berichte.* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), 165-168.

Housing as a "Right:" The Language of Migrant's Claims

By looking closely at the language migrants used to describe their living conditions, one can begin to ascertain how some migrants thought about and articulated their housing claims. Combined with the sense of injustice they related in "living like animals" or about the actions of landlords, they also referred to something much broader, invoking the language of "rights" more generally. By asserting housing as a "right," migrants were not only asserting a claim to what they viewed as rightfully entitled, but also pointing to the fact that the social state was failing in its promises to protect them from the very precarity which they now faced. Through the language of "rights," migrants continued to highlight that they "suffer[ed] from failing social and economic networks of support more than others" – networks to which they viewed themselves as entitled.[101]

In writing to his local chapter of the Tenant's Union in 1968, one resident on the outskirts of Milan related his substandard housing conditions to a failure of what he termed "fundamental rights." He described paying 30.000 lire of his 80.000 lire monthly salary to the public housing entity IACP. That amounted to approximately 38% of his income budgeted towards rent, and for an apartment that was supposed to be subsidized by the state. He described his home as a "type of barracks; one sees that they were built in a hurry in order to put people inside."[102] The occupant concluded, "It is truly a shame! I think all of us tenants should unite together to obtain our fundamental rights. I say that the Institute cannot treat us like wild animals or plagues to be contained in ghettos!"[103] He affirmed that decent and affordable housing was a fight to which he

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[101] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 34.
[102] "Quartiere Tessera: ecco la lettera di un inquilino," *Il giornale dell'unione inquilini*, November 1968. FF, Collection: Nuova Sinistra, File: 71.
[103] "Quartiere Tessera: ecco la lettera di un inquilino," *Il giornale dell'unione inquilini*, November 1968. FF, Collection: Nuova Sinistra, File: 71.

believed all tenants were entitled, or at least the right to be treated with dignity. As he lived in public housing, he also faulted the state-run IACP for its role in creating "ghettos" – viewing his and his neighbors' separation into certain neighborhoods based on their lower socioeconomic status (usually dictated by public housing blocks in Italy) as discrimination.

Perhaps the most publicized tragedy that criticized the failure of state actors and administrators of the social state to guarantee perceived rights to a basic standard of living occurred in Milan but quickly traveled to Turin and even the FRG. Massimiliano was the second child of a family who had emigrated north; he had already experienced health complications in his heart and lungs due to his home environment. According to one of the reports, the family lived in a damp single room with a kitchen, for which they paid 22.000 lire. When they could no longer make ends meet, they received an eviction notice.[104] In these desperate straits, the family decided to take part in illegally occupying luxury apartments in via Tibaldi in the outskirts of Milan. When the police cleared the occupation, they spent a great deal of time standing in the rain – circumstances which doctors believe exacerbated Massimiliano's already weak lungs and led to his death. On June 9, 1971, the entirety of *L'Unità*'s second page was dedicated to the tragedy. In one of the columns, reporters included a segment of their interview with the father. Though the article provides little context surrounding his comments, Massimiliano's dad established a direct connection between the challenges of housing and his son's death. *L'Unità* reported his remarks as, "'He died,' says the father, 'because we were denied the right to a dry room, because they ignored my application for public housing for years; if they offered me the most beautiful house today it would seem like a curse. I don't want wreaths at his funeral. Massimiliano has always lived in poverty and must be buried like a poor child!'"[105] Whether

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[104] "La casa si prende – L'affitto non si paga," *Lotta Continua*, 3, no. 9, supplement.
[105] "Tragica morte di un bimbo coinvolto nello sgombero di una casa occupata," *L'Unità*, June 9, 1971.

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prompted by reporters or of his own accord, Mr. Ferretti used the news outlet to amplify his accusations of injustice by pointing to how he and his family were "denied the right" to public housing. He implied that he kept his side of administrative responsibility – he asserts that he went through the application process "for years" – but that because the state did not uphold their end of the social contract, his child suffered the ultimate consequence.

Massimiliano Ferretti (al centro) durante l'occupazione in via Tibaldi
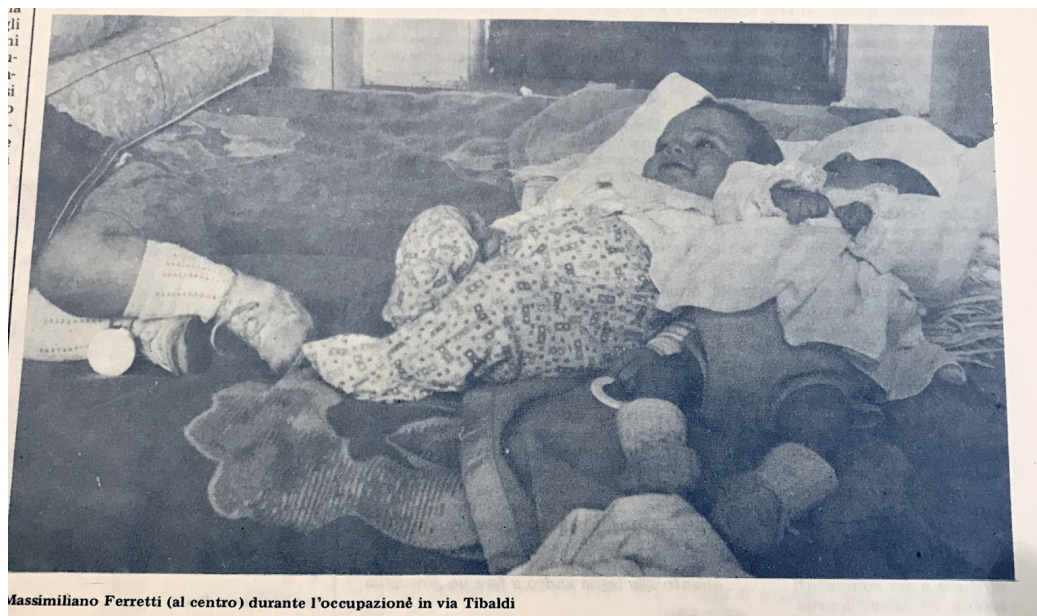
Figure 1.4 Photo of Massimiliano featured in *il giornale dell'unione inquilini*[106]

The news of Massimiliano's death was not limited to one nation-state. The *Unione Inquilini* (Tenant's Union), which distributed its newsletter throughout Italy and to Italians in West Germany and elsewhere, took up the story on its cover and throughout the first five pages of a bi-monthly issue. Though the publication rarely featured photos due to ink and word constraints, the editors included a photograph of Massimiliano along with a poem entitled "For Massimiliano F: Victim of Hardship and Social Injustice." As seen from the title, the body of Massimiliano was mapped onto the larger issues of rights, as manifest by the first stanza:

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[106] *Il giornale dell'unione inquiline*, July-August, 1971. Photo taken by author at (PG) Collection: Marcello Vitale, Sub-Collection: Guido Piraccini, File: 15. Lotte per la casa, varie città, doc. 11, Document: 010503.

Everyone who opens their eyes to the light
has the right to life, the right to the beautiful
the right to the ugly – HAS THE RIGHT TO EVERYTHING!
A safe home, affection, care,
a job, bread, joy for everyone.
your little heart…asked
your fragile body…asked
but they died before achieving it! [107]

According to the poet, who signed only with the initials M.B., the right to life is closely

connected to the right to a home, among other things. In Italian, "safe" can also mean "reliable"

or "secure," referring to a guarantee of housing, security, and protection. In dying, not only did

Massimiliano fail to achieve or obtain said rights, but later stanzas signal that *because*

Massimiliano was denied rights viewed as his due, it resulted in his death. Public outcry and the

circulation of claims of injustice prompted city administrators to act; Milan's mayor and city

assessor declared that 200 apartments would be made available to the families who had occupied

alongside the Ferrettis in an attempt to ameliorate the situation, providing a solution that was

only temporary. Nonetheless, city officials' actions underscore that state actors were sensitive to

claims that they were failing to deliver on the standard of living that was so frequently invoked

as a symbol of a modern nation-state.

Some migrants and reporters in Frankfurt also connected poor living conditions with the

language of rights. When a reporter for the *Frankfurter Rundschau* interviewed Giuseppe

Zambon, leader of the Italian-based Tenant's Union about their reasons for moving the

organization into the FRG, he related, "We all have the right to a home if we will stop

complaining and start fighting in an organized way." Although his comments are directed toward

what he viewed as a more effective way of achieving results, i.e. organization, he still asserted

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[107] "A Massimiliano F.: Vittima degli stenti e dell'ingiustizia sociale," *Il giornale dell'unione inquilini*, July-August, 1971.

that "all" have a right to a home, even if not formal West German citizens. Zambon did not believe that organization could help only migrants to achieve the realization of the rights, but West German citizens as well. He told the reporter "The Tenant's Union wants to unite all foreign tenants to fight together for better living conditions. And if guest workers can organize themselves, the Germans can do it too."[108] By implying that other West Germans – formal citizens – were similarly being denied their rights, his perspective points to a larger failing of the social state more generally.

Other residents within the FRG went even further to connect migrants' housing rights not just with those guaranteed by the social state, but to socialism's long efforts at depicting rights as international in nature. In a flyer commemorating International Workers Day, authors engaged in traditions of worker solidarity and referred to the conditions of "foreign workers who are mistakenly referred to here as 'guest workers,'" deriding the "social state" for its supposed failures. The flyer stated that although migrants paid taxes like the West Germans, "their children have no places in the SCHOOLS…there is no proper medical care and no APARTMENTS. For them, this SOCIAL STATE – which finances its reform policies with the sweat of the workers – functions even less for them than for the Germans." They then reiterate that migrants enjoy "all basic rights with the exception of freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom of choice of profession, employment and education, and protection against expulsion to foreign countries."[109] By listing each of these exceptions to the rights guaranteed by the Basic Law (as the West German constitution was called) and associating them with the lack of housing and other social services, the authors of the flyer point to what they view as a

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[108] Norbert Leppert, "Giuseppe Zambon aus Italien will mit ausländischen Gastarbeitern in Frankfurt gegen Mietwucher kämpfen," *FR*, August 30, 1971.
[109] DOMiD, File: E 0359,0042. The flyer is undated and is entitled, "Mai Kampftag der internationalen Arbeiterklasse."

significant failure of the state to both ensure social rights and/or expand social services along with the common market.

The report that the city of Frankfurt commissioned Maria Borris to complete also opens an important window into migrants' own perceptions of their social and political rights as well as her viewpoint as a city-appointed official gathering information on living conditions. Interestingly enough, Borris and her team did not limit their questions to housing conditions or rent prices. Borris's findings related that 41% of the interviewees believed that the 1965 Foreigner Law should be modified to remove restrictions on the freedom of movement, the right of assembly, and the formation of political groups.[110] In reflecting on why this was the case, Borris concluded that the language of the Foreigner Law allowed for many "indefinite" legal terms, "very wide discretion" of immigration authorities and, last but not least, sometimes stood in direct violation of "fundamental basic rights" outlined in the FRG's constitution. Borris was not the only one to connect the issue of constitutional rights with this legislation. At its inception, Hessian officials (the region in which Frankfurt is located) "questioned whether the law could really be represented as a progressive regulation of foreigners' rights, especially in view of human rights concerns."[111]

As seen by Borris's report and in the public discussions surrounding the death of Massimiliano, housing rights did not consist of a separate subsection of rights, but were perceived to be intrinsically tied with registers of other rights and protections. Authorities, reporters, researchers, and migrants invoked the language of human rights in the context of "fundamental," "social," and even "basic," which is to say constitutional rights to point to the fact that migrant living conditions did not qualify for a standard of living that was, in large part,

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[110] Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt*, 227.
[111] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*, 51.

enshrined by the promises of the social state. By using the term "right" to couch their housing claims, then, migrants and their allies simultaneously criticized the failure of social services, contributing to what would become the dominant perception of the welfare state in crisis.

Conclusion

According to philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, space is both political and social. In a 1979 essay entitled "Space: Social Product and Use Value," he remarked that "everywhere, people are realizing that spatial relations also are social relations."[112] Migrants' social and economic precarity was exacerbated and dictated by their relationships with landlords, and by more macro-level forces set in motion by city planners and policymakers. Federal social housing policies did not grant equal access to all residents, city redevelopment plans limited the availability of affordable housing, and landlords' biases provided even more barriers to obtaining housing. The spaces of migrants' living quarters were informed and influenced by both localized and larger political and economic trends, relegating migrants to small rooms in run-down buildings, or even former animal stalls, while generally paying disproportionately for them.

Migrants' insistence that affordable and decent housing was a "right" was steeped in both a normalized standard of living and by political rhetoric upholding the social state as a sign of of a modern nation-state. However, migrant living conditions made other residents and governing officials painfully apparent that the ideal of universalized social protection systems were far from being realized. From holes in administrative services, to urban renewal plans that diminished housing availability, to contingencies based on one's residency status, not all residents were equally protected. The catalyst for migrant housing claims, then, was a challenge to the forces

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[112] Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, translated by Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden, edited by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 190.

producing their precarity and a demand for decent living conditions – a standard of living which

the social state had promised to provide but was now failing to do.

CHAPTER TWO

Amplifying Injustice: News Media, *Radio Colonia*, and Migrant Housing Conditions

The last chapter focused on some of the main forces producing migrants' precarious

living conditions, namely limited access to state aid, city redevelopment plans that diminished

availability, and the sociocultural discrimination practiced by a large number of individual

landlords. This chapter examines how people talked about these forces in public spheres through

news reports and other forms of media. The influence of mass communication on shaping social

and political contexts, including messages picked up and spread throughout communities, cannot

be understated. According to historians Christian Führer and Corey Ross, newspapers, radio,

television broadcasts, and film "transformed the nature of politics, prompting an intensive

cultivation of popular appeal on the part of would-be leaders, exposing real or imagined

scandals, and helping to set the parameters of political debate."[1] Through an examination of how

news reporters, community members, and migrants portrayed and understood migrant housing

conditions, I sketch the social climate in which migrants found themselves – one which

determined how their claims to decent housing were made or received.

The first half of the chapter focuses on newspapers to analyze how deplorable migrant

housing conditions were represented in the public sphere. Though televisions and radios were

increasing in popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, newspapers remained one of the most widely

accessed sources of information. For instance, around 70% of the adult population (aged 16-70)

in West Germany had access to a regional newspaper subscription.[2] Moreover, though the Italian

newspaper industry was plagued by a series of economic downturns and consolidation in

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[1] Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross, eds., *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 2.
[2] See Rüdiger Schulz, "Nutzung von Zeitungen und Zeitschriften" in Wilke, Jürgen, ed., *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Bohlau, 1999), 410.

ownership, by the very end of the 1970s it would break 6 million daily newspaper sales for the

first time in its history, demonstrating the continued popularity of the news source.[3] I consider

newspapers not simply a source of information, however, but a "socially realized structure of

communication" that shared or engaged in the representation of migrant living conditions during

a particular moment in time and in specific urban contexts.[4] As such, newspapers (namely the

journalists and editors who produced their content) serve as historical actors who both

represented and mediated what urban residents thought of migrants' housing situations and the

forces contributing to their disadvantaged position, at times spurring socioeconomic or political

responses.

　　　The discussion on newspapers is divided into three sub-sections to evaluate what or

whom reporters and/or migrants viewed as responsible for migrants' physical and socioeconomic

precarity: companies, individual landlords, and city- or state-affiliated entities. Although left-

leaning and more conservative papers differed in their interpretation of individual, company, or

municipal responsibility, an analysis of multiple news outlets shows that by and large, news

reporters agreed that migrant housing conditions were deplorable, and that migrants faced more

barriers to decent, affordable housing than long-time residents. Media coverage consequently

amplified the voice of southern Italian migrants as reporters expressed more freedom in

commenting on social issues beginning in the latter 1960s. As Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn

point out, "It was newspaper reports about the foreigners' living conditions—not their working

conditions or status under German law—that awakened in the German public a certain interest in

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[3] Matthew Hibberd, *The Media in Italy: Press, Cinema, and Broadcasting From Unification to Digital* (Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill Open University Press, 2008), 62-63.

[4] I borrow from Lisa Gitelman's definition of media as historical actors, as laid out in *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 7.

the guest workers."[5] In sum, news stories generated greater discussion and recognition among residents, highlighting the vulnerability experienced by migrants in their new communities.

The second half of the chapter attempts to illuminate more clearly some of migrants' own perceptions of their disadvantaged social position in connection with housing, focusing on how they related to one another and how they positioned themselves in relationship to other long-term residents. An analysis of letters sent to the moderator of an Italian-language radio program broadcast from Cologne, West Germany, highlights how migrants compared their marginalized position to others within the social order or to a subjective standard of living, gesturing to a lack of rights to which they felt entitled. Though letter writers addressed a number of concerns, from wage compensation to interpersonal relationships to legal advice, a significant number centered on housing problems or inquiries. In addition to expressing their sense of injustice at conditions, authors asked about how to evade eviction or even deportation from the FRG when tensions arose with landlords. Italian migrants also sought to understand how to redress their precarity by asking about housing legislation and processes in both the FRG and Italy, suggesting that many viewed the social state as the both the entity responsible for their position and the means whereby they could potentially find solutions. In essence, then, letters written to the program – known as *Radio Colonia* or "Radio Cologne" – and responses from the moderator served as platform for conversations about housing rights and the administration of social services and protections, providing a small window into how southern Italian migrants thought about and articulated their housing claims.

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[5] Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, "Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic: From the Beginning of Recruitment in 1955 Until its Halt in 1973," in Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany*, *1949-1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 200.

Within the second half of the chapter on the radio program, the first section examines the genesis of *Radio Colonia* and how its moderator served as a privileged interlocutor in amplifying migrants claims while translating and promoting official West German housing policies. The next two sections use migrants' questions and the aired responses to shed light on how migrants understood their situation and resources at their disposal for a decent home and protection against evictions or expulsion. Finally, discussions about access to state aid in both the FRG and Italy highlight the opportunities and limitations faced by migrants and the uneven and unequal ways in which social services and protections were administered. In sum, migrants' disadvantaged position within the social order vividly helps illuminate how the euphoria that stemmed from height of economic growth throughout the 1960s degenerated to skepticism associated with economic stagnation and inflation in the 1970s.[6] Shifting economic forces also had a sociopolitical impact, creating a sense among both Italians and West Germans that the welfare state was in crisis, at least in one of the major pillars of social reform - housing. Spread across geographical boundaries, Italian migrants' housing anxieties and state responses thus foreshadow the growing pains associated with an even larger shift to neoliberal policies that loomed on the horizon.

The Power of Scandal: News Reporting on Migrant Housing Conditions

By the 1970s, news reporting of scandal in the media become a catalyst for social and political change. According to historian Christina von Hodenberg, the number of scandals reported increased beginning in the 1960s as news reporting transitioned from "consensus journalism" towards a critical journalism that increased public debate about political and social

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[6] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000: Recovery and Transformation after Two World Wars*, translated by Liesel Tarquini (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 251. See also Charles S. Maier, "'Malaise': The Crisis of Capitalism in the 1970s," in Niall Ferguson et al., eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010), 25-48.

problems.[7] This was also the case in Italy. According to Matthew Hibberd who specializes in media and cultural industries, by the late 1960s Italian journalists similarly "became more deeply politicized, seeking greater freedoms from editorial pressures." They advocated for greater separation from ties to "political and economic owners."[8] As news reporters amplified migrant accusations of housing injustices, with less constraint from political or economic consequences of past decades, companies, landlords, and city officials began to feel public pressure in response to challenges presented in the media.

Assigning Responsibility: Companies

For those Italian migrant workers who came to the FRG as part of the 1955 Labor Agreement, they were given certain legal protections. One of these included the guarantee of "suitable living quarters."[9] In essence, one's work contract was formally tied with company housing. In northern Italy, circumstances could be quite similar; one could often only obtain work if one proved they had housing, and it was difficult to find housing on one's own without already having a job. As a consequence, though not legally compelled as in West Germany, it was often easier for Italian companies to provide workers with their own housing as well – simultaneously serving as an effective recruitment tool and a way to keep tabs on their employees. Usually, migrant worker housing was fairly removed from other residents. As historian Rita Chin describes the situation in the FRG, "The pattern was to build barracks or hostels on or near the factory site, often in areas far removed from city centers, interior neighborhoods, or public transportation."[10] As implied by the terms "barracks" or "hostels,"

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[7] See Christina von Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise: eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit, 1945-1973* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006).
[8] Hibberd, *The Media in Italy*, 61.
[9] Herbert and Hunn, "Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic," 190.
[10] Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40-41.

early company housing usually consisted of bunk beds for individuals, rather than apartments for entire families, though some businesses would make these available in later years. In 1962, for instance, approximately two-thirds of guest workers lived in "communal hostels," as opposed to family living.[11]

The location of migrant housing on the fringes of communities more easily allowed for residents to sweep housing concerns to the margins of public awareness. As such, many long-term residents remained unaware or avoided discussion of migrant workers' accommodations until some sort of a scandal erupted in the news or media. City dwellers may have interacted with immigrants while shopping or when workers sought entertainment, but the "private sphere" remained relatively hidden until journalists began to increase their coverage of dismal living situations for newly arrived individuals. Migrants' grievances, as recorded by the press and other public reports, created a maelstrom of criticism starting in the late 1960s. The backlash against companies constrained individual entities to make adjustments, also leading to small changes on municipal levels.

In 1970, workers' complaints about conditions in company barracks reached the national level in Italy. At the annual convention for the three largest labor and trade union confederations, one of the items on the docket addressed the fact that in Turin, Fiat "attempted to lump fifteen thousand workers in barracks similar to those used in concentration camps."[12] The stark parallel union representatives drew between living spaces for workers, many of whom had migrated from the south, and the accommodations of concentration camps during the war brought those living

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[11] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers*, translated by William Templer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 217-218.

[12] FILLEA-CGIL, FILCA-CISL, FeNEAL-UIL, *Atti del convegno nazionale unitario per la casa e l'occupazione. Roma, 20-21 marzo 1970* (Rome: Tip. Lugli, 1970), 60. The reference does not designate which type of camp or where, just "concentration camps" more generally.

on the margins into the limelight of public discourse. The comparison with the Second World War resonated with Italians, especially in northern Italy where a strong anti-Fascist consensus emerged out of the prevalence and legacy of the Resistance. Public and union opposition thus likely pressured Fiat to rescind this particular design for worker accommodations.

Two years later, Fiat proposed a new solution for housing its workers (this time including their families) that was similarly condemned. In May of 1972, Fiat came to an agreement with a satellite town on the outskirts of Turin – Orbassano – and the IACP to build 4,000 new apartments. The catch, however, was that 90% of the housing was to be reserved for Fiat workers, even though 25% of the cost would be covered by public funds from the IACP.[13] The three labor unions who had raised the issue of barrack conditions in 1970 immediately launched a protest, asserting that it was discriminatory and illegal to allow a private company to determine who would be assigned public housing, rather than going through the government-run IACP. It took almost an entire year for the president of IACP to invite representatives from the labor unions to discuss this particular issue. At their meeting on February 26, 1973, the labor unions declared that none of their workers would help build the housing until the issue was first resolved; the percentage of non-Fiat employees granted apartments within the complex needed to significantly increase.[14]

In a public report published by the Italian Communist Party following one of their conferences a few months later, Fiat defended itself in one of the recorded discussions. It positioned itself as one of the few companies trying to contribute to affordable housing solutions

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[13] Fondazione Istituto Piemontese Antonio Gramsci Onlus (IG), Collection: Camera Confederale del Lavoro di Torino, C.1.7., File: 131, Envelope: 7:1972. "FIM-FIOM-UILM-ACLI, May 31, 1972."

[14] IG, Collection: Camera Confederale del Lavoro di Torino, C.1.7., File: 131, Envelope: 8:1973. "Verbale riunione del giorno 21/2/1972 per l'esame del regolamento di assegnzione degli alloggi del Piano IACP/FIAT richiesta dalle organizzazioni sindacali CGIL-CISL e UIL."

to keep workers in the city. Fiat instead shifted blame for poor housing and the lack of low-income accommodations to city development, particularly private investors, by making the following statement at the conference:

> It is no coincidence that every time we tried to address the question of high rents, the lack of maintenance, etc., in the downtown area – with the goal of an urban renewal that would allow them [the workers] to remain in the historic city center – we found indifference; as soon as the developer or landlord offered to pay the families an incentive in exchange for their moving out of the building…we could not force the families to conduct an uncertain battle…even if it would be to their benefit, given the hostility of the welcome offered to southern immigrants in Turin.[15]

Fiat's statement does not sugarcoat migrants' standing in the social order, directly pointing to some of the discrimination southerners faced upon arrival. Fiat put in a great deal of effort to portray itself as an advocate instead of one of the contributors to this type of treatment; the company presented its plans as beneficial and counteractive to redevelopment projects that shrunk affordable housing in Turin's city center. However, the opposition of labor unions, who claimed to represent the interests of underprivileged workers and viewed Fiat's self-portrayal as hollow, once again forced Fiat to backpedal. The deal with the IACP fell through and the 4,000 apartments were not realized.

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[15] Atti del convegno del PCI tenuto a Venezia il 18-19 giugno 1973, *Casa, esodo, occupazione* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1974), 94.

Bundesarchiv, B 145 Bild-F038815-0016
Foto: Schaack, Lothar | 27. Januar 1973

Figure 2.1 Italian Migrant Workers and Their Quarters at the Volkswagen Factory in Wolfsburg[16]

Turin's Fiat was not the only company which received backlash for its housing policies; businesses in Frankfurt had to confront criticisms of deplorable housing conditions and the lack of space for migrant workers during this same period. In 1970, public attention centered on building contractor Philipp Holzmann, who housed his employees in Rödelheim, just outside of the city. In giving context for an interview journalist Ernst Klee (who would go on to write articles for the weekly center-left newspaper *Die Zeit*) conducted with an Italian migrant employed by Holzmann, Klee described the workers' accommodations as a "lager" or encampment filled with wooden barracks. Each building of the "camp" contained thirteen 6-person rooms, with blue and white striped bedding "such as those common in prisons" – reifying the sensation that migrants were confined, rather than independent individuals. Indeed, when Klee asked an Italian migrant how he felt, the man replied, "I do not feel like a free worker in a

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[16] Bundesarchiv B 145 Bild-F038815-0016, Wolfsburg, VW Autowerk, Unterkunft Gastarbeiter.jpg, *Wikimedia*, accessed April 26, 2021, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_B_145_Bild-F038815-0016,_Wolfsburg,_VW_Autowerk,_Unterkunft_Gastarbeiter.jpg. Labeled for Reuse.

European community, but as a tenant who has to submit to a master just to get something to eat."[17] Klee also reported that when some of his colleagues asked the company why there were only eight showers for almost 800 workers, board member Georg Kircher claimed that they were never crowded, as "foreigners do not require as much hot water." The same Italian Klee interviewed informed him that the situation was even worse: usually only four of the eight showers were in working order, and the water fluctuated from burning hot to freezing cold so often, it was difficult to actually use them. He concluded, "The Holzmann company has never asked us if we are comfortable here or not, or if we have any problems…whenever we made a complaint, they were – I don't know – probably thrown into the trash can." When Klee pressed him on whether they had truly made complaints, his interviewee responded, "Of course. We have made recommendations and collected signatures."[18]

Workers such as the man interviewed above had been protesting and complaining for years, to no avail.[19] Inhabitants of Frankfurt rarely traveled to the industrial zones of Rödelheim outside of the city to be in a position to observe living conditions for Holzmann employees. It was not until two church leaders and a social activist from a Sicilian association in Frankfurt were barred entry from visiting on St. Nicholas Day in 1970 that conditions came to public awareness. In response to accusations of wrongdoing, the mayor sent a commission to inspect the grounds.[20] Accompanied by cameras from the news station *Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln* (West German Broadcasting Cologne, or WDR) which the company tried to prevent from filming, the commission reported dire living conditions: the men had to wash their clothing by hand in cold water due to the absence of washing machines, they had to trek 200 meters to one of only 56

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[17] Klee, ed., *Gastarbeiter*, 195-204.
[18] Klee, ed., *Gastarbeiter*, 195-204**.**
[19] Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations," 195.
[20] Klee, ed., *Gastarbeiter*, 195-204.

toilets available to the 800 workers, and there was no possibility of washing one's hands after.

The news broadcast featured the comments of one of the female committee members who

proclaimed, "If we were all to live in such a camp, even for a night or two, we would all realize

that we could not stand such conditions. "[21] By using the term "we," she identified with other

West German citizens and communicated that a general standard of living and comfort was

wanting in the company barracks for migrants. By signaling deficiency, she highlighted the

unique obstacles that foreigners confronted in finding adequate living spaces.

Philipp Holzmann countered the WDR*'s* report by issuing statements to local

newspapers, claiming that in the eleven years of regular inspections by the public health

department, no legal complaint had ever been filed. In an article in the left-leaning local

newspaper the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (FR) on January 18, 1971, Holzmann emphasized that

according to West German law, a building contractor can charge up to 50% of the worker's

hourly wage for accommodation, whereas he only charged his workers 35% - or what amounted

to 63 DM monthly. He also pointed to other exceptional provisions he supplied workers, such as

special trains his company organized to return workers to their homeland.[22] Each day, over

189,000 copies of the *FR* circulated, bringing the conditions of Holzmann's employees – and his

counter claims – to a fairly wide audience.[23]

It appears that Holzmann did stand on solid legal ground. In the official city report

ordered by Mayor Walter Möller on January 6, 1971, only minor recommendations were made.

Overall, the review concluded that "there is no health or disease risk in the barracks," and turned

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[21] "Sammelband mit zusammengestelltem WDR-Archivmaterial. Reportageentstand ca. in den 1970er Jahren."
DOMiD, WDR-Archivmaterial, VI 0233, VHS.
[22] "Holzmann stellt klar," *Frankfurter Rundschau* (FR)*,* January 18, 1971.
[23] Hubert Kleinert, *Das geteilte Deutschland: die Geschichte 1945-1990* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2019), 426. The
number given is for 1984. If anything, though, this number was higher in the 1970s because as television viewership
increased, newspaper circulation decreased.

the issue of rent over to the housing office to examine "whether the required rent of 63DM is considered to be unreasonably high and what legal action is possible in this case."[24] More important than the question of legality, however, is that the "astonishingly critical and intensive media treatment" received national attention and served as a catalyst for several other reports on living conditions for migrant workers in the Federal Republic, even though the migrant workers' conditions had been commonplace for years.[25] In addition, Mayor Möller made legislative changes regarding migrant worker housing within the local municipal code in response to the scandal, such as guaranteeing a certain amount of space for each inhabitant.[26] Thus, criticism of both Fiat and Holzmann had implications for each company's relationship with city officials, and for their southern Italian employees.

Assigning Responsibility: Private Landlords

Another entity that media channels faulted for migrants' living conditions was individual landlords. One concrete way by which reporters illustrated their alleged culpability focused on high rent prices, relying on accounts from migrant tenants as evidence. Even more conservative-leaning newspapers who supported the free market contributed to discussions surrounding rent prices migrant workers had to pay for substandard quality. For example, in an article simply entitled, "Unheard of," the center-right *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) described a family consisting of two parents and one child who paid 250 DM in Frankfurt in 1972. The only space they received at this price was the kitchen of a five-story building that the landlord had parceled into 30 different rooms that he rented out individually, usually to immigrants. When they became aware of the situation, a local citizens' initiative decided to file a case of usury

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[24] IfS, "Inspection report of the Guest Worker Camp Rödelheim," Collection: PIA, File: S6b-38/1.274.
[25] Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations," 197.
[26] Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations," 197.

against the proprietor.[27] In this instance, even the *FAZ,* though generally more conservative than

other Frankfurt-based papers, was sympathetic to migrant housing conditions in Frankfurt.

Considering that it routinely sold over 250,000 daily copies in 1972, its reach and influence was

quite substantial.[28]

Its less conservative competitors took their criticisms of the housing situation much

further. In describing migrant housing conditions in the early 1970s, journalists at the

Frankfurter Neue Presse (FNP) concluded "Most of them (migrants) came to Frankfurt, not

knowing what to expect here in terms of wages, working and living conditions, and the cost of

keeping their livelihoods."[29] Due to cultural differences, some migrants also had to confront the

practice of charging additional fees per child on top of rent during their stay in West Germany,

stretching one's salary even further. Tarant, who reported sharing one bathroom between 22

people, would normally have paid 280 DM in rent. But, because he had seven children, the

landlord required 400 DM for his single room.[30] At times families went to extreme lengths to

avoid increased rent or eviction based on the number of children present. In a 1970s newspaper

article entitled, "Landlord Searches Under Bed for Children at Night," the *Frankfurter Neue*

Presse reported that one Italian family hid three of their six kids in a closet whenever the

landlord came by. According to the mother, should the landlord discover that there were actually

eighteen people living in four rooms, they "would have thrown us out." In this case, the cultural

differences that children represented were reflected in monetary measurements. At the same

time, it is likely that journalists focused on children in particular to underscore the vulnerability

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[27] "Unerhört," *FAZ*, June 9, 1972.
[28] Peter Hoeres, *Zeitung für Deutschland: Die Geschichte der FAZ* (Munich: Benevento Verlag, 2019), 579.
[29] "Ausländer leben oft wie im Getto," *FNP*, January 1, 1973.
[30] Sybille Krafft, "Damals…'Herzlich Willkommen!'; Die ersten Gastarbeiter in Bayern", Munich: Bayerischer Rundfunk, 1994. DOMiD, Video: DV 0123.

of migrant tenants, eliciting greater sympathy in their readers through the imagery of having to hide in one's home.

A common theme also meant to evoke a strong emotional reaction pertained to utilities, especially access to heating during winter months. In 1973, correspondent Hermann Lammert of the center-left *FR* reported on proprietor Isac Rosen's failure to heat Münchner Straße 7 and repair broken windows that let additional amounts of cold air into the house. One of the tenants claimed, "The heating was turned on only a few days before rent was due. A few days later it was cold again." A six-year-old immigrant girl gave a concise explanation for the windows, "Boss said, 'Leave here. Will be torn down.'" Akin to other journalists, Lammert marshalled the use of a child to lend additional weight to the article, with the intent of further dramatizing the poor treatment of migrant occupants. When Hermann Lammert attempted to contact Mr. Rosen for comment, his wife replied, "This is no concern of the *Rundschau*," before hanging up the phone.[31] When he tried to reach the business office a week later, the receptionist threatened that if he wrote up the story, it would be "propaganda." Her characterization of Lammert's reporting as "propaganda" accentuates the politicization of media during this time; she implied that Lammert's motivations were political, though Lammert himself may have disagreed. Despite landlords' and property owners' protests that their private affairs and relationship with their tenants was not open to the public, the press continued to report on poor housing conditions and high rent prices, with more and more focus on maltreatment of migrants – emphasizing their greater independence from economic and political organs and more critical reporting on socio-political problems.

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[31] "Wie Hausherr Rosen türkischen Gastarbeitern das Wohnen verleidet," *FR*, April 12, 1973.

Italian reporters also marshalled the use of children to increase cognizance of marginalized groups in poorly maintained housing, though to an even more serious level than journalists in Frankfurt. The most dramatic example of using a young individual to embody larger social and communal issues centered on the death of a child due to unhygienic or unsafe living conditions. Though this end result was implied in Frankfurt reports about lack of heating, it often featured as a reality in the Turinese context. For instance, Lorenza Schettini, a 28-year-old mother of four, related the precarity of their situation to *La Stampa* in early 1973. She described living in Altessano, a peripheral town over 40 minutes from Turin via public transit. In addition to the challenges of location, there was an open sewer running in front of the crumbling army barracks they were using for housing. She claimed, "A baby died from the cold and discomfort; we couldn't continue living there without a roof overhead."[32] Here, the death of an unnamed child from a different family symbolized just how hazardous living circumstances could be for families whose landlords neglected their buildings and properties; circumstances that Lorenza clearly thought could lead to the same end for her own children. Although *La Stampa* was owned by Fiat, the company that brought many of these workers to Turin, reporters nonetheless criticized the scarcity of housing and poor conditions throughout their coverage, without fear of (or in spite of) any economic consequences from its financial backer. Seeing as *La Stampa* circulated around 361,000 copies per day, their interventions had a wide reach.[33] At the same time, there is no fault spelled out in this article; only the conditions are reported, not who is responsible.

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[32] "Sgombero alle Vallette delle due case occupate," *La Stampa*, February 13, 1973.

[33] See Paolo Murialdi and Nicola Tranfaglia, "I quotidiani negli ultimi venticinque anni: crisi, sviluppo e concentrazioni," in Alberto Abruzzese, Valerio Castronovo, and Nicola Tranfaglia, eds. *La stampa italiana nell'età della TV: dagli anni settanta a oggi* (Rome: Laterza, 2008), 5. La Stampa circulated 361,000 daily papers in 1975.

In addition to discriminatory rental practices and landlords who charged high rents and failed to provide utilities, the practice of purposely damaging building structures and utilities in order to hasten a demolition permit soon became the topic of debate in the press and in legislative bodies. In a 1981 essay analyzing this practice in Frankfurt, Barbara Dietrich, a researcher at the Living and the Environment Institute in Darmstadt, described both the motivation behind landlords' actions and the consequences. She wrote: "Frankfurt landlords have intentionally had their old villas in the Westend damaged in order to make the houses uninhabitable…running them down, in order to more quickly facilitate more profitable use. As shown by the housing crises and social movements, this has led to massive conflicts between residents and the city."[34] The residents involved in the conflicts do not refer exclusively to long-time Frankfurt residents – a large number of tenants who had to deal with their accommodations either intentionally left in a state of disrepair or purposefully damaged consisted of foreign migrants.

For example, on January 26th of 1974, the *FNP* reported that this was the case for tenants of Bettinastraße 37 in Frankfurt. According to their article entitled "Apartment completely devastated: Owner wants to demolish," not only were four apartments rendered uninhabitable, the construction company also "damaged the water supply, so that water flowed into the rooms below." All of the tenants were immigrants. One of the Turkish families refused to move, while the other opted to move in with relatives. One of the other apartments severely damaged belonged to "an Italian family with an 8-year-old child." Their contracts were not even close to

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[34] Barbara Dietrich, "Der Beitrag der Grundrente zur Umstrukturierung innerstädtischer Wohnquartiere" in Joachim Brech, ed., *Wohnen zur Miete: Wohnungsversorgung und Wohnungspolitik in der Bundesrepublik* (Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Verlag, 1981), 202.

ending; there was one year left with a possibility of a five-year renewal through the company that employed them.[35]

In practice, the city pursued legal action against the misappropriation or damage of existing housing stock. Prior to the "Social Obligation Paper" passed in 1972, the city administration pushed through an emergency Frankfurt ordinance that penalized landlords who kept apartments vacant in order to try and ameliorate the housing shortage. In order to avoid fines, some landlords moved in family members so that the rooms would technically not be empty, even though it was not their permanent residence. As for the damage of property, one landowner identified as Frau G. by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* used the workers she hired as an excuse, saying, "The foreigner workers probably did not understand their job properly because they do not speak German well enough…it was not our intention that the ceilings be torn down and the toilets destroyed."[36] If one could disguise the damage as accidental, there was the possibility of avoiding a fine. [37] Regardless of the potential for legal action against landlords, many tenants started reporting unfamiliar persons entering their building, especially at night, and then waking to problems the following morning.

In another instance, when some families returned to Italy for an annual summer visit, they came back to find their apartments in Schwindstraße 14 uninhabitable, with rain gutters broken and other damage. According to a description in the *FR*, Nicola Giampietro paid 450 DM a month for a 60 square meter apartment in which "Cockroaches are crawling in the bathroom, wallpaper is hanging down from ceilings and walls like rags, in the kitchen the plaster has come

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[35] "Wohnung völlig verwüstet: Besitzer will abreißen," *FNP*, January 26, 2974.
[36] "Der Hauswirt läßt sein Haus demolieren," *FAZ*, November 24, 1970.
[37] See, for example, Kurt Kraus, Pressestelle der Frankfurter Polizei, *Dokumentation zum Polizieinsatz um das Haus Kettenhofweg 51: Die Vorgeschichte, die Demonstrationen, Einsatzberichte der Polizei, Stellungnahmen, Pressestimmen, die juristische Diskussion* (Frankfurt: Presse- und Informationsamt der Stadt, 1973), 3. See also Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt*.

off the ceiling."[38] That was not the worst of it. Apparently, the conditions were so bad that Nicola's four children were constantly sick to the point that one of them "suffer[ed] from chronic bronchitis" due to their environment. Landlord Wolf Weiner refused to undertake repairs or reduce rent. According to the opinion of one of the women living there, "That means that this house will fall apart in a very short time. As is customary in such cases, Wiener here only wants to shoo out the other tenants in order to get to the building demolition permit more quickly."[39] A housing initiative from Westend, which was composed of 700 local residents and migrants, invited the press and officials from the Housing Department to view the house. After their visit, the Housing Department's representatives promised that it would be officially inspected in the next few days to ascertain whether "the structural damage is now life-threatening for the residents."[40]

In Italy, migrant households likewise resisted efforts of their new owner to "encourage" them to move out. The thirteenth child in her family, Carmela moved to Turin from Sicily and married her husband in 1961. They lived in via Garibaldi, one of the oldest quarters of Turin. Their rent was modest, at 15,000 lire a month. However, when their landlord sold off their building, the new owner wished to tear it down and rebuild. Most of Carmela's neighbors left when the owner offered them a monetary incentive until she was the only one left with their two twin girls and her husband – now confined to a wheelchair due to a degenerative disease. Slowly, the water and electricity were shut off; when Carmela confronted those on site, they offered the excuse that it was necessary to shut off the utilities due to the remodeling taking place throughout the rest of the building. In response, Carmela hung three banners from her balcony

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[38] "Nicola Giampietro fällt die Decke auf den Kopf," *FR*, April 9, 1974.
[39] "Häuserrat: Ein Fall von Wohnraumzerstörung," *FR*, January 22, 1974.
[40] "Nicola Giampietro fällt die Decke auf den Kopf," *FR*, April 9, 1974. This housing initiative, Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend (AGW) will be described at length in another chapter.

with large blocked letters proclaiming phrases such as, "Against Evictions!" She recalled, "When people passed by, everyone stopped. They would call up to me and we would [chat]…they couldn't throw me out because of my husband."[41] Eventually Carmela chose to illegally occupy a house on the first floor of a newly constructed building on the outskirts of town, where she remains to this day, eventually obtaining a legal contract.

Whether it be rent prices, the lack of utilities, or the blatant hastening of demolition, news reporters circulated their indictment of individual landlords. However, their actions cannot be separated from the company recruitment of workers who brought an influx of tenants to their cities nor from city redevelopment plans that exacerbated housing shortages. Thus, not even municipal officials or state-affiliated entities were immune from an increasingly critical press, both conservative and more left-leaning.

Assigning Responsibility: City- and State-Affiliated Entities

Whether it be to deflect their own responsibility or for other reasons, landlords, company owners, and residents alike frequently gestured to state or city missteps as responsible for migrants' precarious housing conditions. In Italian news circles, the entity that came under fire most often was the IACP, the national organization which oversaw public housing through regional bodies. Plagued by mismanagement and an uneven distribution of funding, the institution quickly lost trust both from the public and many of its partners. On February 15, 1973, *La Stampa* reported that seven trade union representatives were resigning from the IACP rent commission. According to the article entitled "Public Housing: Resignation in Rent Commission," the representatives tendered their resignation in protest "against the inefficiency of the institution and the failure to accept some requests from the board of directors." Some of

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[41] Interview with Carmela Selvaggio with the assistance of Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author on January 27, 2018 at her home in Turin.

the recommendations they claim were ignored concerned procurement, unauthorized subletting, speculation, precise data on rent prices, and inadequate funding for maintenance.[42]

This last point on maintenance seems to be well-founded based on descriptions of public housing conditions. In December of this same year, journalists from the far-left extra-parliamentary group *Autonomia Operaia* (Worker's Autonomy) described IACP apartments found in Corso Taranto, a neighborhood located on the northern periphery of Turin. Their article contained the following depiction:

> The buildings are prefabricated with poor material. The interior walls swell with moisture and fall to pieces; the floors are made of a thin layer of plastic that hide cockroaches in spades. Toilets, water heaters, and faucets were purchased from companies about to declare bankruptcy: stuff that broke immediately with no spare parts to be found. In six years, neither the city nor the IACP have ever spent a dime in maintenance.[43]

Reporters from *Automia Operaia* were skewed toward the perspective of marginalized workers, from whom they obtained the majority of their information. According to one of their sources, the IACP invoked a law from 1910 in a communication to their tenants that would allow them to increase rent prices to the equivalent of one-fifth of each household's salary. By so doing, rent would be equated solely to income, without taking the condition of the living spaces into account.

However, other public figures within the established order similarly called into question the IACP's efficiency. When the president of Turin's College of Building highlighted the slow bureaucratic procedures of the IACP as a significant factor exacerbating the housing crisis in another *La Stampa* article in 1974, the IACP responded. Mario Dezani, president of the IACP in Turin, commented, "we have always fulfilled our contracts, according to the provisions of

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[42] "Case popolari: dimissioni nella commissione affetti," *La Stampa*, February 15, 1973.
[43] "Gravissima decisione del Comune di Torino. Un quinto del salario per pagare l'affitto," *Autonomia Operaia*, December 21, 1973.

law."[44] A few months later, the IACP again defended itself in the press, claiming that they had built 8,376 apartments in the last ten years in Turin alone. In regard to this claim, *La Stampa* editors asked, "but what do 8,000 apartments represent in the face of Turin's housing need? Could the IACP not have done more?"[45] Media, then, provided commentary and provided a platform for the debate on the effectiveness of state-run housing entities, gesturing to one of the reasons that neoliberalism and the move toward privatization may have been viewed as a viable solution in this period of transition. At the same time, however, since Fiat owned *La Stampa*, it is not entirely dismissible that it kept criticizing the IACP to deflect its own responsibility in bringing so many workers to Turin when housing was insufficient.

Nevertheless, it took until 1976 before the issue of funding to renovate public housing came before Turin's city council. Reflective of the climate of dispute in the media, city representatives' comments were similarly divisive after the city's assessor revealed that even public housing built *before* the war – beginning in 1935 – had never received long-term maintenance.[46] As such, the city considered partnering with IACP to approve one billion lire in funding overdue maintenance works – a sum that had first been proposed five years prior in 1971. When representative Capello criticized the inaction of the IACP, representative Vindigni came to its defense, advocating justification based on unanticipated challenges to its leadership. He related that President Dezani was plagued by a series of health problems, eventually resulting in his death at a critical juncture for the IACP. Due to these health factors, Vindigni explained, "We therefore had a management vacuum that allowed this phenomenon to spread from '73 to '75," which was made all the worse for the succeeding president having to inherit many of the

[44] "Alt nelle costruzioni per le case popolari?", *La Stampa*, June 4, 1974.
[45] "Processo all'Istituto per le case popolari," *La Stampa,* October 9, 1974.
[46] ASdC, Collection: Consiglio Comunale – Sessioni Straordinari, October 12, 1976.

unresolved internal problems.[47] Questions of how much the IACP did or did not do in Turin's city hall had significant overlap with conversations in circulation in media reports. Newspapers in particular provided a canvas for housing issues that had often been pushed to the fringes of public discourse or government agendas to explosively come to the fore.

Though the West German welfare state relied on subsidies rather than large public housing entities to provide social services, real estate stakeholders themselves implicated city officials or even the "state" more generally for their role in creating disparate housing conditions. According to Abraham Markiewicz, for instance, Frankfurt municipal officials actually encouraged investors to buy up holdings in certain areas to introduce more business so the city could achieve its vision of an international business center. As part of his 1975 book publication "e.g. Frankfurt: The *Destruction* of a City," Jürgen Roth includes a transcribed discussion with Abraham Markiewicz. Markiewicz explained why he chose to invest in Frankfurt's "Five-Finger Plan," and how the city's designs shaped his investments. He claimed he first wished to buy a house for himself, but when he proposed his plans to the city, "I was presented with a plan that something quite different was planned here. The city had indeed developed their own ideas, and because of these ideas people with initiative now come and create what the city actually wants."[48] Far from being a helpless spectator, Markiewicz implied that city administrators played a role in privatizing development.

This view was corroborated by another landowner. Rudolf Hechler was one of Frankfurt's most prolific property owners, leasing a large number of apartments throughout the city. In a rare instance when a landlord actually lost a court case against his or her tenants, he paid a fine of 20,000 DM for not heating his apartments, in addition to paying back over 86,000

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[47] ASdC, Collection: Consiglio Comunale – Sessioni Straordinari, November 8, 1976.
[48] Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt*, 25-26.

DM to renters for not providing adequate services. According to the coverage of the court case in the *FR*, Hechler's argument in the proceedings was, "heat costs money, my tenants have blankets."[49] When Jürgen Roth interviewed Hechler, his rendering of Hechler's perspective was lengthier, though Hechler still seems to view his migrant tenants as lesser than native Frankfurters. In the interview, Hechler portrayed the city as the entity to blame for migrant living conditions. He explained, "The point is that they (migrants) have temporarily rented these rooms as temporary housing, of their own volition. Nobody forced them to do that. The real culprit is the state that has not given these people housing…not the private landlord who leases out single rooms here and there."[50] By deflecting responsibility, Hechler pointed to another entity under criticism for its failure to provide – the state. Given the sheer number of apartments that Hechler leased throughout the city, his comment about leasing "single rooms here and there" also seems to confirm an evasion of responsibility.

For tenants, the line between state and landlord or even company responsibility was not nearly as clear as Hechler's portrayal. An article printed in 1969 in *L'Unità* highlighted how both long-time established residents and newcomers confronted local authorities in seeking a resolution to rental practices enacted by individual landlords.[51] For eight days, the city offices of Nichelino, a district of Turin, were occupied by locals whose goal it was to pressure the council into making a statement about housing. Reporters from *L'Unità* asked those who comprised a "continuous and uninterrupted traffic of people" their motivations for this action. A group of women they interviewed emphasized that their recourse to occupy the municipal offices was a

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[49] "AStA: OB tut nichts für Hechlers Mieter," *FR*, September 14, 1973.
[50] Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt*, 62-67.
[51] In 1975, L'Unità printed 239,000 daily papers between its two versions. See Murialdi and Tranfaglia, "I quotidiani negli ultimi venticinque anni," 5.

last resort; something to which they turned after exhausting all other options. One of the women

outlined their situation at length:

> For two months…ten of us have been sleeping in two rooms. This is my sister; her husband was unemployed in Bari. They came up because Fiat recruited them and now he's at the Mirafiori plant earning 120,000 lire a month. We looked all around Turin, Grugliasco, Moncalieri, Beinasco, and we did not find a place [to live]. We now have a house near here in Nichelino. His boss wanted four months' rent in advance: one for him as a commission because he found the house for us and the other three as a deposit for the landlord. Then he asked us about our family. When he saw that my sister had two children, a seven- and eight-year-old, he said he could not give us the smaller apartment for 27,000 lire a month but only a larger apartment for 40,000 lire. How can one pay these kinds of prices?[52]

In her comments, the woman emphasized family and their desire to live together. In addition, she

countered any potential criticism by pointing to their efforts to find housing – she mentions

scouring suburbs that are extremely far from the Mirafiori plant as evidence of their willingness

to sacrifice travel time for affordability. Her implication of the boss (as well as the landlord) in

wrongdoing and the mention of Fiat as the entity that recruited her brother-in-law implies an

association between big business and the housing crisis. However, by physically taking over

space representative of governing authority, including the city council meeting room, these

petitioners pressured state actors to respond to what they perceived as a failing in their duty to

provide a safety net for their citizens. In speaking with reporters, they also made their claims

public, communicating their demands beyond those who passed by their physical occupation.

In both Turin and Frankfurt, then, scandal and accusations of wrongdoing in the media

brought companies, landlords, and state and city officials into the limelight. Reporters' use of

families, such as the commentary of women or children in particular, was meant to elicit an

emotional response in readers for an issue that many politically-engaged reporters began to view

as a social problem. At times, public reaction led to concrete changes, such as legal action

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[52] "Petizione popolare del PCI per il blocco di sfratti ed affitti," *L'Unità*, June 18, 1969.

against landlords and even modification to municipal codes, illustrating just how powerful a scandal may become.

The Genesis of *Radio Colonia* and Role of Moderator Giacomo Maturi

Though many individuals and entities discussed migrant living conditions or the housing crisis more generally in newspapers and via televised reports, the migrant perspective was usually only cursorily included in the form of small quotations or photographs. One Italian-language radio broadcast in the FRG provides a small window into how Italian migrants themselves talked about and understood issues and challenges associated with being a migrant. Beginning in 1961, each evening at seven o'clock a great number of Italian expatriates in West Germany tuned into *Radio Colonia* – or "Radio Cologne" – to receive updates on news from their homeland, listen to Italian music, and even get advice on how to accomplish difficult tasks in their new environment, such as applying for a driver's license or running a washing machine. Perhaps one unintentional consequence of this platform, originally designed by authorities to help Italians "adapt" to the FRG, was that it soon became a means for Italian migrants to communicate their treatment as second-class citizens abroad *and* at home, as evidenced by the challenges of obtaining decent housing. At first, *Radio Colonia* focused on broadcasting pre-recorded programs, music, and updates on the scores of football matches. Unexpectedly, however, listeners began writing to the station from cities as far north as Hamburg and as far south as Taranto with questions. The public broadcasting station directed one of their moderators to address such letters over the air in a program segment entitled "Responses from the Expert." By examining their letters and the response from the program moderator, one is able to get a glimpse into how migrants themselves perceived of their challenges in obtaining decent housing and/or accessing state assistance.

The Cold War context played a pivotal role in the development of West German public radio and television programming. This, combined with the fact that Italians were the first group of guest workers recruited for labor and comprised the largest group of immigrants until 1971, meant that *Radio Colonia* was the first foreign language program to be aired in the FRG. This section outlines both the context of *Radio Colonia* as well as the role of its moderator in order to understand why Italian migrants would turn to this source to protest their precarious living conditions and ask questions about legislative redress to which they felt themselves entitled.

In the early postwar years, the occupying powers were divided on whether to break up the German centralized radio broadcasting system. Though the British pushed for a model similar to the BBC, opponents pointed to the NSDAP's (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei's, or Nazi Party's) use of a nationalized transmission system as a mouthpiece for state power. Instead, responsibility for radio and increasingly prevalent television media was allocated to various regions, which could also address "regional, confessional, and cultural-traditional differences as well as specific living and working environments."[53] Most programming was dictated by which occupying power oversaw each region; FRG leadership did not receive full control of its airwaves until 1955 when it joined NATO and was recognized as its own independently sovereign nation-state. Once they did, the FRG's first chancellor – Konrad Adenauer (CDU) – pushed back on the regionalized system to emphasize additional federal oversight and funding in order to create a more unified West German identity, including the ability to defend against larger scale perceived threats to their fledgling republic. A former employee for the public broadcasting system, who wished to be referred to only as Herr (Mr.) B.,

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[53] Janina Fuge and Hans-Ulrich Wagner, "Das Gute liegt so nah? Föderalismus, Dezentralisierung und 'Regionalisierung' in der NWDR-Zeit" in Peter von Rüden and Hans-Ulrich Wagner, eds., *Die Geschichte des Nordwestdeutschen Rundfunks. 1* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2005), 215.

recalled the alarm of the Christian Democratic government in the 1950s over information seeping in from "Communists in Prague, in Moscow, and in part from East Berlin," for instance.[54] East Germany was equally concerned about information coming across the border. As a result, "both sides therefore made a huge effort to reach the population on the other side of the Wall, and both feared that the propaganda coming in from the other side might prove to be too successful."[55] Not only did regional broadcasting groups receive more support from federal channels, more listeners tuned in. Between 1950 and 1960, the registered number of listeners doubled within the FRG.[56]

Due to radio's popularity as a source of information, and because it was much more affordable than a television for those who may not be long-term residents, federal officials also viewed it as a powerful tool to communicate with the growing number of guest workers coming into the FRG. As a result, they directed certain regional broadcasting organizations to air foreign language programs in order to reach these populations. Prior to *Radio Colonia*, there were only two news stations that disseminated programs in the Italian language – Radio Prague and Radio Budapest.[57] In fact, once Radio Prague realized that its broadcasts were particularly popular "among Italian immigrants in Germany and Switzerland," it began to introduce more information addressing "the problems of emigration."[58]

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[54] Herr B., interviewer unknown, February 31, 2002, DOMiD, Recording: IN 53.906, cassette tape.
[55] Frank Bösch and Christoph Classen, "Bridge over Troubled Water? Mass Media in Divided Germany," in Frank Bösch, ed., *A History Shared and Divided: East and West Germany since the 1970s*, Jennifer Walcoff Neuheiser, trans. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018), 566.
[56] Yuliya Komska, "West Germany's Cold War Radio: A Crucible of the Transatlantic Century," *German Politics and Society* 32, no. 1 (2014): 3.
[57] WDR, "21. Oktober 1961 – Erste Sendung der ARD für Gastarbeiter startet," October 21, 2011, accessed January 25, 2021, https://www1.wdr.de/stichtag/stichtag6058.html.
[58] Roberto Sala and Giovanna Masseriello Merzagora, *Radio Colonia: Emigrati italiani in Germania scrivono alla radio* (Milano: UTET SpA, 2008), 237.

The origin of the programs coming from the East worried government officials and employers alike. Herr B. specifically related attempts from Soviet-bloc stations to catalyze unrest in Italian workers in his recollections. In one such instance, broadcasts from the East communicated that the Italian government had been overthrown, voiding all political agreements with the FRG, and encouraged the workers quickly leave the country because there was no future for them in West Germany. In order to provide Italian workers with "correct" information to counter similar efforts, the WDR, was instructed to provide a program in the Italian language to air every evening, beginning in 1961. Herr B.'s job was to screen all transmissions to ensure that the information communicated was in line with the Federal Republic's current domestic and foreign policies. However, the lack of staff with federal clearance coupled with the rush of getting the broadcasts off in time meant he rarely had time to check each individual transmission. Instead, he had to rely on translators and trust that what his copy said was a faithful reproduction of what would be aired.[59]

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[59] Herr B., interviewer unknown, February 31, 2002, DOMiD, Recording: IN 53.906, cassette tape.

Figure 2.2 "Italian Migrant Family with Radio" (1962)[60]

In order to fulfill Chancellor Adenauer's mandate, the WDR looked to hire personnel

groomed to serve as intermediaries between two cultures who would be sympathetic to West

German political stances for the Italian foreign language program. They found their man in Dr.

Giacomo Maturi, an Italian who had moved to the FRG in the late 1950s on a scholarship after

studying law in Milan. He first worked for the *Caritas* – a Catholic charity organization that

assisted many Italian migrants – and then was hired by Ford in Cologne to help with the

integration of foreign workers. One decade later, he was quite well known in Cologne as an

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interpreter and public relations specialist who helped author various pamphlets for guest workers, and not just Italians.[61]

Dr. Maturi occupied an intermediary and privileged position within West German society. On one hand, Italians seemed to trust him because of his nationality, law degree, and familiarity with West German and corporate policies on immigrants. On the other hand, West German officials seemed to trust him as both an insider and an outsider; he could make Italian migrants' experiences and/or culture more intelligible to the German public and lessen their "foreignness," thereby making Italian guest workers more familiar and less threatening. Although a transplant himself, Maturi was an educated elite who rarely dealt with discrimination himself. Indeed, while he expressed sympathy for the plight of his fellow Italian nationals, he continually displayed bias toward southern Italian migrants of lower socioeconomic positions and status when advocating for integration. In a 1961 lecture Dr. Maturi gave to a nationwide meeting of employers, he spoke to "specific adaptation problems" for the "southern labor force," pointing to some of the same cultural differences that West German landlords used to prohibit Italian immigrants from renting from them. Dr. Maturi explained that "the roots of these differences lie in the climate, in the landscape, in the historical development, in the culture and education, and in the societal structure of these peoples."[62] By portraying these perceived differences as both effectively innate and insurmountable, Dr. Maturi never promoted

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[61] Roberto Sala and Giovanna Masseriello Merzagora, *Radio Colonia: Emigrati italiani in Germania scrivono alla radio* (Milano: UTET SpA, 2008), viii. This book uses the letters Italian immigrants wrote to the station as a window into the emigration experience as a whole, including only fourteen examples on housing. As I was able to directly access those letters and add to them based on the holdings at DOMiD, I cite the actual letters themselves instead of the secondary source.

[62] Giacomo Maturi, "The Integration of the Southern Labor Force and its Specific Adaptation Problems," trans. by David Gramling, printed in "Documents" in Deniz Göktürk, David Gramling, and Anton Kaes, eds., *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration, 1955-2005* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2007), 32.

assimilation based on his opinion that national identity was irreconcilable in creating a new, cohesive whole.[63]

As patronizing as his perspective was, Maturi flagged many of the underlying patterns that undergird migrants' claims to more or improved social and political rights. In the same lecture mentioned above, Dr. Maturi reprimanded West German employers with the following:

> Foreign labor power is certainly not merely "foreign workers" anymore, but these people are still not perceived as fully human; they are isolated. Families living in the area also tend to avoid contact with these people as much as possible. There are no free rooms to rent for them; they are not wanted. One should greet them, invite them in, receive them warmly in order to introduce them into the new society. The economic problems of immigration should not overshadow purely human problems. Inclusion in the economy demands inclusion in society.[64]

Dr. Maturi referred to immigrants as "these people," disassociating himself from their ranks. The distance he inserted was not necessarily one of nationality, rather one steeped in socioeconomic status. He stemmed from an educated and higher class than most Italian workers (many of whom originated from the south) – after all, he came to West Germany from *northern* Italy on scholarship after studying law and was employed at a high level by companies such as Ford, assuming positions of authority and expertise rather than one more relatable to most of his compatriots. Still, he pointed out the effects of the ostracization (to which he himself contributed by emphasizing difference) in highlighting processes of dehumanization. He alluded to housing and similar concerns when he addressed "human problems," correlating solutions with "inclusion in society."

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[63] As evidence that Maturi never espoused assimilation, even later on in life, I turn to a 1996 interview, in which he explained: "Since the beginning – I say from the 60s – I have been for integration. Not for assimilation…adaptation, but not assimilation. I do not want to be made the same, but I want to integrate myself well." Dr. Giacomo Maturi, interviewer unknown, May 21, 1996, DOMiD, Recording: IN 050, cassette tape.

[64] Giacomo Maturi, "The Integration of the Southern Labor Force," 33.

Based on his familiarity with both Italian culture and West German institutions and policies, as manifest by his time as a consultant at Ford, for instance, WDR administrators viewed him as an ideal candidate to serve as a moderator on *Radio Colonia*. Similar to an advice column in a newspaper, Dr. Maturi answered listeners' questions on air. Often, his advice went far beyond the immediate concern at hand, but served as more general commentary on social and political issues. From both the content of letters written to the WDR and the way that Italians addressed Dr. Maturi, it is clear that migrants considered him a well-connected expert, one whom many hoped would intervene on their behalf or who could point them to the right German or Italian agency/authority to resolve their issues. Indeed, the program he moderated was entitled "Responses from the Expert." Dr. Maturi recognized and embraced this perception, and on the ten-year anniversary of the program thanked his "dear compatriots" for their trust which "often surprised and frightened me for the frankness with which they express their concerns and their most dramatic and personal difficulties."[65] Though he did not often provide immediate solutions, his professed expertise and familiarity with both West German and Italian legal and bureaucratic systems also made him a source of trust for Italian listeners.

For the two decades following his first transmission in 1961, Dr. Maturi replied to over 50,000 letters from both the FRG and Italy either on air or in personal correspondence, though the majority of the letters came from *meridionali* in West Germany. By 1967, Maturi was publicly responding to at least twenty letters a week. Miria Fleischer, the secretary for *Radio Colonia* during the 1970s, recalled that she would comb through about 300 letters a day, not to mention answering numerous phone calls asking for addresses for various services or advice on what to do for a particular illness. She reflected, "We were also idols, I believe, especially the

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[65] Broadcast on December 1, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.

moderators [...] The first thing I noticed when I started the program was that people always called here when it came to anything. That's when I thought, why do not they go to the consulate? [But] the Italian Consulate in the 1970s [was] a catastrophe."[66] In her mind, and perhaps those of the many Italians who wrote to Maturi, *Radio Colonia* filled in for the failing of a state-run entity that was supposed to provide and protect its formal citizens – the Italian consulate. Some letter writers even indicated that they had already approached the consulate or other government agencies without success by way of explaining why they turned to Maturi instead.

Housing Grievances as (Informal) Claims to Rights

An analysis of many of these letters and transmission transcripts provides a unique window into apprehension and concerns felt by Italian migrants in both Italy and the FRG. The amount of trust letter writers had in Maturi was manifest in the fact that they wrote to him about very personal matters, including grounds for divorce, children conceived out of wedlock, and intercultural romantic relationships about which one or another set of parents disapproved. One of the more common worries centered on housing, particularly the inability to find adequate and affordable living spaces for one and/or one's family. By examining the content of these letters and Maturi's responses, we can get a better sense of how migrants understood their precarity, how they discussed their marginality in public forums that connected them with others in their same socioeconomic position, and how Maturi addressed their claims of injustice. Though couched in understanding, his advice reflects the discussions and proposed solutions being circulated in business and governing circles. As a trusted mediator and educated interlocutor for

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[66] Interview conducted by Roberto Sala. See Roberto Sala, *Fremde Worte: Medien für 'Gastarbeiter' in der Bundesrepublik im Spannungsfeld von Außen- und Sozialpolitik* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2011), 276.

the WDR, he tended to promote West German policies, while making them more legible to his listeners.

Early letters and transmissions from the 1960s illuminate conditions of company housing for primarily single workers prior to marriage or family reunification. One of workers' biggest concerns was the price they paid for shared rooms, as they generally aimed to save as much as possible for a future house back in their hometown. This often stood in contrast to the conditions of native-born coworkers. Such is the case of a letter written by Cicillo P. in 1969 from Kostheim, who began by relating that he had attentively listened to *Radio Colonia* for the eight months he had been in Germany. He described how his company grouped four men to a room, each paying 40 DM a month for 9 square meters of space, or 4.44 DM/m². In 1972, the average rent for a West German was 2.98 DM/m².[67] Thus, not only were the migrant workers sharing a room, but they were paying over 50% more than an average FRG citizen in rent in a city that was likely to have lower rates than some of the larger high-rent metropolises. In addition, they were responsible for their own cleaning, and the sheets were only changed every "20 days or every month, whichever suits them [the company] best."[68] Another anonymous worker from Rheinhausen also expressed concern over paying even more in rent – either 90- or 120 DM per month, depending on the size of room and number of roommates.[69]

Dr. Maturi answered this particular letter on air on November 11, 1971, encouraging the author to go to the authorities for an evaluation of the lodging provided. As is often manifest in his responses, he validated the listener by claiming that the rent did seem "exaggerated," but also reminded listeners that many companies either provided free housing or lower rates for their

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[67] Graham Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies in West Germany and Britain: A Record of Success and Failure* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1977), 19.
[68] Cicillo P. to Giacomo Maturi, 18 May 1969, DOMiD, Collection: GFM 005, Folder: E 894,3.
[69] Broadcast on November 11, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.

employees.[70] By so doing, he classified the pricing in these letters as exceptional, portraying the majority of companies as more responsible or economical in housing their workers. This served to deflect both perceived and real specific injustices in favor of promoting overarching FRG economic and labor policies. In this same broadcast, Maturi addressed questions from Fortunato C. who asked whether the government fixes or controls rent prices in order to discourage such inflated prices. Maturi responded that prices were all subject to the market, which did allow for the occasional landlord to exploit his or her tenants.[71] In fact, the FRG had ceased controlling rents by the early 1960s.[72] This stood in comparison to the many rent freezes initiated in Italy, from which perspective Fortunato was probably writing. In the West German context, then, housing was much more subject to the private market.

Another instance in which Maturi translated the ways in which West German authorities oversaw labor recruitment patterns occurred in his discussion of government efforts in encouraging private firms to build more housing for guest workers and their families. In a broadcast in the early 1960s, he addressed the problem of housing for immigrants in a lengthy discourse. He recounted the federal government's efforts in providing incentives for those companies who built housing for migrant workers, pointing to the destruction of the war as a principal cause for housing shortages for Germans as well. He cautioned, "Many workers still complain of having to live poorly and in bad conditions, but it would be unfair to ignore the efforts made so far by the German government and employers." Maturi then pivots to place part of the blame for poor housing conditions on Italian migrants themselves, saying in the very next sentence, "As for the housing problem, there are other difficulties that stem almost exclusively

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[70] Broadcast on November 11, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.
[71] Broadcast on November 11, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.
[72] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 27.

from the workers themselves. With all respect and sympathy for our dear workers, who possess so many excellent qualities, we must however recognize that the majority of them do not know how to look after or keep their accommodations tidy and clean."[73] For him, sociocultural belonging was also contingent on adherence to perceived standards and norms of behaviors. Maturi thus implied that the right, or at least access to, decent housing correlated with the responsible conduct of would-be citizens.

In contrast, Maturi communicated that the FRG had largely fulfilled its responsibilities through either its efforts or even intentions to quickly build housing. In the same broadcast, Maturi again assigned his compatriots responsibility in caring for the cleanliness and orderliness of their living quarters as a precondition of recognition and inclusion in West Germany's civil society. Maturi drew a clear distinction between cultural habits with the following:

> We must remember that we live in a country that attaches great importance to one's home, so we must do everything possible to ensure that there is no trash, garbage or untidiness around accommodations. We must try to avoid making noise or otherwise disturbing the neighborhood…We must safeguard the good name of our country and show that we also know how to be orderly and clean, and that we have regard for the people who live around us.[74]

As a representative of a particular socioeconomic milieu in many ways, Maturi here outlined West German cultural expectations in regard to appearance and behavior. The above two examples are not the only instances in which Maturi publicly chastised Italians for not meeting German standards of upkeep and living. More than a moderator, then, he also positioned Italians relative to formal West German citizens by emphasizing difference and indicating how to

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[73] No date for broadcast, transcript. Contained in folder entitled, "MANUSKRIPTE DER SENDUNGEN FUER ITALIENISCHE ARBEITNEMER VON DR. GIACOMO F. MATURI 1961 - 1964. DOMiD, Collection: M/Z1/0001/001, GFM 001.

[74] No date for broadcast, transcript. Contained in folder entitled, "MANUSKRIPTE DER SENDUNGEN FUER ITALIENISCHE ARBEITNEMER VON DR. GIACOMO F. MATURI 1961 - 1964. DOMiD, Collection: M/Z1/0001/001, GFM 001.

conform. Rather than emphasizing injustice and discriminatory circumstances, though, Maturi appeared to at least partially assign culpability for poor living conditions on Italian migrant behavior itself.

These public scoldings did little to dissuade Italian migrants from pressing for more housing rights and protections by comparing their situations implicitly or explicitly with that of their neighbors – or a perceived standard of basic living conditions. This is even more apparent when concerns centered on family housing circumstances, as opposed to single workers billeted in company barracks. Housing woes only became more pronounced as greater numbers of workers either married or sent for pre-established families in Italy. A number of factors contributed to migrants' decisions to remain in northern Italy or the FRG for longer than initially anticipated, usually surrounding financial security. Motivations often centered on little to no economic improvement in their hometown, stable employment in their current position, or the possibility of transitioning to a desirable job. Rather than remaining alone, some workers sought to bring familiar faces to them to create new spaces of home – to be settled for a longer duration or even permanently in contrast to a temporary separation.

One woman, Marianna, recalled that after a year of work her husband called from Cologne and said, "I cannot do this anymore, I need you to join me." For a time, just the two of them lived in a house that was too dirty for their children until one day he came home to her crying because of their absence.[75] Though he was often away from their living quarters at work, she was the one who had to pass each day in squalid conditions, which likely only enhanced her sense of isolation. Unable to find more traditional housing suited to their needs and budget, they moved to the outskirts in old army barracks to permit the children to join them. As demonstrated

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[75] Marianna, interview by Aurora Rodonò, April 30, 2004, DOMiD, Recording: IN 157,158, cassette tape.

by Marianna's family moving into a former army outpost, finding clean, affordable spaces proved challenging – a common concern expressed in letters to Dr. Maturi that centered on discrimination in obtaining reasonable housing for families. Such was the complaint of P. Remo, who wrote to Dr. Maturi in 1967. He described the quarters he and other Italians occupied as "unlivable" and "unhealthy," in which entire families of 4-5 people slept in one room and paid 220-240DM in rent. He indicated that this price did not include utilities, nor were the utilities reliable.[76] In contrast, the average monthly rent for all West German dwellings was 180 DM in 1972.[77] His description of the apartments as "unlivable" and "unhealthy" implies that he and his neighbors were relegated to live in spaces that did not meet perceived minimum standards of living. Without explicitly doing so, he relates his condition to a "norm" that consisted of affordable, clean housing in which the utilities work if one pays for them.

When a separate group of Italians in Kassel in similar circumstances proposed they protest their precarious circumstances and go on rent strike, following the example of news reports filtering in from Frankfurt and elsewhere, Dr. Maturi adamantly discouraged them from doing so. He pointed out that failure to pay rent would be an obvious breach of contract, giving the landlord clear authority to cancel their agreement. He did, though, counsel them not to pay the increase requested by the landlord and only pay the rent stipulated in their contract. He cited new renter protection laws passed in the early 1970s requiring proposed rent increases to be received in writing and subsequently allowing the tenants six weeks to consider the proposed rate change. If the tenants then rejected the proposal, the landlord's recourse was to take it to court.[78]

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[76] Sala and Merzagora, *Radio Colonia*, 7-8.

[77] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies*, 19. If one takes five years of inflation into account, the discrepancy is even larger.

[78] Broadcast from January 10, 1974, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 008, Folder: E 894,7. These rent laws will be further discussed in subsequent chapter sections.

In urging the authors to use legal recourse, Maturi directed migrants to use the same grievance channels as formal West German citizens. However, guest workers did not often arrive at similar outcomes as formal citizens. Of the 140 cases that did eventually make it to court in Frankfurt in 1973, for example, judges ruled in favor of the landlord rather than migrants in 90% of them.[79]

Often, rent prices provided such a financial burden that families had to be separated in order to accommodate financial needs. Most of the time, the worker remained by him or herself, leaving the spouse in southern Italy to care for the children. Or, if both parents were working, the children were cared for by grandparents while the parents continued working in northern Italy or the FRG. Not only did most Italians find this separation difficult, it also complicated which individuals and which social services was responsible or in a position to meet a family's needs. One senses the frustration of Pietro M. who wrote to Dr. Maturi that he had been in West Germany for three years and wished to send for his two children who had been in the care of his mother-in-law for a long time. Yet each time he tried to find an apartment to accommodate his family, potential landlords "shut the door in my face as if I were a dog or a gypsy asking for a handout" as soon as they heard he had children. Pietro continued his letter by asking for Maturi's help in finding an apartment so he could settle in the FRG, as "things in Italy are only going from bad to worse."[80] Far from a temporary work solution, then, Pietro conveyed his plans and desire to remain in West Germany for a longer period of time, but felt he was hindered in obtaining the basic social needs that would allow him and his children to do so.

Other migrants also struggled to find the means to provide so that family members could join them in the FRG. For example, an Italian who had married a Spaniard wrote to Maturi,

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[79] amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf* (Münster: Unrast, 2011), 17.
[80] Pietro M. to Giacomo Maturi, 1969. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 005, Folder: E 894,3. "Gypsy" is the term used in the original. No date is included, but the year is derived from the postmark.

explaining that he had sent his three children to Spain to live with his mother-in-law on account of the difficulty they had in finding housing in Hamburg.[81] Armando T. faced a similar situation in Mannheim. After searching for housing in vain, he had to send his wife and child back to Italy. When Armando asked what he could do, Dr. Maturi referred the question to his listeners, asking what any German or Italian worker does to successfully find housing. The fact that he included German workers is striking, reminding those tuned in that the housing crisis transcended internal linguistic or cultural barriers. In so doing, Maturi also placed Italians relative to formal West German citizens. Though he does so implicitly, he does seem to gesture toward the possibility that some housing aid should be available to both naturalized citizen and foreign resident – be it formally through government services or informally through other independent groups or networking. Rather than providing a concrete response, though, Maturi concluded the broadcast by stating that each person must resolve the problem in their own way and apologized for the banal response, possibly reflecting the FRG's own indecision throughout the 1960s in how to provide for inhabitants whose stay was initially meant to only be temporary.[82]

Even when one was fortunate enough to find living accommodations for their children or families to join them, this did not mean that they were free from other financial hardships once their loved ones arrived. In 1972, Dr. Maturi's broadcasted response to Paride M. in Hannover labeled seemingly arbitrary rent hikes as a "classic example" of speculation when "a landlord who, after renting a room for 150 marks…allows them to bring a child or two and asks for double the price, threatening otherwise to throw them out into the street."[83] Hence the extreme

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[81] Broadcast on May 28, 1970, transcript. DOMiD Collection: GFM 059, Folder: E 894,5.
[82] Broadcast on February 13, 1965, transcript. DOMiD Collection: GFM 041, Folder: E 935,171.
[83] Broadcast on November 13, 1972, transcript. DOMiD Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,9.

measure cited in the prior chapter in which an Italian family hid three of their six kids in a closet whenever the landlord came by. According to the mother, should the proprietor/ress discover that there were actually eighteen people living in four rooms, "the landlord would have thrown us out."[84]

Discrimination such as the instances outlined above were not limited to the fact that the letter writers were foreigners in the FRG, rather such inequity also existed in northern industrial cities in Italy. Even among formal citizens, the realization of both formal and informal rights and privileges of citizenship was codified and contested in terms of difference. While answering the letter of Ermanno P. in 1965, Dr. Maturi attempted to soften West German bias by responding, "We know that prejudices still exist in Germany and that Germans do not readily rent rooms to foreigners, but the same thing happens, for example, in northern Italy vis-à-vis southerners, if what the newspapers write is true."[85] Indeed, refusal to rent based on one's place of origin or perceived differences in customs often prevented southern Italians from obtaining an apartment in northern Italy as well.

Dr. Maturi consistently invoked these sorts of housing conditions and prejudices in northern Italy as a way to discourage the notion that the grass was greener back in one's home country. As he did work for a public radio station, his efforts reflect one of many efforts to improve Italian perceptions of and relationships with Germans. When one group of workers wrote in from Sprendlingen in 1970 complaining about poor treatment – even in comparison with workers from Turkey or what was Yugoslavia – Dr. Maturi differentiated between legal

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[84] "Hausmeister sucht nachts Kinder unterm Bett," *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, no date, but likely 1970s. IfS Folder: Wohnungsamt. 969.

[85] Giacomo Maturi to Ermanno P, no date. DOMiD, Collection: M/Z1/0001/0045, GFM 045, Folder: E 935,180. Although no date is included, the letter is contained within the folder, "Schriftliche Beantwertung von Hörerbriefen 1965."

parity and equality as practiced. He took care to mention that ill treatment occurred "all over Italy" as well, as northern Italians "prefer some Italians over others." He cautioned against creating a scandal in Sprendlingen, and instead encouraged the writers to evaluate the facts to see if there were legitimate reasons for why their coworkers from other lands receive different treatment, such as the lengthier home leave that their employers supposedly allowed migrants of other nationalities.[86] Here Maturi emphasized relationality, in essence dismissing the workers' claims to unequal treatment amongst foreign-born workers, let alone their native-born coworkers.

In a separate instance, three young men wrote to the station from Saarbrücken protesting placards placed in front of various locales prohibiting entrance to Italians. Evidently, this was the third time they had written Maturi by March of 1966, and he replied that his response had not changed. Again, Maturi displayed a patronizing tone from his advantaged socioeconomic position, communicating his viewpoint that cultural understanding would take time and should not be forced. Maturi admitted that should his sole purpose be gaining the good graces with his Italian listeners alone, he would join in the chorus against racist and discriminatory policies, all while "praising the sense of education, distinction and fairness of our friendly young men from all the provinces of Italy." Instead, he claimed to err on the side of "objectivity" and asserted that each side still had much to learn. He concluded, "To build a united Europe as our young men who write to us say, we must be willing to meet each other. Each of us must take a step, that is we must understand, adapt, and learn."[87] Though couched in terms of compromise and understanding, this outlook seemed of little use to migrants wishing to achieve greater recognition and inclusion when facing what they viewed as bias and discrimination.

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[86] Broadcast on February 23, 1970, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 059, Folder: E 894,5.
[87] DOMiD, Collection: GFM 041, Folder: M/Z1/001/041.

In writing letters discussing their housing conditions, Italian immigrants frequently positioned themselves in comparison to what they perceived as basic standards of living, sometimes by juxtaposing their circumstances with that their West German counterparts. In his responses, Dr. Maturi often urged letter writers to seek legal recourse for their misfortunes, even when the issues stemmed from sociocultural prejudice. He also gave undue credit to state-affiliated policy and building efforts, which clearly proved inadequate for the influx of foreign workers. He similarly assumed a patronizing attitude, meting out judgement on migrants for not exhibiting acceptable standards of behavior that he viewed as the principal reason behind their substandard living conditions, rather than other forces.

Warding Off Eviction or Deportation

The very personal concerns at the center of letters written to *Radio Colonia* also call attention to certain institutionalized practices of the two nation-states – as embodied by municipal officials and their approaches to enforcing housing policies. Individuals, politics, and monetary matters all came forcefully together when a household was threatened by either eviction, expulsion, or even a mixture of both. Italian migrants often wrote Dr. Maturi about the anxiety of being displaced in both geospatial locations. In his responses, Maturi outlined legal recourses available to migrants and their families, and occasionally offered criticisms of individuals, landlords, or state policy. The broadcasted conversations addressing the possibility of losing one's home further highlight migrants' precarity, and the difficulties municipal officials faced in providing adequate shelter vis-à-vis the social state while both nation-states struggled with housing shortages.

At times, migrants' housing security was tied to their employment status. When Pietro S. was laid off at his company in Kelsterbach in 1972, he claimed the company instructed him to

leave the apartment they had provided him and his family. However, his wife still worked for the same company. In addressing Pietro's letter, Dr. Maturi expounded that by law a rental contract was separate from a work contract, and regardless of the fact that his wife worked for the same company, a tenant could not be evicted on grounds of a lost job. According to his transmission, a company did have a right to "preferential treatment reserved for employees" in providing housing, but that treatment did not extend to evictions, because tenants were protected under housing laws.[88] A few years later, though, Maturi clarified that single workers who live in company housing without their families could be kicked out, as they were assigned a bed, rather than a rental contract applicable to an entire apartment.[89] A migrant's living situation could therefore be a lot more tenuous than a native-born co-worker, often perpetuating second-class treatment within society and reifying the notion that their state was only meant to be temporary.

West German companies were not the only ones who tied employment to company housing. Giorgio a former worker at a tire plant, recalled that if one lost his or her position at Fiat in Turin, it correlated to also losing one's house. In addition, because most of the housing near the factories was company-owned, the loss of a house meant having to travel far beyond the periphery of the city in order to find an affordable place to live. Giorgio asserted, "As much as the city tried to do for [inner city] housing, families could not afford to stay [within the city] on their salaries."[90] The stress of work was only heightened by tying one's performance to one's home, contributing to many health problems and apprehension surrounding injury.

Italians who dealt with private landlords also expressed fear over the risk of eviction. When Salvatore's building near Stuttgart changed owners in 1976, the new landlord made minor

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[88] Broadcast on January 20, 1972, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,9.
[89] Broadcasted response to a letter from Franco L. of Wuppertal on July 7, 1975, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 008, Folder: E 894,7.
[90] Interview with Giorgio conducted by author in Milan on March 9, 2018.

improvements and then asked an 80 DM increase in rent in correlation with the renovations. When Salvatore protested, management responded that if he did not pay the increased price, he ran the risk of being evicted. In explaining West Germany's laws over air, Maturi responded that landlords could increase prices for improvements, but only a building expert could ascertain if the rent increase corresponded to renovations undertaken. He encouraged Salvatore to seek this expert advice, and if he still disagreed, to take it to the municipality's housing office where it had the possibility of being elevated to a matter for the local courts.[91] His response was little comfort for someone who would have to overcome linguistic and legal barriers in order to seek redress.

Concerns about eviction also plagued migrants in terms of their housing situation back in Italy while abroad. Due to the yo-yo effect of families traveling to and from southern Italy and northern Italy or the FRG, at times they left their apartment for a season without cancelling their rental contract because of the uncertainty of their stay. With apartments already in short supply, though, landlords often served eviction notices for those tenants who left their rooms empty. In replying to Fernando A., Dr. Maturi distinguished between public and private housing contracts. Under Italian law, the fact that "the tenant is an emigrant who leaves the house empty" was not adequate cause for eviction. However, public housing entities were legally bound to keep all living quarters inhabited, and an absence for work reasons could not exceed a certain established period, normally one year's time. Dr. Maturi continued that although public housing entities "often turn a blind eye…according to the regulations in force, public bodies must take into account the existing need and cannot afford to leave houses built with public financial means empty for years at a time."[92] A family thus had to decide whether it was worth paying two separate rents if one of the apartments was empty, splitting their family between two locations,

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[91] Broadcast on January 19, 1976, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,10.
[92] Broadcast on March 28, 1977, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,10.

or if they could both afford and find adequate housing in their new communities when they relocated for work.

In addition to empty housing, some heads of household wrote to Dr. Maturi about other reasons their families were to be evicted in Italy. Such was the desperate letter of Benito G. who had spent seven years away from his family for work. After he received notice that the apartment he had rented for his family in Taranto for the past nine years was requested for the use of the landlord's family, he appealed to a judge who added a grace period of an additional eight months. In 1967, Benito wrote that he had been attempting to build a small, 4-room house for years, and believed he could finish it within the next three or four months, but feared his "loved ones will be thrown out" before that time. Benito further communicated that he had already written to the public housing entity for an apartment assignment, but he was denied his request as the law, as it then stood, did not allow emigrants to apply for that particular social service.[93] Moreover, since it was workers who paid into the fund that helped subsidize public housing, his wife would not have qualified for her own assignment, as public housing was tied to work. Though an Italian citizen, then, Benito was similarly denied access to state assistance in his home country because of his status as an emigrant. In addition, Benito's correspondence illustrates the authority radio listeners invested in Maturi, as well as his perceived ability to solve problems in both nations. This was especially true of Benito, who had exhausted all means at his disposal, even writing to the president of the Italian Republic itself.[94] Yet, he still believed that Maturi's unique influence as expert in legal and family matters on both sides of a border could provide resolution where he previously found none.

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[93] Benito G. to Giacomo Maturi, 3 July 1967, DOMiD, Collection: GFM 001, Folder: E351, 26. This law would change three years after his letter was written.
[94] Benito G. to Giacomo Maturi, 3 July 1967, DOMiD, Collection: GFM 001, Folder: E 351, 26.

As if the threat of eviction were not enough for migrants to navigate, one could also face the additional risk of expulsion from the FRG if they failed to fulfill legal stipulations granting them work and residency. In the mid-1960s, many listeners inquired after the specifications tying family members' residency permits to the wage earner's ability to provide adequate housing. In explaining the West German government's rationale for requiring certain housing standards to be met before issuing residency permits to workers' families, Maturi acknowledged that many migrant families were willing to live in spartan conditions in order to increase their savings. In so doing, foreigners had the potential to congregate in poor living conditions in either the older areas of the city or on the outskirts creating the formation of "ghettos" – housing patterns the authorities viewed as prohibitive to integration. For this reason, inspectors were authorized to deny residency permits to those "who do not have a home like the majority of the population."[95] This was measured primarily in terms of square meters per household member. Federal officials, then, did seem to desire that temporary residents had the same living standards as formal citizens. It would take until 1971, however, before legislation would grant migrants the same access to state aid in order for that parity to become more of a possibility (as will be discussed). The disconnect between housing requirement and aid in meeting said expectation prior to 1971 may be ascribed to a shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist economic model as large corporate companies could no longer afford to provide housing for all of their workers, particularly as more migrant workers married or sent for their families. As historian Ulrich Herbert underscores, "The provision of living quarters for guest workers was the most crucial cost factor for the firms in connection with foreign labor."[96] The extension of aid also symbolized a reluctant but growing

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[95] Broadcast on May 8, 1965, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 041, Folder: E 935,171.
[96] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/Guest Workers*, translated by William Templer (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), 220.

recognition that *Gastarbeiter* were beginning to stay; the legislation thus served as a precursor or signaling of impending debates on immigration and multiculturalism taken up in subsequent decades.

Until the protection offered in 1971, however, many migrants faced a potential revocation of their residency permit when they experienced a change in work or living status. In one of the rare letters that a woman wrote about housing, Mrs. Comignani described their living situation. When her husband lost his job, they also lost their housing. She found work herself, but it only paid enough to afford a single room, so they had to send their two children back to Italy to be cared for by the grandmother. She had just given birth, however, to two twins who currently lived with the parents in a single room. Along with their lack of success in finding new housing, the Office of Foreigners threatened to deport them and take away the residency permit of herself and the two twins for the family's failure to provide adequate housing.[97] Although Mrs. Comignani worked, the loss of the father's job and inability to afford a larger living space triggered official action. Interestingly, Dr. Maturi communicated that it was only the residency permit of Mrs. Comignani and the children that was at risk. This illustrates the gendered nature of the EEC regulation 34/64, which stipulated that in order for a worker's family and dependents to be able to reside in a member state outside of their country of origin, "the worker must have accommodation for his family that is considered normal for national workers in the region in which he is employed."[98] As head of household, Mr. Comignani either had a separate work permit or was granted a period of time to look for a new job. Still, when confronted with the

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[97] Broadcast on August 28, 1965, transcript. DOMiD Collection: GFM 041, Folder: E 935,171.
[98] Gazzetta Ufficiale delle Comunità Europee, "Regolamento n. 38/64/CEE del Consiglio del 25 marzo 1964," accessed March 2, 2021, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bff341e9-c5c6-403e-bba8-e466d67ccf89/language-it.

threat of deportation, the Comignanis were abruptly reminded that they did not have the same protections as West German citizens – nor the same access to social services.

Antonio E., also did not have enough space for his family; he similarly lived with his wife and two children in a one-bedroom apartment. As a result, when it came time to renew his residency permit, it was only extended three months instead of a year or more. In his response to Antonio's letter in 1971, Dr. Maturi referenced housing conditions in both nation-states, emphasizing that instead of being angry with West German regulations, "it is of the utmost importance that our immigrants do not live here abroad in barracks or shanty towns as on the outskirts of certain Italian cities."[99] He continued that though dilapidated housing also plagued the FRG, at least the authorities insisted on sufficient space for migrants and their families – espousing an ideal of shared standards of living, even when the reality fell short. Dr. Maturi's approval of this stipulation spanned a large number of years. Instead of advocating for policy change, he more often than not tasked Italian immigrants to follow the law. In 1966, for instance, he remarked to one Raffaele A. that it seemed somewhat "irresponsible to bring one's family here without being able to first provide a sufficient home." He expressed amazement that Raffaele was able to get a residency permit for his family in the first place.[100]

At the same time, though, the provision of tying adequate housing to one's residency permit also prevented many workers from reporting poor housing conditions or rent extortion to local authorities. In the sixties, Maturi criticized German authorities on air for the harm this provision could cause. He conceded that every head of household was responsible to provide for their family, and yet he asserted "we think that it may be time to eliminate these threats of deportation when one is not able to immediately obtain what every father wants for his family: a

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[99] Broadcast on August 2, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.
[100] Broadcast on October 28, 1965, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 041, Folder: E 935,171.

dignified living situation."[101] This moment seemed to be rather exceptional. By and large, Maturi

continued to encourage more responsibility on the behalf of Italian migrants to both remain

within legal stipulations and use legal recourse to their benefit.

For example, in his response to Paride M. from Hannover – who wrote of multiple

families living in terrible conditions and paying 260 DM per room – Maturi focused on

preventing such situations, rather than dealing with undesirable housing after the fact. On

November 13, 1972 he aired the following recommendations:

> Workers often do not resort to the authorities out of fear of losing their residence permit, because the house is too small for the family. What can one recommend? Get a decent home before bringing the family. Never accept homes offered by traffickers. If possible, avoid furnished rooms, wait until you can get furniture even if it is simple. Finally, in the event of an excessive increase in rent, go to court immediately.[102]

The tone of Dr. Maturi's response reflected a shift as some Italians transitioned into preparing to

stay in the FRG long-term, rather than temporarily. He increasingly encouraged Italians to open

special banking accounts – *Bausparkasse* – with attractive interest rates for clients building a

home. He reasoned that money quickly devalued by the time workers were ready to return to

southern Italy to build a small house when they were already too old to enjoy it. Instead, one

could sell a house that he or she both invested in and actually lived in while in Germany,

"spending those years that are the best of one's life with dignity."[103]

In sum, Italian migrants often wrote to Dr. Maturi when the possibility of eviction or

deportation materialized. Through their letters, they criticized state and local policy, especially

when housing was tied either to one's employment or to one's residency permit. In leaving their

hometowns, migrants were subject to less formal and informal protections, such as social

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[101] Broadcast on February 22, 1966, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 041, Folder: M/Z1/001/041.

[102] Broadcast on November 14, 1972, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,9.

[103] Broadcast on April 23, 1970, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 059, Folder: E 894,5.

networks of friends and family or legal aid and protection. As migrants continued to voice their grievances in both word and action, some of which will be discussed in later chapters, state actors did begin to respond with changes in legislation that afforded more rights to the renter, irrespective of place of origin or citizenship status.

Migrant Responses to the West German and Italian Social State

In addition to the question of eviction or expulsion, migrants also broached the topic of state aid and social services when they wrote to Maturi about clarification on social legislation and housing provisions. Due to their intent to return to the *mezzogiorno* or writing from a position of being landlords themselves to properties back in their home country, migrants' questions centered on both the West German and Italian context. When examining their letters, it is clear that Maturi himself favored the FRG's approaches to widespread housing questions, in turn viewing Italian social service legislation as belated and problematic. Though his perspective is certainly shaped by his role as intermediary for a West German public broadcasting corporation, the exchanges between letter writers and Maturi do accentuate that the perceived (and at times real) crisis of the social state began much sooner in Italy than West Germany, germinating already in the 1960s compared to the mid- to latter 1970s.

West Germany:

Letters written to Maturi from 1971 onward record a shift when channels of state assistance were finally opened up to immigrants in the FRG – channels that had previously been reserved for formal West German citizens. This change was largely due to the passage of the Tenancy Protection Act that granted "foreigners" limited access to renter assistance. The WDR aired multiple broadcasts throughout the year to clarify what this new law meant for Italians living in Germany. On November 8, 1971, the hosts introduced the "Responses from the Expert"

segment by announcing that Dr. Maturi would explain information published and circulated by the German Minister for Social Housing regarding the new law. In so doing, Dr. Maturi underscored that foreign workers now had the same right as German citizens to apply for a housing subsidy, as long as they had a stable residency in the FRG. He further emphasized that the subsidy was not a "handout," rather a "real" right "based in law."[104]

It was clear that Maturi openly endorsed the law, asserting that "the German state begins from the premise that housing or lodging is a basic social right and, due to scarcity, is still too expensive."[105] Maturi also recognized that the West German approach resulted in stimulating private construction, in contrast to Italy's system of federally- and regionally-funded public housing blocks. He similarly compared the FRG's solution to the rent freezes of Italy, stating, "instead of blocking prices, the state leaves the economy free so that those who build houses can cover the costs and also have an adequate profit."[106] In a separate transmission, Maturi outlined his preference for the West German system, remarking, "the Bonn government knows that by reducing the already limited profit of landlords, they would only block building activity, which would increase the scarcity of housing," an issue that constantly pestered Italian authorities.[107] In some ways, West German authorities already engaged in processes of neoliberalism by taking the beginning steps toward the privatization and outsourcing of housing services.

Once "foreigners with a stable residence" could legally apply for subsidies, many letters to Dr. Maturi expressed confusion about the stipulations, which he attempted to clarify. In a

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[104] See, for example, the broadcast from August 23, 1976, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894, 10.

[105] Broadcast on November 8, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8. Dr. Maturi does not distinguish whether "foreign workers" applies only to EEC members or all guest workers, such as Turkish employees.

[106] Broadcast on October 25, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8. Dr. Maturi does not distinguish whether "foreign workers" applies only to EEC members or all guest workers, such as Turkish employees.

[107] Broadcast on March 4, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.

broadcast on November 9, 1971 for instance, Maturi explained that although the laws were written to benefit low-income families, the more economical the house, the smaller the subsidy. On the other hand, the Ministry for Social Housing stipulated a maximum rent price so as to prevent one from renting luxury housing on the state's dime. In addition, authorities differentiated between "old and new houses, small towns and cities with over 100,000 or 1 million inhabitants, houses with or without heating and running water," etc., all in relation to the number of people in one's family. To demonstrate the process to listeners, Maturi outlined the prices a family of four would pay as an example, using an average salary and listing the various sums depending on the size of the city.[108]

Though it was a bit of a headache, then, to qualify for a government subsidy, *Radio Colonia* transmissions are riddled with encouragement to apply for one. Such was the counsel given to Agostino T., who was paying 285DM for one room measuring four meters by four meters. Dr. Maturi reminded him of the new laws in effect, including the provision that the landlord could be punished by law for charging such prices. He concluded by advising Agostino to stop paying 285 marks for a "hovel" that also endangered his residency permit, and instead go to the housing office to get a subsidy for a "normal" house with actual rooms for 400 marks.[109] Maturi's encouragement for Italians to take advantage of newly reinforced legal parity extended throughout the 1970s. On May 23, 1977 Nicola L. wrote to ask about the stipulations for a subsidy and where he could go to apply. Maturi calculated that Nicola could qualify if he earned less than 1700 DM per month, due to Nicola having a wife and child; and then urged his audience to consider applying as well. He reasoned, "Worst case scenario, you will get a negative answer. But it would be a serious mistake to renounce this assistance, to which we are

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[108] Broadcast on November 9, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.
[109] Broadcast on February 4, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.

entitled."[110] "Entitled" implies that one has a right to something. Therefore, Maturi implied that immigrants now definitively qualified for certain rights and privileges of citizenship. This not only reflects a shift in his own characterization of immigrants, but illustrates an adjustment in how the FRG meted out the benefits of the welfare state.

It appears that some Italians did indeed take advantage of the subsidy. For example, Umberto M., living in Frankfurt, wrote to the station at the end of December 1972 in order to appeal to his compatriots to take advantage of the opportunity to obtain their own apartment.[111] The Basso family living in Porz reported that they received financial aid of 45 DM for their 300 DM monthly rent, and wanted to transfer the apartment and subsidy to another family due to plans to repatriate. Dr. Maturi responded that they needed to ascertain if their landlord was favorable to the transfer, and that the new family would be required to apply for their own subsidy since it was tied to household, rather than location.[112] Umberto and Mr. Basso's letters indicate that many migrant families were taking the time to apply for a subsidy, signifying a transition in which some Italians considered longer term plans to stay in West Germany – a decision that led them to actively seek for more stable and decorous housing.[113] It also signaled a desire for some migrants to moor themselves to their new communities and neighborhoods, generating a greater sense of belonging.

In addition to the legal right now granted foreigners to apply for a subsidy, the 1971 Tenancy Protection Act also granted an expansion of renter rights, many of which directly benefited low-income migrant families. Most of these protections limited the power of landlords,

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[110] Broadcast on May 23, 1977, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,10.
[111] Broadcast on December 14, 1972, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E894,9.
[112] Broadcast on January 13, 1972, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,9.
[113] Klaus Bade also indicates that family reunification accelerated greatly from the mid-1970s, largely due to the 1973 end to labor recruitment after the OAPEC oil crisis. See Klaus Bade, *Migration in European History*, translated by Allison Brown (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 231.

especially in the realm of eviction. According to Article One of the law, for example, a landlord could only terminate a rental contract on three premises: 1) the tenant had violated his contractual obligations to a *significant* extent; 2) the landlord needed the apartment for themselves or their immediate family members; or 3) the landlord would suffer *considerable* economic disadvantages by continuing to lease to the renter.[114] In contrast to the many tenants who wrote in the mid-1960s who faced eviction, the landlord now faced greater responsibility in proving that the eviction could be upheld by one of the above stipulations. If found in violation, the landlord could face a punishment of up to ten years in prison.

Dr. Maturi invoked these new laws to assuage the anxiety Giuseppe C. expressed after receiving an eviction notice in Offenbach. Maturi suggested that most contracts provided a minimum of three months before one can be evicted, though six months was usually the norm. He emphasized the new laws, pointing out that "the new provisions impose prison sentences on those who abuse the scarcity of housing or whose rent prices equate to usury." In the same broadcast, the program turned its attention to Italy and to an unknown author who asked if he could evict those who were renting his house in the south as he had immediate need for it for his own family upon return. In a somewhat scathing response, Maturi replied with the following:

> This recalls what we have said above regarding the cancellation and eviction of Italian families in Germany. In Italy, the law also guarantees a certain protection to tenants and what we claim for us we must also grant to others. So it is logical that the emigrant, as landlord, would behave himself in the same manner…It is not true, then, that we are always the victims.[115]

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[114] Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Gesetz über den Kündigungsschutz für Mietverhältnisse über Wohnraum*, November 25, 1971. Nr. 118 – Tag der Ausgabe: Bonn, den 27. November 1971, accessed September 24, 2020, https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl171s1839.pdf%27%5D__1600977702365.

[115] Broadcast on September 7, 1970, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8

This comparison of renter rights and protections between the two nations demonstrates that a broader perception of the rights to social security – or the social safety net – extended across national boundaries. In denouncing the letter writer's supposed hypocrisy, Maturi asserted that if one were to enjoy renter protections outside of one's nation-state, it was only logical that one's compatriots should enjoy similar protections in one's own. His response also implied a need for outdated or outmoded legislation to change in Italy in order to more effectively regulate rent prices and contracts.

In addition to protections from evictions, the Tenancy Protection Act of 1971 also safeguarded tenants from rent hikes. One group of Italian immigrants wrote to *Radio Colonia* from Kassel, denouncing one such rent increase and refusing to pay anything because they considered it "unjustified due to the miserable conditions of the apartments we live in." Dr. Maturi first urged them to continue paying their original rent. He then informed the group that under the new law, they must receive notice of the increase in writing, after which they had six weeks to accept or reject the change. It the landlord insisted, the tenants had a right to take it to court.[116] Indeed, this process was aptly detailed in Article Three of the new law, including the provision that rents could not be changed until "the previous rent remains unchanged for one year and the desired rent corresponds to the average price in the same town or city, or comparable town or city," in correlation with the same size, condition, location, etc.[117]

As evidenced by Maturi's responses, in addition to a platform for advice from the expert, *Radio Colonia* served as a means for Italian migrants to understand their position in the FRG and how to extract social aid from local and federal entities. Moreover, it is clear that this relationship was not unidirectional. The changes embodied by housing subsidy laws and the

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[116] Broadcast on January 10, 1974, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 008, Folder: E 894,7.
[117] Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Gesetz über den Kündigungsschutz für Mietverhältnisse über Wohnraum*.

Tenancy Protection Law of the early 1970s signaled a shift in the definitions of welfare state responsibility. By extending housing subsidies and renter protections to foreigners, the FRG made it easier for temporary residents to live and/or remain within its geographic bounds – small steps that would eventually help pave the way for a disentanglement of formal citizenship from the nation-state that would culminate in the formation of the European Union.

Italy:

In the early 1970s, social housing policy in Italy also shifted. National legislation changed to allow emigrants to gain more points for work completed outside of Italy that would figure into their applications for public housing, possibly as a result of the closer ties stipulated by agreements within the European Community. Previously, Italians who lived outside of Italy were barred from applying for public housing upon return because their wages had not contributed to the public housing fund. In a transmission responding to a letter from Pietro N. – who wanted to move his family back to Milan in 1971 – Dr. Maturi clarified that time spent working abroad would now be calculated into the point system and that workers who repatriated could now apply for public housing. He cautioned listeners, though, that this would not translate into housing immediately after their return in Italy, rather this new right was an "abstract right, that will only be realized when housing actually exists," reflecting the housing shortage in Italy.[118] Thus, their names would likely remain on the applicant lists for a number of years before anything was available. In fact, six years later when asked again about the point system, Maturi reminded Vincenzo C. in Hamburg that time abroad only translated into three points when most applicants needed twelve or more before they were assigned a house, making it very likely that many other workers in Italy would have a higher number of points than most repatriates.[119]

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[118] Broadcast on December 2, 1971, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 060, Folder: E 894,8.
[119] Broadcast on August 15, 1977, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,10.

Other questions about housing laws in Italy continued to arrive at the WDR for years after initial discussions of changing federal policy. Two such letters in 1977 asked about continuing rent freezes and how one could move back to Italy. In his response, Dr. Maturi acknowledged their "hope that this time around, there will not be any further delays by the legislative body or government" before more permanent legislation was passed.[120] For almost a decade, Parliament had been debating a "Fair Rent Act" to stipulate rent prices in order to establish renter protections and regulate rent percentages when drawing up housing contracts. In the meantime, they froze rent prices to try and mitigate the economic impact on renters while they deliberated – a move that had ample precedent and had often been enacted in the republic's history. Transmitted on October 17, Maturi related that should legislation not be delayed for the "umpteenth time," the Fair Rent Act was scheduled to be signed into law on October 31, 1977. In fact, the act did not pass until the following year.

At times, Italians wrote from the position of landlords, rather than renters. They, too, expressed confusion about rent freezes and the upcoming Fair Rent Act. For example, Gaetano P. wrote asking if he had a right to ask his current tenants to leave, as he absolutely needed the apartment for his own family upon return. Similar to the provisions in the West German Tenancy Protection Act, this was one of the conditions that did allow for an eviction notice. For the moment, though, rent freezes sanctioned many caveats and stipulations that allowed renters to delay moving, mitigating or delaying landlords' legal right to inhabit their own premises. Thus, Dr. Maturi concluded that if the current tenants pursued such a course, it would likely result in "an appeal to court with expenses, delays and many useless headaches." This time, Dr. Maturi expressed sympathy with Gaetano, concluding, "In truth, even tenants who cry so often about

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[120] Broadcast on October 17, 1977, transcript. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,10.

injustice should also understand the desperate situation of certain expatriate emigrants."[121] His comments illustrated frustration on behalf of both tenants and landlords in Italy with the pace and nature of their government's response to the housing crisis.

In comparison to the FRG, then, Italy's federal government proved slow to respond to housing needs. Moreover, by prioritizing public housing rather than subsidizing private rentals, the dearth of building and mismanagement of government entities only served to exacerbate the Italian housing crisis. Letters written to Dr. Maturi are ripe with confusion and frustration over the delay of the Fair Rent Act. Rent freezes did not seem to offer much protection, as manifest by the previous section's discussion of evictions, and as will be demonstrated by a vast number of rent strikes and housing occupations. The case of Italy illustrates a welfare state in crisis, with a lack of funds and services to protect all citizens from the negative results of the market economy or guarantee a minimum standard of living, enhancing migrants' precarious position in the social order.

Conclusion

For many Italian migrants in the FRG, *Radio Colonia* looms large in their memory. In a 2004 interview of a second-generation Italian immigrant woman living in Cologne, Simona related that her family first purchased a radio in West Germany because they could not afford a television. She described *Radio Colonia* as a part of their home environment; it "accompanied our every evening" for decades. Though Simona recalled often feeling bored during the program as a child, she relayed that her mother "can still remember the names of the program moderators," such as Dr. Maturi.[122] The twenty years that Dr. Maturi spent broadcasting from the WDR thus capture pieces of Italian migrants' perspectives. By writing to the station and hoping

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[121] Broadcast on October 17, 1977. DOMiD, Collection: GFM 009, Folder: E 894,10.
[122] Simona, interview by Aurora Rodonó, November 3, 2004, DOMiD, Recording: IN 166, 167, cassette tape.

that part of their letters would be addressed on air, they communicated about their collective

sense of precarity, sharing their difficulties in providing for the basic needs of their families.

Their letters demonstrate that their concerns over finding proper housing, paying rent, avoiding

eviction or deportation, and tapping into financial aid were not bounded by a single nation-state.

They often compared their situation to the real or perceived circumstances of their neighbors and

a baseline standard of living in order to emphasize the injustice of their social and political

position within both West German and Italian communities.

Italian migrant housing grievances did not remain within an internalized community

bounded by the airwaves of *Radio Colonia*'s Italian language program. News reporters mediated

and frequently inflamed public debate about the individuals and policies aggravating migrants'

housing conditions. At times using women's and children's voices to elicit sympathy from their

readers, journalists increasingly engaged with social issues and pointed to businesses, city

administrations, and individual landlords as partially to blame for migrants' problematic and

potentially hazardous living spaces. In spite of greater discussion generated among neighbors, on

the streets, and in administrative offices as a result of their reporting, migrants' letters to Dr.

Maturi illustrate that their challenges to obtain decent and affordable housing remained very real,

in spite of small reforms in legislation. Still, a heightened public awareness paved the way for the

formation of alliances and support systems that would bolster migrants' efforts to challenge the

groups and mechanisms viewed as contributing to their marginalization.

CHAPTER THREE

Challenging Redevelopment with Allies and Action: Citizens' Initiatives and Rent Strikes

In 1972, Mario Polverino was a single immigrant father trying to raise his six kids in Frankfurt am Main; after their son was hit and killed by a car, his wife left him to manage the household on his own. He paid 250 DM for a single room from his 850 DM monthly salary to house his family, or roughly $495 of a $1688 monthly salary in current U.S. dollars. After further deductions for food, clothing, and other living expenses for the seven of them, there was little left to save. Mario was the first in the building to stop paying rent, viewing 250 DM for one room on his small salary as excessive. Soon after, other families followed suit, and they placed a placard on the front door barring entrance to the property manager. Mario's 13-year-old daughter, Vincenza, told editors of the magazine *Konkret*, "Mrs. Schmidt always threatens to call the police. I told her, 'If they come, I'll know what to say: She wanted the money, I had the money, but I did not give it to her.'"[1]

What gave this young Italian girl the brazenness to respond as she had? Perhaps it was the widespread prevalence and partial community acceptance of rent strikes in the early 1970s. As part of a larger process of "self-reduction" in northern Italy that referred to subjectively reducing the amount of money one paid for rent, utilities, or other living costs, the practice trickled north into West Germany, particularly among Italian immigrants. Indeed, just one year after her comments were printed in *Konkret* magazine, over 1,000 migrants would join an organized march in support of rent strikes in Frankfurt – a public performance that the activist known as amantine labeled the "first ever demonstration organized by migrants."[2]

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[1] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext. V 183 / 2. Konkret Nr. 12 (May 31 1972), 45.
[2] amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf* (Münster: UNRAST, 2011), 17.

In contrast to the previous two chapters which examined migrants' precarious living circumstances and motivation, this chapter shifts to examine the collective action of migrants and affiliates who took concrete measures to push back on city redevelopment plans and the related effects of housing shortages. By so doing, I touch on citizenship as a performance, that is how individuals and groups engaged in contest to make some of their own meanings of citizenship on localized stages, but with translocal resonances and effects.[3] As participatory citizenship is relational, it is important to understand the groups and organizations who actively supported – or who were sympathetic to – migrants' actions. Read along the lines of Sidney Tarrow's political opportunity structure, long-time residents with related housing goals often provided resources and facilitated opportunities for migrants to press their claims, even if native-born collaborators did not share every layer of disadvantage with migrants and their families.[4]

The first two sections of the chapter thus compare and contrast the objectives and actions of allies – local citizens' initiatives in Turin and Frankfurt – including how migrants contributed to or had shared interest in their tactics for pressuring city officials to curb speculation and protect affordable housing and rent prices. Though groups in each city share some overlap, such as relatively loose organizational structures and a focus on quality of life issues, Turin's "neighborhood committees" were much more tied to the factories, whereas Frankfurt's "Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend" (Westend Action Collective – AGW) consisted of a much

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[3] Kathleen Canning, "Reflections on the Vocabulary of Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany" in Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 216.

[4] Tarrow's elements of political opportunity include an increase in access to external resources, shifting alignments, rifts within elites, availability of allies, decline in state capacity for repression. In this instance, city redevelopment plans created political opportunities for opposition measures, aided by local support and allies. Moreover, municipal authorities (especially those representing political parties who claimed to be more progressive) were divided on how to respond, only exacerbating concern that strong measures could be perceived as "authoritarian" in both fledgling republics – as will be shown in later chapters. See Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

broader coalition of middle-class residents, students, and white- and blue-collar workers. The third section of the chapter examines the role of the *Unione Inquilini* (Tenant's Union – UI) that actively supported immigrants and Italians of low socioeconomic status in both northern Italy and the FRG. Finally, the chapter concludes with an analysis of specific actions migrants instigated or participated in, namely rent strikes.

If, as geographer David Harvey asserts, a "single money payment of rent can conceal a host of possible social significations,"[5] then migrant tenants' refusal to pay rent was simultaneously a subversive challenge to the existing social order. As (generally marginalized) migrants changed their performances by not paying privileged (generally native-born) landlords, it displaced the normalized balance of advantaged and disadvantaged, shifting conceptions of a socioeconomic hierarchy and compelling policymakers to respond. In other words, migrants practiced an "insurgent" urban citizenship that "destabilize[d] the differentiated" as they challenged constructed boundaries of acceptable housing practices.[6]

Citizens' Initiatives

One of the most powerful forces attempting to check the negative consequences of redevelopment consisted of citizens' initiatives. Building on the new oppositional tendencies of the protest movements of the 1960s, local neighborhood associations took to direct action when formal political parties no longer functioned as mediators.[7] Citizens' initiatives thus served as

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[5] David Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 107.

[6] James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 9.

[7] Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency: Cultures of Revolt in Italy from 1968 to 1978* (London/New York: Verso, 1990), 263. One protagonist in Donatella della Porta's examination of citizen's committees directly related his decision to participate in his local neighborhood group due to his experiences as a student in the 1968 movements, for instance. See Donatella della Porta, "Comitati di cittadini e democrazia urbana: una introduzione" in Donatella della Porta, ed., *Comitati di cittadini e democrazia urbana* (Soveria Manelli: Rubbettino, 2004), 24. For an excellent overview of protests movements and a chapter that is specific to citizens' initiatives in the FRG context, see Rob Burns and Wilfried van der Will, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany: Extra-Parliamentary Opposition and the Democratic Agenda* (London: MacMillan, 1988).

"intermediaries between the needs of residents and the city government." Groups in both Turin and Frankfurt mirrored sociologist Donatella della Porta's general characterizations of citizens' committees; they were built on local identities, their action strategies favored protests, and they were loosely organized so as to facilitate broad participation without requiring high levels of leadership or coordination.[8]

Urban renewal served as the political opportunity for citizens' initiatives to organize in ways that transcended other social or cultural demarcations, creating a "site of alliance among groups of people who do not otherwise find much in common and between whom there is sometimes even suspicion and antagonism."[9] Many of the repercussions of redevelopment were felt locally as houses or historic buildings were torn down, fell into disrepair, and small businesses forced out to make room for modern apartments and offices. Space, namely threatened space, served as the common glue binding residents together; those personally affected formed initiatives to counter specific city plans, protest demolition projects, and give voice to growing concern over infrastructure, rents, and business costs. Though most scholars examining citizens' or neighborhood initiatives overlook the migrant experience within local initiatives,[10] the next two subsections outline how citizens' initiatives' objectives aligned with

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[8] della Porta, "Comitati di cittadini e democrazia urbana," 14.

[9] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2015), 27.

[10] In her analysis of urban social movements, political scientist Margit Mayer outlines the history of the study of urban social movements, including their terminology as such, nature, and participants. This includes a brief synopsis of sociologists (and later urban sociologists) such as Manuel Castells, Henri Lefebvre, and other influential theorists of the connection between cities, citizens, and power. Yet even her work tends to focus on the influence of the New Left in said movements, and she characterizes the protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s in West Germany as "relatively homogenous," leaving out the migrant experience. See Margit Mayer, "Städtische soziale Bewegungen," in Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht, eds., *Die Sozialen Bewegungen in Deutschland seit 1945 ein Handbuch* (Frankfurt/M: Campus Verlag, 2008), 296. In the Italian context, neighborhood initiatives are similarly often studied in the context of far-left extraparliamentary groups or with an eye to native-born and local participants without distinguishing the migrant experience. For example, see della Porta, *Comitati di cittadini e democrazia urbana* and Elena Petricola, *I diritti degli esclusi nelle lotte degli anni settanta. Lotta Continua* (Rome: Edizioni Associate Editrice Internazionale, 2002).

migrants claims. By their very nature of being based in local contexts, citizens' initiatives in Frankfurt and Turin differed in many important aspects, particularly in terms of organization and the sociodemographic make-up of participants. However, by sharing similar concerns about housing and redevelopment schemes, one may see some parallels in how their actions provided resources and opportunities for migrants to advocate for better housing and living conditions

Italian Comitati di Quartiere

In Italy, a growing phenomenon of forming "*comitati di quartiere*," or neighborhood committees, grew in the latter 1960s. Also known as "*comitati di lotta*" and "*comitati di agitazione*," some neighborhood participants wished to infuse the term "struggle/fight" (*lotta*) or "agitation" (*agitazione*) into how they labeled their particular community organization. I shall use the term "neighborhood committees" to refer to all three labels due to their grassroots organization, their concern with local issues, and similarities in actions and goals.[11] Building on the long history and model of factory organizing, a foundation not nearly as strong in the West German context, neighborhood committees attempted to find avenues to advocate for better living conditions. Neighborhood committees' organizational structure was significantly influenced by factory councils, which directly elected delegates who held significant "decision-making power with regard to contract negotiations, grievances procedures, and other vital interests of rank-and-file workers."[12] In contrast to German factory councils – *Betriebsräte* – whose delegates were selected in organized and planned elections, Italian factory councils were

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[11] In similar mode, the article Guido Laganà, Mario Pianta, and Anna Segre, "Urban social movements and urban restructuring in Turin, 1969-76," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 6, no. 2 (1982): 223-245 also pairs *comitati di quartiere* and *comitati di lotta* together.

[12] Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 210. According to Miriam Golden, there were close to 1,000 factory councils in 1972 with over 10,000 delegates and 32,000 factory councils with over 200,000 delegates by 1977. See Miriam Golden, *Labor Divided: Austerity and Working-Class Politics in Contemporary Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 105.

the result of grass-roots and often spontaneous elections whose delegates could be recalled at any time, thus addressing the most pressing workers' problems through a form of participatory democracy.[13] Southern Italian migrants frequently led factory councils, even radicalizing their demands.[14] One particularly charismatic factory council leader, Tonino Miccichè, would lead the largest housing occupation in Turin in 1974.

According to political theorist Joshua Clover, it is little surprise that protests about conditions within factories spilled into the streets to address housing and other living concerns in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though 1973 would be seen as the juncture of the decline of Keynesian economics as symbolized by a global oil crisis, marginalized working populations already began to bear "the early weight of deindustrialization" as the Fordist economic model commenced a slow decline and transitioned from production to circulation.[15] If his theory that agitations occur in times of surplus holds weight, then in the Italian and West German context the rush for production throughout the 1950s and 1960s eventually produced a surplus in labor, driving down wages (particularly for low-skilled workers, many of whom were migrants) while housing could not keep up with the influx of workers.[16] This trajectory may explain why rent strikes were still tied to the places of production, such as rent strikers' insistence that rent be the equivalent of 10% of one's salary, or why Italian neighborhood committees borrowed so heavily from experience and organization in the factory. In fact, some more contemporaneous scholars

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[13] Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68*, 207.

[14] Nicola Lisanti, *Il movimento operaio in Italia, 1860-1980: Dall'Unità ai nostri giorni.* (Rome: Riuniti, 1986), 114.

[15] See Joshua Clover, *Riot. Strike. Riot: The New Era of Uprisings* (London/New York: Verso, 2016). The specific phrasing quoted is taken from page 106 in the context of American automobile workers in Detroit who share many characteristics with Fiat automobile workers in Turin.

[16] As Gino Bedani describes the shift in factory organization from 1968-1972, "The centre of gravity of industrial protest had thus shifted decisively to the centre of the mass of workers. The unskilled Catholic worker of southern extraction was now just as prone to industrial action as the politicised skilled operative close to the Pci." See Gino Bedani, *Politics and Ideology in the Italian Workers' Movement: Union Development and the Changing Role of the Catholic and Communist Subcultures in Postwar Italy* (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 168.

described the urban conflicts in Turin between 1969 and 1976 as "a 'socialization' of class conflict, extending outwards from the factory to the whole society and concerning general political reforms as well as problems of labour power reproduction and urban living conditions."[17]

From the perspective of a worker at the time, the macro forces of a crisis of capitalism were not likely on their radar, rather more micro concerns that bridged the spaces between work and home. According to Giorgio, who helped work rubber into tires for the auto industry, "the workers' struggle was closely tied to the struggle for housing…Fiat workers were sick of paying rent. Even though they [Fiat] had reduced the price, they failed to do so for everyone."[18] Another worker, Aldo Forbice, related similar logic, gesturing to how factory councils prefigured neighborhood councils by writing, "We claimed the right to meet, to 'hold an assembly,' to discuss anything and everything about workers' conditions *inside and outside of the workplace.*"[19] One neighborhood committee flyer made this same connection between work and home, proclaiming, "in the factory, in the house…it's the same boss!"[20]

Neighborhood committees also borrowed from factory council organization. They similarly held spontaneous elections and followed a loose decision-making structure that often changed. In some areas with a dense number of inhabitants, "delegati di scala" were elected – literally delegates that represented a certain "staircase" or subsections of apartment buildings that were linked by common entry and access. Though participants in neighborhood committees may have had differences in dialect, language, or cultural customs, most participants were individuals and/or families of low socioeconomic status, meaning that gentrification and the loss of

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[17] Laganà, Pianta, and Segre, "Urban social movements and urban restructuring in Turin," 226.
[18] Interview with Giorgio, conducted by author on March 6, 2018.
[19] Aldo Forbice, as quoted in Lisanti, *Il movimento operaio in Italia*, 115. Emphasis added.
[20] FF, Collection: Nuova Sinistra, Folder: 19.

affordable housing affected Turin-native and migrant alike. Moreover, southern Italian migrants' experience and leadership positions within factory councils meant that the relationships they built at work influenced their interactions with their neighbors, many of whom were migrants themselves. Women, too, were heavily involved in neighborhood committees in other ways, on rare occasion even elected as delegates. In one neighborhood committee on the northernmost outskirts, for instance, 10% of the elected delegates were women.[21] Some female workers related that their experiences "fighting" for housing meant even more than their agitations within their places of work.[22]

The composition of members and strategies of factory and neighborhood councils consequently threatened the prior monopoly Italian workers' unions had on working-class protest and bargaining. First, their actions decentralized union federations as each factory had its own factory council. Eventually, the three largest Italian federations (CGIL – Italian General Confederation of Labor, CISL – Italian Confederation of Worker's Trade Unions, and UIL – Italian Labor Union) would be forced to adopt rank-and-file modes of operation and embrace this decentralization in order to maintain influence and power.[23] Second, those involved in factory councils and citizens' initiatives during this time period, such as students, *meridionali*, and women, went beyond (generally) male blue-collared workers traditionally associated with labor movements.[24] By their very composition, factory councils and neighborhood committees insisted on greater equality and recognition within the socioeconomic and political order.

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[21] Interview with Anna Cagna, conducted by author on November 27, 2017 in Turin.
[22] Graziella Derossi and Gigliola Re, *L'occupazione fu bellissima: 600 famiglie occupano la Falchera* (Rome: Edizioni delle donne, 1976), 101.
[23] Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68*, 210.
[24] Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 263.
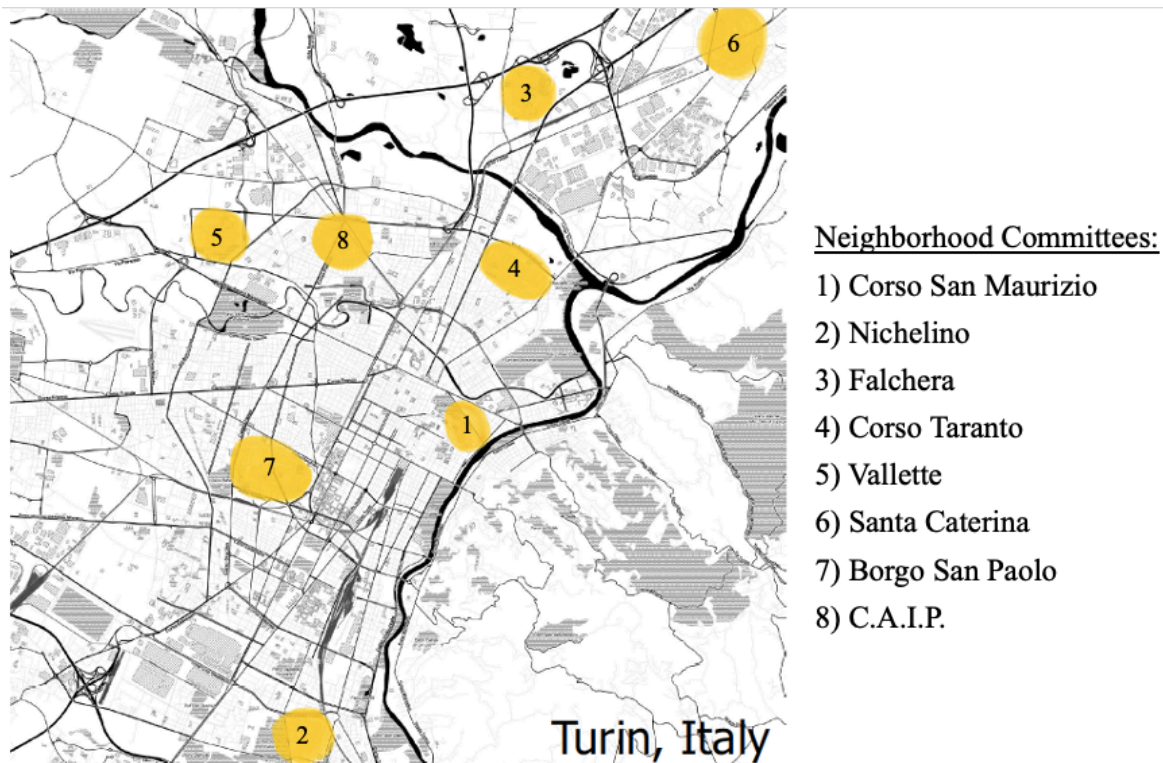
Figure 3.1 Map of Selected Neighborhood Committees in Turin[25]

In addition to forming more equitable structures of representation, neighborhood

committees' demands centered around concrete and local needs that they felt had been

overlooked or ignored. More specifically, historian Filippo Falcone related that neighborhood

committees pushed back on the lack of housing and called for reduced taxes and better access to

public facilities (schools, parks, public services). He noted, moreover, that those based in Turin

"were also very attentive to urban planning problems, managing to block the plan drawn up by

the Municipality in Turin for restructuring city services" because they viewed them as

detrimental to healthy urban growth.[26] One flyer circulated in the Corso San Maurizio district of

Turin (see Figure 3.1), a neighborhood adjacent to the city center, outlined the inhabitants'

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[25] Map created by author using QGIS open software, Apple Markup, and Microsoft Office.
[26] Filippo Falcone, *Morte di un militante siciliano: Meridionali nella Torino degli anni Settanta* (Turin: Lighea, 1999), 36.

specific goals for improved living standards – ideals espoused by many of their fellow

community groups. The neighborhood committee enumerated:

- A home for all workers
- Rent equating to 10% of one's salary
- Improved public housing, guarantee and greater employment in the building sector, use of money for the construction of metropolitan highways, public transit, etc.
- Requisition of vacant housing
- Rehabilitation of unhealthy houses without the expulsion of the current tenants[27]

As evidenced by the demands listed, housing was central to neighborhood committees' concerns.

Not only were prices and conditions protested, solutions were also proposed: a reduction in rent,

an increase in the building of public housing, and the take-over of vacant housing for the high

number of those searching for living spaces. Their objectives, if realized, would have benefitted

all residents challenged to find affordable housing, migrant and native-born alike.

Other flyers produced by neighborhood committees also supported more timely actions,

such as protests, rent strikes, and eventually housing occupations. For example, during the

occupation of the municipal offices in Nichelino discussed in chapter two, women from the

neighborhood committee created their own flyer addressed to the "housewives and female

workers of Nichelino" (see Figure 3.1). They explained that they were staging a protest at town

hall in order to freeze rents and stop evictions. They encouraged more women to join their cause

because women were the ones "who have to deal with the miserable pay stubs: they are most

aware of their families' economic difficulties."[28] Here, the common identity of being a woman

impacted by redevelopment and other economic downturns served as the catalyst for action, not

regional or cultural differences. Even employment did not serve as a demarcation, as the flyer

invited both "housewives and female workers." Instead, the authors couched their outreach

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[27] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Valentina Donvito, folder "Lotte per la casa – Torino," document 006578.
[28] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, distributed June 6, 1969.

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efforts in registers that were socially and culturally familiar, i.e. women as the individuals who had to make ends meet for the rest of the household. By encouraging them to physically assemble and protest in the public spaces in front of their local municipal offices, the organizers asked women to both subvert typified gendered roles while concurrently reifying that the end goals centered on the so-called private sphere – house and home. Though not all of these women had extensive experience with union organizing, then, some female locals and female migrants participated in neighborhood committee actions to disrupt the quotidian functioning of social relations while perceiving or portraying their actions as less politicized due to their connections to family life.

To combat disparities in housing location and building quality, the term "ghetto" also became much more prevalent in neighborhood committee discussions in Italy. However, the language often referred to geospatial location on the outskirts of urban centers and apartment conditions rather than foregrounding the more racialized connotations of concentrated minority groups associated with the term in the West German context. In Turin in 1972, a group of 100 families moved into the city center from the peripheries to illegally occupy empty housing. In a flyer they distributed throughout the quarter, they proclaimed, "We will never go back to the ghettos" and as part of their demands they listed "decent housing, no more ghettos and rotting attics."[29] Some tenants also invoked the term "ghetto" to criticize what they perceived as shoddy public housing construction. A Turinese neighborhood group whose tenants were assigned apartments constructed through a contract co-sponsored by Fiat and the IACP wrote a denunciation in all capital letters, proclaiming, "THEY PROMISED US APARTMENTS AND

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[29] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Sub- Collection: Valentina Donvito, document 005011.

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THEY GAVE US GHETTOS!" The printed handout accused Fiat and the IACP of speculation, including overcharging rent prices and shouldering inhabitants with management costs.[30]

The Falchera zone of Turin (see Figure 3.1) illustrates how much the lack of inter-agency communication for public utilities and services contributed to "ghetto-like" circumstances on the margins of the city. An area reserved for public housing, only one tram line reached from the neighborhood to the city. Guido and Elena Raro remember their situation in the Falchera twenty years after first moving there. They recalled that they had just been married and felt fortunate to be assigned public housing. What they found when they arrived was much different than anticipated:

> There was no water or electricity, and in these 10-story skyscrapers people had to use the stairs to go get water with canisters at the public fountain…As for shops there was only a shack that sold a bit of everything. When we went to live there was absolutely nothing. The fields were completely unkept. Later they built the "Pablo Neruda" elementary school, but before that, the children went to school in barracks across the way. The roads were not paved; when the 50 [tram] passed it coated everything in dust.[31]

More than an extension of the city, the description of the Raro's resembles more of a settlement than a suburb. Though the housing structures may have been standing, there was no running water, food supplies, transportation (apart from one tram), or public buildings. Their depiction of their living situation illustrates the difference between city center and periphery that redevelopment plans magnified.

A neighborhood committee in an adjacent neighborhood in Turin that experienced similar conditions began to protest in 1971. The inhabitants who formed the "Neighborhood Committee of Corso Taranto" (see Figure 3.1) demanded a community center, grocery and other stores, an

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[30] IG, Collection: C.!.7, Folder: 131, File: 8:1973. It is unclear which month and day this was distributed in 1973.
[31] ASdC, Mario Alba, Amilcare De Leo, and Umberto Grassi, "L'altra Storia. Vent'anni dopo: Falchera Nuova," 44-45.

elementary school, the cultivation of parks, and better utilities.[32] Two years later, they obtained

partial success. In an area of land dividing housing blocks in their quarter, the city made plans to

build even more apartment buildings. The committee insisted that city planners scrap the original

plan and instead build a daycare with a park surrounding the facility. Municipal authorities

conceded, and the proposed apartment buildings were not built. In a communication to the

community following the city's agreement, the committee announced that an alternative zoning

plan was adopted "for which a series of previously missing social services are currently

envisaged," including a social and cultural community center.[33] It is worth mentioning that

neighborhood committees often offered public support to one another; in this instance a

committee from the Vallette neighborhood (also a heavily working class and migrant-based

neighborhood on the outskirts - see Figure 3.1) issued a statement of solidarity supporting the

Neighborhood Committee of Corso Taranto's initiative to obtain better social services.[34]

Another strategy that neighborhood committees employed during the 1970s, often in

conjunction with factory councils, was "autoriduzione," or "self-reduction." Taken from a

reduction-of-output or "slowdown" method used in the workplace to force employers to the

bargaining table in the workplace, the term "self-reduction" was meant to invoke a sense of a

"strike" extending to all aspects of daily life. The action of self-reduction responded to inflation:

in addition to paying reduced bus or tram fares, households subjectively lowered their electricity,

gas, and telephone prices.[35] To give a sense of scale, the price of fuel for heating one's home

increased from 30 lire/kg to 81 lire/kg between October 1973 and March 1974 as a result of the

oil crisis of 1973, prompting one workers' organization to complain that it would take about one

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[32] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Valentina Donvito, document 006674.
[33] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Valentina Donvito, document 006673.
[34] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Valentina Donvito, document 006714.
[35] Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency*, 264.

month's salary to heat one's home if the trend were to continue.[36] To give a parallel example, it cost about 50,000 lire in heating costs for the average apartment in the winter of 1970-1971; that jumped to 250,000-300,000 lire in 1975, or just over $2,300 in today's current U.S. dollars.[37] One group of neighborhood committees whose tenants all lived in public housing explained that self-reduction was justified as "the most effective tool in creating mass mobilization and because it allows us to immediately implement the goal we need to achieve," namely a decrease in costs associated with living.[38] By paying reduced prices, tenants could stretch their salaries further, thus countering the effects of inflation.

As referenced by the above flyer, self-reduction only worked when done en masse, which is why it required cooperation between the factories and the neighborhoods. Often, factory councils coordinated strikes in the workplace with self-reduction actions, as is manifest by a flyer distributed the neighborhood committee of Santa Caterina in Turin. The committee members who authored the flyer similarly defended self-reduction, positing "…it is clear that we cannot deprive ourselves of food, so if there is to be a cut in expenses, this must be done on other items of the family budget." After specifying that cuts were to be made to rent, electricity, gas, and telephone bills, they underscored the relationship between protest tactics in the workplace and in the home and emphasized the need for collective action: "…but as this cannot be done individually, it must be done by all workers who are on strike and who, due to a reduced salary at the end of the month, will not be able to meet expenses."[39] The importance of embodied and collective action in carrying out self-reduction campaigns was often visibly represented in public

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[36] MP, Collection: Ricci, Subcollection: 002, 18. *Avanguardia operaia: settimanale di agitazione comunista,* 4, March 22, 1974.
[37] Polo '900, Collection: Vera Nocentini, Subcollection: Faldone, Folder: BXII F .119/M 1974.
[38] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Filippo Falcone, Document: "Bozza di piattaforma per il coordinamento Cittadino dei comitati di lotta degli inquilini dei quartieri pubblici," dated February 1975.
[39] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Sucollection: Guido Piraccini, Document: 010406.

marches, such as the one depicted in Figure 3.2. Here a group of demonstrators in Milan gather

around a sign reading, "Let's self-reduce transportation costs and electricity and heating bills"

signed by the "Fight Committee Against the High Cost of Living."

Figure 3.2 "Self-reduction" Demonstration in Milan[40]

Eventually, workers' unions realized they would need to accommodate some of the

factory and neighborhood committees' tactics or risk being left behind when it came to dictating

workers' conditions, both in the factory and outside of the factory. By 1974 they were printing

their own bulletins encouraging workers to practice self-reduction. One bulletin that attempted to

convince workers in Milan that self-reduction was effective claimed that over 80,000 family

units were participating in paying reduced bills in Turin and that the electrical union opposed the

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[40] The photo was printed in a pamphlet labeled "Self-reduction Bulletin" printed by the "Comitato Cittadino, via De Castiglia, 11 centro sociale isola). Fondazione Istituto per la Storia Dell'Età Contemporanea (ISEC), Collection: L'Unità – Movimenti e gruppi extraparliamentari, Folder: 1, Subfolder: 3, File: 20. Reproduced with permission.

energy supplier ENEL's intentions to "suspend the supply of energy to workers who practice self-reduction." To support the self-reduction initiative, they called for a four-hour strike to encourage ENEL to rethink its plans.[41] On another occasion, the dual strategy of combining factory strikes with self-reduction was so effective that city officials became involved. For example, when the Quarto Oggiaro neighborhood on the periphery of Milan went on strike in the metal and rubber industries for several days, apparently the city, not the company, conceded to pay a sum of money to workers whose "paycheck had been reduced due to strikes…to be able to pay electricity, gas bills and…back rent."[42] The city administration's decision to become involved illustrates northern Italian cities' reliance on big industry (and the workers who manufactured their products) for their economies as well as how effective self-reduction and workers' strikes could be in crippling production.

In addition to overcoming the division between work and homelife, neighborhood committees had the power to transcend political lines. In one neighborhood in close proximity to many of the Fiat factories, Borgo San Paolo (see Figure 3.1), the neighborhood committee invited "workers and citizens" to an assembly to discuss issues surrounding housing and the cost of living. The flyer declared that neighborhood committees throughout the city and in the outskirts had "created a broad front of united struggle that…embraces the great working masses and a vast array of political forces: from the communists to the PSIUP (Parito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria – Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity), to the socialist and Christian Democratic left, to the ACLI (Associazioni Cristiane dei Lavoratori Italiani – Christian Associations of Italian Workers), to numerous mayors of the provincial centers."[43] The assembly

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[41] "Bollettino sull'autoriduzione," dated November 2, 1974. ISEC, Collection: L'Unità – Movimenti e gruppi extraparliamentari, Folder: 3, File: 23.

[42] FF, Collection: Unione Inquilini, "Unione Inquilini di Quarto Oggiaro: La casa e' un diritto," undated.

[43] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, Document: 010409, dated July 1969.

was open to both "workers and citizens," meaning that even those who were unemployed or engaged in unpaid work could attend. The broad political affiliations listed in the flyer also indicate that local and daily problems, such as housing and utility bills, served as common cause no matter other socioeconomic or cultural distinctions.

Soon, rent strikes became one of the most visible solutions of the neighborhood and individual self-reduction efforts, and will be discussed later in this chapter. For example, one flyer written by the "Neighborhood Committee C.A.I.P." – located in a dense working-class and migrant housing area northeast of Turin (see Figure 3.1) – encouraged other neighbors to join in their self-reduction efforts. They wrote, "Tenants! The increase in rent, housing expenses, contract registrations, etc. required by landlords are the usual abuses tenants are accustomed to suffer and about which they think nothing can be done…This is not true! Landlords are only strong when we are weak!"[44] This same neighborhood committee listed positive outcomes of apartment buildings along specific streets within their district in another flyer, indicating that residents in via De Geneys, via Terni, Largo Cardinal Massaia, and via Villar obtained a reduction in rent in addition to interest on their deposit by employing self-reduction. The committee insisted that "these results were possible because they knew how to organize themselves," once again emphasizing the power in numbers and the effectiveness of resources and allies for concerted action.[45]

As demonstrated above, northern Italy's "*comitati di quartiere*," influenced by and in connection with factory councils, were important in generating the support and interest necessary for group action. On occasion they were able to influence city policy. For example, Turin did eventually begin to requisition vacant housing in 1974 as demanded by some of the

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[44] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, Document: 010432, dated April 3, 1971.
[45] PG, Collection: Marco Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, Document: 010433, dated March 6, 1971.

neighborhood committees, though the end result was few in number. City council meeting notes also show that political representatives' concerns mirrored those of the neighborhood committees, especially regarding the availability and conditions of public housing, plans to renovate dilapidated housing, and how to improve infrastructure.[46]It does appear, then, that neighborhood committees and the actions they supported either helped spur administrative action or at least give voice to marginalized inhabitants who individually may have felt ignored.

Frankfurt's Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend

Unlike Italian *comitati di quartiere* which were significantly influenced by workers' activism within their places of employment, citizens' initiatives in West Germany emerged from a different, albeit parallel, protest context. According to historian Peter Mayer-Tasch, the long-standing stereotype of "unpolitical Germans" – a caricature steeped in theories of a "Sonderweg" or "special path" that paved the way to Nazism – began to change in the mid-1960s as local citizens became more engaged in local, regional, and even federal politics.[47] Most potently, the 1968 student movement directly challenged the political elite's control and laid the groundwork for local citizens' initiatives with their calls for direct democracy and innovative protest tactics.[48]

Indeed, student movements within West German universities served as an organizational and theoretical model for many citizens' initiatives. Their influence is particularly apparent if one looks back to one of the mantras of the SDS (Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund – the Socialist German Student League) – the collegiate branch of the SPD that was expelled from its

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[46] See in particular ASdC, Collection: Consiglio Comunale – Sessioni Straordinari, October 21, 1974.

[47] Peter Cornelius Mayer-Tasch, *Die Bürgerinitiativbewegung: Der active Bürger als rechts-und politikwissenschaftliches Problem* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1976), 8. For a still-relevant and exemplary critique of the *Sonderweg* theory, see David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley. *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

[48] Michael L. Hughes, *Embracing Democracy in Modern Germany: Political Citizenship and Participation, 1871-2000* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 105.

parent organization 1961. The SDS, particularly its antiauthoritarian wing was more radical than the broader Außerparliamentarische Opposition (APO – Extraparliamentary Opposition) that emerged in the late 1960s, though both umbrella organizations prioritized grassroots or direct democracy to counter what they viewed as authoritarian sociopolitical trends. The protesters focused on revolutionizing the "social function" of education and politics, which historian Nick Thomas elucidates as "not be[ing] attained through reform within a capitalist system but via the replacement of capitalism and parliamentary democracy with direct participation through *Rätedemokratie*, or government through people's councils."[49] The 1968 protest movements thus extended beyond the confines of the SDS to unfold at the level of "daily life" on other sociopolitical levels, transforming into "nothing less than a wide-ranging attempt to dismantle the usually taken-for-granted authority relations in society."[50]

Though citizens' initiatives may not have shared some protesters' goals of replacing parliamentary democracy, they did often espouse the view that the political system was not representing their interests. In keeping with the participatory thrust of earlier protest movements, citizens' initiatives formed "a reaction against what was commonly perceived as that [democratic] system's inability to take account of, or give expression to, the views, needs and concerns of the vast majority of ordinary citizens."[51] Let down by formal political parties and critical of a growing reliance on technocratic forms of governance and administration, citizens'

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[49] Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2003), 60.

[50] Timothy Brown, *West Germany in the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962-1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17. For a detailed analysis of the lived experience, including over 500 oral interviews from former activists, see Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, eds., *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). See also Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall, eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

[51] Rob Burns, "Citizens' Initiatives: Grassroots Democracy and the Growth of Environmentalism in the 1970s and 1980s," in Burns and van der Will, *Protest and Democracy in West* Germany, 166. This chapter is worth reading in its entirety for an overview on the characteristics and overarching themes around which citizens' initiatives formed.

initiatives thus sought to protest what they viewed as unethical or inequitable policy or practice within their communities, find solutions, and pressure the political apparatus to respond to their demands. According to a 1973 survey, up to 12% of West German citizens became actively involved in citizens' initiatives, and that percentage only increased by the latter 1970s and early 1980s.[52]

One difference between West German citizens' initiatives and Italian *comitati di quartiere* was that of participant composition. Whereas the majority of those who took part in neighborhood committees in Italy were working class and of similar socioeconomic circumstances, those in the FRG generally tended to be less homogenous, as the "basis of membership was not class but ideological goals or collective goods."[53] As a result, individuals of many different backgrounds, professions, and even nationalities in the case of migrants joined together. Still, their objectives centered on local concerns, with their strategies stemming from direct action.

Moreover, for a citizens' initiative to be successful, it required a broad base of support, including the formation of alliances or coalitions.[54] This form of organization explains why migrants and long-time Frankfurters cooperated in order to protest the lack of low-income housing and city planning/speculation's contribution to the problem in spite of national or cultural differences. By having at least parallel desires and motivations – i.e. maintaining or redeveloping residential areas in ways that protected and/or expanded affordable housing – migrants and other urban residents assisted each other and strategically worked with other

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[52] Peter Cornelius Mayer-Tasch, *Die Bürgerinitiativbewegung*, 8.
[53] Michael L. Hughes, *Embracing Democracy*, 118.
[54] Peter Cornelius Mayer-Tasch, *Die Bürgerinitiativbewegung*, 126-127, 134.

groups, such as student activists, to raise awareness of Frankfurt's housing situation and

coordinate opposition efforts, including demonstrations, public marches, and open houses.

Perhaps the most influential Frankfurt-based citizens' initiative that focused on urban

renewal was "*Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend*," (Westend Action Collective – AGW). According

to one of its founding members, Lelle Franz, "There were lawyers, doctors, old Westenders who

were still living here and who said: We need to create a structure that will prevent Westend from

being destroyed. There was this development plan, the Five-Finger Plan, the stupid fantasy of the

city of Frankfurt, to create such a service metropolis within the old Stauffer Walls."[55] Her

description highlighted the diversity of participants in the group with one common goal:

opposition to the Five-Finger Plan. Franz herself was a single mother who found herself in

difficult economic circumstances. Yet she dedicated her time to the organization because she

thought it would both better her individual circumstances and help change policies which were

creating harm to her community. Lelle would join migrants and other Germans in the first

housing occupation in the FRG during this period in 1970.

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[55] Barbara Sichtermann and Kai Sichtermann, *Das ist unser Haus: Eine Geschichte der Hausbesetzung* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2017), 117.

Figure 3.3 AGW Placard[56]
(Westend Action Collective – Save Our City Now – For Exemplary Renewal**)**

With its founding in 1969, AGW published a pamphlet with its stated objectives. Not

only did AGW protest speculation and the city's current redevelopment plans, it also tasked itself

to "present to the city alternative plans for a healthy structure of the Westend. These plans are

intended to satisfy both urban planning and social and economic needs."[57] In addition, the AGW

claimed to be "open to members of all democratic parties and represent both tenants as well as

homeowners in Westend, provided they are not speculators;" a definition open to migrant

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[56] Photograph listed under a Creative Commons license.
[57] Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend, *Ende oder Wende Westend: Studie zur Situation des Westends von Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Biermann Steinbach/Taunus, 1969).

inhabitants.[58] Westend's geographic location played a significant, if not principal, role in forming AGW. As one of the neighborhoods most affected by speculative practices and with seemingly little assistance coming from the local political parties, residents took matters into their own hands and organized to save their community, as symbolized by their seal whose slogan reads, in part, "Save Our City Now" (Figure 3.3).

Both the Protestant and Catholic communities joined forces with the AGW in these initiatives, adding the weight of local institutions to these neighborhood-specific concerns. The churches issued a joint resolution to the city of Frankfurt alongside AGW in calling for a "building permit stop for office buildings in the Westend as soon as possible, until the competent authorities of the city make a plan for a functional mixed structure based on in-depth, careful analysis of the situation in the city."[59] Their proposal was a counter to the many high-rises being constructed or under consideration in their neighborhood, with an insistence that affordable housing be required in any development proposal when filing for a permit. By transcending denominational lines, religious leaders issued a united reprimand of city planners' seeming participation in the forces that were pushing Westenders from their homes and businesses.

Another pastor, Hans Cohrssen, not only discarded denominational lines, but lines of nationality as well. He published an article entitled "The Church can no longer stay aloof" in the September 24, 1971 issue of the publication *Church and Society.* He argued that local parish councils should take responsibility for "foreign workers" who were "exploited and live in the most primitive living conditions when vacant apartments (in a housing crisis) are inhabited by rats and the residential face of Westend is perverted by the construction of office buildings."[60]

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[58] Rudolf Heinrich Appel, *Frankfurt am Main: Stadtentwicklung und Wohnprobleme* (Frankfurt: Franz Jos. Henrich KG, 1974), 40-41.
[59] Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend, *Ende oder Wende Westdend*, "Resolution der Kirchengemeinden."
[60] IfS, Collection: PIA, S6b-38/1.274.

Pastor Cohrssen urged local parishes to fight the "stagnation" of the church and care for people living in these conditions, "even if the official church does not follow" while knowing that it would "provoke conflict with the hierarchy, with the city administration, with political parties, and not least with industrial, financial, trade union and other economic interests that see their privileges endangered."[61] As an ally to local initiatives who sought to help those affected by redevelopment plans, his statements indicate that some prominent local leaders spoke out against Westend's urban changes, although it often contradicted official church or city policy

More concretely, AGW provided lawyers for residents, often migrants, who sought legal redress for exorbitant rent prices. For example, Christoph Kremer was a law student who offered his services to immigrants caught up in legal proceedings. In a published interview many years after the fact, he related, "I am sure that the practical support of foreign workers, even in eviction procedures, was very important…I have always been able to combine something of my practical life with my learning."[62] As Kremer inhabited a much different socioeconomic position – he had the means and opportunity to study law – he may be described as more of a privileged collaborator than one who experienced the same level of disadvantage as migrants. Still, whether through a vision of political change or because he, too, had difficulty in finding affordable housing as a student, Kremer illegally occupied a house with migrant tenants in the following years.

One strategy the AGW used to pressure local municipal authorities was to continually submit alternate neighborhood zoning and planning blueprints to the appropriate city departments. In a newsletter that printed their comments, AGW representatives claimed that "the city administration wanted to liquidate the Westend as a residential area" and turn it all into

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[61] IfS, Collection: PIA, S6b-38/1.274.
[62] Sichtermann, 113.

"office space." Whether intentional or not, some readers may have associated the provocative verb "liquidate," with the Nazi liquidation of the Jewish ghettos – indeed, other chapters have shown how the term "ghetto" grew in prevalence when describing slum-like housing areas and/or the concentration of minority groups in certain neighborhoods. The AGW statement further claimed that such a "liquidation" was only prevented because they "did not cease" to send in their own plans that they felt would benefit the majority of Westend residents.[63] Their priority of keeping low-income housing benefitted migrants and students who attended the nearby Goethe University, many of whom had moved into the area. Though only based on personal observation, one Italian transplant claimed that Italians were better able to put up with students' noise than other residents due to their own cultural practices.[64] Whether his reasoning was the case or not, migrants of various nationalities composed 23.4% of the Westend population by 1970, or almost one quarter of the residents.[65]

Other AGW actions centered on specific buildings within the Westend neighborhood. For instance, members and sympathizers often organized marches to prevent the demolition of buildings they viewed as having historic value. Around 200 individuals participated in one demonstration against the razing of Mendelssohnstraße 55 on August 14, 1970, carrying banners reading "Stop the terror of the speculators!"[66] Though this particular building was vacant at the time, AGW's ability to organize against demolition resembled Italian neighborhood committees' efforts to prevent eviction. In another instance of advocating for the preservation of affordable apartments, AGW posted 50 photos of vacant buildings that were not being rented out at one of

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[63] IfS, Collection: 1971: Hausbesetzungen S3/A 10.304 "Die Frankfurter Hausbesetzungen: Was hat sie heraufbeschworen und wie werden sie enden?" DFB Newsletter, March 1971.
[64] Interview with Aldo Loiero, conducted by author in Frankfurt on July 3, 2018.
[65] Maria Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt: Eine empirische Untersuchung am Beispiel Frankfurt* (Frankfurt/M: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 129.
[66] Christoph Albrecht-Heider, "'Wie Hunde vertrieben': Als Frankfurt die Hausbesetzungen für sich entdeckte," *FR*, December 14, 2013. This was a 2013 article looking back at the history of housing occupations in Frankfurt.

their public meetings. One of AGW's chairpersons, Otto Fresenius, told reporters, "What they will become – what the owners are planning to do with them – is unknown."[67] He also alluded to a breakdown in the so-called "rotating system" in which the local public housing entity moved families from building to building as landlords waited on demolition or other permits, temporarily helping alleviate the housing shortage. Indeed, many migrants participated in this system. However, according to Mr. Fresenius, by 1973 such a system had "collapsed."

Finally, the AGW directly petitioned governing authorities to reconsider their involvement in city planning schemes that had detrimental impacts on Frankfurt's residents. In an open letter to members of a municipal commission in 1970, the AGW warned that the fate of Westend could quickly be mirrored in other residential areas throughout the city, implying that "in a predictable time the entire city and urban periphery [will] be in the hands of 30 to 40 financial tycoons," who would usurp the ability of politicians to enact their sociopolitical programs. To counter this potential outcome, the AGW insisted on "democratizing the decision-making process" and that an advisory group be set up to review all demolition permit and building applications.[68] As reported by Odina Bott, an original AGW member, city officials did set up the advisory groups they requested; she herself served on a local advisory board for Westend as soon as it was established.[69]

As a local entity that served the interests of a community in which a high percentage of migrants lived, the AGW provided both resources and opportunities for migrants to bring awareness and potentially challenge their living situations. In pushing back on urban renewal

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[67] "Im Westend stehen noch 50 Häuser leer – AGW plädiert für mehr Wohngebiete," *FR*, November 12, 1973.
[68] Dietrich Giering, "'Mieter, habt den Mut, um eure Wohnungen zu kämpfen!' Ziele, Struktur und Funktionen einer Bürgerinitiative am Beispiel der 'Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend'" in Heinz Grossmann, ed. *Bürgerinitiativen: Schritte zur Veränderung?* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1971), 124-125.
[69] Odina Bott, "Das Frankfurter Westend: Bericht über einen bekannten Stadtteil aus der Beobachtung Betroffener," (Frankfurt: Publisher unknown, 1988), 7-8, accessed February 8, 2021, https://www.spd-frankfurt-westend.de/dl/frankfurterwestendodina88.pdf.

plans in a particular geospatial location, the AGW helped marginalized residents highlight perceived and real injustices as speculators demolished, emptied, or purposely allowed apartments to deteriorate in anticipation of new building projects. Later, the AGW would openly support initial housing occupations in which many migrants would take part, viewing them as "a suitable means to mitigate and eliminate deficits in city planning," as will be discussed in the next chapter.[70]

The Transnational *Unione Inquilini* – Tenants' Union

One of the most important organizations that provided resources and opportunities for migrants to protest their living circumstances originated in 1968 in Milan as the *Unione Inquilini* (UI) – Tenant's Union – but quickly spread throughout northern Italy and to the FRG. The UI often worked in tandem with other groups, such as citizens' initiatives, to protect renters from the effects of urban redevelopment and speculative practices. UI became so prevalent that it began to publish its own newsletter recounting its goals and successes, as well as housing challenges in specific cities. Its monthly or bi-monthly publication also featured "The Emigrant's Page" which focused on the housing problems of migrants outside of Italy, frequently discussing the situation in Frankfurt. An analysis of the UI's newsletter reveals four overarching strategies the UI implemented to help tenants: self-reduction of rent and other prices; rent strikes; the prevention of evictions; and advocating for reform to both municipal policies and federal housing legislation.[71] In the FRG context, the UI would often also help emigrant tenants in legal processes. On many occasions one or more of these aspects aided migrants in forwarding their housing claims by offering organizational support or lending resources – including anti-eviction

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[70] "Arbeiter und Studenten…viele Sympathiebeweise," *FR*, September 21, 1970.
[71] Andreina Daolio, *Le lotte per la casa in italia: Milano, Torino, Roma, Napoli* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974), 19.

brigades – to tenants at odds with their landlords, a relationship that frequently symbolized their social and political marginality.

The UI emerged directly out of tenants' frustration at not being able to afford housing in Italy's industrial centers. In 1968, a few hundred workers met together in Milan and decided to no longer pay rent until legislation was passed that one would pay no more than 10% of one's salary. They pursued a line of direct action as neither traditional political parties nor the unions seemed to be finding concrete solutions for their needs.[72] The "fight committee" tasked for leading the striking workers became known as *Unione Inquilini* and soon evolved into a national entity.[73] In a self-authored leaflet entitled "What is the *Unione Inquilini*?" the UI succinctly clarified its overarching goals to the general Italian public and to/for whom they offered their services:

> The Tenants' Union is an organization that fights to defend the interests of the proletariat in regard to the housing problem and everything related to it. The UI wants (to help provide solutions for) organizing the struggle for decent homes for those who live in buildings that are in poor condition, uninhabitable, unhygienic. It wants to fight against rent hikes in whatever form they take and intends to assist even those who do not have a home: the evicted; young people looking for their first home, immigrants.[74]

Immigrants are explicitly mentioned in this organizational creed. Seeing as the large majority of migrants to the industrial areas originated from southern Italy, they would be among those who benefitted from the UI's actions, from challenging rent prices and substandard living conditions to finding housing in overcrowded metropolises.

For example, the UI specifically addressed southern Italian migrants in an article about how urban development had affected Turin's downtown area. The authors described "tens of thousands of apartments without the most basic services and in a state of neglect, which are

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[72] Francesco Di Ciaccia, *La Condizione Urbana: Storia dell'Unione Inquilini* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974), 70.
[73] Nella Ginatempo, *La Casa in Italia: Abitazioni e crisi del capitale* (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta, 1975), 163.
[74] "Cos'è l'unione inquilini" (Faenza, March 1976), MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, File: 86.

occupied by the families of southern workers drawn by the possibility of work." They claimed

that only 10% of housing in the historic city center had running water, and characterized housing

conditions as a "by-product of Fiat exploitation."[75] To counter the inequitable expansion of

industrial cities, such as Turin, UI continually advocated for extensive legislative and

administrative reforms, such as:

- Fair rent (10% of salary)
- Forgiveness of all debts from rent strikes
- Construction of new public housing
- Implementation of missing public utilities in existing neighborhoods
- Renovation of old working-class neighborhoods and maintenance plans in newly built neighborhoods
- Popular control over public housing assignments through workers' organizations
- Popular control of the management of public bodies, in particular the IACP (Autonomous Public Housing Institute)[76]

In addition to the relationship between salary and rent prices, one can see concerns about

redevelopment infusing the UI's demands, especially concerning the renovation of "old"

neighborhoods that many low-income individuals and families (migrants included) were leaving

in droves because of an uptick in prices. The center-periphery divide (as alluded to in the bullet

point referring to "old working-class neighborhoods" and "newly built neighborhoods) is also

manifest as the UI advocated for many marginalized groups that had been pushed to the

outskirts. Finally, criticism about the Italian system for assigning public housing was addressed

by insisting on more representative management.

At the level of individual residents, the UI encouraged tenants to participate in collective

action to reduce or stop paying rent and other bills. Though rent reduction will be discussed more

extensively in the next section on rent strikes, the case study of kerosene prices following the oil

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[75] MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, Folder: 86. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 5, no. 2 (April-May 1976).

[76] Unione Inquilini, *Per il diritto alla casa e per un uso sociale del territorio apriamo la vertenza casa* (Milan: Tipografia Linotipia, 1975), 20-21.

crisis of 1973 provides an illustrative example of how the UI supported tenants' efforts to combat inflation. In a flyer that urged workers to come to a meeting to discuss a general strike, the UI adamantly declared that "THE ARABS ARE NOT AT FAULT" for residents' lack of access to affordable kerosene and diesel to heat their houses, even though it was the OAPEC embargo that catalyzed global distribution issues. The UI claimed instead that the federal government and individual municipalities had enough fuel in store but were sequestering supplies, consequently driving up prices. The UI encouraged readers to join a demonstration that would demand state officials to requisition supplies, give over control and administration of the nation's oil stores to the public, and eliminate the import tax on all heating materials. To strengthen residents' faith in their ability to mobilize, the flyer further related that after occupying the municipal offices of a peripheral town outside of Milan, the UI succeeded in forcing an emergency distribution of 1,000 canisters of heating fuel.[77]

In addition to launching their own protest actions, the UI worked closely with *comitati di quartiere* on issues of housing. Giuseppe Zambon, one of UI's early leaders, explained how neighborhood committees were both forerunners and collaborators with the UI. He related, "We weren't aware that many people already didn't pay rent [until] we started doing this…Basically we went into the neighborhoods, and through our small group, simply built up the ties and connections between people who were or could run and propagate this type of struggle," or the struggle for housing.[78] The UI and neighborhood committees combining resources to prevent evictions provides an example. Often, UI flyers posited that landlords used eviction as a tool to fight against tenants' attempts to practice self-reduction and go on rent strike, but that eviction

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[77] ISEC, Collection: Fondi Politico e Sociale, flyer undated.
[78] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author at his publishing house in Frankfurt on June 20, 2018.

could simultaneously be countered through collective opposition.[79] Giuseppe Zambon detailed

how the UI and neighborhood committees would recruit people when someone called for help

when threatened with eviction. He related, "We organized an anti-eviction brigade, which meant

that when an eviction was announced in one of the neighborhoods we were involved in, we

called two people, who in turn called two others – we theoretically had the capability of

organizing 200 [people]" through this phone tree. What was UI's objective in bringing large

numbers of people to the house? "Not everyone came, of course, but there was always enough to

resist [the eviction] and force the police to postpone or call in for reinforcements," continued

Zambon.[80] In addition to their efforts at physically preventing tenants from being kicked out of

their homes, the UI called for legislative measures to temporarily halt evictions, frequently

enjoining an "eviction freeze" that would mirror the rent freezes the Italian parliament issued

over the course of the 1970s.[81] We know that at least in one limited instance they were

successful; though the duration is unknown, a 1973 newsletter indicated that a partial eviction

freeze in Milan had gone into effect.[82]

In order to identify families who faced eviction, the UI plastered flyers throughout cities

which read, "Eviction notice? Call us!" Zambon recounted that the phone rang day and night,

until one day in late 1970 a man with a Veneto accent called and asked for help. When Zambon

asked which neighborhood, the man responded, "No, in Frankfurt."[83] Somewhat surprisingly,

Zambon agreed to cross national borders and move the organization into the FRG. In a pamphlet

written in German and distributed throughout the city in 1973, the authors described the

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[79] There are numerous examples of these flyers at ISEC, Collection: Fondi Politico e Sociale.
[80] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author at his publishing house in Frankfurt on June 20, 2018.
[81] Daolio, *Le lotte per la casa in italia*, 19.
[82] MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, Folder: 478. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 3, no. 1 (January 1973). The newsletter specifically mentions eviction freezes against two significantly large Milanese property holders, Ceschina and Nova.
[83] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author at his publishing house in Frankfurt on June 20, 2018.

objectives of UI. They claimed, "The first objective of Unione Inquilini Frankfurt is to propagate the fight for the right to housing in order to appeal to as many guest workers as possible."[84] Perhaps even more so than the Italian context, migrants formed the bulk of tenants whom the UI tried to support.

Still, the UI attempted to collaborate with other local organizations, just as they did with neighborhood committees in northern Italy. In one of the reports printed on "The Emigrant's Page" in 1973, the newsletter editors communicated that "the UI shows solidarity with German workers in the fight against rent increases. This should be the start of a common struggle."[85] In contrast to the rather widespread support that the UI received in Italy, however, Giuseppe Zambon related that they found very few real instances of collaboration with other Frankfurt organizations, save what he named as the German Communist Party and other far-left oriented extraparliamentary groups. Indeed, Zambon recalled meeting with members of *Revolutionärer Kampf* but recounted that differences in end goals and strategy quickly led to a falling out.[86]

Still, some West Germans, particularly the *Jusos* collaborated with the UI to help Italian and other migrants. That being said, the newsletter's column on Frankfurt implied that it took quite a great deal of canvassing and convincing in the first months. In a 1972 article entitled, "*Meridionali* Migrants Initiate the Fight: Correspondence From Our UI Colleagues in Frankfurt," the authors related the long process of inception the UI underwent in the FRG:

> Families and young Calabrian and Sicilian emigrants, tired of the continuous rent increases, have rebelled…We held many meetings with the tenants, and a little at a time even the skeptical ones were convinced. Then a wonderful thing happened: for the first time we didn't have to make posters and flyers ourselves but did so all together – men, women and our comrades. Women raced to get sheets to make banners to hang from the

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[84] "Der brave Bürger, der di bestehenden Gesetze achtet, seinen Mietzins regelmaessig zahlt und seinen Protest gegen die hohen Mieten auf Worte beschraenkt, ist nicht nur ein Opfer, sondern gleichzeitig auch ein Komplice der Bodenspekulation," pamphlet, Primo Moroni Archive (PM), Milan.
[85] PG, Collection: Emilio Cavalleris. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 3, no. 3 (April-May 1973), 10.
[86] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author at his publishing house in Frankfurt on June 20, 2018.

balconies. Finally, with the help of German allies, we decided to propagate the neighborhood with leaflets in German.[87]

Though the news report does not indicate which specific action the Italian migrant tenants undertook, it was likely either a rent strike or the self-reduction of rent. Either way, this is one of the newsletter's earliest recorded incidents of collective migrant action taking place in Frankfurt, as supported by the UI.

The UI also connected housing conditions to community perceptions and access to public services. In a piece that sought to challenge prevailing assumptions about immigrants within another UI newsletter entitled, "None of us chose to emigrate," southern Italian migrants in Frankfurt claimed that there "are no houses for emigrants, there are no schools, there are no kindergartens for our children."[88] On one occasion, the UI supported the efforts of Italian migrant women to collaborate with their native-born neighbors in order to build a new kindergarten. In a flyer composed by Italian women to West German working women in 1972, they addressed oft-vocalized concerns that Italian children were "dirty and poorly educated." In response, the authors of the flyer pointed out that many of them had to work to supplement their income and often found it difficult to find spaces to place their children while they were gone. Their proposed solution was a school, rather a "kindergarten for the children of all nationalities who live here, for German and foreign children, where the children can get to know each other, can play together and learn how to be together and live together with children of other nationalities and other languages."[89] Their movement gained momentum; less than two weeks later 60 Italian and West German women, along with 15 children, went to the mayor's office

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[87] MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, Folder: 478. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 2, no. 2 (March-April 1972). Note that the article made use of the term "*meridionali*" which implies that a large share of Italian migrants in Frankfurt came from southern Italy.

[88] MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, Folder: 478. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 3, no. 1 (January 1973).

[89] IfS, Collection: S3/A 10.210.

unannounced to demand funding for such an undertaking, in addition to better housing. In an

internal brief circulated to municipal officials, the press office identified that some of the Italian

immigrant women were known members of the UI, and that the mayor agreed to meet with a

representative committee the following Monday.[90] In this particular instance, women overcame

cultural differences and perceptions to coordinate a protest in the very public space of the

mayor's office. Their actions illustrate how common norms within a conflict led to shared

subversive performances that challenged socially established parameters of behavior, though still

couched in registers connected with femininity and particularly motherhood.

When migrants faced evictions and other housing dilemmas, the UI in Frankfurt also

offered legal aid, though the courts did not often rule in their favor. Referring to his experience

with the West German housing system, Giuseppe Zambon explained, "If a German tenant

receives an eviction, he often looks for another apartment and leaves…To evict a foreigner it is

sufficient to use the laughable excuse of a 'serious offense' against the landlord. In such a case, it

is unlikely that the foreigner will find witnesses in his favor."[91] Foreigners faced more instances

of evictions that were based on dubious grounds; those who braved the language barrier and an

unfamiliar legal system to file a grievance usually did not win their case. As mentioned in the

prior chapter, of the 140 cases of migrants' housing grievances that did eventually make it to

court in 1973, judges ruled in favor of the landlord rather than migrants in 90% of them.[92] For

example, a set of Italian migrant families in Wiesbaden – a city about a half hour away from

Frankfurt – approached the authorities about the rent prices they were paying: 295 DM for five

people living in an attic with 22 m^2 and 300 DM paid by Giuseppe Spampinato for a room of 15

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[90] IfS, Collection: PIA, S6b-38/1.274. "Dpa-Meldung vom 2. November 1972."

[91] Giuseppe Zambon, *Francoforte e' il nostro futuro. Emigrazione e lotta per la casa in Germania* (Milan: Nova Cultura Editrice, 1978), 56.

[92] amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf*, 17.

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m^2. Though an officer came and inspected the premises, declaring that there was a possible article within the code that could be used against the landlord, the UI pointed out that "previous court judgements have already established that this article could not apply to inflated rent prices."[93] On another occasion, a judge ruled against the Italian tenants in house 220 Eschersheimerlandstraße, ruling that "832 DM for 70 m^2 did not justify the proletarian tenants' rebellion."[94] Due to their lack of success in the courts, UI often organized anti-eviction brigades; in one instance in 1972, 200 participants successfully impeded one tenant's eviction.[95]

In sum, the UI transitioned into an international organization that aided marginalized tenants to challenge impoverished living circumstances, even more particularly for southern Italian migrants in the FRG. By coordinating with other tenants in similar circumstances, the UI was able to organize collective acts of self-reduction and even workers' strikes to protest inequitable housing conditions in cities plagued by housing shortages and exacerbated by urban renewal programs. In addition, they pressed for legal reforms that would better protect disadvantaged tenants from the fluctuations of the market and the whims of individual landlords. However, the UI is probably best known for its role in instigating and assisting rent strikes, as demonstrated below.

Performances: Rent Strikes

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, some migrants in Turin and Frankfurt began repeating a series of disobedient or subversive performances. By not sticking to the "script" and acting in ways different to the prior repetitions of paying rent, tenants on rent strike changed their role in the socially constructed and normalized relationship between tenant and landlord.

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[93] MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, Folder: 478. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* (September-October 1971).
[94] MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, Folder: 478. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 3, no. 3 (April-May 1973), 10.
[95] MP, Collection: Marco Pezzi, Folder: 478. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 2, no. 2 (March-April 1972).

More concretely, though the law and the landlord called on them to pay rent – and indeed this call was often written in terms of notices – migrants increasingly self-reduced rent to 10% of their salary or stopped paying altogether. In so doing, they engaged in contest and questioned the legitimacy of the demand, further amplifying debates around redevelopment, speculation, and discriminatory rental practices. Consequently, migrants began to act more as wronged (social and political) citizens rather than outsiders within their communities. Furthermore, their actions were received with greater resonance due to common motivations and grievances shared with their neighbors. Support from citizens' initiatives and the UI allowed migrants to ally with other disadvantaged residents in order to challenge the socioeconomic and political forces that constrained them to pay inflated rent prices for substandard spaces, or to live on geospatial margins.

If, as David Harvey argues, the "right to the city does not arise primarily out of various intellectual fashions and fads…[but] rises up from the streets, out from the neighborhoods, as a cry for help and sustenance by oppressed peoples in desperate times," then migrants' rent strikes symbolized a potent cry for help that simultaneously demanded a right to the new cities to which they now belonged, even if temporarily.[96] Rent strikes meant more than economic savings, rather a challenge to tenants' marginality: a condition further exacerbated if one were a migrant. By refusing to pay rent or paying a significantly reduced price, I view rent strikers as pushing back on their "residential differentiation" and subsequently the "reproduction of the social relations within capitalist society."[97] Where and how residents lived within local contexts, and how they challenged those living conditions (such as by going on rent strike) is crucial to understanding participatory citizenship as "cities are especially salient sites for analyzing…negotiations of

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[96] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012), xii.
[97] David Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 117.

citizenship, democracy, and…belonging."[98] Through rent strikes and allying themselves with local neighborhood organizations to counter the byproducts of a transitioning economic system and urban redevelopment, migrant tenants thus began making their own meanings of urban citizenship.

Rent strikes in northern Italy proved to be quite successful, leading to entire quarters paying reduced rent in certain cities, such as Milan and Turin. According to a contemporaneous scholar, Nina Ginatempo, the first large-scale strikes were initiated by the UI in January of 1968, with several hundred households in northern Italy participating. Two months later, 600 families were on rent strike; by January of 1970 that number increased to 10,000. One year later, it had doubled again to 20,000 until 35,000 units no longer paid rent by October of 1972.[99] When authorities tried to respond with forced evictions, protests erupted and hundreds of residents arrived on scene to prevent the evictions from occurring. Similarly, Frankfurt experienced the largest rent strike on record in 1971, with over 1200 migrants participating.[100] Though West Germany's courts were more effective in curbing migrant tenants' actions, rent strikes called some of those very legal systems into question – and if not the legal system, at very least the housing systems and practices that it was upholding on paper.

Rent Strikes in Italy

Rent strikes cannot be separated from redevelopment plans and gentrification processes that progressively pushed migrants and other low-income residents from city centers to the periphery. The connection between migration, urban renewal, and rent strikes is clearly present

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[98] James Holston, ed., *Cities and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), vii.
[99] Nella Ginatempo, *La Casa in Italia: Abitazioni e crisi del capitale* (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta, 1975), 163. That being said, Giuseppe Zambon's interview indicates that many individuals already independently went on rent strike before the UI's involvement in 1968.
[100] amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf*, 17.

in the conception and motivations for those involved in the housing movements of the time

period in question. One activist, Giudo Laganà, was part of the Catholic-based social movement

"Azione Cattolica" (Catholic Action) and became directly involved in efforts to preserve low-

income housing in Turin's city center, later supporting some of the housing occupations on the

urban periphery. Trained as an architect, he collaborated with a sociologist and political

economist to publish a study in the 1980s documenting the relationship between urban social

movements and urban renewal in Turin in the preceding decade. In their report, they asserted that

rent strikes were not simply economically motivated, but were also pursued as a strategy to

challenge speculation and real estate development:

> An interesting aspect of this period [1969-73] was the struggle for housing, mainly based
> in the inner-city, the so-called 'Centro Storico.' Here the most striking problem was
> housing deprivation where the newly arrived immigrants lived, often in intolerable
> conditions. The development of rent strikes was not simply a way of defending real
> wages, but was used as a weapon to force landlords to maintain and rehabilitate the oldest
> dwellings. Thus these struggles were not part of any attempt by residents to move out of
> the centre, but were aimed at the proper management of the central housing stock.[101]

Though their study may be shaped by their personal interest (and in Guido's case, involvement)

in contemporaneous events, their analysis highlighted the interconnectedness between local

action and space. Yes, rent strikes certainly served as commentary on wages and inflation, but

they also challenged larger socio-spatial relations between landlords, city planners, and those

who were at risk of being even further marginalized.

    The authors also specifically mention immigrants as being most affected and implied that

they participated in rent strikes. This characterization is corroborated by urban sociologist

Andreina Daolio, who after detailing the areas of Turin which saw the most urban protest

movements, described the social base as "homogeneous: generally the working class, of various

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[101] Laganà, Pianta, and Segre, "Urban social movements and urban restructuring in Turin," 236.

statuses, predominantly *meridionali*." Daolio also asserted that going on rent strike as a protest strategy "was born as a natural extension of the struggle in the factory as a united opposition to the logic of exploitation," reaffirming why neighborhood committees reached for it as a tool.[102] Especially in Italy, workers often participated in strikes on the factory floor; as such, it was not much of a stretch to apply the same tactic to advocate for better housing conditions. It also demonstrates the powerful cultural patterns and values that bled into society from Italy's strong labor movements, further blurring the line between work and other avenues of daily life.

To look at it from a different angle, many individuals involved in rent strikes felt that the traditional modes of union organizing in the workplace did not go far enough in obtaining access to what they viewed as social rights outside of the factories. This perspective dovetailed with the New Left's attempts to form and practice new forms of collective agency while challenging capitalism, though still bounded by a working-class identity. The UI's very first article on the front page of its inaugural newsletter (1971) made that point very clear when explaining "Why the Rent Strike?" The authors asserted, "by now everyone has understood that it is no longer enough to organize ourselves in workplaces to improve our living conditions, but that strikes in the factory must be accompanied by new and effective forms of struggle against the expensive cost of living and high rents." Acknowledging that individual families had already pursued rent strikes as a course of action, the UI offered to organize more prolific collective action to impose two principles: 1) "the home is a right;" and 2) "rent must be proportional to one's salary, the size of one's family, and the features of the house and in any case (at least for an average home), must never exceed 10% of the household's salary."[103] In the minds of those who viewed rent

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[102] Daolio, *Le lotte per la casa in italia*, 20. Emphasis added.
[103] ISEC, Collection Politico e Sociale, Folder: 6, Envelope: 36. *Il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 1, no. 1 (May – June 1971), 1, 8.

strike as a viable course of action, it was not enough to simply press for higher wages at one's workplace, or to address related living conditions through the labor unions. Instead, they turned to more direct action by withholding physical monetary payments instead of theoretical promises at bargaining tables.

Many of the neighborhoods whose had high numbers of residents on rent strike correlated with areas dense in immigrant populations. Already in 1969, the neighborhood committees of Nichelino, Grugliasco, and inhabitants near via Taranto (see Figure 1.2) declared a rent strike from January until June.[104] Soon thereafter, tenants in the downtown area joined, emphasizing the number of immigrants living within their district. In one flyer outlining the housing conditions in their area and encouraging readers to go on rent strike, participants warned that landlords were turning to "false" or "illegal" evictions in an attempt to remove tenants on strike.[105] The landlord of house 34 in via Mazzini also employed this tactic, successfully evicting a few of the building's tenants. Those who remained claimed they had been fighting for months to get the owner to remodel their apartments as they "had been left to rot for years." They distributed a flyer about their efforts, contending, "Our battle is the struggle of all proletarians who want to live in decent housing and who fight for the right to housing." Once again, the residents invoked the language of rights, as steeped in socialism, to communicate that affordable and structurally sound housing is something they perceive as a social entitlement.

Unlike a few of the inhabitants in via Mazzini, other residents did successfully ward off eviction. In a neighborhood adjacent to some of Fiat's factories, a leaflet distributed by "workers, students and the tenants' committee of Nichelino" in 1969 encouraged local residents to support

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[104] Adreina Daolio, "Le lotte urbane per la casa" in Francesco Indovino, ed., *Lo spreco edilizio* (Venice: Marsilio, 1972), 206.
[105] Polo '900, Collection: Vera Nocentini, Subcollection: Faldone, Folder: BXII F. 119/E.

their occupation of the municipal offices by going on rent strike and protesting rising prices of daily living without corresponding wage increases. To garner support, the authors communicated "The workers who work at Fiat and in the factories of Nichelino are using the occupied town hall to organize the struggle in the factory for higher salaries, and resistance to rent increases and evictions in our apartment buildings. An eviction that was to be carried out on the 20th has been blocked."[106] Through group efforts, often organized by the UI and other groups, some families managed to remain in their homes, at least giving them more time to find alternative living spaces if not the possibility of staying indefinitely.

However, not all inhabitants believed that going on strike was the correct way to accomplish some of these goals in the 1960s and 1970s, even if they were in favor of the end result. In a somewhat satirical newsletter, the far-left organization *Lotta Continua* addressed some of these concerns. In an article entitled "We will no longer pay rent and heating," the authors acknowledged, "Some have said to us, 'It's not decent to not pay rent.' But is it decent that a worker must put in eight hours and then work overtime or a second job to survive and pay the bills?" The article continued, "Others have observed, 'It is an illegal act.' In this society the only thing legal is what is convenient to those in charge."[107] In their interpretation, the action of going on rent strike was clearly an action against those in power.

Yet not all of "those in charge" had the means to accommodate what some strikers demanded. In a letter to Diego Novelli, mayor of Turin, one landlady outlined her predicament. Her husband had owned a small mechanical shop, and since he could not invest in a retirement plan, he bought four apartments with the hope that rent would cover their costs of living. After he passed, his wife struggled with her small income. She attempted to raise the rent prices, but

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[106] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Subcollection: Luigi Bobbio, Document 011163.
[107] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Subcollection: Luigi Bobbio. *Lotta Continua,* October 21, 1969.

her tenants refused. She asked the mayor to intervene and find some way to increase the rents slightly, as she was living in a state of discomfort. She related, "I don't go hungry, but almost."[108]

In contrast to landowners such as the woman above, a large number of rent grievances were directed toward public housing entities, particularly the IACP. In May of 1970, a group of residents in via Sansovino in Turin held a meeting to decide on whether they, too, would go on rent strike. Contained within a questionnaire circulated to the households was information that 600 families in another district of Turin had decided to reduce their rent by 30%. The questionnaire then posed three questions: "Are you in agreement with the rent reduction? Are you in agreement to only pay 8, 10, or 12 thousand lire a month, including utilities? Are you willing to come to another meeting on May 31 at 10am?"[109] The events sparking this neighborhood discussion was a rent increase to 28, 30, and 34 thousand lire, depending on the size of one's apartment, even though the houses were owned and managed by public housing.[110] The neighborhood committee sent a letter to the IACP with their proposed rates on June 16, 1970.

What ensued was a month-long struggle which played out in the press. In one of their flyers in November, tenants in via Sansovino countered what they perceived as attacks in the local paper – namely that 240 of the families had never paid rent, that many families earned over 300 thousand lire a month, and that far-left groups such as *Lotta Continua* had "infiltrated" their neighborhood and started the movement.[111] In their response, they claimed they had always paid rent at a 40% reduction and had bankers' receipts to prove it, and that they would never have

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[108] Piero Giodanino, *Diego Novelli: Lettere al Sindaco* (Turin: Societa' editrice internazionale, 1979), 92.
[109] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, Document 010453.
[110] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, Document 010444.
[111] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, Document 010471.

qualified for public housing if their earnings were as high as the IACP claimed. The flyer also

posited, "The struggle of Via Sansovino has come about due to a concentrated internal

organization of the tenants…we do not have nor wish to have anything to do with *Lotta*

Continua."[112] They insisted that the initiative came from themselves alone, not the intervention

of an outside organization. The following day the mayor agreed to organize a meeting between

tenant representatives and the president of the IACP with a city assessor present. When IACP

president Dezani failed to show, the residents went on a complete rent strike for the months of

January, February, and March the following year. The tenants were finally guaranteed new

apartments in April, as reported by *La Stampa* in its article "A Roof for Every Citizen."[113]

Rent Strikes in Frankfurt

In the summer of 1971, Italian migrant tenants joined with their Yugoslavian and Turkish

neighbors to initiate the first rent strike in house 20 of Ulmenstraße in Frankfurt (see Figure 3.4).

In a press conference, they declared their intentions to only pay 10% of their salary on rent.

According to sociologist Serhat Karakayali, the rent strikes in northern Italy had a direct

influence on Italian migrants' actions; he even goes so far as to claim that some of the Italian

migrant community in Frankfurt "had already experienced rent strikes in Italy."[114] Luigi's

experience serves as evidence to support his assertion. Previously, Luigi lived in Milan in public

housing. He and others in the Quarto Oggiaro neighborhood (one of the first and most prolific

areas of rent strikes on the outskirts of Milan) refused to pay rent for a number of years, saving

him 30,000 lire a month. After he found work as a locksmith in Frankfurt, his landlord asked for

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[112] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Subcollection: Guido Piraccini, Document 010471.

[113] "Un tetto decoroso per ogni cittadino," *La Stampa,* January 17, 1970. Note the term "citizen."

[114] Serhat Karakayali, "*Lotta Continua* in Frankfurt, *Türken-Terror* in Köln: Migrantische Kämpfe in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik," *grundnisse: zeitschrift für linke theorie & debatte*, accessed December 8, 2020, http://www.grundrisse.net/grundrisse14/14serhat_karakayali.htm.

400 DM for his two-room apartment, or the equivalent of 68,000 lire, more than double his rent in Milan. Instead of paying, he called Giuseppe Zambon of the Unione Inquilini in August of 1971.[115]

Though monetary need was certainly a motivating factor, Luigi's and his neighbors' rent strike in Ulmenstraße also served to push back on discrimination, whether consciously done or not. When giving comments to the *Frankfurter Rundschau* about the rent strike, their landlord said, "I say it quite frankly, I say it freely: For me these foreign workers are just pigs!" Other opponents of migrants' tactic expressed their opposition in a slightly less dehumanizing way. For instance, Hans Michen, a representative from the German Federation of Trade Unions, related, "If foreigners want to live in decent apartments, they have to pay as high of rents that Germans do – and that's an average of 25% of one's salary."[116] In contrast to the Italian context, which borrowed heavily from labor activism in the factories, West German trade unions not only did not lend support, but at times openly opposed collective actions of the working class. Instead of widespread class solidarity with individuals of similar socioeconomic circumstances, migrants in Frankfurt experienced an even greater degree of marginalization then *meridionali* in Turin.

Those who did support their efforts were thus more diverse in background – they tended to be motivated religiously (such as the pastors issuing statements in Westend) or politically (*Spontis* or *Jusos*), and came from other socioeconomic classes. For instance, in addition to the UI, the director of the catholic-based *Caritas* welfare institution responded positively to the Ulmenstraße rent strike. In contrast to collective action, the *Caritas* mainly involved itself by helping individuals, such as lending monetary or other resources, or using a small number of

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[115] Norbert Leppert, "Giuseppe Zambon aus Italien will mit ausländischen Gastarbeitern in Frankfurt gegen Mietwucher kämpfen," *FR*, August 30, 1971.
[116] Norbert Leppert, "Giuseppe Zambon aus Italien will mit ausländischen Gastarbeitern in Frankfurt gegen Mietwucher kämpfen," *FR*, August 30, 1971

social workers to find legal resolution when tenants paid astronomical sums. Still, the organization viewed solidarity among diverse migrants as beneficial, especially if it led to lower rents.[117]

A few months after announcing that they were initiating a rent strike, the tenants of Ulmenstraße 20 were joined by other migrant residents in house 16 of Altkönigstraße (see Figure 3.4). In reporting the situation of Altkönigstraße in one of their newsletters, *UI* editors contrasted promised living conditions with the "reality" of what happened: "In spite of the fact that the water seeped everywhere, the rats, a toilet for 20 people, no heating; the landlord issued an eviction notice. The speculator then bricked up the doors of the rooms which were empty." The article implied that the landlord was preparing the building for demolition and attempting to force out the current occupants in order to hasten his project. In response, the inhabitants declared a rent reduction to 10% of their salaries and re-opened the closed rooms, inciting the landlord to call the police. At the time of printing, the occupants still apparently had the upper hand. The UI reported that tenants in both Ulmenstraße and Altkönigstraße had successfully resisted eviction, were still on strike and encouraged others to join in the UI's efforts.[118] Indeed, they would continue their rent strike for another two years.[119]

Though migrants of other nationalities joined Italian migrants in rent strikes, the UI and Italian strikers were so closely associated with housing activism in Frankfurt that the Italian word "Basta!" or "Enough!" soon became used throughout the city as a slogan for reducing rent or going on rent strike. One German-language flyer of an unknown date addressed to "workers of all nationalities" and distributed in the Heddernheim neighborhood on the north-west fringes of

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[117] Norbert Leppert, "Giuseppe Zambon aus Italien will mit ausländischen Gastarbeitern in Frankfurt gegen Mietwucher kämpfen," *FR*, August 30, 1971
[118] FF, Collection: Unione Inquilini, *il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 1, no. 3 (September-October 1971)
[119] "Francoforte," *il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 3, no. 3, (April – May 1973), 10.

the city professed, "In Frankfurt a few hundred families have said BASTA (now we've had

enough!) to exploitation and have started fighting. More than three hundred families are on

RENT STRIKE![120] By 1973, a collaborative publication produced by students and self-

identifying activists maintained that "1,000 foreign comrades and colleagues" had taken part in

rent strikes in the preceding year and a half.[121] A more contemporary activist-researcher

estimated that number to reach as high as 1500, asserting that migrant participation in housing

activism peaked in the 1970s at a rate that was not to be repeated.[122]
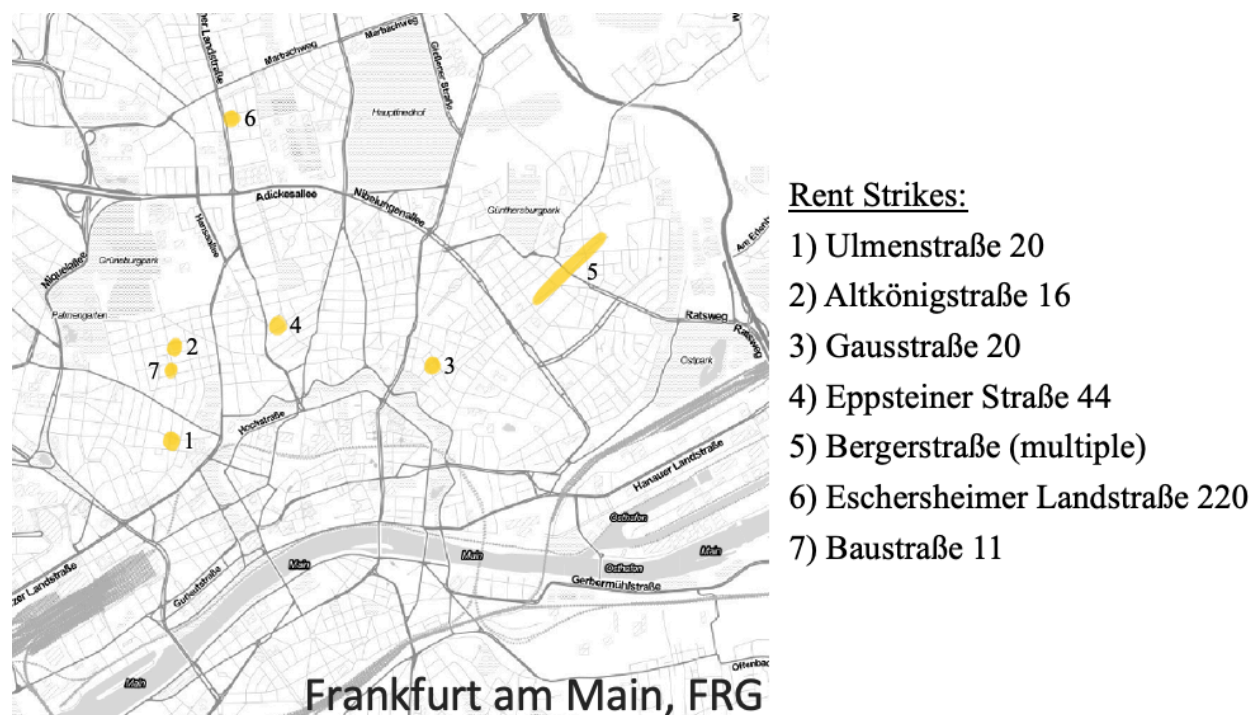
Figure 3.4 Map of Selected Rent Strikes in Frankfurt[123]

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[120] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext, File: V 183/14, "Raus mit den Nazi Bonzen aus Heddernheim!!!"

[121] Dokumentation des Häuserrates und des Asta der Universität Frankfurt, *Kettenhofweg 51. Wohnungskämpfe in Frankfurt* (Frankfurt/M, 1973), 4.

[122] amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf*, 207-208.

[123] Map created by author using QGIS open software, Apple Markup, and Microsoft Office.

Small victories in locations such as Ulmenstraße and Altkönigstraße aside, the consequences for going on rent strike ranged from the shutting off of utilities, to the threat of eviction, to losing one's job, to the possibility of deportation. The action taken by one landlord who tried to resolve his situation outside of the courts illustrates migrants' precarious position. On March 9, 1974 he first wrote a letter in which he acknowledged that some of his occupants had called the UI. He posited that he "forced" no one to live in his building, and that those who had entered into alliance with the union should view his letter as a notice of a contract cancellation.[124] One year later, his tone became even more caustic to his renters in Gausstraße 20 (see Figure 3.4). Referring to the UI he declared, "You have been ill advised. With the prices you are paying, I cannot and will not pay utilities. In the next little while, water and light will no longer be available." He concluded with this scathing remark that could be perceived as a threat: "The families who live in a room with more than three people will have difficulties. So you have won nothing, rather you will lose your apartments" – demonstrating his willingness to evict the tenants.[125]

The situation in Eppsteiner Straße 44 (see Figure 3.4) demonstrated other negative outcomes for migrant residents who tried to resist. The new owner of the building temporarily leased the 33 rooms to foreign families, assigning one family per room. He charged 300 DM per unit, collecting almost 10,000 DM each month while awaiting demolition permits. There were only four toilets available for the 33 families, which is one of the many reasons they initiated a rent strike. One Italian migrant who worked as a postal worker was warned that if he continued to participate, he would "lose his job and possibly be deported."[126] When one of the tenants of an

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[124] Jürgen Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt: die Zerstörung einer Stadt* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1975), 72.
[125] Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt,* 72.
[126] Zambon, *Francoforte e' il nostro futuro*, 37.

unspecified nationality was taken to court by the proprietor, he received a letter from the Immigration Office inviting him to leave the Federal Republic because "indecent housing conditions compromise German interests," even though the conditions of the premises were not his fault.[127] It was the UI who often supported foreigners such as these inhabitants, providing free representation in court.

On occasion, inhabitants responded to threats with their own form of verbal belligerency, such as hearkening to the recent past. In a flyer with blocked letters proclaiming "Out with the Nazi Bigwigs from Heddernheim!" the composers recounted the story of a group of families who went on rent strike rather than paying 150-180DM for "tiny, cold and dilapidated rooms." The text related the landlord's reaction in strongly-worded prose, claiming, "Then the landlord HECHLER, who is a registered member of the NPD (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland, or National Democratic Party), as a good Nazi, accompanied by a killing squad…threatened the foreign workers with pistols and machine guns."[128] The flyer's reference to Hechler's party affiliation, and associating him with Nazism and killing squads, was an exaggeration meant to elicit a powerful emotional response to passers-by at a time when Frankfurters were concerned about the nationalist NPD's growing political support. Emerging as the party with the closest ties to the Nazi party in 1964 and largely joined by former National Socialists, many residents and activists feared that a shift toward the NPD meant a backward slide towards authoritarianism that it represented.[129] Comparing Hechler's efforts at intimidation to a killing squad embodied an attempt to tap into continuing debates on questions of guilt and culpability, establishing a binary

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[127] Zambon, *Francoforte e' il nostro futuro*, 37.

[128] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext, File: V 183/14.

[129] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Twentieth-Century Germany*, translated by Ben Fowkes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 695.

between landowners on the one hand, and renters or victims on the other by alluding to the killing of ethnic others by the Nazis. Hechler was sentenced in court and levied a monetary fine.

Migrant rent strikers did at times receive widespread backing from their West German neighbors beyond formal organizations. This type of support is perhaps most evident in the case of Italian tenants of Bergerstraße northeast of the city (see Figure 3.4). Previously, a room cost 50 DM for tenants, generally native-born Frankfurters to rent. When the property was sold, "the new tenants, foreign workers, paid 160 to 240 DM for a room" even though "plaster was falling off the walls of the house…several rooms were without heating," and "water seeped through the ceiling from the toilet."[130] The Italian tenants went on rent strike, and then organized a street festival for them to discuss their decision with other community members and passers-by. In a flyer after the festival, the tenants claimed that two hundred police officers arrived to shut down the event, even though the meeting had been authorized "by the police itself."[131] In a separate leaflet, residents claimed that more than 6000 citizens had signed a petition against their eviction, thus signaling a number of individuals who supported their response to their landlords' inflated rent prices and threat of legal action.[132]

The inhabitants of Bergerstraße were not the only ones to receive public support. In March of 1972, Italian families renting apartments in Eschersheimer Landstraße 220 went on rent strike, joining 21 other Italian and Yugoslav families who had already gone on rent strike in Baustraße 11 at the end of the previous year (see Figure 3.4). Inhabitants in Eschersheimer Landstraße had received letters four months prior trying to increase their rent by 80 DM because the tenants apparently consumed too much gas and oil. This increase would equate to some

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[130] Jürgen Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt*, 71.
[131] IfS, Collection: 1973: Hausbesetzungen. S3/A 11.084.
[132] IfS, Collection: 1973: Hausbesetzungen. S3/A 11.084.

foreign families paying over 900 DM for four rooms, though German tenants in the same building paid much less. In the same letter, the landlord – Mr. Mariunas – supposedly wrote, "I have nothing against guest workers, but they must realize that the house suffers greatly if the tenants do not pay attention to the interests of the homeowner. This is my last letter to tenants, and I ask you to show me respect."[133] Mutual respect was one of many things lacking in the house; when one of the Italian renters, Francesio Facella, complained to Mr. Mariunas about bugs in the apartments, Mr. Mariunas responded, "You brought them with you."[134] The migrants were not joined by their German counterparts in the rent strike, and the landlord complained that the red banners hanging from windows proclaiming, "10% of salary for rent. Stop exorbitant rents. No more evictions" hurt both his reputation and that of his German tenants.[135]

When Mr. Mariunas threatened eviction, the UI helped the tenants organize a street demonstration for the weekend of April 16, 1972. Perhaps unexpectedly, 1200 people participated in this "first ever demonstration organized by migrants."[136] Protesters also tore down the scaffolding that was erected in preparation of demolition in front of Baustraße 11. One of the Italians rallied demonstrators in both Italian and German, calling out, "Fight hard without fear!"[137] This demonstration, coupled with the rapport the UI had established with Frankfurt city administrators, prevented actual eviction for an entire year. From an article printed in *FR* on March 28, 1973, the city froze the eviction for an additional three months while the Office for Housing continued to work with the UI to find a solution for the tenants once the courts deemed the rents "excessive." Not only did the Office for Housing seek compensation for families, but

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[133] "Zehn Prozent, nicht mehr," *Konkret* nr. 12, May 31, 1972.
[134] "Zehn Prozent, nicht mehr," *Konkret* nr. 12, May 31, 1972.
[135] "Zehn Prozent, nicht mehr," *Konkret* nr. 12, May 31, 1972.
[136] amantine, *Gender und Häuserkampf*, 17.
[137] "Demonstrazionszug am Wochenende," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), April 17, 1972.

the director Herr Zeyen even "agreed that the Italian families should be assigned social housing, if possible."[138] Though it took over a year for them to finally be realized, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* reported that "the city council has procured social housing for all Italian families in this house."[139] One of the beneficiaries was Mario Polverino – the single father whose daughter refused to hand the money over to Mrs. Schmidt.[140]

Though the number of rent strikes in Frankfurt (roughly 1500) may appear small, the collective action was perhaps even more symbolic in the FRG as Italian migrants took even greater risks to do so. For "guest workers," going on rent strike meant exercising a right to city, even if they were not formal West German citizens. As Raika Espahangizi explains, "It was the first time that migrant families made forceful use of their rights, made direct demands towards the municipality…and therefore acted as citizens of the city, who had a right to normal housing."[141] Through repeated performances of subversion in both contexts, particularly by not paying rent, migrants challenged boundaries of physical and social inclusion, forcefully asserting a claim to rights that they viewed as being denied them. And they were heard.

Conclusion

In both cities, local initiatives emerged that attempted to counter the negative effects of urban renewal and speculation. Neighborhood committees and organizations such as the AGW served as intermediaries between inhabitants and economic, social, and political apparatuses once tenants felt that other organizations – such as formal political parties or labor unions – did not represent their interests when it came to their quotidian needs. For migrants, citizens'

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[138] Marlies Nehrstede, "Wieder eingewiesen, aber nur bis Mai," *FR*, a 28, 1973.
[139] "Schallplatte über den Wohnungskampf," *FR*, April 16, 1973.
[140] "Zehn Prozent, nicht mehr," *Konkret* nr. 12, May 31, 1972.
[141] Raika Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations: Frankfurt in the 1960s and 1970s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (2014): 202-203.

initiatives created opportunities for alliance and support with individuals tapped into local concerns. Through parallel objectives, some migrant tenants engaged in practices that reduced or eliminated their rent, called attention to their substandard living conditions, and had the potential to lead to legal redress on rare occasion. Moreover, local community initiatives were often better received in the public in contrast to more politicized extraparliamentary organizations whom officials and residents often viewed as threatening in an urban environments that had experienced a large amount of street conflict in previous years. Indeed, some migrants intentionally distanced themselves from far-left political groups, as manifest by the Sansovino neighborhood committee and as will be discussed in the context of housing occupations.

For migrants who affiliated themselves with local opposition actions, their demands were often not only about shelter, though that was indeed a concern. As Judith Butler explains, "when bodies gather as they do to express their indignation and to enact their plural existence in public space, they are also making broader demands: they are demanding to be recognized, to be valued, they are exercising a right to appear, to exercise freedom, and they are demanding a livable life."[142] When migrants and other individuals gathered together to form human brigades to prevent eviction, when they lined up in marches in support of self-reduction and rent strikes, and when they physically occupied their living quarters after having stopped paying rent, they expressed indignation and demanded to be recognized and valued. In so doing, they refused to perpetuate their differentiation as migrants, as low-income, as workers, and/or as tenants undeserving of equitable prices and decent conditions. In conjunction with other strategies pursued by neighborhood committees and initiatives, their actions culminated in an uneven reevaluation of city redevelopment plans, rental practices, and the position of migrants in the

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[142] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 26.

social pecking order. As Raika Espahangizi highlighted, migrants "acted as citizens of the city, who had a right to normal housing," challenging socially and culturally fabricated ideas that it was "normal" for migrants to live substandard living spaces, thereby asserting a right to the city.[143]

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[143] Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations," 203.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reformulating Urban Citizenship: Housing Occupations in Frankfurt am Main

In 1972, female Italian immigrants who were actively taking part in either illegal housing occupations or rent strikes in Frankfurt am Main papered the Westend neighborhood with a flyer addressed to "German Women, Colleagues, and Neighbors." Their purpose was to illustrate to West German women, or "working women like us," why they went to such lengths in pushing the bounds of the law in order to provide a living space for their families. They explained:

> We do not want to just work here like crazy; we have the right to live decently like all human beings. However, one cannot live decently if one has to pay four to five hundred marks (DM) for a damp room from the meager wages we earn. We need clean, proper housing – not the hovels they lease to us foreigners. We need enough space to be able to live together with the whole family…[rather than being] crammed into one or two tiny rooms.[1]

The female immigrants who claimed to have authored the communication positioned themselves in relation to West German women who could relate to their gendered and socioeconomic status, justifying their collective action in familiar registers of both work and family. Furthermore, they couched their claims in terms of universality; they drew a connection between the right to "live decently" and an identity as "human beings." The association between rights and a universalized conception of existence communicates that the authors perceived housing as a right unbounded by legislative or jurisdictional lines, prefiguring how the language of human rights would become more resonant in subsequent years as various groups used it to focus on specific claims of injustice.

This chapter focuses on housing occupations as an "an embodied form of calling into question the inchoate and powerful dimensions of reigning notions of the political."[2] Not only do

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[1] IfS, Collection: Ortsgeschichte. 1972: Hausbesetzungen, File: S3/A 10.210.
[2] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2015), 11.

I pay attention to the claims vocalized (or written) by occupiers, I take inspiration from Judith

Butler's conceptions of collective action to view the very act of occupying as bodies "speaking

politically" – thus posing their challenges in corporeal terms rather than strictly vocal or written

language.[3] By physically taking over apartments, or remaining in their current living situation

without paying rent, migrant participants joined with other housing occupiers to question the

economic and sociopolitical forces that created and/or contributed to the city's housing crisis. I

also argue that due to migrants' marginalized position within West Germany society, their

actions represented opposition to even more layers of disadvantage they faced as social and

cultural outsiders as they pushed back on the determinants producing their precarity, i.e.

redevelopment, the housing market's inability to keep up with the influx of workers, and

discrimination based on their position as immigrants.

The first section of this chapter examines the first and one of the most prominent housing

occupations in Frankfurt in house 47 on Eppsteiner Straße, in which both Italian migrants and

West Germans took part, highlighting internal dynamics. Two successive subsections then turn

to evaluate reception within the larger community, including occupiers' efforts to portray

themselves as the right kind of neighbor who presumably had rights to housing unthreatened by

speculative practices. The second overarching section consists of a deeper examination of the

response of city officials and internal conflict within the SPD leadership, outlining how two

different city administrations began to crack down on subsequent occupations that they viewed

as overly politicized. The third section explores how and why Italian migrants began to occupy

independently, portraying and even perceiving their claims as apolitical and less threatening as a

result of the city officials' "hard line," as manifest by the actions of Italian migrants living in

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[3] Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," (2011), accessed February 10, 2021,
https://transversal.at/transversal/1011/butler/en.

Bettinastraße. Finally, the chapter concludes with an evaluation of the small reforms in policy and legislation enacted by government representatives to uncover the uneven ways in which migrants' claims were recognized.

The First Occupation: Eppsteiner Straße 47

In 1970, a group of residents already residing within house 47 of Eppsteiner Straße (see Figure 4.3) decided to remain in their building rather than relinquish their apartments so the landlord could tear it down; they were soon joined by others and established the premises as "besetzt," or "occupied." By physically using their bodies to remain in a space and then employing various tactics to translate their occupation into a legible text about rights, occupiers contested two related strands of economic and political legitimacy: 1) the economic prerogative of the landlord in charging high amounts of rent, particularly for migrants, and the practice of purposely allowing the building to deteriorate in order to renovate at a profit; and 2) the political decision-making processes of state actors in determining the parameters of social services and urban renewal. Though the occupying inhabitants often presented a united front when facing the public, internal tensions nonetheless illustrate the challenges of collective action, particularly when embodied forms of resistance require those with different social, cultural, and political statuses to live within the same spaces.

In early 1970, residents in Eppsteiner Straße 47 received notice that their landlord wished to empty the apartments in anticipation of its demolition and eventual redevelopment, regardless of the fact that they had a year-long contract. According to the recollection of one of the Germans who had moved into house 47 on Eppsteiner Straße in the fall of 1969, Til Schulz, he and a few other students were the only West Germans who lived in the house, whereas "Turks

and Italians lived in all the other flats."[4] When the tenants received instruction from the landlord to clear out, Schulz recounted that "over half of the tenants, almost all Turks, were put out on the streets."[5] Here the language of "put out on the streets" may be misleading – migrants often were not offered official rental contracts if a landlord was waiting on demolition permits; even if they were offered a contract, many did not find it worth disputing eviction notices within the legal system when many viewed their stay in Frankfurt to be temporary. As a result, it is likely that many simply chose to find another living situation. After the initial vacancies, five of the ten apartments stood open and empty, leaving Schulz, his roommates, and a handful of Italian families in the building. To encourage the stragglers to leave, the owner of Eppsteiner Straße apparently sent in people who "damaged pipes and pissed on the floor; toilets were smashed and sinks torn out or damaged," though Schulz admits that "whether these damages were carried out on behalf of the owner [could not] be proved."[6]

Based on internal conversations within the building, combined with the support of *Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend* (AGW), those left in the house initiated an occupation; they would only pay 10% of their wages in rent, take over the house for renovation, and prevent eviction and demolition. Moreover, one of the Italian tenants called the *Unione Inquilini* (UI) for help, which agreed to lend personnel and resources to the cause.[7] As a result, the residents who stayed on were joined by other occupants, such as Lelle Franz, an AGW member and single mom who moved in with her children, and Giuseppe Zambon, one of UI's leading organizers. In an interview in March of 2015, Franz recalled one Italian family already living on her same floor

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[4] Til Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße [sic] 47. Wohnungskampf, Hausbesetzung, Wohnkollektiv" in Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Karl Markus Michel, eds., *Kursbuch 27* (Berlin: Kursbuch/Wagenbuch, 1972), 86-87.
[5] Til Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße," 86-87.
[6] Til Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße," 86-87.
[7] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author in Frankfurt/M on June 20, 2018.

when they transferred homes and described AGW's attempts to recruit more participants by relating to those potentially interested that "There is a beautiful house with several empty apartments, if you are willing to risk just going in illegally." It is worth noting her use of the term "illegal," underscoring that the occupiers did violate established trespassing laws as they acted without the permission of the property owner, though city authorities would debate the exact nature of trespassing in ensuing months. Lelle further recollected the apparent novelty of the occupation, at least in the West German context, recalling many years later that Eppsteiner Straße "was a crazy story. There was no example, there were no prior occupations, nothing, we were the first."[8] Along with the assistance of both the AGW and UI, Eppsteiner Straße 47 was officially occupied on September 19, 1970.

The unknown outcome of the occupation and the risk that it entailed dissuaded several potential occupiers, mainly because the occupation could possibly interfere with their residency permits or employment. The *Frankfurter Rundschau* (*FR*) reported that one Spanish family considered moving in from where they lived all together in a single room but feared "being expelled from the Federal Republic." Even if deportation was not a factor, other native-born Germans had reservations. One German family with six children feared repercussions from employers should they occupy. This is not to say that all potential tenants decided against it; the same article reported that an Italian family would "now likely move in, evidently not afraid of the risk."[9] It may be that the support of the UI helped sway their decision, or their prior living situation was truly so untenable that they decided that the unknown outcome was worth obtaining improved living quarters, even if temporarily. A separate article about the occupation

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[8] Barbara Sichtermann and Kai Sichtermann, *Das ist unser Haus: Eine Geschichte der Hausbesetzung* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2017), 118.
[9] "Viele Sympathie-Beweise für Haus-Besetzung," *Frankfurter Rundschau* (FR), September 22, 1970.

in the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* (FNP) related that a total of six "foreign" families decided to shoulder the risk and take part in the occupation, along with Giuseppe Zambon, Lelle Franz's family and a handful of individual students (including Til Schulz).[10]

Just after the house was declared occupied, the property owners Mr. and Mrs. Preissler, a Jewish couple around 40-50 years of age, asked to meet with a delegation of tenants. As reported by Zambon, Mr. and Mrs. Preissler offered a bottle of Coca-Cola as the delegates sat down to discuss the events. According to Zambon's recollection, the delegation acknowledged the couple's kindness but related that due to the "fault of the Germans," they were "sorry to have to continue" in their endeavor.[11] Here Zambon's implication of fault was likely much broader, taking in urban renewal plans and widescale speculation. When certain media outlets accused the occupants of anti-Semitism, the tenants adamantly disagreed. Mr. and Mrs. Preissler were not at the heart of occupants' actions. Instead, the occupiers were pushing back against the lack of housing and marginalization based on income, nationality, and perceived differences in culture – all larger issues in the community not limited to one particular building. Mr. and Mrs. Preissler just happened to own this particular house. As reported by the press, the couple did not take too warmly to their refusal to leave. In a statement Simon Preissler sent to the *FR*, he disclosed, "I do not know exactly what legal means are available to me. But of course I'll use them all."[12]

Internal Occupation Dynamics

Regardless of outside pressure and uncertainty about what might happen to their occupation, life went on within house 47. Influenced by the 1968 protest movements' efforts to change society and politics at a relational level, the tenants attempted to implement various

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[10] Peter Alles, "Haus Eppsteiner Straße 47 wurde vom Kollektiv wieder bewohnbar gemacht," *Frankfurter Neue Presse* (FNP), October 7, 1970.
[11] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author at his publishing house in Frankfurt on June 20, 2018.
[12] "Arbeiter und Studenten," *FR*, September 21, 1970.

forms of grassroots democracy, or a participatory organization when dealing with quotidian concerns.[13] As a result, the occupiers held plenary sessions every other day. Participants attempted to resolve problems, divide the workload, and establish and enforce rules. In many ways, this structure theoretically gave migrant occupiers both a voice and representation that they often lacked outside of the house. The desired result was that "everything had to be talked about and accepted by all" in terms of renovating and maintaining the house while keeping peace between occupiers.[14] For example, everyone older than 15 years of age had a right to vote, and a 2/3rds majority was required to enact any decision. Furthermore, no one could be excluded from the plenary councils, only suspended "in case of gross violations of statute of [their] duties as a delegate." However, grassroots democracy was far simpler on paper than implementing it within an occupied house. Schulz lamented that the statutes outlined above, though discussed, were never actually agreed upon.[15] Lelle Franz concurred in her interview, stating, "We tried for two years to establish house rules. We had to table them again and again."[16]

Relationships between occupiers soon became quite strained due to power dynamics and dissimilar end goals. Some tensions surfaced around interpersonal relationships within the occupied building. Writing from a perspective of a West German student, Til Schulz described a disagreement that arose between two Italian families once they had established that everyone would pay 10% of their salary for rent to the landlord as a symbolic token of their perceived

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[13] For a discussion of 1968 protesters and their efforts to apply their ideals to the "every day," see chapter four of "Act III" in Nina Verheyen, *Diskussionslust: Eine Kulturgeschichte des "besseren Arguments" in Westdeutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 244-312. See also Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall, eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Timothy Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962-1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, eds., *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[14] Sichtermann, *Das ist Unser Haus,* 26-27.
[15] Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße 47," 94-95.
[16] Sichtermann, *Das ist Unser Haus*, 118-119.

legitimacy. The Francesco family earned more than the Ercoli family; therefore, according to the house agreement, the Francesco family would mathematically pay more for rent. However, they had fewer children and lived in a smaller apartment. The head of the Francesco family complained that he should not pay more for a smaller home, adding that he practiced "sexual abstinence" whereas the Ercoli family "produced children as they pleased." Even within the occupied building, cultural tensions manifested; in this instance, Mr. Francesco invoked the very stereotypes of southern Italians that some landlords used to reject Italian migrant applicants. He also refused to contribute funds for the running of the day care established on the first floor, as his children were already too old.[17] Although Schulz and many of the West German participants desired to establish a more communal form of living that ran counter to dominant social trends, Mr. Francesco's comments illustrated that privacy and the needs of the nuclear family remained a priority for some of the tenants.

Indeed, student Til Schulz reflected that not only did interpersonal differences surface, but ultimately diverging goals for many migrant participants and self-identifying activists came to the fore. For instance, many migrant families seemed to be more focused on material needs, whereas other occupiers viewed housing occupations as a larger tool in instigating sociopolitical changes to traditional single-family privatized living. Schulz and others thought the occupation could provide an opportunity to establish a more communal form of living in line with the trends enacted by many individuals associated with the 1968 protests and ensuing movements. In the latter 1960s, some activists criticized the nuclear family for its connection to private property, its "isolation from the social outside world," and the authoritarian and/or patriarchal structures of

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[17] Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße 47," 93-94.

organization enacted within a family.[18] However, it seemed that those who occupied functioned within a variety of frameworks and understandings about the nature and desired outcomes of their actions. Schulz later admitted that although migrant families participated in the occupation willingly, a vision of collective living "basically [stemmed from] just the squatters, the intellectuals, the hippies, the students; we occupied with the families, with their consent, but we overruled them with the collective idea."[19] A single mom who occupied while she was pregnant and then raised her son while squatting in Frankfurt, Erna Müller, agreed, relating that some of the migrant occupiers she associated with feared that "families would be dissolved" by participating in forms of living that prioritized the community over nuclear family units. Müller further explained that occupations which privileged "houses with no separate rooms, where everyone slept together" differed from those in which migrants took part because "for the houses that were occupied by migrants, that was not at all the point, in that families lived together."[20]

Giuseppe Zambon of the UI also described dissimilarities in mentality between Italian occupiers whose claims centered on challenging precarious living conditions and some of their West German counterparts who wished for larger shifts in social and political patterns. In an interview with me at his bookshop in Frankfurt, he related that he himself had lived in Eppsteiner Straße 47. He alluded to that occupation and others in explaining why the UI settled for more immediate, concrete compromises with municipal institutions to provide shelter for migrant families. According to him, many self-proclaimed activists disagreed with this strategy. He related the following:

> When, from time to time, we happened to be successful – for example, when a judge ruled in our favor…in our attempts to protect tenants from eviction – we were accused of

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[18] Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014), 352-353.
[19] Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße 47," 95-96.
[20] Interview with Erna Müller, conducted by author in Frankfurt/M on June 3, 2018.

being false missionaries. Why? [Some claimed,] 'Now that you have won the house, you think you've arrived.' No, we didn't think we had arrived, but what can you do? [They responded] 'We need to continue the…revolution.'[21]

Although migrants' actions did arguably lead to political consequences, many migrant occupiers' demands focused on reform and desire for shelter, including a recognition of the disparate ways in which current housing practices adversely affected migrants and other marginalized groups. This is not to say that no migrant occupiers self-identified as political activists, rather I wish to underscore that many migrant occupiers' actions frequently centered on more immediate claims. In contrast, some occupiers (generally West German citizens) saw in this particular action a tool for greater revolutionary sociopolitical change – a shift that would overthrow existing systems rather than reforming them.

In spite of larger ideological deviations, renovations undertaken by the residents significantly improved quality of living for those living within the house. An article in the *FNP* depicted the apartment of Camillo, one of the Italian occupiers. Journalists narrated that "[w]hen Camillo comes home from work in the evening, he returns to a spacious, freshly painted apartment. He and his family do not need to live in a neglected, overcrowded house, like many other guest workers. For exactly eighteen days he has had this apartment; he pays 10 percent of his income for rent."[22] In the above example, Camillo's apartment serves as a legible text. The comparison between Camillo and "many other guest workers" establishes a correlation between poor housing conditions – such as neglect and overcrowding – with being a "guest" or non-citizen. Instead, Camillo lives in a "spacious, freshly painted apartment," an anomaly for someone with his legal status but one that was rather normal for most West Germans as the city-

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[21] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author in Frankfurt/M on June 20, 2018.
[22] Peter Alles, "Haus Eppsteiner Straße 47 wurde vom Kollektiv wieder bewohnbar gemacht," *FNP*, October 7, 1970.

funded research led by Maria Borris outlined in chapter one indicated. As subtle as it may be, the

FNP article implied that an improvement in living condition potentially correlated to an

improvement in social and political standing. In other words, a proper home was representative

of a certain standard of citizenship or urban belonging, albeit informal.[23] Journalists were not the

only ones to make this correlation; occupiers pursued many avenues in portraying themselves as

the right kind of neighbor, or those who belonged in the shared spaces of the city.

"Won't You Be My Neighbor?"

While contesting the effects of redevelopment and asserting claims to decent and

affordable housing, the residents of Eppsteiner Straße 47 also went to great lengths to establish

themselves as good neighbors. Many of their actions and communications reflected what

Kathleen Canning characterizes as an important attribute of citizenship, or the "positioning of

citizens and would-be citizens to one another within a polity."[24] Occupiers both sought sympathy

from their neighbors and filled in where institutionalized social services seemingly failed. As

such, they asserted their role in what James Holston has described as "city building," – or

inhabiting the urban landscape in constructive ways that contributes to its growth. Occupying

living space with the intention of renovation was thus portrayed as a civic action, a critical

performance of citizenship undertaken by the community regardless of the fact that the migrant

occupiers were not formal West German citizens. The inhabitants of house 47 represented

themselves as stakeholders in the city of Frankfurt, consequently grounding a sense of belonging

that helped solidify a professed right to the city.[25] Occupiers thus reiterated a commitment to

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[23] For a similar discussion in a separate context, see Edward Murphy, *For a Proper Home: Housing Rights in the Margins of Urban Chile, 1960-2010* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).
[24] Kathleen Canning, "Reflections on the Vocabulary of Citizenship," in Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 231.
[25] James Holston, "Housing Crises, Right to the City, and Citizenship," in Edward Murphy and Najib B. Hourani eds., *The Housing Question: Tensions, Continuities and Contingencies in the Modern City*, London: Ashgate 2013, 262.

urban spaces and their right to it – rights based on their abilities as good stewards and caretakers of living space in contrast to developers whose projects seemed incongruent with the needs of the local community.

As a neighborhood, Westend experienced quite a bit of growth just prior to the First World War, establishing itself as a residential area. Though it did suffer during the bombing raids of the Second World War, it maintained its character as a residential, as opposed to business, area during rebuilding. This changed, however, once city planners began constructing the U-Bahn through the quarter in the late 1960s as part of their plans to extend the city and house its rapidly growing financial sector, thus "turning previously residential houses into sought-after objects of speculation."[26] As previously mentioned, landlords and developers frequently rented out housing to migrants and their families to continue earning money while they awaited demolition permits in order to continue bringing in income. In 1970, AGW labeled 37 total dwellings within their neighborhood as "guest worker housing" in a report they sent to the city about speculation, a list that would likely have contained Eppsteiner Straße 47.[27] The house itself stands fairly near the center of Westend. Occupying a corner on the junction of Eppsteiner Straße and Freiherr-vom-Stein-Straße, many of those trying to get to either the main thoroughfare, Goethe University, or the many parks to its north may have passed by its façade (see Figure 4.1).

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[26] Ernst Karpf, *Eine Stadt und ihre Einwanderer: 700 Jahre Migrationsgeschichte in Fankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2013), 162.
[27] Karpf, *Eine Stadt und ihre Einwanderer*, 163.
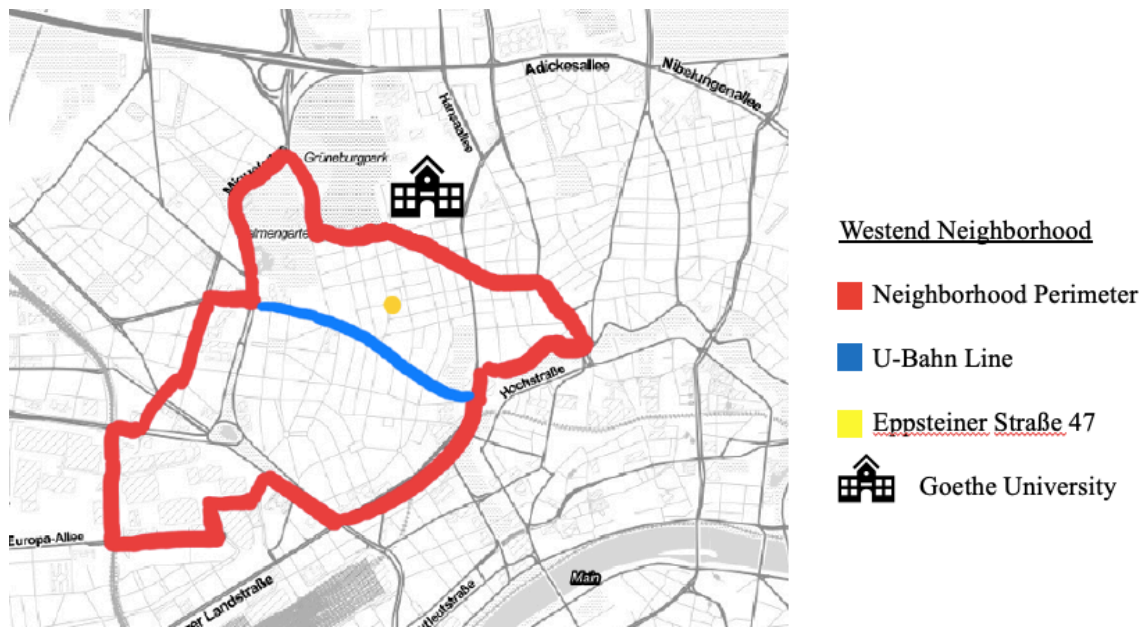
Figure 4.1 Map of the Westend Neighborhood[28]

One of the first steps residents of house 47 undertook to establish better public relations

with the surrounding community was to print a letter they sent to neighbors in the area to clarify

their intentions and signed as "Your House Community Eppsteinerstr. 47."[29] At this point, about

one quarter of their neighbors would have come from outside of West Germany.[30] In fact, many

of their communications were printed in multiple languages to accommodate the diversity of

residents. After discussing the impact of redevelopment on the Westend neighborhood in their

first letter, the tenants explained that they had already begun renovating the building and were

"ready to negotiate with the landlord for a reasonable rent." They concluded by trying to create a

sense of solidarity and shared purpose with the recipients of the letter, claiming, "We believe that

all Westend dwellers here are threatened by similar measures by landlords and speculators, and

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[28] Map created by author using QGIS open software, Apple Markup, and Microsoft Office.
[29] Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße 47," 90.
[30] Maria Borris, *Ausländische Arbeiter in einer Großstadt: Eine empirische Untersuchung am Beispiel Frankfurt* (Frankfurt/M: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 129.

believe that you therefore understand our countermeasures."[31] It was their hope that by alluding

to the negative consequences many local residents could relate to, and assuring them that they

were already trying to improve the premises, they would garner greater support.

House 47 occupiers also filled in with some of the services missing in the neighborhood.

For instance, the communal day care set up on the first floor of the building was welcomed by

community members due to the lack of accessible education and childcare options, adding

weight to occupiers' claims to be acting out of civic duty. In the flyer that opened this chapter,

female Italian migrants who occupied other houses complained of this same daily struggle to

know what to do with their children, writing "there are not enough kindergartens, not even for

German children, so no one can really look after their children well."[32] So many families sent

their children to number 47 that a waiting list developed after 70 children were accepted.[33] In

addition to the day care, volunteers ran a homework help group for the children living in house

47 as well as other students from Westend who came over after school. By providing childcare

and educational services, occupiers pointed to a failing in existing public services and also

attempted to legitimize their actions as stemming from a desire to productively contribute to the

neighborhood.

While positioning themselves in relation to other community members, occupiers

publicly criticized speculators and city administration's role in the detrimental effects of urban

renewal within their neighborhood. Painted sheets written in Italian flanked those written in

German on the main gate of their building and were draped from balconies (see Figure 4.2).

Other placards and oversized sheets of paper written in multiple languages hung from the metal

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[31] Schulz, "Zum Beispiel Eppsteinerstraße 47," 90.
[32] IfS, Collection: Ortsgeschichte. 1972: Hausbesetzungen, File: S3/A 10.210.
[33] Albert Bechtold, "Sympathien für die Eppsteiner Straße 47," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, nr. 239.

bars. Some of the slogans posed a direct challenge to the government, with expressions such as "If the city government and the police take the side of the speculators, then they are enemies of all tenants," or "We have occupied this house in order to achieve what the city government only promise." Other slogans were directed toward the ill effects of speculation, for instance "We occupied this house because the apartments had been vacant for a long time and because the apartments were systematically destroyed. For the owner, the house is an object of speculation, for us it is urgently needed living space;" other signs further claimed that 20 houses remained vacant within their community. Yet another slogan encouraged other neighbors to join by urging, "The apartments belong to those who live in them. Do not let yourself be driven out of your housing! Resist together! Drive away the speculators!"

Figure 4.2 Multi-lingual Signs Posted at the Eppsteiner Straße 47 Occupation[34]

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[34] The large sheet is written in Italian, as well as half of the placard on the far right. Though hard to make out, it appears that the oversized paper announcements hanging from the metal rails were also written in multiple languages. IfS, Fotosammlung Frankfurter Rundschau, Photograph: S7Wer/00004. Reproduced with permission.

The fact that these slogans were written in Italian and German further demonstrates that *meridionali* increasingly viewed themselves as having a right decent housing within the city, even without being German. Rather than nationality, their claims to belonging began to center on a subjective and constructed sense of participatory citizenship. Through their economic and social contributions, they actively worked to build up the communities in which they lived; in turn, the governing structures they supported should offer some protection against high rents and run-down apartments. Their sheets were a means to build bridges within the local community, enhancing commonalities in an attempt to promote greater inclusion. House 47 residents also sent a letter to the mayor – the municipal position that embodied the power to either accept or negate their claims of community building. In their correspondence, tenants highlighted their connection to other urban citizens and why they should be considered such. They recalled house 47's previous state of decay and abandonment and described their efforts to "restore this house to its purpose as a place of residence for people." They also claimed that other residents had already accepted their assertion of a right to space and belonging, as manifest by the "constant sympathy of almost all of our neighbors and visitors from the whole of Frankfurt."[35]

Housewarming: Reactions to New Neighbors

The views of local residents, neighboring landlords, and other Frankfurters generally centered on questions of legitimacy. Most people agreed that change in housing policy was necessary but disagreed as to whether occupation was a justifiable means to pressure governing officials into reforming or extending social services, and/or revising the city's redevelopment approach. Some supporters offered both verbal and physical aid, whereas other opponents turned to city administrators to express their disapproval. In sum, housing occupations illuminated a

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[35] IfS, Collection: 1970: Hausbesetzungen. S3/A 9588.

polarized population with categories of acceptance and definitions of who "deserved" state aid in constant flux.

It appears that many of Eppsteiner Staße 47 neighbors did receive occupiers' actions positively, partially because it was located in the Westend neighborhood that had long protested the effects of redevelopment and speculation. House 47 residents claimed they had many sympathizers who "brought cake…money, and furniture donations."[36] When a Stuttgart paper picked up the news, it reported that over 2000 German mark (DM) in anonymous contributions were donated to help with paint and wallpaper for the restoration project.[37] In addition, AGW issued an official statement of support to the press. It read, in part, "We welcome and support the occupation of house 47 on Eppsteiner Straße. We see in it and in further occupations of vacant houses a suitable means to mitigate and eliminate deficits in city planning…it will alleviate the housing shortage in Frankfurt."[38] Even the more conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) reported that local Westenders greeted the occupation with "unusual popularity." The article recounted that although older citizens in particular acknowledged a "breach in law…only a few of them consider the action to be wrong."[39] This view may be partially due to the fact that Frankfurt in general, and this neighborhood in particular, had long been a stronghold of blue-collar workers who could more easily relate to the socioeconomic hardships that the occupiers claimed to be challenging, as one interviewee asserted.[40] Some community members offered physical sustenance, serving hot soup to their "twenty new neighbors."[41] The many residents

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[36] "Arbeiter und Studenten," *FR*, September 21, 1970.
[37] Albert Bechtold, "Sympathien für die Eppsteiner Straße 47," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* nr. 239.
[38] "Arbeiter und Studenten…viele Sympathiebeweise," *FR*, September 21, 1970.
[39] "Die Diskussion um das Westendhaus geht weiter," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), September 23, 1970.
[40] Interview with Erna Müller, conducted by author in Frankfurt/M on June 3, 2018.
[41] Claudia Michels, "Im Frankfurter Westend began der 'Häuserkampf' der 70er Jahre," *FR*, September 19, 2000. This was an article published thirty years after the events.

who supported, or at least did not oppose the occupation, strengthened the occupiers' assertion that the right to a home was widely held view among the general population.

Other residents were divided in terms of legality, especially when it came to whether or not they viewed occupiers' actions as legitimate. A lawyer for the Frankfurt Tenant's Union (a West German organization, as opposed to the UI), Erhard Kania, was well aware of housing shortages. He argued that the question of occupation was both a legal one and one that simultaneously needed to be understood based on actual housing conditions in the city. He claimed that the occupiers were "sitting on a powder keg" because they had no legal right to the property. At the same time, Kania conceded that "this will force the city to put these people somewhere," perhaps by even allowing them to stay in the house if there was a risk of homelessness.[42] As it so happened, this particular powder keg did not explode. In fact, by the beginning of the following month, neighbors continued to show their support through monetary means. They gifted the occupiers 600 DM to cover the 1000 DM in rent that they were paying the landlord as a gesture of good will – or the equivalence of 10% of occupiers' wages. In providing the occupiers with money, some surrounding urban residents legitimized occupiers' actions, acknowledging and welcoming them as members of their community, irrespective of nationality or other marginalized statuses.

As the occupation progressed, however, other neighbors were not as happy with their new associates. Dr. Rita owned house 45 on Eppsteiner Straße, right next to house 47. She wrote to the mayor when no other municipal office responded to her complaint at the disorder of the occupied house. While outlining the "slum-like conditions" of the neighboring building, she distanced herself from other property owners who allowed their buildings to fall into disrepair in

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[42] "Viele Sympathie-Beweise für Haus-Besetzung," *FR*, September 22, 1970.

order to tear them down and rebuild. She claimed that she had renovated at considerable expense in order to continue renting out her apartments. Her letter described house 47 with torn shutters that stood crooked on their rails, weed overrun yards, and piles of waste, paper, bottles, and broken furniture. In her opinion, she felt the occupiers' lack of upkeep was "done very consciously and systematically" so that other buildings would be vacated and leave space for further occupations to take place (indeed, the house across the street from hers had already been occupied at the time she wrote the mayor). She concluded by asking for municipal assistance to help clean up the area to "help maintain Westend as a beautiful residential area." This piece of her communication deserves noting – she contended that Westend remain a residential area, even claiming that one could have "understanding" for the occupation as a demonstration, "but not for the fact that the authorities have not done anything in years."[43] Thus, while she blamed occupiers for their lack of cleanliness and asked for assistance in that regard, she implied that speculation and other urban renewal plans that would change the residential face of Westend were similarly wrong.

Response of the City Administration and Other Formal Political Groups

Internal divisions among Frankfurt's SPD leadership complicated official responses to the Eppsteiner Straße and ensuing occupations. Previously the party had promoted urban renewal as a means of progress that could potentially open new avenues for rebuilding both economically and socially; the SPD now found itself under attack for the perhaps unanticipated consequences of redevelopment and its impact on the most socially vulnerable. Moreover, the occupations followed on the heels of the large street protests and conflicts with student activists on the city's streets just a handful of years prior, tempering city officials' willingness to act with force lest

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[43] IfS, Collection: 1970-1974 City Acts. Letter dated December 11, 1972.

they be accused of authoritarianism. At times the mayor or chief of police disagreed in their views about housing occupiers, only partially condoning the occupations or attempting to lay the blame elsewhere while not completely exonerating those who participated. Moreover, an unexpected change in leadership due to the untimely death of the mayor, in combination with a view of subsequent occupations becoming more politicized, also played a role in shifting the city administrations' response to housing occupations as a protest tactic. Overall, the city response resembled a rollercoaster as SPD leadership tried to determine just what should be done to maintain public safety while not undermining their political identity as a party of progress that sought to equalize the socioeconomic disparities within their jurisdiction.

At the time of the Eppsteiner Straße 47 occupation, the city of Frankfurt was under the political leadership of SPD Mayor Walter Möller. Frankfurt had a long history of being aligned with liberal and leftist political strains, as did the region of Hessen in which it was located.[44] It also housed the interwar Akademie der Arbeit, an educational institution closely connected with the labor movement, and the Frankfurt School, an entity much less involved in institutional politics but a school of thought that was grounded in Marxism and Freudianism.[45] The city was also a site of street conflicts, in which student protesters criticized the deficits of democracy, capitalism, and issues of global social justice, many of which found their theoretical justification in thought disseminated from the Frankfurt School.[46] In addition, Frankfurt had already seen

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[44] See Wolf-Arno Kropat and Helmut Berding, eds., *Hessen – 60 Jahre Demokratie: Beiträge zum Landesjubiläum* (Wiesbaden: Historische Kommission für Nassau, 2006).

[45] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Twentieth-Century Germany*, translated by Ben Fowkes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 691. See also Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995* (Frankfurt/M: Rogner & Bernhard bei Zweitausendeins, 1998) and Rolf Wiggershaus, *Die Frankfurter Schule: Geschichte, theoretische Entwicklung, politische Bedeutung* (Munich: C. Hanser, 1986).

[46] For a comparative piece on the events, strategies, and outcomes of the 1968 protest movements in Western Europe, see Ben Mercer, *Student Revolt in 1968: France, Italy and West Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); see also Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, Detlef Junker, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

violence from the more militant far-left groups that emerged from the student movement;

Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin (two of the founding members of the future left-wing

terrorist group, the RAF – *Red Army Faction*) set off incendiary devices in two department stores

in Frankfurt on April 2, 1968 as a symbol of protest against the Vietnam War and the ensuing

fires caused around two million DM in damage.[47] Moreover, the *Spontis* were highly active in

Frankfurt, seeking to build on and radicalize the traditions of the earlier protest movement that

relied on revolutionary momentum from below.[48]

In spite of their disagreements with activists' radically anti-authoritarian line, the

Frankfurt SPD's lengthy tradition of opposing mainstream sentiment allowed for greater

compromise and a more progressive political platform with the "New Left" than SPD organs in

other cities. Even the *Jusos* supported Walter Möller's renomination in 1969 even though he was

an "Old Socialist" who led the center-left faction of the SPD.[49] However, tensions between the

umbrella party and the *Jusos* would often remained inflamed, illustrating the challenges the

political left faced in implementing policies purported to be progressive, but that sometimes

marginalized the very groups whom they claimed to represent, particularly blue-collar workers.

It is thus not very surprising that the left-center *Frankfurter Neue Presse* depicted Mayor

Walter Möller as "understanding" in his reaction to the Eppsteiner Straße 47 occupation; in his

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[47] Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2003), 202.

[48] For a discussion of *Spontis* role in housing occupations in Frankfurt, see Freia Anders and Alexander Sedlmaier, "'Squatting means to destroy the capitalist plan in the urban quarters': Spontis, Autonomists, and the Struggles over Public Commodities," in Martin Baumeister, Bruno Bonomo and Dieter Schott, eds., *Cities Contested: Urban Politics, Heritage, and Social Movements in Italy and West Germany in the 1970s.* (Frankfurt/M: Campus, 2017), 277-300. As migrant and other disadvantaged occupiers often portrayed their actions in moral rather than political terms, they do not feature much in my analysis as *Spontis* often participated in occupations that are not at the heart of this study.

[49] Gerard Braunthal is the scholar who points to the Frankfurt SPD's history of leaning more left than other SPD organs in his article "The West German social democrats: Factionalism at the local level," *West European Politics* 7, no. 1 (1984):47-64. The information about the *Jusos* is taken from pages 56-57.

public statement he communicated, "I would regret [evicting them], nor would it serve any special purposes or [benefit] the reputation of the landowner."[50] The SPD voting district in the Sachsenhausen neighborhood echoed their mayor's sentiments in an open letter to the press. Located next to the river in the oldest area of the city that similarly provided low-income housing to both native Frankfurters and a large migrant population, the Sachsenhausen district response was overwhelmingly positive. The letter called the occupation a "symbol" for others not willing to "submit to the unrestrained greed for profit" and expressed explicit solidarity with occupiers' "endeavor to promote the coexistence of German and foreign workers and students."[51] It is worth underscoring that their support extended not just to housing, but to the "coexistence of German and foreign workers and students." This seems to imply that other contemporaneous groups also saw in embodied collective action an appeal to greater rights of recognition and inclusion for non-West Germans. Furthermore, the SPD's chapter in Westend also issued a statement in support, calling the occupation an act of "self-help" that could only "find our support."[52] Their letters point to what they considered a failure of a system or a political economy to safeguard against the lack of access to affordable and safe housing, forcing formal and informal citizens to provide for themselves.[53]

The Christian Democrats in opposition disagreed, with members extending their criticism to the mayor. The CDU spokesman characterized Mayor Möller's public statement as a "dismaying declaration of sympathy" and labeled the occupiers as "a politically extreme group."[54] The CDU's stance reflected wider concerns over public security in a time radicalized

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[50] "Möller: Verständnis für Hausbesetzung," *FNP*, September 22, 1970.
[51] "Westend-Aktionen im Tauziehen der Politiker," *FR*, September 24, 1970.
[52] "Das Mietrecht ist unsozial," *FR*, September 22, 1970.
[53] Judith Butler discusses the failures and inequalities of socioeconomic and political institutions in relationship to a neoliberal conception of "responsibility" in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 14-23.
[54] "Westend-Aktionen im Tauziehen der Politiker," *FR*, September 24, 1970.

political organizations were seen to threaten domestic stability. Furthermore, it denied occupiers the language of morality and universality, instead bringing the occupation onto the plane of partisan politics. The CDU accordingly lumped occupiers of diverse motivations and goals together, portraying their actions as efforts to attempt to overthrow the established order. In so doing, not only were some migrant occupiers further excluded from the realms of social and political belonging in CDU rhetoric and circles of influence, they were pushed from the margins of destitution to the margins of extremism and deviation.
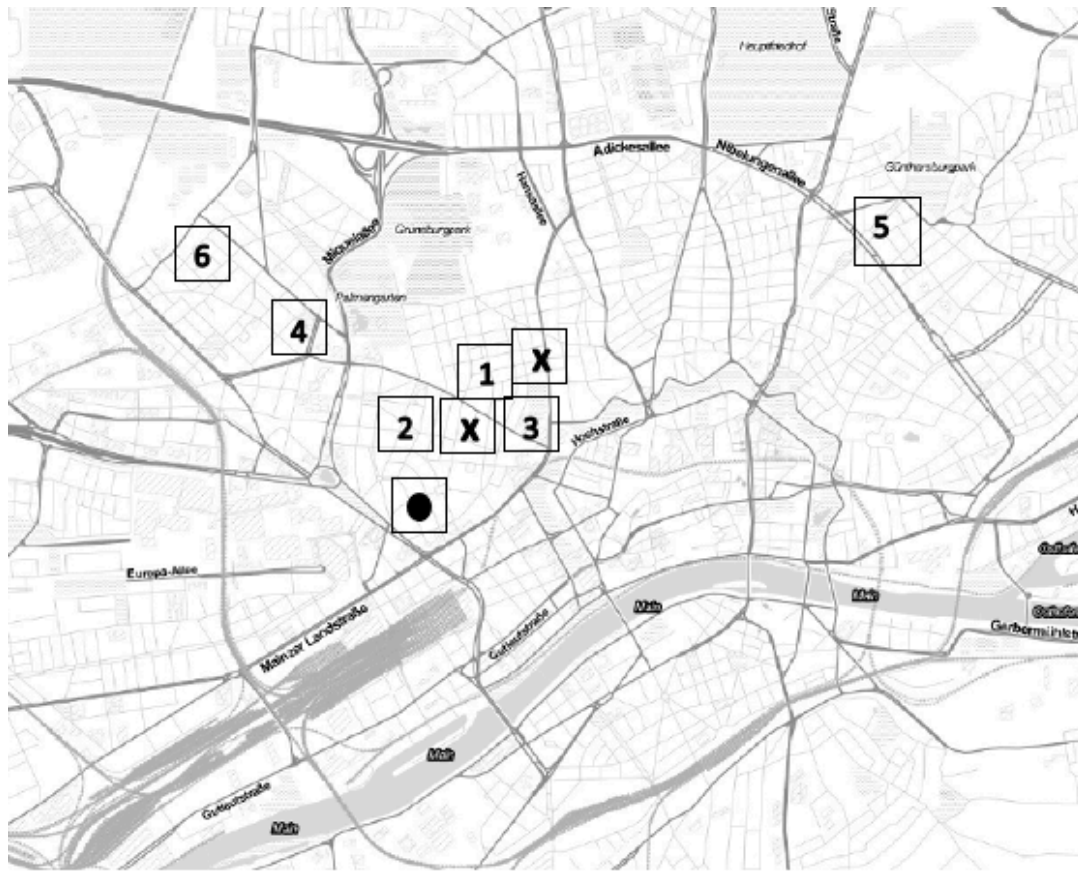
[1]	Eppsteiner Straße 47	September 1970
[2]	Corneliusstraße 24	October 1970
[3]	Liebigstraße 20	October 1970
[4]	Leipziger Straße 3	May 1973
[5]	Rothschildallee Camp	September 1973
[6]	Friesengasse 5&7	September 1973
[●]	Bettinastraße 35	
[X]	Police Conflict over Forced Evictions in Grünebergweg (upper)	
[X]	Police Conflict over Forced Evictions in Kettenhofweg (lower)	

Figure 4.3 Map of Selected Occupations/Confrontations in Frankfurt am Main[55]

Political representatives did not have long to mull over the degree of (il)legitimacy of the

Eppsteiner Straße 47 occupation. On October 14 and 27, 1970, house number 24 of

Corneliusstraße and house 20 of Liebigstraße were occupied, respectively (see Figure 4.3). Both

occupations contained a mixture of West German and migrant families and individuals, though

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[55] Map produced by author using QGIS Open Software and Microsoft Word.

their exact nationalities are unknown apart from mentions of a "Spanish family" or "the Italians who are in the house."[56] Karsten Voigt, chairman of the Frankfurt *Jusos*, supported their actions. Voigt proclaimed, "I still think that it contradicts the necessary social fabric of a democracy if homes are left empty for a long time for speculative reasons, on the one hand, while on the other hand, apartments are urgently sought after."[57] Moreover, the response of other urban dwellers remained generally positive. The number of items donated to the occupiers in Liebigstraße was so large that volunteers had to use a truck in order to deliver all of the furniture, foodstuffs, and fuel. The landlord of Corneliusstraße, Miriam Gertler, filed multiple motions to city departments against the occupiers in the ensuing months and pressed for a forced clearing in 1973. One of her elderly occupants, an 88-year-old Mrs. Lessing, had been the reason preventing demolition prior to this point, but Mrs. Gertler reminded municipal officials that Mrs. Lessing had known for four years when her contract would expire and that the "eviction period of the appellate court" had already expired the month prior.[58]

The reaction of the Liebigstraße landlord, Georg Faktor, deserves analysis as his reaction influenced and was impacted by a developing city policy about evictions. His initial reaction to the fact that his property was occupied was both sympathetic and firm; he declared that he did not wish to issue an ultimatum for eviction, while pointing out that larger political and economic factors were to blame. He related his opinion to the *FR*:

> What can I do about the fact that the state has not yet created enough social housing or that it allowed so many guest workers into the country, without considering the question of accommodation? I am sorry for the number of guest workers and large families who live in terrible living conditions, but ultimately the occupiers' course of action is

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[56] See, for instance, "Hausräumung mit Wasserwerfereinsatz," newspaper unknown, August 29, 1974. IfS, Collection: Hausbesetzungen. S3/A 11.586; "Haus-Besetzer rechnen mit Räumung," *FNP*, December 19, 1970.
[57] Hans-Joachim Noack, "Mittwoch, 20.15 Uhr: Zweite Hausbesetzung," *FR*, October 15, 1970.
[58] Letter dated November 15, 1973. IfS, Collection: 1970-1974: City Acts.

unsustainable – that is to say, when the occupation becomes more than a demonstration and instead turns into expropriation.[59]

While blaming the state for the lack of housing, Faktor acknowledged that "guest workers and large families" were living in "terrible conditions," implying that decent living conditions were perceived to be a normalized standard of living, and thus migrants' and those of other marginalized socioeconomic statuses lived in exceptional circumstances. He did, however, disagree that occupiers' embodied actions constituted a legitimate claim to rights. In other words, he implied that their claims to decent homes were valid, but not the means to obtaining them in practice. Occupiers from the house responded that they were sorry they had not met Faktor before the occupation due to his level of understanding of their actions, but that the quarters would "remain occupied."[60]

The common concern for both occupiers and the landlord was a long-term solution to the housing problem in Frankfurt; a solution they both viewed as the responsibility of the state to provide for all residents, even "guest workers." In the more immediate context of the occupation, however, the landlord and occupants still had not come to an agreement by December. Still, Georg Faktor remained hesitant over the terms and conditions of an eviction. The more conservative newspaper in Frankfurt, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), compared his reaction to the Corneliusstraße occupation, asserting that "in contrast to the owner of the house occupied in Corneliusstraße, he does not demand prosecution." Instead, Faktor insisted that the house be cleared by police "only when it is certain that there will be reasonable housing for the current residents in the event of homelessness," a precondition that the city of Frankfurt later

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[59] "In der Liebigstraße 20: Diskussion der Okkupanten mit 'verständnisvollem' Hausbesitzer," *FR*, October 20, 1970.
[60] "In der Liebigstraße 20…," *FR*, October 20, 1970.

adapted as part of their policy on using the police to enforce evictions.[61] No longer did Faktor refer to the occupiers as "guest workers" or "large families." He did not even use the term "occupiers." Instead, he referred to his unwanted guests as "current residents" and expressed concern over the risk of homelessness.

In many ways, Georg Faktor's dilemma was reflective of that of city leaders'. While dissatisfaction escalated through protests, marches, and demonstrations in support of the occupations – and official complaints lodged by landlords – Mayor Möller had to balance his party's (SPD) claim to be a party of progress with very prevalent concerns of domestic safety and security. Moreover, as occupations were generally not resolved in weeks, or even months, other occupations began to crop up, including those that were led by students and/or self-identifying activists who tended to portray their goals in more overtly politicized terms. The compromise that the mayor seemed to reach both personally and in terms of official policy centered on a distinction between those who occupied out of social need, and those who did so for more so-called inflammatory purposes. Often, this translated to a correlation between migrant occupiers whose precarious living conditions were now generally recognized in the public sphere, and other, political activists who tended to be young West German students or *Spontis*.

Consequently, Frankfurt's administration began to categorize the "deserving" poor – or foreign-born residents who had little recourse or few familial or social connections that could serve as a safety net in lieu of state intervention. Native-born occupiers, on the other hand, were associated with a potential for illegality and violence. For example, while discussing the agreement he and other city officials came to with the Corneliusstraße and Liebigstraße occupations, the mayor placed the majority of the blame on "instigators" who endangered

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[61] "Polizei will besetztes Haus räumen," *FAZ*, December 19, 1970.

foreign workers and their families by encouraging them to break the law. He criticized what he perceived as false hope when occupation leaders give the impression that families could stay there indefinitely.[62] He then declared that he could "no longer tolerate further squats as demonstrative symbols that draw attention to [housing] abuses, but as part of a broad-based campaign with the goal of endangering security and order."[63] He warned that the police would be mobilized in any subsequent occupations. In a way, Mayor Möller's use of the term "instigators" implied a greater onus of responsibility for activists who used migrant occupiers for their own political ends. The allusion to "endangering security and order" would not have been lost on Frankfurters based on the recent rise in political violence. At the same time, however, Möller painted "families and foreign workers" in a much more benign light, implying that their motivation for adequate shelter was apolitical in nature. Therefore, the mayor depicted migrant participants as largely non-threatening, implying that their claims centered on social need rather than any motivation to create unrest.

Following this distinction, the order the mayor issued on November 17, 1970 following the Eppsteiner Straße, Corneliusstraße, and Liebigstraße occupations was an intriguing mixture of enforcement and accommodation. In this way, it very nearly reflects the vacillation of the mayor himself, and SPD policies in attempting to maintain order while also recognizing the grassroots movements (also emanating from the *Jusos*) pushing to hold the left government responsible for its social promises. If one examines Mayor Möller's personal collection in Frankfurt's city archives, they will find multiple letters he wrote to numerous state and federal superiors, agonizing over whether occupations should be considered "hard" or "soft" trespassing,

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[62] "Jetzt Schluß mit den Hausbeesetzungen:" Möller spricht von verantwortungslosen Initiatoren," *FR*, October 22, 1970.
[63] *FR*, October 22, 1970. As quoted in Stracke, 85.

and the role of police in enforcing evictions. After weeks of internal debate, the November 17, 1970 decree declared squatting a "criminal offense" and a disturbance of public security and order. By characterizing housing occupations as "hard" trespassing, police were required to intervene according to Federal Criminal Law Article 125. Still, while discussing the legislation in a press conference, Mayor Möller continued to officially recognize the first occupations in Westend as a "protest against alleged injustices in building and land rights and against the excesses of land speculation." In essence, the mayor also tapped into the language of rights and morality to portray the initial occupations as less oppositional in nature, bound instead to local urban disparities. Mayor Möller also defended his early actions by saying that "given the special circumstances in Westend," he "expressed sympathy for the socio-economic concerns of this protest." The statement reiterated, however, that any "proceeding squats must be interpreted as a deliberate attack on the existing legal order."[64]

However, Frankfurt's municipal legislation included several stipulations that would allow city officials to take a softer course of action for those who occupied out of need. Police intervention would be annulled, for instance, if a landlord declined intervention and agreed to the occupiers using their building. Furthermore, any eviction should "under no circumstances give rise to a state of homelessness" because that similarly disturbed public order.[65] Therefore, self-identifying activists who already had a place to stay could be evicted because there was no threat that they would become homeless once an occupation was cleared. In comparison, eviction was often delayed while authorities tried to negotiate other solutions for migrants or others of low socioeconomic status who occupied because they had few other options.

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[64] IfS, Collection: 1970: Hausbesetzungen. S3/A 9588, "Verfügung und Erklärung…" November 17, 1970.
[65] IfS, Collection: 1970: Hausbesetzungen. S3/A 9588, "Verfügung und Erklärung des Oberbürgermeisters zu den Hausbesetzungen in Frankfurt am Main," November 17, 1970.

Not all public authorities shared Mayor Möller's sympathetic view of the first few occupations. Both the *FR* and *FNP* covered an impending eviction attempt of the Liebigstraße occupation on December 19th, one month after Frankfurt announced its policy on housing occupations. According to the *FR*, the SPD police president Knut Müller intimated that there would be "consequences of a refusal to voluntarily leave the house," namely that "the foreigners would probably have to reckon with a withdrawal of their residence permit." The *FNP* included an even more direct quote from him which stated, "at the slightest resistance of the residents, the Italians who are in the house must expect immediate expulsion from Germany."[66] Notably, Chief Müller specifically referred to Italians who were occupying and their difference in formal citizenship status, reframing occupiers' claims as a right of citizenship that was nationally determined, rather than one that superseded geographical boundaries. Moreover, as the embodiment of the official responsible for maintaining internal order and security, he privileged local conditions about safety over occupiers' assertion to a universal right to housing. A collective that formed to represent "occupied houses and houses on rent strike," the *Häuserrat*, connected his comments to the issue of perceived basic rights, declaring "they want to take away from those without rights their last right, that of the right to work."[67] In contrast to this view, the chief of police implied that rights were based on certain standards of behavior and nationality in order for one to have the standing to challenge the injustices they claimed.

Soon after this, city officials modified their stance. Perhaps recognizing that these particular occupiers – Italians included – did not represent a threat to peace and order, city officials finally came to an agreement with the occupiers one month later. The Liebigstraße occupiers were promised social housing by April 30, 1971 (and some residents of the

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[66] "Haus-Besetzer rechnen mit Räumung," *FNP*, December 19, 1970.
[67] "Haus-Besetzer rechnen mit Räumung," *FNP*, December 19, 1970.

contemporaneous Corneliusstraße occupation also obtained leases in 1973).[68] Despite police

president Müller's earlier threats of expulsion, city officials treated the foreign occupiers on the

same level as their German counterparts. For instance, municipal authorities transferred the

Perotta family to temporary housing in June of 1971 while they awaited public housing. In

explaining why the Italians qualified for public housing, the head of the city's housing

department, Mr. Zeyen, briefly related, "This family of four came from very poor tenancy

conditions, so as to warrant further improvement."[69] In this instance, then, social service

representatives recognized the Italians as deserving of state assistance *and* decent living

conditions based on their prior conditions that did not seem to have met an acceptable standard

of living. In opening up access to municipal services, city officials perhaps unintentionally

established the precedent that migrants were entitled to at least some social rights promised by

the social state, even if that was not the framing they used.

Issues of legitimation and acceptance, then, colored many reactions in Frankfurt's public

sphere. Did one adhere to official or informal standards of behavior? Did one fit into the fabric of

the surrounding community? Who was more to blame for the occupations – occupiers

themselves or state representatives responsible for housing? Though these questions would swirl

in the initial months following the first three occupations, they would dramatically shift once

more radical occupiers began to take over a growing number of vacant buildings throughout the

city.

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[68] Dokumentation des Häuserrates und des Asta der Universität Frankfurt, *Kettenhofweg 51. Wohnungskämpfe in Frankfurt*. (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), 3. See also "Vertrag mit Hauskollektiv," *FAZ*, January 13, 1971.
[69] "Die Rebellen von gestern sind zu Bürgern geworden," *FR*, June 23, 1971.

Turning Point: Frankfurt City Leadership Takes a Hard Line

Mayor Möller's November decision to come down on further occupations represented an attempt to dissuade individuals from pursuing the collective action as a viable protest strategy. Unfortunately for city leadership, the next three years (1971-1973) experienced a wave of occupations mainly led by students and others who self-identified as political activists – organized and supported in large part by the Häuserrat. They occurred in buildings on Siesmayerstraße, Grüneburgweg, Bockenheimer Landstraße, Kettenhofweg, Eschersheimerlandstraße, Jügelstraße, Adalbertstraße, Beethovenplatz, Schumannstraße, Schubertstraße, Leipzigerstraße, and elsewhere, the majority of which were located in the Westend or surrounding neighborhoods. As police attempted to clear the occupations in line with Frankfurt's new order, violence often spilled onto the streets. This section will focus on two evictions – Grüneburgweg and Kettenhofweg (see Figure 4.3) – to illuminate how conflict between governing forces and more radicalized squatters would actually reify the perception that migrant occupiers' actions were less politically motivated. Migrants were generally absent from the street fighting, further solidifying the distinction between threatening and non-threating occupiers – or those who did so for more overtly political reasons and those who did so out of social need. Conflict in the streets also highlighted the culpability of the state in contributing to discontent over housing availability and affordability. Previously, occupiers were the only ones in violation of the law, their actions the ones disrupting the peace and status quo. When Frankfurt evictions turned violent, however, some residents charged the municipality with being equally responsible for disturbing public safety and order.

The clearing of Grünebergweg signaled one of the first real challenges in implementing the November 20, 1970 decree Led primarily by students, the participants clarified their reasons

for occupying Grünebergweg in a leaflet distributed throughout the city. They claimed that after searching for housing for months, they were close to signing a lease with the landlord, Mr. Selmi, when he suddenly changed his mind, citing broken electric networks as a condition rendering the apartments uninhabitable. Of the 21,000 university students living in Frankfurt, 3,000 were unable to find a room to rent, exacerbating their own ability to find affordable accommodations. The student occupiers justified their forced entry because the landlord "still has about 74 other houses in Frankfurt…including those which are overcrowded with guest workers, in which nothing is repaired anymore, where people live like animals and still have to pay crazy rents!"[70] Why did these unwelcome tenants include guest worker housing conditions in their claim when the house was occupied primarily by native-born students? They asserted that their actions were to protest the rampant speculation that allowed property-owners to take advantage of marginalized low-income groups, such as migrant workers, signaling an attempt couch their claim in terms of morality. Yet they benefitted from co-opting the portrayal of dismal housing conditions of migrants and others that featured so prominently in both the media and the three previous occupations, even though they had very few foreign-born individuals participating in their occupation. Were migrant occupiers simply a means for them to legitimize their end goal, or were the students also occupying out of social need?

These types of questions featured heavily in an internal SPD vote over whether squats, such as the one in Grünebergweg, should be evicted based on the preconditions outlined in the November 1970 legislation. One representative criticized the students' marshalling of guest workers, saying in a speech that the "last squat had not foregrounded the socially disadvantaged,

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[70] IfS, Collection: 1971: Hausbesetzungen S3/A 10.304, "Warum haben wir diese Haus besetzt?" September 29, 1971.

but rather extremists, 'who are playing at revolution.'"[71] Once again, the allusion to potential violence exacerbated concerns over internal safety. On the other hand, the *Jusos* protested that the city should show itself the party of reform that it claimed to be, rather than prioritizing "law and order." All in all, the assembly cast 163 votes to 141 against the Grünebergweg occupiers.[72] According to a declaration released by the SPD convention, the occupiers' actions did not stem from "social need," but rather from a "political-demonstrative intent against Mayor Möller and the SPD."[73] In essence, their gathering together in physical space did send a message about rights, but was perceived to be and received in a different register of rights' claims than other disadvantaged occupiers. The vote once again highlighted the SPD's distinction between occupations based on "social need," and those that were more "political" in nature. It is clear from these deliberations within the SPD (thereby not even including conservative political parties), as well as the actions of the city during the first three occupations, that municipal authorities were more sympathetic to those they perceived as "apolitical."

When police did clear the occupation in Grünebergweg, the eviction turned violent, with batons, firehoses, rocks, and Molotov cocktails exchanged between the police and protesters. The *FR* deemed the clash the "biggest conflict between police and demonstrators since 1968," which was a fairly large claim to make, as student protests had been notorious for their opposition to authority – as symbolized by the police – in their demonstrations since those earlier clashes.[74] Conflict over the eviction was not simply limited to the streets, however. The landlord, Mr. Selmi, protested that he had never wished for police intervention, aspiring instead for an

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[71] IfS, Collection: 1971: Hausbesetzungen S3/A 10.304, "Die SPD verurteilt Hausbesetzungen," October 7, 1971.
[72] "SPD distanziert sich von Besetzung," *FR*, October 6, 1971.
[73] IfS, Collection: 1971: Hausbesetzungen S3/A 10.304, "Die SPD verurteilt Hausbesetzungen," October 7, 1971.
[74] "Schlacht um leeres Wohnhaus," *FR*, September 30, 1971.

"amicable solution" with the occupiers.[75] In that case, Grünebergweg would have constituted an exception to police action according to Möller's earlier November legislation. Forced to face the repercussions of a change in strategy, Mayor Möller's comments to the press reflected on-going internal municipal conflict. He first blamed Selmi for not being clear with his middle-man, declaring that it was "too bad" that he "made a game of the well-being of police and housing occupiers." Yet, he also admitted his own uncertainty when he stated, "I'm not sure under what conditions the police should clear the houses" – and this in spite of the formal legislation he issued the year prior.[76] His doubt illustrates the nigh-impossible position of the SPD party at the time. The cloud of authoritarianism loomed large, with the press often using the language of "NPD storm troopers" in regard to any form of state violence (NPD again referring to the National Democratic Party – or the far right nationalist party). It was difficult, then, for the SPD to claim to be a party of social change and then use repressive measures against initiatives that stemmed from the people they claimed to represent. The chief of police, in contrast, was again less hesitant in his views, deeming the squatters' actions a "clear attack on public order" and communicating his opinion that the occupiers' intentions were one of disruption, not need.[77]

In the aftermath of the Grünebergweg clearing, the mayor tried to toe a middle line in establishing policy for future occupations. Responding to criticism that the police response was out of proportion with the manpower needed for the eviction, Mayor Möller made regulations to ensure that police resources would match the force required for future removals. Furthermore, he announced that the landlord must provide a written eviction request, so as to avoid the fiasco and apparent miscommunication between the city and Mr. Selmi.[78] This request would only be

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[75] IfS, Collection: 1971: Hausbesetzungen S3/A 10.304, paper unknown.
[76] "Grüneburgweg: Jeder sieht es anders," *FNP*, October 1, 1971.
[77] "Schlacht um leeres Wohnhaus," *FR*, September 30, 1971.
[78] Jürgen Roth, *z.B. Frankfurt: die Zerstörung einer Stadt* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1975), 80.

accepted once the proprietor denied Wohnheim GmbH – Frankfurt's public housing entity – the possibility of drawing up a subsidized leasing agreement to allow squatters temporary housing until more permanent solutions were found. Though the city administration made progress in establishing more clear guidelines, Mayor Möller's tenure would shortly come to an early close with his death on December 16, 1971 after only 18 months in office.

To fill his position, Rudi Arndt took over the reins of city leadership. Though also a member of the SPD, Arndt was much more moderate; he prioritized safety, legality, and order. Beyond differences in specific political orientation, domestic and international terrorism would also reach new levels of escalation by 1972, with terrorist groups such as the anarchist 2 June Movement (*Bewegung 2. Juni*) aligning themselves with the RAF to carry out a series of bombings, kidnappings, bank robberies, assassinations, and other skirmishes with police. In Frankfurt itself, the RAF bombed the I.G. Farben building in May of 1972, leading to a massive manhunt for the group's leaders.[79] These events, combined with the killing of Israeli athletes by Palestinian terrorists at the 1972 Munich Olympic games, meant that authorities were on high alert for anyone suspected of aiding or even sympathizing with terrorists or counter-terrorists. In addition, extraparliamentary groups oriented to the political left (including *Revolutionärer Kampf* and *Lotta Continua*) engaged in internal debates on the role of violence, deciding whether to support or condone such acts of terrorism, further contributing to a city on edge. Fearing that a soft approach may backfire in a city with a strong history of and continued radicalism, Mayor Arndt cracked down on occupations, clearing them much more quickly than his predecessor, citing occupiers as being in violation of the law. However, one occupation that proved

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[79] For an examination of the West German Left's fraught position of trying to protect democracy from terrorism and counter-terrorism, see Karrin Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

particularly resilient was house 51 of Kettenhofweg. The events surrounding its clearing

illustrate the extent to which Frankfurt's administration pursued a change in strategy – one which

other cities would refer to as "Frankfurt's hard line."

Initially occupied during 1972, tensions surrounding the occupation of Kettenhofweg did

not come to a head until 1973. This occupation actually went to trial within the judicial system.

When Mayor Arndt held a brief conference during one of the breaks, supporters of the

occupation waved a red flag above his head while he spoke. Arndt embraced the idea of housing

being a universal right, affirming that housing was not a "commodity," particularly when there

was a shortage for workers and lower income families. Yet, when asked about evictions for

occupied houses and those on rent strike, Arndt emphasized their illegal nature. He seemed to

imply that it was a foregone conclusion that they would be cleared. Still, Arndt followed the

regulations established by the Mayor Möller, reiterating that it was "paramount" that the police

force be proportional to what was needed to clear the occupation and that "above all, the

protection of life and health should be respected."[80]

Part of the reason tensions around Kettenhofweg led to such conflict was also due to the

involvement of the Häuserrat – or Council for Occupied Houses and Rent Strikes. Though it had

existed prior to this point as a loose collective that published flyers and tried to garner local

support and resources, including eviction brigades (much akin to the UI in northern Italy), their

identity as an anti-authoritarian opposition movement solidified around the Kettenhofweg

occupation, as many *Spontis* became involved with the organization. In one of their own

publications, co-authored with the General Students' Committee at Frankfurt University

(Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss, or AStA), they communicated that some of their

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[80] "OB: Wohnungen kein handelbares Objekt," *FR*, April 18, 1972.

contributors or members wished to take on housing opposition full-time, including spreading

information and "prepar[ing] spectacular actions."[81] As a result, city officials faced more

organized groups who pursued more direct oppositional tactics than had happened in many prior

occupations. For instance, when one landlord bricked up the doors to empty apartments to

prevent anyone from occupying his premises, the Häuserrat tore down the bricks and in turn

bricked up the city's housing office.[82]

Figure 4.4 Photograph of the Second Kettenhofweg 51 Eviction Attempt[83]

When police attempted to clear the Kettenhofweg squat on March 27 and again on March

29, 1973, they thus faced a significant gathering of individuals opposed to the action, organized

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[81] Dokumentation des Häuserrates und des Asta der Universität Frankfurt, *Kettenhofweg 51. Wohnungskämpfe in Frankfurt* (Frankfurt/M, 1973), 3.
[82] "Jetzt schwingt der Häuserrat den Hammer," *FR*, July 4, 1973.
[83] IfS, Collection: Fotosammlung Frankfurter Rundschau, Photograph: S7FR /7.363. Reproduced with permission.

largely by the Häuserrat and student groups from the university (as seen in Figure 4.4). Tensions

between the occupants and police escalated to violence that spilled out into the streets. Many

local and regional news outlets pinned the blame on the occupiers. One police officer compared

it to being at war, telling reporters from the right-leaning tabloid *Bild* printed by Springer (a

press highly criticized by students in the late 1960s) that "the sky was black with stones, bottles,

and pieces of metal…they hit us with long, wooden clubs…all 30 men of our unit were injured.

Without helmets and shields, we would have all been dead."[84] Other conservative papers labeled

the occupiers as "leftist radicals" and "anarchists" and called the violence "red Wednesday,"

drawing ties between the squat and groups such as the Red Army Faction – accusations

particularly charged in Frankfurt. This type of language reflected the strain between violence, the

right to assemble and protest, and public order.

The chief of police, still Knut Müller, only cemented the view that the occupiers were

political extremists in his debrief after the conflict. The press photographed him with a pickaxe

that the police confiscated from occupiers, which he demonstrated as a "weapon" with the

potential to pierce police shields (see Figure 4.5). He also declared: "We must suppress this

latent potential for civil war, or anarchy will reign. Occupied houses are turning more and more

into a hotbed of political crime. There, the climate of terror is bred."[85] He associated the act of

occupation not only with criminality, but with terrorism. In contrast to previous occupations, any

discussion of housing shortages or social need was notably absent. It is also telling that the

oppositional party – the CDU – had always expressed criticism about the SPD's handling of

occupations previously, but this time they approved of the city's response. The CDU

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[84] Andreas H. Fritzsche, "Verletzter Frankfurter Polizist: 'Es war wie im Krieg!'" *Bild*, March 30, 1973.
[85] "Nach dem Straßenschlacht in Frankfurt: SPD-Radikale wollen Polizei-Chef abschießen," *Abendpost*, March 30, 1973.

representative of Westend, of all districts, claimed that most inhabitants of the neighborhood thought the police responded with "appropriate means" to the "provocative and violent behavior of the squatters."[86] Viewpoints such as these served to solidify Mayor Möller's prior legislation that a differentiation between occupations conducted out of social need and those more radical in nature was necessary.
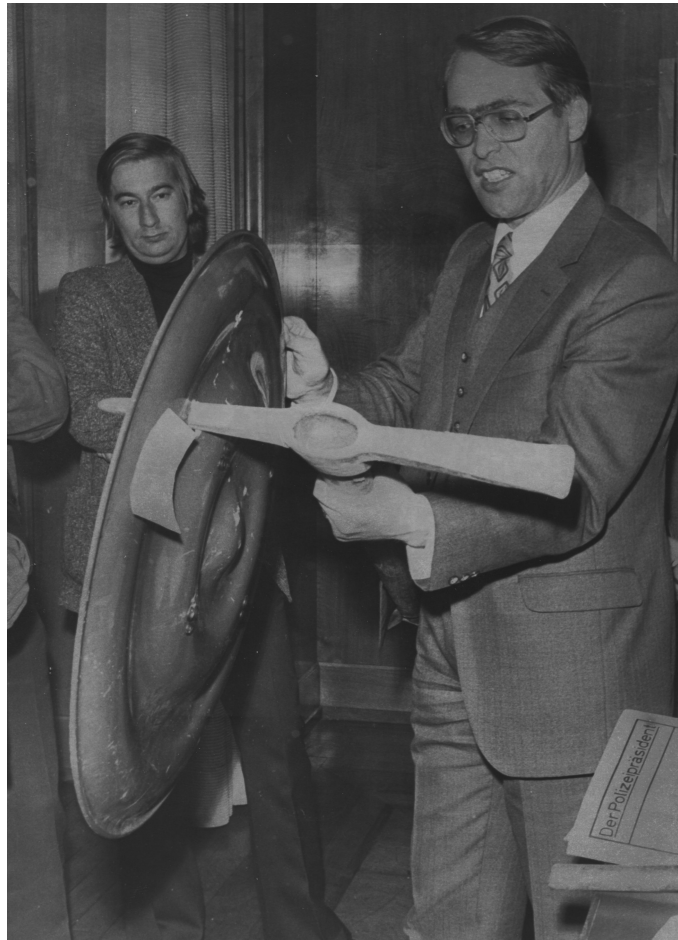
Figure 4.5 Police President Knut Müller Demonstrating a Confiscated Pickaxe[87]

Police again attempted to evict the occupiers at Kettenhofweg on March 29, 1973.

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[86] Horst Kammhuber, "Besetzte Häuser entwickeln sich zu einer Brutstätte der politischen Kriminalität," *Abendpost*, March 30, 1973.
[87] IfS, Collection: Fotosammlung Frankfurter Rundschau, Photograph: S7FR /7.376. Reproduced with permission.

This time, other self-identifying activists came in from outside of the city to lend their support, illustrating the politicized nature of the conflict. The skirmish grew so large that it flooded downtown into Frankfurt's main square. The edition of a Frankfurt-based conservative tabloid "The Evening Post" dedicated their entire front page to the violence. The title read: "Again on Saturday: Street Terror in Frankfurt. External Militant Groups Brought into the City by Bus. Many Injured." The use of terms such as "terror" and "militants" communicated the real and perceived threat of home-grown unrest and terrorism. Injury, too, featured prevalently. Moreover, the photo was taken from the side of the police, displaying helmets and the spraying firehoses – thereby obscuring the so-called "militants" on the receiving end of the water. The positioning of the photo is telling; even though the language of the headline and article emphasizes the potential threat the demonstrators posed, the photograph instead shows a strong display of state power, perhaps communicating to their readers that governing officials were in (or would be able to be in) control of the situation. The response of the Häuserrat was that they were "proud to be terrorists" if it meant fighting against eviction and what landlords did "to German and foreign tenants almost every day."[88]

Some Frankfurt residents were alarmed by the seemingly abrupt shift in policy with the new mayor and the violence enacted on both sides, not just from the occupiers as portrayed in the news. When the aforementioned tabloid *Bild* organized a question-and-answer session with the mayor a few weeks later, many participants expressed their concern. Mrs. Kaiser, a 50-year-old housewife from Frankfurt, asked what would happen if a child accidently got mixed up in a demonstration. A 23-year-old woman from Oberhausen asked why officials "even let it come to these riots." Both of these women's reactions seemingly called for municipal authorities to de-

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[88] "Häuserrat will weiterkämpfen," *FNP*, June 6, 1973.

escalate the conflict, though it is less clear as to whom they viewed as more at fault for instigating the tensions. After their questions, Willi Schlecker, a 48-year-old banker in Frankfurt, discussed the culpability of the government when he asked, "Is it wrong if I presume that one of the reasons for these uprisings is the approval process for building high-rises?" He concluded by stating that "the blame also lies with city administration." In response, Arndt skirted responsibility, pinning the situation Schlecker described as in the past, or rather "the situation in Westend was like that a year or two ago." He continued, "In my opinion, the reason for the new confrontations is that a group in Westend wants this political confrontation, no matter the cost."[89] From his reaction, he distinctly correlated the occupation with confrontation – political confrontation at that – dismissing Schlecker's reference to the shortage of affordable housing. At the same time, he referred to the confrontations as "new," which could be read that the occupations were similarly a "new" type of housing protest movement with more oppositionary ramifications.

The public was not the only one divided in their views. Two SPD executive board members, Alexander Schubart and Herbert Faller, had marched in the protest against the eviction that led to the violent street conflict. A special SPD conference affirmed that although municipal officers had a right to exercise the right to protest, "Wednesday's demonstration was clearly directed against the SPD and its leaders." As a result, Mayor Arndt declared that those who had participated would be expelled from the ranks of the party in keeping with the national party's stance as embodied by the 1972 Anti-Radical Decree.[90] In response, the *Jusos* demanded that the

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[89] "Wer bezahlt eigentlich den Schaden der Krawalle," *Bild*, April 13, 1973.
[90] "Arndt: Boden der Partei verlassen," *FNP*, April 7, 1973. Declared in response to the RAF in January of 1972, the *Radikalenerlass* (Anti-Radical Degree) banned anyone considered to be involved with extremist organizations from work as civil servants. Opponents to the decree called it the *Berufsverbot*, or Occupational Ban. After 1979, many of the regions or states began to repeal the degree. See Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany*, 132-133, 145-147.

mayor resign and that chief of police Knut Müller be fired for excessive violence, though they would rescind their demands one month later. These cracks only splintered further as Mayor Arndt continued to distance himself from his predecessor. One association of landlords and property owners declared shortly after the attempted clearing that many policies of the late Mayor Möller had apparently died with him.[91]

In terms of migrant responses to the Kettenhofweg clearing, the Italian-based extraparliamentary organization *Lotta Continua* (LC) vocalized support for the occupiers, seeing in the forced eviction attempt an authoritarian move on behalf of the state. In a flyer written in Italian and distributed to Italian residents throughout Frankfurt, the authors disputed the supposed myth put forth in mainstream media that occupation participants were "terrorists." The title in bold-face read, "The Real Terrorists are the Landlords – the SPD – the City – the Police!!" turning the discourse of violence on its head.[92] Though very few Italians actually occupied in Kettenhofweg – the Häuserrat confirms only four "immigrants" of unknown nationalities took part –another LC communication in Italian tried to connect the failed eviction to the larger housing struggle, relating that "Kettenhofweg's eviction meant a defeat for the whole proletarian movement fighting against high rents and against speculation."[93]

Despite their claims that Italian immigrants took part in attempts to block the police from clearing the occupation, there is not much evidence to suggest that Italians who were less radicalized than those who identified with LC joined in. In fact, LC was often allied more with the *Spontis* or *Revolutionärer Kampf* (RK) than representing large numbers of Italian migrants.

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[91] "Zur Lage der Stadt," *Der private Haus- und Grundbesitz*, July 6, 1973.

[92] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext. V 183/2, "I veri terroristi sono i padroni – l'SPD – il Comune – la polizia!!"

[93] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext. V 183/2, "Dopo 4 ore di battaglia, la polizia non riesce a sgomberare la casa occupata di K 51." For the number of immigrants, see Dokumentation des Häuserrates und des Asta der Universität Frankfurt, *Kettenhofweg 51. Wohnungskämpfe in Frankfurt* (Frankfurt/M, 1973), 7.

Indeed, the UI began to distance itself from occupations it deemed more political in nature. In a statement released both to the press and other organizations in March of 1973, just before the attempted clearings, the UI declared, "We are tenants and nothing else, and as a tenants' union we must organize ourselves as a purely economic special interest group that has nothing to do with political issues." The UI's stance was reprinted and came under stark criticism from RK in their publication, "Wir Wollen Alles." In response to the UI's declaration, the editors wrote, "Anyone who speaks in this way cuts off every opportunity to recognize the political opponents of the tenants and organize together against those who intervene politically…in the economic interests of the landlords. Anyone who speaks in this way blocks initiatives of foreign colleagues who have…come together…through practical political experience in the tenant struggle."[94] Note the number of times the article refers to tenants' motivations and actions as political, illuminating the prevalent concept that the personal was not only political, but something to be radicalized. It is also notable that RK accused UI of blocking the initiatives of foreign colleagues even though RK's participants were primarily native-born West Germans. The tensions foregrounded in the article thus underscore the antagonism that existed among many of the groups who supported and/or claimed to be allied with migrants who took part in housing activism.

Notwithstanding the fact that UI supported actions did indeed result in political consequences, particularly in terms of social policy, the shift in housing occupations' motivations and outcomes when led by those with seemingly more confrontational agendas meant that the UI needed to create some distance to demonstrate their receptivity to reform. As a spokesperson for the UI related to the *FR*, likely referencing street confrontation as a tactic: "We

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[94] "Wir wollen Alles," 1:(2), March 19, 1973. The word "Interessenvertretung" is difficult to translate here as it does not have quite the same connotation as U.S. special interest groups, rather signifies more an agency that is representative of a group's interests.

differentiate between protest methods and protest goals, and that means that at times we are forced to accept compromises."[95] In turn, the city's housing office signaled a similar willingness to work with the UI while distancing itself "sharply" from the Häuserrat as a result of Kettenhofweg, according to reporters at the *FR*. In the midst of the public turmoil surrounding the multiple eviction attempts, the housing director Mr. Zeyen negotiated with the UI and Italian immigrants over the rent strike at Eschersheimer Landstrasse 220 to procure social housing for some of the Italian tenants while extending a stay of eviction for three additional months.[96]

Mayor Arndt's tendency to authorize the use of force in administering the parameters of the law put a temporary damper on migrant participation in housing occupations. If the mayor was willing to send in the police with firehoses, who was to say that he would not expel any migrant participants from the FRG, as the chief of police had insinuated earlier? For some time, occupations became increasingly politicized (early 1971 through early 1973) and did not last long before the police came to evict in the name of public peace, stability, and order. Arndt's "hard line" also received federal support from Chancellor Willy Brandt, who previously had tried to integrate the student protest movements into mainstream politics and had been openly sympathetic to prior occupations. At the SPD federal party convention in April of 1973, he commented on the situation in Frankfurt, saying that "up until yesterday" he had "thought of our Frankfurt comrades (meaning occupiers) with sympathy" as a whole. His tone then shifted to reiterate that based on the Kettenhofweg occupation, "maintaining the functionality of the state and defending the constitutional order is a duty for us German Social Democrats" and that if someone – in this case Mayor Arndt – was "forced to make tough or unpopular decisions in the

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[95] Marlies Nehrstede, "Wieder eingeweisen, aber nur bis Mai: Stadt bemüht sich um Sozialwohnungen für Mietstreiker," *FR*, March 28, 1973.
[96] Marlies Nehrstede, "Wieder eingeweisen, aber nur bis Mai: Stadt bemüht sich um Sozialwohnungen für Mietstreiker," *FR*, March 28, 1973.

service of these tasks, they were "entitled to their solidarity."[97] In contrast to his prior political strategy to adapt and absorb, or potentially at least compromise with oppositional groups, the chancellor's support of "tough or unpopular decisions" underscores national preoccupations with internal security and public order and the threat of domestic unrest.

Recognition: From Co-Occupiers to Migrant-Initiated Occupations

As exhibited by the Grünebergweg and Kettenhofweg clearings, the increase in violence as well as the perception of housing occupations being more "political" meant that the risk in pursuing this form of collective action increased exponentially in the space of about two years. However, some Italian migrants' precarious living conditions were so dismal, they felt they had no other recourse than occupying. This section examines the actions of Italian tenants who lived in house 35 of Bettinastraße, paying particular attention to how they independently initiated many forms of collective protest rather than being considered co-occupiers of a West German-led demonstration. Though other politicized organizations would lend support, the Italian migrants often signaled that they perceived their claims as less "politically" motivated (or at least not motivated by a radicalized strand of politics demonstrated by the *Häuserrat* and others) and gravitated more towards allies deemed less threatening by the city administration, such as the UI and the *Jusos*. Moreover, Bettinastraße residents often couched their justifications on moral grounds – or as a result of immediate physical need. Nonetheless, by demanding a recognition of their socioeconomic standing by asserting their bodies into community spaces and political migrant occupiers' claims had an impact on institutionalized social service practices.[98]

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[97] IfS, Collection: Arndt, Rudi: Nachlass, Subcollection: S1-163/91, "Willi Brandt auf dem Bundesparteitag in Hannover im April 1973."
[98] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 11.

According to a police inspection conducted in 1972, a year prior to the migrants' occupation actions, 62 Italians lived in house 35 of Bettinastraße, 29 of whom were children.[99] The Italian tenants claimed that their apartments were filled with "cockroaches, rats, mice, [and] cracked plaster falling from the ceiling," – conditions that the landlords refused to rectify.[100] In May of 1973, four of the Italian families occupied house number 3 in Leipziger Straße because of these conditions. Their actions were supported by the UI and the *Jusos*, who also pushed for Leipziger Straße to be declared a pedestrian area in order to increase community safety. According to Giuseppe Zambon, the house was owned by a bank and had been kept empty for years, with the plan to tear it down and rebuild. His account is backed by an article in the *FAZ* that reported the property to be owned by the *Frankfurter Sparkasse*, currently the fourth largest savings bank in Germany.[101] Zambon further stated that the migrant families occupied just as it was about to be demolished (which was likely how they were alerted to the fact that it was empty) and that supporters formed a human barrier to prevent a forced clearing.[102]

In contrast to the violence on the streets just months prior surrounding the eviction of the Kettenhofweg occupation, city officials surprisingly agreed to let the Italian families stay. The city decided to take over the property, even though the cost of renovations would be between 90,000 and 100,000 DM (or close to 1.8 million in today's U.S. currency) as the house was currently in a bad state of disrepair, as the more conservative *FAZ* estimated. Still, the Italian occupiers "maintained that the occupied apartments were much better than their previous quarters," in spite of the need for significant improvements.[103] In addition, officials from the

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[99] IfS, Collection: Wohnungsamt. 969. "31 S 13. Polizeirevier: an die Inspektion West."
[100] amatine, *Gender und Häuserkampf*, 17.
[101] "Hausbesetzung in der Leipzigerstraße," *FAZ*, May 21, 1973.
[102] Interview with Giuseppe Zambon, conducted by author in Frankfurt/M on June 20, 2018.
[103] "Hausbesetzung in der Leipzigerstraße," *FAZ*, May 21, 1973.

Italian Consulate arrived on scene to try and find a better housing solution for all families in Bettinastraße 35, not just those who occupied.

Both the conservative *FAZ* and the left-leaning *FR* spotlighted the chief of police as being instrumental in negotiating the compromise. One article, entitled, "Patience Paid Off," reported chief inspector Müller as explaining, "We couldn't just haul women and little kids out of the [occupied] house. We found it more desirable to place it under the jurisdiction of Wohnheim GmbH," or the city-affiliated public housing entity.[104] He also labeled house 35 on Bettinastraße as "unmenschlich," a German word that is used to communicate both the meaning of "unhuman" and "inhumane," thereby accentuating how the Italian migrants' housing fell below a normalized standard of living deemed to be "human." The *FR* even went so far as to assert that the mice within house 35 "nibble on children's fingers," once again marshalling the image of the most vulnerable population to highlight the tenants' precarious position. The image of a benevolent police force coming to the aid of women and children thus contrasts greatly with the violent images of Grünebergweg and Kettenhofweg, as well as the same chief referring to other, generally native-born occupiers as "terrorists." This juxtaposition demonstrates the perceived difference between politics and morality, or the idea that Italian occupiers seemed to be motivated by social need rather than politics as traditionally understood. The Italians' claims to increasingly prevalent ideas of basic human rights – whether purposely done or not and as reified by the police presidents' characterization of their living quarters – further highlighted this apparent difference.

When the promised help of better housing still did not materialize, the rest of the residents of Bettinastraße pursued a milder form of protest: they continued their rent strike. They

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[104] "'Geduld hat sich gelohnt,'" in: *FR,* May 21, 1973.

first reduced their rent price from 800 DM to 450 DM, and then suspended all rent payments. In contrast to the police report in 1972 that documented 62 Italians living in the building, the UI claimed that the number was actually 80; space was so tight that no one had a bed to themselves.[105] When the landlord threatened legal action in response to the Bettinastraße rent strike, the UI issued a statement on their behalf, which declared: "We live in Bettinastraße 35, where the ceilings fall on our heads, where bugs and mice contaminate the house, where the landlord is quietly waiting until the roof collapses."[106] Rather than drawing criticism, the public largely responded in favor of the tenants, notwithstanding their legal status as outsiders. In fact, when the Minister President of the state of Hessen, Albert Osswald, toured the living conditions of Bettinastraße earlier that spring, he stated "we should be ashamed that there is such a thing in our country."[107]

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[105] Hermann Lammert, "Wo Ratten huschen und Kakerlaken kriechen," *FR*, September 30, 1973.
[106] "Wir brauchen keine Luxuswohnungen," in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), August 29, 1973.
[107] "Beschlagnahme leerer Wohnungen gefordern," in: *FR*, August 29, 1973.

. Zehn italienische Familien campierten auf dem Grünstreifen.　(FR-Bild: Winkler)

Figure 4.6 "Ten Italian Families Camp on the Green Median" in the *FR*[108]

In spite of public support, conditions still did not improve quickly for the families living

in Bettinastraße. The majority of Italian families then resolved to visibly protest by taking to the

streets at the end of September. Their protest march grew to over 200 people, the majority of

whom were fellow Italian migrants joined by a small number of *Jusos*. Their goal was to occupy

an undisclosed number of 60 empty luxury condominiums in a newly constructed building in

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[108] "Neue Phase der Hausbesetzungen / Jungsozialisten helfen Italienern," *FR*, August 30, 1973. IfS, Collection:1973: Hausbesetzungen. S3A 11.084. Reproduced with permission.

Nordend, a wealthier part of the city. When police forcibly prevented their entry, the *Jusos*

provided three large tents and a handful of Italian families from Bettinastraße began camping out

in an adjacent park (see Figure 4.6).[109] In a flyer disseminated by the Italians to explain their

actions to the surrounding neighborhood, they outlined their conditions in Bettinastraße in terms

of violations of a normalized basic standard of living: the landlord only provided one toilet for 20

people, there was no electricity or heating, and the walls and floors were constantly damp. Each

family had already spent over 2500 DM of their own money to try and make it more habitable,

with no repairs or improvement from management.[110]

Mr. Korn, the landlord of the luxury apartments in Rothschildallee, issued a financial

explanation to the press as to why 60 apartments were vacant in spite of the housing shortage in

the city. He painted a rather bleak picture, relating that even though he also considered the rental

price of 10 DM per square meter high, he would still lose 400,000 DM a year due to inflation. He

claimed that if the protesters did take over the empty apartments, that his "other tenants will run

away from me."[111] In reporting on the Rothschildallee protest actions, the news publication

"WIR" took care to note that the Italian tenants were currently paying the equivalent of 10 DM

per square meter for much more dismal conditions in streets such as Rotlintstraße.[112] One of

Frankfurt's deputy mayors gave a surprising different response than Rudi Arndt's "hard line" in

dispersing other housing protests led by young West German students and self-identifying

activists. Although deputy mayor Rudi Sölch (SPD) disapproved of the Italians occupying the

green space in front of the luxury housing, he acknowledged "the fact that thousands of new

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[109] "Neue Phase der Hausbesetzungen / Jungsozialisten helfen Italienern," *FR*, August 30, 1973.
[110] IfS, Collection: Wohnungsamt. 969. Flyer, "Schluss mit den Kündigungen!"
[111] "Die Besetzung wurde verhindert," *FNP*, August 29, 1973.
[112] "Ausländer von skrupellosen Wucherern schamlos erpreßt," *WIR*, September 1973. Though I have yet to locate information on "WIR," it appears to be a news organ of the *Jusos* based on tone and information contained.

apartments in Frankfurt are empty 'because of excessive rent.'" He proposed a legislative

solution, describing it as a priority for the SPD to "ensure that such new apartments are also

used."[113] Some news outlets viewed this stance as backpedaling and made their opinions known

to their readers. For instance, the more conservative *FAZ* entitled their article on Sölch's

response as "The Deputy Mayor Applauds the Occupation Attempt," although the substance of

his comments did not seem to communicate support of the actions themselves, rather the need

spurring the migrants' protest.[114]

The next morning was a scene of calm rather than conflict: there were no police

skirmishes, batons, firehoses, or Molotov cocktails. The protesters ate a breakfast of fresh

pretzels, jam, and milk on improvised tables. The *FR* reported that not only did the police

tolerate the demonstration, but even handed over woolen blankets from their stocks so that the

children could camp out in greater comfort.[115] By that afternoon, the twenty Italian migrants

agreed to take their ten children back to Bettinastraße 35 in return for the city administration's

promise to help rectify their living situation. They were assisted by the UI and the *Jusos* as they

made their way back to their apartments to await more concrete aid.[116] Similar to the occupation

in Leipziger Straße, city officials indicated a willingness to work with collective action that they

perceived conducted out of social need.

However, it appears that some residents of Bettinastraße were not willing to wait for aid

from the city administration or the Italian consulate, perhaps wary after they had been made

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[113] "Der Bürgermeister applaudiert dem Versuch einer Hausbesetzung," *FAZ*, August 30, 1973. Frankfurt am Main was (and is) such a large city that it was administered by multiple deputy mayors under the leadership of one Oberbürgermeister, or "Lord Mayor." Even though Rudi Arndt was the Oberbürgermeister, then, he was assisted by other Bürgermeistern.

[114] "Der Bürgermeister applaudiert dem Versuch einer Hausbesetzung," *FAZ*, August 30, 1973.

[115] "Neue Phase der Hausbesetzungen" / Jungsozialisten helfen Italienern," *FR*, August 30, 1973.

[116] "Protestcamper in der Rothschildallee: Stadt sagt bedrängten Familien Hilfe zu / Zurück ins alte Haus," *FAZ*, August 30, 1973.

similar promises without seeing definitive action. On September 3, 1973, just a few days after

the Rothschildallee resolution, seven of the families hauled mattresses and a television to occupy

houses 5 and 7 of Friesengasse. When reported by the *FR*, the newspaper made it clear that the

Italians did so independently, without informing any organizations which promoted or supported

occupations. Furthermore, both the *FAZ* and the *FR* emphasized the occupiers' nationality in

their news articles on the event, publishing the titles, "Italians Occupy a House in Bockenheim"

and "Italians Occupy Houses in Friesengasse," respectively. One of the Italian women who

spoke with the *FR* related their impatience, saying, "We couldn't live one more day in

Bettinastraße. When I prepared my husband's breakfast in the evening, the rats had already eaten

it by morning."[117] Her comments highlight how she (or the news reporters) utilized the

traditional association between home and motherhood to present her claims as moral, and less

disruptive to public order than student-led occupations. She appeared to be advocating for the

best interests of her husband (and by default her children), a register which many readers may

have interpreted as "apolitical." In addition to speaking with the press, the occupiers hung sheets

from the windows on Friesengasse that declared, "This house is occupied. Four families from

Bettinastraße 35 do not want to be eaten by mice any longer," again emphasizing the conditions

of their previous quarters as their motivation, rather than any anti-authoritarian or a differently

oppositional politics.[118] After lengthy negotiations with city officials, the landlord Israel Orgler

agreed to allow two of the families with the most need to stay on for four months, and the Social

Affairs Director Martin Berg promised the Italian families in Bettinastraße 35 that "they would

get better living spaces within three months," offering a more definitive timeline. This report,

published by the *FNP*, underscored that this occupation again "ended without a major

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[117] "Italiener besetzten Häuser in der Friesengasse," *FR*, September 3, 1973.
[118] "Italiener besetzen Haus in Bockenheim," *FAZ*, September 3, 1973.

confrontation with the police," making clear the differentiation between threatening and non-threatening collective action.[119]

The *FNP*'s conclusions about conflict proved to be short-lived once more radical groups became involved. Within a matter of days, Friesengasse 5-7 was again occupied, this time by a mixture of Italian migrant and West German individuals and families. According to a leaflet distributed about the second occupation, groups such as the *Häuserrat*, the university's AStA, and *Lotta Continua* contributed to this subsequent attempt. This time, municipal authorities quickly changed their stance toward the occupiers. The same Social Affairs Director who had promised the Bettinastraße inhabitants better housing conditions, Mr. Berg, labeled the occupiers "troublemakers" and declared that anyone who occupied "must be prepared to take responsibility" for their actions. He cautioned that one cannot assume that doing so would get them "social housing faster" when 3,000 families had been waiting for an availability, some for years.[120] Police also posted notices on the occupied buildings, one dated September 11, 1973, warning migrant occupiers of the possible ramifications of their actions. The official warnings invoked the 1965 Foreigner Act and EEC agreements as legal justification:

> A foreigner who wishes to remain in the Federal Republic of Germany must be able to support himself and his family members from his own means. This includes adequate housing. This policy is also in accordance with Article 7 of the Law on Entry and Residence of Nationals of the Member States of the European Economic Community (AufenthG / EEC) of July 22, 1969 and the corresponding directives of the Council of the EEC. Since you have not rented a suitable apartment and are illegally staying in a house according to police findings, you do not meet the requirements for a foreigner to reside in the federal territory. If you do not immediately remedy the current illegal situation, the authorities are obliged to maintain public safety and order, in accordance with Article 12 Paragraph 1, Residence Permit/EEC, restrictive measures according to Article 7 of the Foreigners Act of April 28, 1965, and, if necessary, may carry out your eviction and deportation.[121]

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[119] "Nur zwei Familien konnten bleiben," *FNP*, September 3, 1973.
[120] "Berg: Hausbesetzung war das Werk von Unruhestiftern," *FNP*, September 4, 1973.
[121] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext. V 183/14.

The consequences of migrants' protests actions were thus much higher than those of native-born occupiers. Based on their difference in nationality, they could potentially be removed from the FRG as a result of their instigation of or participation in housing occupations. Italian migrants' status as EEC citizens did not offer any sort of special protection from deportation either, as they were found in violation of EEC residency agreements.

On this occasion, instead of offering state aid, the police forcibly cleared the house of the "five Italian and German families" who were residing within, though there is no evidence that the Italian occupiers were deported. With nowhere else to go, the recently evicted tenants pitched tents in front of Friesengasse 5-7 until the police threatened to break up the makeshift camp with firehoses. The politicized organizations who supported the occupiers published their response in another flyer distributed throughout the neighborhood, claiming that the camp was disbanded by authorities early in the morning so that "residents should not see what 'social democratic politics' is," launching a criticism of what they viewed as the SPD's strongarm tactics of repression in spite of their promises of social progress.[122] The same authors also disseminated another pamphlet highlighting the seeming contradictions that guest workers faced in the FRG. They described migrants being "stuck into holes [for housing] and then told that they would kindly need to look after the decent apartments. If you are out of work, you will not get any housing, if you don't have a [suitable] apartment, you will not get a residence permit."[123] In essence, migrants were often relegated to the least desirable rentals because there was not enough decent affordable housing to go around, yet migrants were at risk for losing their ability to work in the FRG due to their inability to provide themselves and their families with adequate

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[122] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext. V 183/14, "Arbeiterfamilien auf die Straße gesetzt."

[123] IfS, Collection: Wohnraumkonflikte; Untersuchungen zu Arbeitsplatzsituationen im polit. Kontext. V 183/14, "Frankfurt. Die Stadt."

living spaces. To put it more succinctly, migrants experienced sociopolitical induced precarity, while that very precarity disqualified them from the economic opportunities to remedy their marginalized circumstances.

This close examination of the Italian migrant tenants of Bettinastraße and how their collective actions were received illustrates the differentiation city administrators made as they responded to occupation attempts. When it was clear that the migrants were acting out of social need and were supported by known entities with whom officials had a working relationship, such as the UI or the *Jusos*, social services generally became involved to find a solution for the tenants' "unhuman" living circumstances. On the other hand, once more threatening politicized groups became involved, namely the *Häuserrat* and *Lotta Continua*, city officials continued to pursue a course of clearing the occupation attempts or ensuing protests, reminding the migrant participants that their actions could result in deportation. In spite of the uneven nature of the SPD leadership's reaction, their willingness to tap into social services and find other means to allocate vacant apartments throughout the city served as a precursor to some larger legislative changes.

Conclusion

In addition to catalyzing temporary solutions and social changes, such as those outlined above, migrants' actions and public performances also influenced longer-lasting legislative reforms spearheaded by SPD mayors Walter Möller and Rudi Arndt. In the midst of the early occupations and following news coverage of migrants' disparate living circumstances, Mayor Möller altered Frankfurt's municipal code to establish parameters for housing non-West German workers in 1971, such as the amount of square meters should be allotted per person in each accommodation. Around this same time, the mayor directed that a "Working Group for Questions Regarding Foreigners" (*Arbeitsgruppe für Ausländerfragen*) be created to "advise the

city government on all issues related to the care of foreign workers and their integration into the Frankfurt resident population." Such issues included how information was communicated between the working group and migrant associations, including more migrant representation in local political decisions and the establishment of information centers. The working group also sought to address "the improvement of living conditions" and "cultural and school issues."[124] Though it would take many years for federal policy to shift toward strategies of integration (indeed, throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s the FRG attempted to enact policies that limited the number of immigrants or encouraged those already present to return home due to economic downturns), this working group signals that certain cities with higher migrant populations already began to consider ways to better care for immigrants rather than dismiss their presence as wholly temporary.

Mayor Möller also launched a campaign to institute housing changes at the federal level, which culminated in new *Guidelines for the Accommodation of Foreign Employees* issued by the Federal Ministry for Work and Social affairs on April 1, 1971.[125] The language of the new guidelines indicates that they were issued to "help adapt the accommodation of foreign workers to modern housing hygiene requirements." Specific provisions dictated that the walls and roof must be weatherproof, the type of heating that was required to be available, and that each person was required to have at least 8 m^2 of space to prevent overcrowding. In contrast to the accommodations at Philipp Holzmann discussed in chapter one, the new guidelines also required there be one shower for every twenty residents, "one urinal and one toilet seat" for every ten

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[124] As quoted in Ernst Karpf, *Eine Stadt und ihre Einwanderer*, 177-178.
[125] Raika Espahangizi, "Migration and Urban Transformations: Frankfurt in the 1960s and 1970s," in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, 1 (2014): 197.

men, and "one toilet seat for every eight women."[126] Although it is clear that these directives

were mostly applicable to shared company housing, it set a standard for migrant housing more

generally. Albeit an improvement, many politicians claimed it did not go far enough, declaring

that the revisions did not correspond to the image of the Republic as a modern state.

It must be noted that both politicians and the official federal guidelines referenced the

term "modern" as a descriptor of what they perceived their nation-state to be. In many ways,

modernity was very tied to ideas of progress that were visibly manifested in consumption

patterns and improved standards of living in the decades following the Second World War.[127]

The idea that residents within their nation-state, regardless of not being formalized citizens, lived

in conditions that did not meet a broadly accepted standard of living was thus alarming to many

state actors. The increasing awareness that residents and officials alike expressed can also be

viewed as a partial legacy of the 1968 movements which sought to create new subjectivities and

generate higher levels of empathy for others as part of their aims to argue for autonomy and

support for the Third World in opposition to imperial movements.[128] In addition, migrant

housing conditions highlighted socioeconomic inequalities that the SPD in particular had sought

to even out through their social programs. Increasingly, then, policy makers began to connect

social services to those previously considered "guests" outside of the purview of the umbrella of

the social state. Though it is difficult to measure the degree to which migrants' claims to decent

housing directly influenced these changes, they provided the means for migrants to begin to be

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[126] "Richtlinien für die Unterkünfte ausländischer Arbeitnehmer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Vom 29. März 1971," (Federal Gazette 1971, Nr. 63, page 2), https://www.zoll.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Links-fuer-Inhaltseiten/Fachthemen/Arbeit/rl_unterkuenfte_auslaendische_arbeitnehmer.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4, accessed February 16, 2021.
[127] For a brief overview, I recommend Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000: Recovery and Transformation after Two World Wars*, translated by Liesel Tarquini (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 62-86.
[128] See Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).

recognized and treated as urban citizens rather than temporary workers whose socioeconomic needs could be swept to the margins.

Under the leadership of Rudi Arndt, Frankfurt officials also enacted new laws and protections for renters the following year. On July 31, 1972, the city of Frankfurt passed an act entitled "Municipal Measures to Safeguard the Social Responsibility of Real Estate." Article 6 specifically prohibited "Zweckentfremdung" – the use or intention to use property that had previously served as housing for purposes other than living spaces.[129] This measure was meant to prohibit cases such as Eppsteiner Straße, Corneliussstraße, Liebigstraße, or Bettinastraße from happening – that is when developers bought old apartment buildings and let them further deteriorate in order to demolish them and build new offices, businesses, or even luxury housing at the cost of displacing reasonable accommodation. The article defined Zweckentfremdung as consisting of leaving residences empty, "willful actions of making living space uninhabitable," and "destruction, especially demolition of housing." Any landlord or owner in violation of these provisions was subject to up to 20,000 DM in fines. Most important for migrants, though, was paragraph four of this same act. Recognizing that the fear of legal proceedings and possible expulsion often prevented foreigners from filing a claim against inflated rent or the destruction of housing, Frankfurt created an exception to circumvent the 1965 Foreigner Law or EEC stipulations that foreigners must provide themselves and their dependents with adequate housing or face deportation. According to the new act, if a migrant were involved in litigation concerning their living quarters, "expulsion orders against such foreigners may not be based on knowledge or evidence that has only been obtained through [said] litigation."[130]

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[129] Rudolf Heinrich Appel, *Frankfurt am Main: Stadtentwicklung und Wohnprobleme*, Frankfurt/M: Franz Jos. Henrich KG 1974, 96-102. Commissioned by the Press and Information Department of the City of Frankfurt.
[130] IfS, Collection: 1970-1974 City Acts.

Frankfurt's new legislation had mixed results. The Hessian Minister of the Interior – the province to which Frankfurt belonged – voiced his concern over the legality of a city interfering with federal laws concerning foreigners. On November 17, 1972, he wrote: "Increasing legal measures against rent abuse is appropriate. However, this cannot be done by violating the Foreigner Law. Most foreigners paying exorbitant rents are usually those persons who have entered federal territory illegally…"[131] In this statement, he associated criminality with migrants forced to pay high rent prices, making an assumption that only those illegally within the republic were constrained to pay such sums. In an effort to assist the city administration, though, the Minister proposed granting a "toleration certificate" to any illegal residents who participated in legal proceedings concerning their living space. The only problem is that these toleration certificates were usually brief in duration. Moreover, as Italians were EEC citizens, the question of legally being in the country would not have applied to them.

After the Bettinastraße tenants' actions in Leipzigerstraße, Rothschildallee, and Friesengasse, the city's Housing Office finally sent inspectors to write up a report on the premises to determine whether the owners could be charged with Zweckentfremdung. Detailing conditions floor by floor, the inspection relayed unsafe living conditions, such as "The kitchen is very damp, water stains on the ceiling, badly worn, windows permeable. There is water in the toilet because the pressure valves are leaking…the electrical lines are in poor condition."[132] It took about five more years, but eventually the city charged the landlord of Bettinastraße with

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[131] IfS, Collection: 1970-1974 City Acts.
[132] IfS, Collection: Wohnungsamt. 969. "Liegenschaft Frankfrut a.M., Bettinastraße 35 hier: Überprüfung am 17.9.1973."

"Zweckentfremdung," according to city records, in part because the landowners had additionally rented out part of the property as a residential office.[133]

Apart from pursuing legal action, the city administration continued to allot social housing to migrant tenants. We know this to be the case for both rent strikers and housing occupiers. For instance, the Italians on rent strike in Escherheimer Landstraße 220 were granted apartments on April 16, 1973;[134] the Italian tenants who had first refused to pay rent while residing in Ulmenstrasse 20 for roughly two years were also promised social housing in that same spring.[135] Meanwhile, Italian occupiers in Corneliusstraße, Liebigstraße, Leipziger Straße, Friesengasse, and those who protested in front of Rothschildallee were all promised state assistance in procuring housing as well, while those in Eppsteinerstraße 47 were permitted to stay on. One may be tempted to point out that these allocations occurred before the "Anwerbestopp" or the stoppage of migrant labor recruitment at the end of 1973. In part due to the global oil crisis caused by an embargo by OAPEC or perhaps because it served as a "useful occasion to check the influx of foreign workers and reduce their numbers," the FRG issued an official halt to any new non-EEC migrant workers entering the country.[136] Though the workers did decrease in number, the total migrant population within the FRG actually continued to rise as those already in West Germany had to decide whether to return home or send for their families and remain in the FRG for a lengthier period rather than risk not being able to re-enter the country should they go home.

In spite of federal trends to limit the number of immigrants entering the country, aid for those who resided within its bounds actually increased, as is manifest by access to social

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[133] IfS, Collection: Wohnungsamt. 969. "Liegenschaft Frankfurt am Main, Bettinastr. 35-37: Verbot der Zweckentfremdung von Wohnraum."

[134] "Schallplatte über den Wohnungskampf: Mietstreik in Eschersheimer Landstraße ein 'Teilsieg,'" *FR*, April 16, 1973.

[135] "Francoforte," *il giornale dell'Unione Inquilini* 3, n. 3 (April-May 1973), 10.

[136] Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/Guest Workers*, translated by William Templer (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press), 234.

housing. According to information from Frankfurt's Housing Office, by participating in a federal

government social housing program for "foreign workers" the department allotted 350 public

housing apartments to immigrants in 1973, 800 in 1974, and 548 of an anticipated 1,300 by June

of 1975.[137] The fact that the city offered little to no state housing aid prior to 1973 and

progressed to allotting over one thousand apartments to immigrants two years later is a

staggering example of city officials' shift in mentality. No longer were guest workers relegated

to the margins of social services and practices, but began to be integrated into the systems from

which they had previously been excluded based on their lack of formal (and social) citizenship.

In Judith Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, she makes the

following observation about housing:

> …no one person suffers a lack of shelter without there being a social failure to organize
> shelter in such a way that it is accessible to each and every person… This means that in
> some of our most vulnerable experiences of social and economic deprivation, what is
> revealed is not only our precariousness as individual persons…but also the failures and
> inequalities of socioeconomic and political institutions.[138]

Migrant tenants in this chapter physically gathered together on the streets and in occupied

buildings in order to highlight the "failures and inequalities of socioeconomic and political

institutions" in the areas and moment in which they lived. In contrast to other protesters whose

actions were largely viewed as a threat to public order, migrant occupiers' claims were (perhaps

reluctantly) received by both city administrators and large portions of the public. The end result

was that some of these socioeconomic institutions – in particular housing and social services –

shifted to rectify said failures and inequalities. By so doing, administrators and city leadership

acknowledged that migrant residents were "deserving" of some of the rights and privileges of

citizenship, despite their lack of formal citizenship status, showing how localized entities came

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[137] Ernst Karpf, *Eine Stadt und ihre Einwanderer*, 323, footnote 160.
[138] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 22.

to begin to acknowledge the FRG as a country of immigration even if that categorization was

rhetorically denied for many years to follow.

CHAPTER FIVE

Demanding Access to Social Services: The Falchera and Other Housing Occupations in Turin

Figure 5.1 Plaque Commemorating Tonino Miccichè[1]

If one takes a tram to the northern outskirts of Turin and then walks east for a time, they

will end up at an expansive cluster of apartment buildings seemingly cut off from the rest of city

life. The community center is full of broken windows and still holds the black remnants of a fire

that once destroyed most of its interior. On one particular building, there is a small plaque that is

easy to miss if one does not know where to look for it (Figure 5.1). It commemorates the death of

Tonino Miccichè, "militant of *Lotta Continua*, immigrant from Sicily, vanguard of the struggle at

Fiat, fired in retaliation, leader of the fight for housing at the Falchera." Known as the "Mayor of

the Falchera," Tonino led an occupation of over 600 households in the Falchera neighborhood

and spearheaded negotiations with city administrators until he was shot in April of 1975. His

legacy looms large, as seen by the language used to describe him on the placard that depicts him

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[1] Photograph taken by author, January 2018.

as a hero of the disadvantaged. Though his death was a tragedy for all who knew him, it also represented a turning point for marginalized groups of tenants seeking to obtain decent housing for themselves and/or their families.

In contrast to housing occupations in Frankfurt, which mainly took place in privately-owned buildings, most occupations in Turin centered on public housing blocks. By assembling their bodies in residential spaces owned and managed by state-affiliated entities, occupiers in Turin exercised a "collective and performative" action that underscored the inequities of the administration of the welfare state even more directly than the measures their compatriots' took in the FRG.[2] As formal citizens of Italy, southern Italian migrants and other marginalized residents theoretically had a claim to housing assistance from the start, but those channels were riddled with inefficiency and a lack of apartments and funding to fulfill the social state's promises to deliver a certain standard of living. As occupiers disputed their exclusion from housing access, city administrators were thus placed in a predicament as occupiers' claims illuminated the deficiencies of the new republic's social service administration.[3] Due to its sheer size, the Falchera occupation in particular stood as a symbol of larger socioeconomic crises Turin city officials faced in the mid-1970s.

This chapter first examines smaller occupations that preceded the Falchera occupation in order to understand who was taking part in that particular form of collective action and the city administration's initial responses. The second section centers on the Falchera occupation; it is broken into several subsections that evaluate how occupiers addressed immediate needs, relationships with those who had legally been assigned an apartment within the occupied

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[2] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2015), 11.
[3] Kathleen Canning, "Reflections on the Vocabulary of Citizenship," in Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 216

buildings, and the involvement of outside groups. The third section shifts to the perspective of city representatives, their debates over "legitimate" and "illegitimate" claimants on the welfare state, and discord over how to resolve the housing crisis that plagued the industrial center. The tragic killing of Tonino Miccichè is central to the fourth section which demonstrates how his death served as a turning point, namely a change in city leadership to a new leftist administration that worked to fulfill the terms of a previously broken agreement between occupiers and governing officials. The chapter then concludes with a brief overview of some of the outcomes of the Falchera and other occupations, including reforms to who and how one accessed state aid. Along with obtaining concrete social services, I view the city administration's overtures as steps toward a social recognition of marginalized residents in Turin – or an acknowledgement that one's precarious socioeconomic situation or status as immigrant should not bar individuals and families from securing "basic" human needs.

Establishing a Precedent of Collective Action: Occupations from 1970 - 1974

Prior to the occupation at the Falchera in Turin, the city experienced numerous smaller occupations on the northwest and southern outskirts of the city beginning the same year that Eppsteiner Straße 47 was occupied in Frankfurt. Occupiers used the action of occupation to protest the perceived inequity of the housing market and the seemingly ineffective process for receiving state housing assistance. Many of them were migrants from the south, and were thus also limited by discriminatory rental practices within the private housing sector. Drawing on strategies from labor movements and the newly active *comitati di quartiere*, *meridionali* took their grievances into IACP (*Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari*, Autonomous Public Housing Institute) apartments to highlight that existing public housing policy was inadequate to cover the needs of all Turinese residents.

Nearly 400 people occupied 60 apartments in via Sansovino in January of 1970 (see

Figure 5.2) in buildings designated as public housing but which were not yet completed.

According to historian Elena Petricola, the occupiers came from decommissioned barracks – a

"remnant of the postwar period" – in Venaria, a neighborhood on the northwest fringes of the

city.[4] Being unfinished, the IACP apartments the occupiers took over lacked heating and glass in

the windows. Nonetheless, *La Stampa* reported that the "immigrants mostly from the south"

brought in mattresses to "sleep side by side, completely dressed, to combat the freezing cold."[5]

When reporters asked several families why they decided to brave such conditions, interviewees

couched their explanations in terms of an inability to procure desirable housing due to their

socioeconomic status. Most families related they "cannot rent anywhere because we have too

many children," or that rent prices were too high for their salaries.[6] Another *La Stampa* article

referred to their claim to improved housing as "the scream and fury of the barracks," tapping into

an almost animalized image of other-than-human beings demanding one of the most basic needs

for human life, shelter.[7]

In response to the occupiers in via Sansovino, city officials sent 600 police officers to try

and clear the occupation in the name of public safety and because the occupiers had no legal

claim to the apartments.[8] In an action that illustrates the desperate situation the occupiers found

themselves in, one woman in via Sansovino climbed to the top of a balcony and threatened to

jump if police came any closer. She apparently stayed there for two days and two nights until

[4] Elena Petricola, *I diritti degli esclusi nelle lotte degli anni settanta. Lotta Continua* (Rome: Edizioni Associate Editrice Internazionale, 2002), 193-194.

[5] "Ancora occupati i sessanta alloggi di via Sansovino," *La Stampa*, January 13, 1970.

[6] "Le case popolari occupate di forza," *La Stampa*, January 14, 1970.

[7] Elena Petricola, *I diritti degli esclusi*, 193; "Ancora occupati i sessanta alloggi di via Sansovino," *La Stampa*, January 13, 1970.

[8] Di Guido Piraccini, Eugenio Musso, and Ricardo Roscelli, "Cronaca delle lotte per la casa nei quartieri di Torino (gennaio-agosto 1970)," in Adreina Daolio, ed., *Le lotte per la casa in Italia: Milano, Torino, Roma, Napoli*, 2nd ed. (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976), 70.

city representatives agreed to provide 68 apartments at 7,000 lire in rent for the occupiers.[9] In this case, the woman's precarious position on the edge of the balcony literally embodied what she viewed as the very real threat of death and the perceived failing of the welfare state in protecting and providing for its citizens.
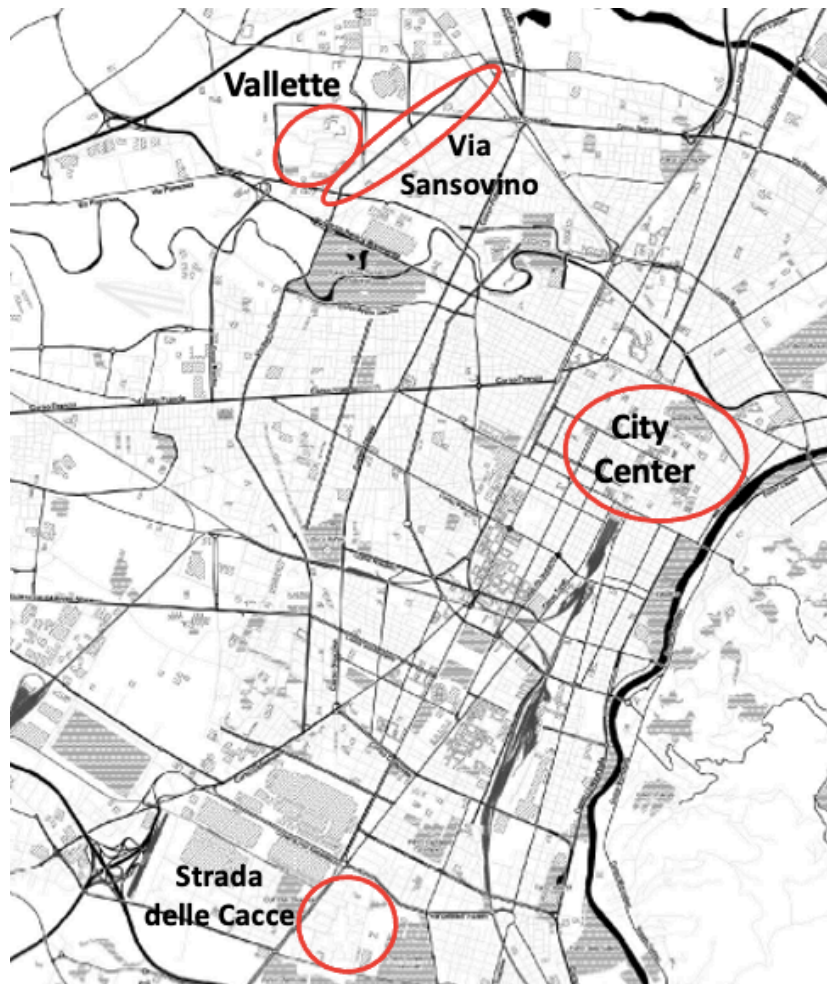
Figure 5.2 Map of Smaller Occupations in Turin[10]

In a nearby occupation just two years later in the Vallette neighborhood (see Figure 5.2), three women gave *La Stampa* similar reasons for occupying. Vicenza, mother of four children including one with significant mental and physical challenges, replied, "I was in a studio in via

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[9] "Andate via o mi butto," *La Stampa*, January 15, 1970.
[10] Map created by author using QGIS open software and Microsoft Office.

Plano, I paid 25,000 lire a month in addition to heating. I cannot pay that amount – my husband is in the hospital. When I heard that there were empty houses here, I came." Vincenza justified her actions by pointing out that she had previously contributed to the housing economy by paying 25,000 lire in rent. In 1970, the average industry laborer earned roughly 120,000 lire a month, or just shy of $1,300 dollars in today's U.S. currency, meaning that Vincenza's family paid the equivalent of $273 in rent for their small apartment prior to utilities. When they lost a wage earner due to her husband's illness, Vincenza could no longer make ends meet. Another female occupier related that a small child died from cold and unsanitary conditions in her prior living space, spurring her to join the occupation. A third woman, Irma, who was 19 years old and pregnant, described sleeping in the same bed as her mother-in-law and choosing to occupy so she could have space for a proper bed.[11] In the two latter examples, the women used unhygienic, uncomfortable, and unsafe circumstances as preconditions for their claims. Moreover, the direct or implied reference to children and their role as caregivers made by all three women communicated their claims in familiar registers. Though their actions went against normalized standards of behavior, the claim to be acting on behalf of their children (both born and unborn) came off as apolitical and in service of providing their dependents with "basic" needs.

Vincenza, Irma, and their co-protesters were not as fortunate in obtaining the promise of state aid as the prior via Sansovino occupation. Vincenza claimed that she was "beaten" by police in the course of the eviction. Other occupiers showed reporters "torn clothes, torn buttons, and a few scratches on the face" in response to police denial of violence.[12] Perhaps in an act of emotional appeal, a local communist "gray" newspaper labeled the eviction an "attack." In their article, male occupiers asserted that the police held them back while the women were beaten and

[11] "Sgombero alle Vallette delle due case occupate," *La Stampa*, February 13, 1973.
[12] "Sgombero alle Vallette delle due case occupate," *La Stampa*, February 13, 1973.

"children snatched from their hands." Editors thus implied that the police violated cultural norms by enacting violence on more vulnerable populations, emasculating the male onlookers as a result. At the very least, occupiers' comments reflected a mistrust of local authorities. One man related "we went to the city, to the province, everywhere: no one can do anything for us – their words are empty promises and other traps."[13] On a separate occasion, one woman claimed that she had written to "the mayor, the prefect, the President of the Republic, and even the Pope" who replied that "there are no apartments available."[14] In their remarks to reporters (or according to the reporters' own interpretation), occupiers seemingly placed the failure to provide on the shoulders of government representatives. They chose to instead guarantee their own perceived rights through occupation, rather than wait on official channels to receive the material protections promised by social state and owed to them as humans. In this instance, however, state actors refused to recognize the validity of their claim.

After these initial occupations, housing conditions and availability in Turin only continued to deteriorate, and some residents continued to turn to occupation as a means to communicate their discontent with the lack of social services. In September of 1974, a large block of buildings near some of Fiat's automobile plants were occupied in Strada delle Cacce (see Figure 5.2). The number of occupiers quickly rose to over 1300 people. A young woman named Rosa also threatened to throw herself from the balcony if police came to evict. Rosa had already been occupying another apartment for ten months after living in an old warehouse with her family prior to that. Rosa, however, was not the one who lost her life; instead a young child

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[13] "Il quartiere ghetto delle vallette: Un'esperienza di lotta per la casa a Torino," *La rivista Rosso*, no. 1, vol. 1., March 19, 1973.

[14] MP, Collection: A. Ricci, Subcollection: 002,18, File: "Significativa vittoria a Salerno: Gli occupanti di Santa Margherita hanno ottenuto le case," *Avanguardia Operaia* 4 (October 11, 1974): 14.

died that September from a respiratory illness due to the cold conditions.[15] To protest her death, occupiers took over city hall. Diego Novelli, who was a city representative at the time and would later become the mayor, recalled that "[a]t the end of the courtyard they had placed a fake coffin covered with plastic flowers: the allusion to the death…of a girl from a family who illegally occupied an accommodation without any services, heating and even glass…was evident."[16] Occupiers used religious and moral connotations about death and the innocence of the vulnerable (the child) to lend weight to their claims about the injustice of current housing policies. This demonstration emphasized that their occupation was not about matters of comfort, but the basic necessities of sustaining life – underscoring the failure of the promised safety net of the social state to protect them. That they would go to such lengths as to take over town hall further symbolized their dissatisfaction with the officials who claimed to represent them, embodying a performance of self-representation in a system that did not deliver what they perceived as their right.

By this time, it was clear to residents and municipal officials that the IACP was struggling to provide public housing anywhere sufficient to Turin's needs. Yet city officials continued to deflect responsibility, pointing to federal or regional foibles and the burden of immigration as the motivating forces behind the strain on social services. The mayor of Turin and a member of the Christian Democratic Party (DC), Giovanni Picco, continued to defend the IACP, pointing to the fact that the public entity had completed 1500 apartments between 1972 and 1973, and provided another 2400 in 1974 alone. Yet, in the same municipal council, he admitted this was hardly a drop when Turin received over 40,000 new immigrants per year.[17]

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[15] "Un episodio della 'guerra dei poveri' nel quartiere Mirafiori," *La Stampa*, September 28, 1974.
[16] Piero Giordanino, *Diego Novelli: Lettere al Sindaco* (Turin: Societa' editrice internazionale, 1979), 7.
[17] ASdC, Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 21, 1974.

While his comments acknowledge several failings on behalf of the administration of social services at the local and regional level, the mayor still pinned the dearth of living spaces on the arrival of immigrants. His language implied that immigrants were the ones responsible for exhausting social services, reifying their second-class position within society. Instead of portraying immigrants as members of society who had and were contributing to Turin's growing industry, he characterized them as parasites who drained Turin's resources.

At a conference for the local labor unions in 1974, the president of the IACP, Mario Dezani, blamed both local and national politics for public housing's supposed shortcomings. He claimed that the national subsidy for housing for the entire Piedmont region amounted to 63 billion lire, an "absolutely negligible figure for the metropolitan area of Turin alone." He also detailed the "painful and long bureaucratic procedure" to access said funds as another factor for the low numbers of new public housing apartments per capita.[18] In spite of the justifications issued by both the mayor and the president of the IACP, very real fissures became more and more visible in the Italian welfare state; fissures that housing occupations cast into even sharper relief.

Initial occupations in Turin did not lead to long-lasting housing reforms, nor to a change in socioeconomic status for migrant occupiers. Instead, these smaller occupations led to tensions over the role of the city in providing for its residents, particularly when large corporations (such as Fiat) had used official measures to recruit a large migrant labor force. When immigrant workers and families then found conditions wanting, they couched their claims to housing and recognition as economic contributors in terms of injustice, as manifest by very potent symbols of

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[18] IG, Collection: Camera Confederale del Lavoro di Torino, C.1.7., Folder: 132, File 9: 1974, dated May 15, 1974.

death. Though the city did provide housing for occupiers in via Sansovino, it was a temporary fix to a particular situation, rather than a recognition of migrant occupiers' assertions.

The Falchera Occupation (October 1974)

Though the Falchera occupation did not earn its fame by being the first occupation in Turin, as was the case with Eppsteiner Straße in Frankfurt, it does have the distinction of being Turin's largest occupation. More so than the occupations that preceded it, the Falchera occupation sparked significant discussion in the papers, in the factories, and on the streets. In so doing, Falchera occupiers raised questions about social services, the process for assigning public housing, and who had a "right to the city." Falchera occupiers took over spaces emblematic of the social state, positioning themselves in relation to other residents and "relevant instances of governmentality," namely access to social services.[19] Placards announcing "Prohibited to Rent to Southerners" would begin to diminish as Turin became the third largest city in Italy composed of inhabitants of southern origin, trumped only by Naples and Palermo.[20] For many immigrant participants, the occupied apartments symbolized more than shelter, but also a recognition of their rights and privileges as formal and sociocultural citizens, regardless of their point of origin.

This overarching section is divided into three subsections to give a window into daily life and interpersonal relationships in an occupation that comprised its own neighborhood. The first subsection examines how occupiers addressed immediate needs, such as organization, access to water, and protection. The second subsection examines tensions between occupiers who took over apartments without legal authorization, and other low socioeconomic status residents who had been assigned one of the Falchera apartments by the IACP – spurring debates that took place both locally and in public and political circles. The final subsection addresses "outsiders" who

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[19] Canning, "Reflections on the Vocabulary of Citizenship," 4.
[20] Giordanino, *Diego Novelli*, 9.

became involved in the occupation in the form of extraparliamentary groups, including women from the nascent second-wave feminist movement – allies who both aided and interfered with occupiers' preferred modes of living and desired outcomes.

Moving In: The Daily Challenges of the Falchera Occupation

As manifest by previous smaller occupations throughout the city, the IACP was hampered by limited access to funds and slow bureaucratic processes, limiting the number of public housing apartments built in Turin. Their problems were further compounded when its president, Mario Dezani, died in July of 1974 from complications of an "incurable disease;" one that some claimed had negatively affected IACP leadership for some time.[21] It was in these circumstances, with an established precedent for occupying, that around 600 families moved into the large public housing complexes in the Falchera neighborhood on the northernmost outskirts of the city in October of 1974, without formal permission to do so (see Figure 5.3).

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[21] "Morto stanotte Mario Dezani," *La Stampa*, July 27, 1974. The newspaper article does not specify what type of illness or condition Dezani was diagnosed with.
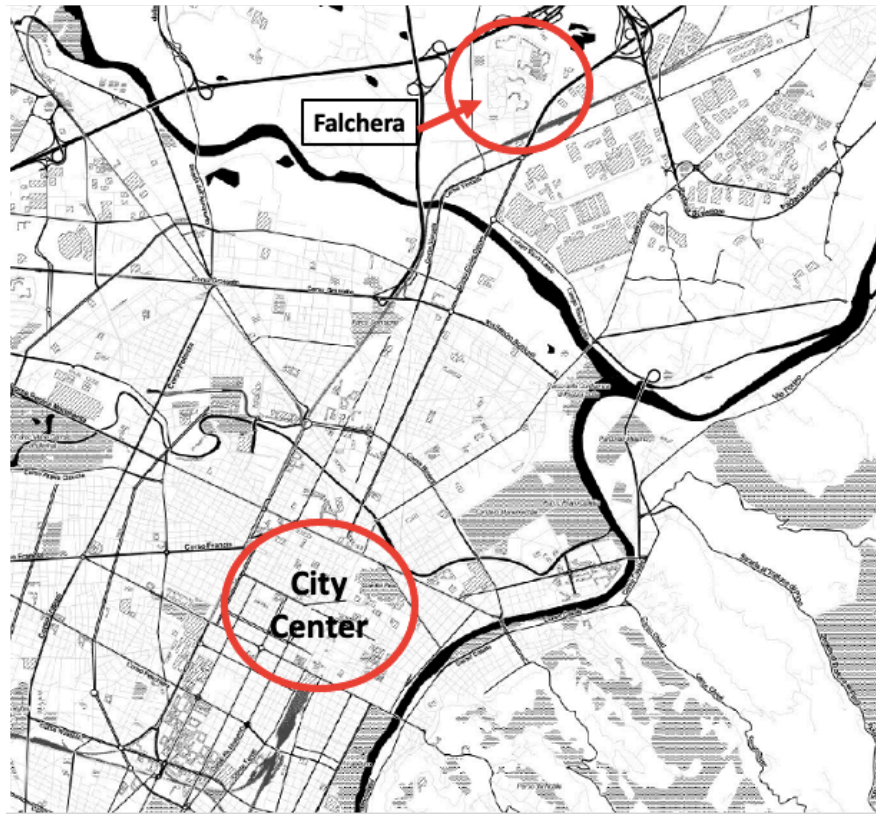
Figure 5.3 Map of Falchera in Relation to Turin's City Center[22]

The occupation did not take place all at once. According to one author, a handful of families "mostly from the south," decided to "spontaneously" occupy a few of the 1,300 apartments destined for about 6,000 total inhabitants in early October of 1974.[23] The apartments were generally grouped into clusters of about three buildings standing four stories tall, whereas other "towers" on the outer edge consisted of ten stories (see Figure 5.4). Built on what had previously been farmland, the residential area was all but severed from other neighborhoods or urban life. In fact, only one tram line reached the Falchera, meaning that many occupiers either had to travel a great distance on foot or, if they were lucky, crowd into a shared truck or other vehicle making its way that direction. Though many of the apartments were not yet completed,

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[22] Map created by author using QGIS open software and Microsoft Office.
[23] Filippo Falcone, *Morte di un militante siciliano: meridionali nella Torino degli anni Settanta* (Turin: Lighea, 1999), 40-41.

word quickly spread throughout the city and "hundreds" of families continued to arrive in subsequent days and weeks.[24]

Figure 5.4 The Different Structures of the Falchera Public Housing[25]

One female occupier recalled being in the hospital when she heard about the occupation. She phoned her husband who worked at one of Fiat's factories to talk it over. In an interview with an autonomist newspaper she related, "…in less than a half hour we decided. I made the decision to occupy." She described rats that "resembled rabbits" and her children's constant illness as the main factors spurring them to leave their prior accommodations.[26] Another woman claimed she had exhausted all legal means before taking such drastic action, turning to this form of protest as a last resort. For fourteen years she and her neighbors had petitioned their landlords,

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[24] Filippo Falcone, *Morte di un militante siciliano: meridionali nella Torino degli anni Settanta* (Turin: Lighea, 1999), 40-41.

[25] The black and white photo is copyrighted by Atlante di Torino, accessed February 22, 2021, http://www.atlanteditorino.it/quartieri/Falchera.html. Reproduced with permission. The photograph of the towers is the front cover of Mario Alba, Amilcare De Leo, and Umberto Grassi, eds., "L'altra Storia. Vent'anni dopo: Falchera Nuova," housed at the Archivio Storico Agenzia Territoriale per la Casa del Piemonte Centrale (ATC). Reproduced with permission. The photograph of the tan brick buildings was taken by the author in January, 2018.

[26] MP, Collection: A. Ricci, Subcollection: 002,18, File: "800 alloggi occupati a Torino," *Avanguardia operaia* 4 (October 13, 1974): 8-9.

city officials, and housing assessors to reduce their rent and repair their building. They even met personally with the mayor for five minutes, but nothing came of it. Instead, they received an eviction notice because the owners wished to renovate the building and make it "more elegant," certainly charging them a higher price in rent once complete. Instead, the woman came with her wheelchair-bound husband and their two children to occupy after having their request to be assigned public housing negated four times.[27] In relating their decision to occupy, each woman used their substandard living conditions to justify their illegal actions, mobilizing cultural conceptions of domesticity while acting against socially established norms afforded to both underprivileged classes and to women in terms of behavior. They viewed their performance as a seizure of rights that should be afforded them based on a supposed guaranteed right to a safe and affordable home. In fact, reporters asked the second woman what people she knew thought of her actions. According to her own interpretation, municipal authorities were in the wrong, not her. She related, "they say I did well. Even if you ask for housing they don't give it to you; for example, the woman who lives just ahead here has five kids and lived in a single room, and they didn't receive a [public housing] assignment either."[28]

In addition to poor housing conditions in their prior places of residence, one's identity as *meridionali* seems to be a commonality among a large portion of occupiers; many groups and individuals participated because someone else of southern origin urged them to join. By encouraging them to challenge the structure of public housing policy, co-occupiers spurred their compatriots to also challenge rigid social structures about who had access to municipal or regional social services (the level at which the benefits of the welfare state were administered).

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[27] MP, Collection: A. Ricci, Subcollection: 002,18, File: "800 alloggi occupati a Torino," *Avanguardia operaia* 4 (October 13, 1974): 8-9.
[28] MP, Collection: A. Ricci, Subcollection: 002,18, File: "800 alloggi occupati a Torino," *Avanguardia operaia* 4 (October 13, 1974): 8-9.

In many instances, recruitment can by tied to the efforts of one man, Tonino Micchichè. In the recollections of a participant who affiliated with the far-left political organization *Lotta Continua*, he related, "Tonino, from the first moment, was recognized as the leader for the struggle for housing…He always led negotiations with the Municipality of Turin and the IACP."[29] Many other occupiers related that Miccichè personally urged them to come and occupy. For instance, Gilberto Angeloro was a plumber whom Miccichè had approached to help hook up water and power to the buildings. In conversing with Angeloro, Miccichè asked how many points he had – a reference to the point system used by state officials to assign public housing. Angeloro had 11, but needed 11.5 to qualify. After their interaction, Angeloro called his wife and said, "Listen, I'm going to occupy in Falchera. I'm not coming home." His wife and children quickly joined him.[30] Then, in order to convince Carmela Selvaggio (first introduced in chapter one) to leave her downtown apartment, Angeloro introduced her to Miccichè "who was also a Sicilian."[31] Due to their shared regional identity and the trust that supposedly engendered, Carmela decided to finally abandon her previous home in the city center and the constant fight with the workers and landlord who were trying to force her out of her building. After her conversation with Miccichè, she, her husband, and their two children came to the Falchera as occupiers. In this case, regional ties filled in the gap left by local authorities to provide for one's needs.

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[29] Francesco Barille and Sergio Sinigaglia, eds., *La piuma e la montagna: Storie degli anni Settanta* (Rome: Manifestolibri, 2008), 93-94.

[30] Interview with Gilberto and Raffaella Angeloro, conducted in the Angeloro home by the author on December 14, 2017.

[31] Interview with Carmela Selvaggio with the assistance of Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author on January 27, 2018 at her home in Turin.

Figure 5.5 Falchera Buildings Under Construction[32]

By October 15, 1974, every apartment in the Falchera had been occupied, either by occupiers or public housing assignees. The inhabitants struggled to quickly find solutions for basic needs, such as light, heat, water, and food – services usually provided based on the relationship between citizens (contributors) and the municipality (the entity in charge of overseeing public utilities). Guido and Elena Raro, a young couple who had received a public housing assignment within the Falchera, recalled hauling water up ten flights of stairs – water collected from the emergency fire hydrant the utility company forgot to turn off. They added that the streets had not yet been paved, causing a copious amount of dust and dirt to enter the houses.[33] Ten delegates composed of a mixture of occupiers and assignees met with the mayor to insist that utilities be hooked up, as "the danger of sickness and infection increases every day." Mayor Picco responded, "It is absurd for you to think that we will legalize your action," even though tenants with legal claim to their apartments were part of the petition.[34] In a city council

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[32] Photo from the personal collection of Gilberto Angeloro. Reproduced with permission.
[33] ASdC, Local Publication: Mario Alba, Amilcare De Leo, and Umberto Grassi, eds., "L'altra Storia. Vent'anni dopo: Falchera Nuova," 52.
[34] "Lunga Protesta degli occupanti," *La Stampa*, October 15, 1974.

meeting the previous day, some representatives had expressed concern that if the city provided utilities, the occupiers would not leave the premises. The city administration's refusal to provide basic public services embodied a related refusal to recognize the occupiers' greater claims to housing and recognize them as legitimate claimants of social services, at least initially.

With such a large number of families and individuals now occupying, the new residents realized that they needed to find some form of organizing themselves, in part to facilitate the distribution of resources or craft solutions for utilities that municipal authorities refused to provide. Along with the leadership of Miccichè, occupants drew from their own experience with factory councils or neighborhood committees (as discussed in chapter three) to create their own *comitato di lotta*. Due to the sheer number of apartments in each housing block, each building and sometimes even each staircase within a building elected their own representative to send to committee meetings. Similar to the plenary sessions in the Eppsteiner Straße occupation in Frankfurt, representatives made both short- and long-term decisions in these meetings, from who would transport household goods and foodstuffs to which children would act as sentries to warn of the arrival of police.[35] This organization empowered everyone have some sort of voice within this ad-hoc community, something that was often denied them in the larger context of Turin. Some women, for instance, actively served as representatives, regularly contributing to decisions. As a few occupiers later recollected, two women in particular were heavily involved: "the committee was always open and was managed and monitored continuously by two women, Carmela and Graziella, both of whom occupied in the same building having come from the city center."[36] Through this form of representation, instead of having to go through the tedious

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[35] Giovanni De Luna, *Le ragioni di un decennio 1969-1979. Militanza, violenza, sconfitta, memoria* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2009), 17.

[36] Barille and Sinigaglia, eds., *La piuma e la montagna*, 95.

process of reaching city representatives who may have dismissed them due to their status as an immigrant, their sex as a woman, or their socioeconomic position, occupiers could knock on the door of their building representative whenever they had a concern and it was likely they could speak to some of their neighbors in their own regional dialect – thus enacting a localized form of grassroots democracy.

Simply because the Falchera occupation had both strength in numbers and an effective organization did not mean that occupiers faced few obstacles. There was always a risk of eviction or legal action, not to mention physical harm. Just as some would-be occupiers backed out of the Eppsteiner Straße occupation in Frankfurt, some Turin residents also had their reservations about possible repercussions of occupying. Carmine, a *meridionale* who had been in Turin since 1958 and father of six children, described being afraid of going to occupy. He explained that he held back from doing so at first, but that once he came, he "found comrades and the committee…now I'm one of the occupants and joined the committee, signing on to the group in charge of dealing with the municipality."[37] Even after overcoming initial fear and misgivings to move to the Falchera, occupiers were overshadowed with the constant threat of eviction or police action. In describing the effect this had on inhabitants, a former occupier related, "What I remember, I must say, is a deep fear. Fear, because you didn't know what would happen…fear of the presence of police…of violence, of removal."[38] This fear stemmed from a lack of official recognition and the precedent set in some prior occupations of clearing by force. Furthermore, any municipal action against the occupation represented an enforcement of

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[37] "Il posto di lavoro e' sacrosanto e non si tocca, la casa e' sacrosanta e la teniamo: Parlano alcuni compagni operai che occupano le case a Torino," *Lotta Continua,* November 15, 1974.
[38] Interview with Carmen Leccardi, conducted by the author in her office in Milan on March 6, 2018.

security, legality, and order – as well as a reinforcement of existing political and social structures rather than an openness to reform.

To combat this type of fear and create their own sense of security, the Falchera set up an internal patrol system, and inhabitants prepared to fight back should any conflict arise. Carmela Selvaggio described having her balcony "full of stones," for instance, but she never had occasion to use them.[39] Though it was generally men who patrolled the perimeter at night, the onus of security largely fell on women such as Carmela during daytime hours when the majority of men (and a number of women) were away at work. This has led some authors to term the women the "motor of the occupation."[40] Anna Cagna recalled that this sort of responsibility led to a type of role reversal in normalized gender regimes. In an interview, she suggested that "women maintained the occupation while the men went to work. When the men saw the women's contribution, they accepted it with great difficulty. The culture and mentality assumed that women were at home, taking care of their children."[41] As someone from northern Italy active in the newly-emerging feminist movement, Anna's comments reflect perceived differences between what she viewed as a more progressive mentality and one tied to a more patriarchal worldview that dominated southern Italy. In protecting and defending their homes, at times physically, female occupiers acted outside of normalized modes of behavior for women. Perhaps their actions were seen as more acceptable because they surrounded a space often ascribed to women – the "private sphere" of the home. Yet women had to take on more front-facing roles to defend said space, such as being prepared to throw stones at any attempt at eviction, thus challenging

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[39] Interview with Carmela Selvaggio with the assistance of Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author on January 27, 2018 at her home in Turin.
[40] Barille and Sinigaglia, eds., *La piuma e la montagna*, 97.
[41] Interview with Anna Cagna and Davide Lovisolo, conducted at the Casa delle Donne in Turin by the author on November 27, 2017.

cultural perceptions about femininity and violence at a time when domestic terrorism was on the rise in Italy as well.[42]

Falchera women also took on several civic service roles within their occupied community, establishing a day care and school to fulfill the daily need for education and childcare. According to the recollections of Raffaela, Gilberto Angeloro's wife, they went to an old building in an adjoining neighborhood that used to house a kindergarten. Though the heat never worked, which is possibly why it was out of service, they brought benches and proclaimed to the children, "we are your teachers." They managed themselves for a time, until accredited teachers volunteered their time to come and instruct.[43] Once again, occupiers provided a civic function to the neighborhood – education – while municipal authorities continued to negate their claims to housing and other services.

The Falchera occupation, then, provided needed housing and civic functions. It gave individuals and families a place to sleep, a place to school their children, and the ability to socialize without as much fear of discrimination, though cultural differences would still emerge, as manifest by Anna's comments. Because so many of the occupiers did come from the south, this very visible action confronted the established social hierarchy, whether or not that was one of occupiers' primary intentions. Even those who occupied but were not necessarily *meridionali* called into question public housing assignation processes and pointed to the failings of city and other public entities in providing for its residents. Though their actions were illegal, occupiers in Turin engaged in a form of participatory democracy as they sought to reposition themselves in

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[42] For an overview on the relationship between gender and terrorism in Italy, see Ruth Glynn, *Women, Terrorism and Trauma in Italian Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). For a comparison with the FRG context, see Patricia Melzer, *Death in the Shape of a Young Girl: Women's Political Violence in the Red Army Faction* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

[43] Interview with Gilberto and Raffaella Angeloro, conducted in the Angeloro home by the author on December 14, 2017.

relationship to other urban dwellers and the government, basing their claims on subjective rights associated with citizenship and belonging.

Won't You be My Neighbor? "Legitimate" and "Illegitimate" Residents within the Falchera

Due to its remote location on the fringe of Turin, occupiers did not have as many neighboring residents in their vicinity. The issue with occupying public housing on a large scale was that, however cumbersome the system for assigning public housing was, occupiers took apartments from other residents of low socioeconomic status who had been fortunate enough to receive an apartment assignment. In most cases, the assignees had waited for years, and their financial situation was either very similar or not much better than the occupiers who came without any formal contract or agreement. The tension and, on less frequent occasions, cooperation between occupiers and assignees led many reporters, city representatives, and members of the public to raise questions of legitimacy. Who was the "deserving" or "legitimate" aid recipient and who was "undeserving" of access to social services, or had taken them over "illegally" or "illegitimately"? Most opponents and even some sympathizers couched differences between public housing residents as the "war among/between the poor," a phrase often perpetuated by *La Stampa*'s reporting of events, though it was broadly used by the press in both Milan and Turin. In response, occupiers had to try and counter accusations of illegality and illegitimacy to underscore that they believed the institutionalized social service system to be flawed, thus portraying their collective action as a necessary means for obtaining the basic needs supposedly guaranteed by the welfare state.

As soon as word spread about the Falchera occupation, the IACP quickly handed out keys to the assignees in an effort to stem the flow of unauthorized habitation, even though the apartments were far from finished. One assignee, Francesco Traisci, was able to access his

apartment before it was occupied. He, his wife, and his mother took turns acting a sentry to protect their home from occupation, and placed a camp bed behind the door while they slept so the "squatters" could not "break through and enter the lodgings, justifying their conquest as natural."[44] From his use of the terms "justifying," "conquest," and "squatters" instead of occupiers – in Italian the term "squatters" translates from *abusivi*, or the shared latin root for the word "abuse" – it is clear that Francesco did not empathize with the actions of the occupiers. He was not alone. At times, tensions came to physical confrontations – Francesco claimed one such conflict even ended fatally. For some assignees like Francesco, his claim to public housing by going through established procedures trumped those who tried to seize it on their own; they did not belong in the same spaces due to their violation of legality in spite of their comparable socioeconomic circumstances.

When Attilio received an urgent communication from the IACP and went to open his assigned apartment, he found it already occupied. He claimed that he went to address "with extreme kindness, the people who were 'occupying' or rather who had already 'illegally occupied' my accommodation, the accommodation that was duly assigned to me by law." Apparently, the occupants threatened him and told him to not come back. In reflecting on why this could happen, he mused, "those were the years of lead, of struggles for housing and unfortunately, as was rightly said then, a real 'war between the poor.'"[45] Like Francesco, Attilio emphasized that he was the legal inhabitant of his apartment as he had followed the bureaucratic process for being assigned public housing. However, his response was slightly more nuanced as

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[44] ASdC, Local Publication: Mario Alba, Amilcare De Leo, and Umberto Grassi, eds., "L'altra Storia. Vent'anni dopo: Falchera Nuova," 52.
[45] ASdC, Local Publication: Mario Alba, Amilcare De Leo, and Umberto Grassi, eds., "L'altra Storia. Vent'anni dopo: Falchera Nuova," 64-65.

he viewed the occupiers as moving in the same socio-economic circles, occupying the same strata within the social order.

This idea of "war between the poor" continued to be perpetuated by news channels that were unsympathetic to the occupations, including *La Stampa*. Their journalists included subtle judgements simply by the language they used. For example, in an article about the Falchera occupation, *La Stampa* described "bickering" between "assignees" and "squatters." In one brief paragraph, the article associated the word "legitimate" twice with "assignees," while referring to the occupiers' actions as an "invasion."[46] This, too, is language generally associated with war, or the unwanted infringement of an undesirable group, such as the invasion of a home with rodents or pests. At times, however, news reporters' assumptions about differences between occupiers and assignees proved unfounded. In a November 3, 1974 article *La Stampa* reported interviews they conducted with Falchera assignees. When they asked Mr. Capurso, a Fiat employee, what he would do if he arrived at his apartment and found occupiers already there, he replied:

> I would attempt to talk with the squatters, to explain my situation. Let's not forget that there are already instances where assignees have adapted and live together with the occupiers while they wait for what will happen…others have already returned to their previous living quarters and permitted the 'illegals' to stay in the apartment they've waited for for years. How is it possible, then, to talk about a "war between the poor?[47]

In his response, Mr. Capurso reprimanded those (including *La Stampa* reporters) who promoted the idea that assignees and occupiers were at war. He further explained, "In our country all citizens have a right to housing. And to rent prices proportional to one's paycheck. I am on the side of the occupiers…if our Republic is founded on work, it is also [founded] on workers' problems."[48] In line with what occupiers would argue, Mr. Capurso implied that state entities

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[46] "Altre case occupant ieri, alla Falchera. Battibecchi fra assegnatari ed abusivi," *La Stampa*, October 7, 1974.
[47] "Inchiesta – Abusivi: cosa c'è dietro la facciata," *La Stampa*, November 3, 1974.
[48] "Inchiesta – Abusivi: cosa c'è dietro la facciata," *La Stampa*, November 3, 1974.

were failing to provide a right that was guaranteed all citizens, particularly workers who contributed economically, regardless of differences in culture or socioeconomic status. Though he may have represented a minority of assignees, his reported comments reflect that some residents viewed occupiers' actions as a protest against inequitable access to social services rather than emphasizing the illegality of the means by which they did so. His perspective also illuminates the strong ties many blue-collar workers had to Communist party culture and rhetoric that espoused the values of egalitarianism, particularly among the working class.

Distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate access to social services, or rather legal and illegal actions – were perpetuated in government circles as well. An official report by the city assessor related that by the end of 1974, "in total, about a thousand apartments were occupied, intended, for the most part, to legitimate assignees, creating a situation of considerable tension, which could have dramatic consequences for the inevitable conflicts between the interested parties."[49] Moreover, local city representatives voiced opposing opinions in council meetings as well. Representative Salvatore Paonni, member of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), defended the rights of the assignees who found their quarters already occupied after "waiting so many years." He referred specifically to the concept of "war between the poor," with the following comments:

> I'm not making it a question of law, nor will I make it a **moral or human question** because it is indeed a great disappointment to wait so many years to be assigned accommodation and then not receive it because you don't have enough points; but even greater is the disappointment of those who finally receive housing but cannot live in it because others – **equally needy** – (this isn't a point of debate), created a serious situation with their own timeline, even if we recognize they did not do it [occupy] in opposition to the assignees. I read many interesting statements [from the occupiers that state] "we don't want a war among the poor", [or] "we don't want a war between the needy"; the fact remains that for the latter the disappointment is equally scorching…[It] would be really serious if **these workers, these citizens**, somehow had the feeling that, after having

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[49] ASdC, Collection: Ass. Problemi della casa: Relazione sullo stato delle occupazioni, "Relazione sullo stato delle occupazioni, Ottobre 1977."

waited so patiently and followed the rules - and I will save you all the talk about the time needed to get an assigned accommodation - were punished by not being able to access the accommodation assigned to them.[50]

Like Mr. Carpuso, Representative Paonni also correlated work with citizenship, or contributor rights to the welfare state. He implied that if occupation were a moral or human question, all needy individuals deserved the right to decent housing – housing provided by the state if they could not afford it on their own, based on this context. Yet, he clearly distinguished between two types of "poor" or "needy" people: occupiers and assignees. He labeled assignees as "workers" and "citizens" who "followed the rules." According to him, these were the traits of citizens who literally and figuratively contributed to local and national economies and culture. They, then, qualified for contributor rights, while their fellow co-nationals did not, based on their inability to follow established norms of acceptability and behavior. As such, Paonni insinuated that the occupiers had relinquished their claims to social services through their illegal actions, negating their claims that they were not driving a "war among the poor."

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[50] ASdC, Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 21, 1974, emphasis added.

Figure 5.6 Excerpts from LC's Comic "Lotta Dura!"[51]

Occupiers and allied organizations, in turn, pushed back on the idea of "war among the poor." One highly accessible and visible example is found within a cartoon illustrated and distributed by LC. Though the comic is specific to Milan, LC mirrored many of their same housing protest strategies in Turin. Entitled "Hard Struggle! Comrade Donald Duck Occupies!" the LC comic distributed on May 5, 1975 co-opted Donald as a tenant who, after approaching his landlord about repairing heating and other unsafe conditions within his house, decides to occupy. He is approached by a representative of S.U.N.I.A. (Sindacato Unitario Nazionale Inquilini e

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[51] PG, Collection: Emilio Cavalleris.

Assegnatari – National Unitary Tenants' and Assignees' Union), the official tenants' union that supposedly represented public housing assignees. The representative threatens Donald, tells him to tear down the sign reading "House Occupied," and promises to return with "the legitimate assignees" (Figure 5.6 page 6, panels 1-4). As Donald locks the door, he grumbles, "Even **they** are against **us**," implying that an organization committed to helping low-income residents should be on the side of the tenants in unaffordable or unsafe living conditions. Donald then declares, "I'm not waging the 'war among the poor,' but taking what is mine," implying his perceived right to decent housing and challenging the pervasive concept that occupiers' actions resulted in a "war" among some of society's most economically vulnerable (Figure 5.6 page 6, panels 5-6). After piling up furniture with his nephews, Donald determined that he would convince others to join them in using occupation as a protest strategy.

Communications emanating from the Falchera occupation also attempted to draw lines of solidarity between those affected by the hardships of the housing market, emphasizing similarity with other disadvantaged groups rather than difference. For instance, in a leaflet claiming to be authored on October 12, 1974 by both occupiers and assignees, the residents demanded three things: that all Falchera occupants be guaranteed public housing or accommodations requisitioned by the municipality; that rent not exceed 10% of the average wage; and that public services (water, electricity, and gas) be provided to the currently occupied complexes.[52] Moreover, in December 1974, the Falchera neighborhood committee distributed a flyer in conjunction with three other neighborhood committees: Strada della Cacce, Corso Grosetto, and Corso Cincinnato, lending weight to their claims that other disadvantaged residents shared their views on and interests in more equitable social services. They listed their objectives in protesting

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[52] Polo '900, Collection: Vera Nocentini, Sub-Collection: Faldone, BXII F. 121/G, dated October 12, 1974.

the lack of affordable and safe housing in a way that could theoretically appeal to others in their

same economic position:

> -We don't want to steal housing from other workers
> -Occupation is just a tool in the fight to obtain housing
> -A home for all workers[53]

From their tone, one can see how occupiers viewed their collective actions as temporary – a way

to pressure policymakers to reform current systems – rather than an attempt to take housing away

from other residents.

In terms of popular opinion, some long-time residents continued to view the occupiers as

illegitimate, at times infusing their criticisms with cultural discrimination. Several letters to the

mayor emphasized occupiers' southern origins, perpetuating stereotypes of unruliness,

lawlessness, and differences in customs. One letter writer encouraged the mayor to "return these

poor people (at least, those who claim to be poor) back to where they came from until they find

work and accommodation. Because…before they came here, they certainly didn't live outside in

the desert." The writer then proposed that the mayor tour public housing and count just how

many cars were parked in the streets – cars that "could very well pay for another apartment."[54]

Here, then, the author implied that not just occupiers, but many other immigrants in public

housing as well, violated either laws or at least established norms of behaviors. In their mind, by

owning a car, the inhabitants were taking advantage of the welfare system, and were therefore

not the truly deserving poor.

Another writer proposed that the IACP be stricter in its stance, evicting anyone who

failed to pay rent after three months and sending them back to their hometown, "even if they

have twelve children." Once again, the markers of othering are present in referring both to the

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[53] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Sub-Collection: 9, Document: 015172, dated December 4, 1974.
[54] Giordanino, *Diego Novelli*, 96.

south and larger families. They close their letter advocating for "discipline and less squatters," associating a hardline approach with "much more peace and tranquility."[55] The preoccupation with order and stability also featured in another letter, written by a family member whose father had qualified for public housing three years prior, but whose contract was rescinded once the father passed away. The author indicated that they were tempted to "join the army of squatters who continue to infest the city," but assured the mayor that they would rather "live in a civilized community," not the "Wild West."[56] This author, then, presented the qualifications of the "right" kind of recipient of public housing: one who goes through the proper institutionalized channels, thus equating civilization with being a citizen. Squatters, on the other hand, were associated with being undesirable; the allusion to rats or vermin is implied with the verb "infest."

At the same time, however, *meridionali* were not the only ones who struggled to find affordable housing. Tenant and labor unions who represented other socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals often criticized city and state officials for their oversight in providing for basic human needs for all residents, oscillating on whether occupations were an acceptable means to change. In spite of LC's criticisms of S.U.N.I.A. in the Donald Duck cartoon, the tenants' union issued a statement on why so many inhabitants – especially immigrants in "difficult situations" – were occupying in Turin shortly after the Falchera was taken over. S.U.N.I.A.'s representative, Mr. Pascali, related that Turin needed over 70,000 apartments to satisfy housing need, and placed the blame of failure on the government by saying, "Unfortunately the government, the region, and the municipality have never moved a finger to fill this shortage." He proposed a solution, claiming that there were "billions" of lire in funding available, and that "we must fight together at all levels to force the province, the municipality,

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[55] Giordanino, *Diego Novelli*, 97.
[56] Giordanino, *Diego Novelli*, 88-89.

and the region to transform this money into buildings."[57] The Confederation of Worker's Trade

Unions (CISL) similarly excused occupiers' actions and laid the onus of responsibility on the

state. In response to the president of the IACP accusing CISL of "demagogically endorsing any

protest" in later years, the organization released a statement that "the occupation of public

housing in '74 represented a moment of struggle in the face of serious delays of official housing

policy."[58] Therefore, according to one of the most powerful associations of labor unions, housing

policy created a situation of injustice that gave occupiers grounds for validation for their actions,

even if not all labor unions agreed with the protest tactic.

The Catholic church in Turin followed a similar line as the CISL, in spite of the affiliated

conservative DC political party initially resisting the occupations. As early as 1971, a document

signed by 128 Catholic leaders proclaimed that occupations were "caused by an extremely unjust

situation, and even if they are illegal, do not violate Christian morals." Catholic priests similarly

blamed housing laws which "rather than promoting the good of the community, and in particular

the most defenseless members, protects the interests of the powerful and privileged."[59]

According to this open letter, several authority figures in the Catholic church tapped into the

language of morality to make their case; though occupiers' actions were illegal, they did not

necessarily consider them immoral. Furthermore, they referred to occupiers (many of whom

were *meridionali*) as "members" of the larger community who were entitled to the protection of

city and state officials. Even when occupations increased, culminating in the occupation of the

Falchera, the cardinal of Turin was one of the first to open up accommodations for families in

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[57] "Il problema dell'abitazione è forse a Torino più grave che non altrove," *La Stampa*, November 7, 1974.
[58] Polo '900, Collection: Vera Nocentini, Sub-Collection: Faldone, BXII F. 117/C, 1977-79 Problema dell'Edilizia, dated March 3, 1978.
[59] "Dal mondo cattolico, non dare a Cesare quel che ti appartiene," *Unione Inquilini*, Year 1 , n. 4, November/December 1971.

need in October of 1974.[60] By this action, the cardinal essentially recognized occupiers' demands to housing as a natural right, privileging this claim of injustice over concerns of legality or city law.

Questions of legitimacy, then, pervaded the public and administrative sphere. Were occupiers at fault for engaging in illegal collective action, thus taking away from the citizens who went through legitimate and legal channels to be assigned public housing? Or were inequitable (and inefficient) social services to blame, excusing occupiers' behavior? Though occupiers and even some assignees challenged the notion of a "war between the poor," what the characterization of conflict really made apparent was the fact that the city and the associated IACP did not have enough resources to go around to guarantee the safety net promised by the social state. Whether or not the large-scale occupation of physical space within public housing complexes would catalyze reform remained to be seen in the beginning months of the Falchera occupation.

Falchera Guests: Internal Tensions with Allies within the Spaces of Occupation

The Falchera occupation was staunchly supported by a number of far-left extraparliamentary organizations who evolved out of student and worker activism movements in the late 1960s. The two most notable groups were *Lotta Continua* and *Autonomia Operaia*. Bringing strategy and some know-how about large scale protest organization, the radical political groups helped print and disseminate information, as well as provided resources and allies to support demonstrations and even the occupation's security details. In addition, women involved in second-wave feminist groups engaged with many of the female occupiers, establishing a women's health clinic. Though the allied groups and organizations often assisted occupiers with

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[60] This is according to a member of city council in their meeting of October 28, 1974. See ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 28, 1974.

raising public awareness and interacting with municipal authorities, tensions did often arise –

both between extraparliamentary groups and in the discriminatory attitudes that non-occupiers at

times displayed toward those who actually resided at the Falchera, often centering on some

occupiers' southern origins. Thus, outsiders' involvement can be characterized as a chaotic

mixture of help and hindrance, a situation perhaps understandable due to the sheer size of the

occupation and the criticism of the state (in myriad ways) that it represented.

Figure 5.7 LC Supplemental Insert[61]

LC was a staunch supporter and instigator of self-reduction (see chapter three), rent

strikes, and housing occupations. In one of their inserts to their monthly news publication, LC

featured Turin on the front page with the title, "Turin in the Hands of the Proletariat!" with a

man with a raised fist superimposed over a photograph of the cityscape (see Figure 5.7). The

article further expounded that "In Turin there are thousands of empty houses that were not made

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[61] PG, Collection: Emilio Cavalleris, "Torino in mano ai proletari." Though the supplement is undated, based on the other events in reported, it is most likely 1970 or 1971.

for the proletariat. We say: 'Let's organize ourselves and occupy them'…let's take the empty

houses from GESCAL [a regional public housing entity eventually absorbed by the IACP] and

from private landlords, it is the same – it's always us who built and paid for them."[62] It is clear

that their goals centered on more radical political goals, namely overturning the existing

sociopolitical order, as the article continued "you will say: but this can only be achieved after the

revolution. It's not true! This can be done today. After the revolution when the proletariat holds

power, we will not only have free homes, but houses that are truly healthy homes where we live

comfortably and freely."[63] For LC, then, occupation was simply a steppingstone to larger

revolutionary goals. Though it fulfilled more immediate basic needs, it was an intermediary step,

rather than an end goal. Still, their activists were more than happy to assist at occupations such as

the Falchera, and often distributed material to occupiers who may not have identified as activists

to try and convince them to share their revolutionary vision. Tonino Miccichè himself was an LC

leader who was invited to the occupation in its first few days, though his involvement in the daily

operation of the Falchera meant that he focused on the details of cohesion and survival more so

than ideological priorities of LC as a whole.

Another group involved in the Falchera occupation was *Autonomia Operaia* (AO), which

viewed occupiers' actions as an assertion of sociopolitical and civil rights that were being denied

the occupiers. They thus supported localized efforts and localized solutions to what they viewed

as a failure of the state to guarantee the rights of citizens. Disagreements about strategy and

desired results often led to conflict between AO and LC members involved in the Falchera

occupation. As historian Filippo Falcone documented: "The relationship between the two

organizations had not been easy from the very beginning, in fact, it was often conflicted and led

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[62] PG, Collection: Emilio Cavalleris, "Torino in mano ai proletari."
[63] PG, Collection: Emilio Cavalleris, "Torino in mano ai proletari."

to some real political confrontations."[64] For Davide Lovisolo, AO representative at the Falchera, differences stemmed more from end goals rather than strategy. He claimed that LC wished to "take the houses, then take power" in a revolutionary overthrow of the government. In contrast, he described occupations in AO's perspective as "a first step to then fix other social services" in what they called "the revolutionary struggle for reform." According to his perspective, AO "fought for things that remained," seeking to modify tenant laws, reform the system for public housing assignation, block rents, and control expenses until longer-term solutions could be found.[65] Gilberto Angeloro, an occupier and labor union representative, described the extraparliamentary organizations' distinctions according to his own context. He related that AO was more willing to work with the labor unions LC focused more on mass movements. As an interesting aside, he thought that LC had a "somewhat hard relationship with the people," meaning Falchera residents.[66] From his comments, it appears that some LC members and Falchera occupiers may not have gotten along too easily.

Indeed, interpersonal tensions abounded within the Falchera occupation, in spite of some affiliated political groups' long-term goals to erase class differences. Due to the fact that many self-identifying activists were current or former students, they generally inhabited a more privileged socioeconomic position than the occupiers, leading at times to manifestations of patronization. While relating his experience assisting the occupation as one who identified with a group called "Catholic Action," Guido Laganà reflected, "What was it like to occupy with the *meridionali*? It was an encounter between different social classes. We were educated, almost all

[64] Filippo Falcone, *Morte di un militante siciliano: Meridionali nella Torino degli anni Settanta* (Turin: Lighea, 1999), 42.
[65] Interview with Davide Lovisolo, conducted by author at Turin's Women's Archive on November 27, 2017.
[66] Interview with Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author at the Falchera, December 14, 2017 He describes LC's relationship as "duro," which can mean "hard," "tough," or even "stern."

of us graduates. Then again, action taken by young people overcomes distinctions between social classes. We helped occupy, but never occupied for us. That was always the difference."[67] Though he claimed that similarities in age overcame differences, he still noted that the activists were "educated" and "graduates," implying that many of the occupiers were not. Furthermore, he and other activists had no need to occupy for themselves due to their social and economic resources. As further illustration of this difference, most of those whom I interviewed rarely slept at the occupation, instead returning home and coming back during the day. As such, they did not confront the fear of a potential police action that sparked the organization of nighttime patrols.

Anna Piazzola was one such activist who would travel to the Falchera during the day and return home in the evenings. The risk she took was almost failing to complete her senior year of high school due to her involvement. She, too, emphasized education in an interview while describing her efforts to disseminate a "Leninist" publication to occupiers, lamenting, "…but the people were not accustomed to reading. They joined us to feed their stomachs. Not out of a conviction for real justice, perhaps."[68] "Real" justice for Anna seems to have comprised of less concrete ideals and ideas. Perhaps what she did not realize is that for many occupiers, their actions were truly about survival, or the basic necessities viewed as necessary for human dignity that then became amplified into larger political spheres of rights and social policy. In other words, for many of them justice meant a realization of social rights, or recognition from the existing political system to make access to social services more equitable.

Women who did or would identify as feminists also engaged with the Falchera occupation, seeing it as a potential space of empowerment for female occupiers. Throughout Italy during this time, women began forming discussion groups to talk about issues such as

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[67] Interview with Guido Laganà, conducted by the author in his office in Turin on January 19, 2018.
[68] Interview with Anna Piazzola, conducted by the author in a café in Turin on February 3, 2018.

divorce, contraception, abortion, and other topics that were previously taboo.[69] Women such as Anna Cagna and others who identified as "activists" came into the Falchera to establish similar groups. Not all occupiers welcomed these groups. At times, men would confront the female "activists" about their actions. Even some of the *meridionali* women viewed them as "bourgeois militants" and responded with diffidence, according to another female activist, Emanuela Locati.[70] Still, Anna claimed that "we went door to do for those who would listen. We found a lot of women at home because they were responsible for maintaining the occupation."[71] Instead of remaining isolated with the constant fear of eviction, women could instead discuss their problems and frustrations together, and even shared the responsibility of caring for each other's children. Many years after the fact, some of the non-occupying women reflected on their position within the social order compared to the occupiers, relating, "We were all very young, just over and under 20 and mostly women. We soon realized that we were privileged, in front of people who, often at the same age, brought with them experiences and responsibilities that we did not yet know."[72] Though they claimed to be aware of their privilege at the time, it is also possible that this mentality emerged as second-wave feminism continued to gain strength toward the latter half of the 1970s, or with the passage of time.

One of the things that female allies did was establish a women's clinic for the Falchera occupation. According to Anna Cagna, one of their friends was a gynecologist and came once a week to answer questions. Eventually they created space for an actual clinic for women to seek

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[69] For an overview of second-wave feminism in Italy, see Maud Bracke, *Women and the Reinvention of the Political: Feminism in Italy, 1968-1983* (New York: Routledge, 2014); see also Fiamma Lussana, *Il movimento femminista in Italia: Esperienze, storie, memorie* (Rome: Carocci, 2012). For Italy's feminist movement's relation to 1968 see Andrea Hajek, *Despite or in Debt to 1968? Second-wave Feminism and the Gendered History of Italy's 1968* (New York: Routledge, 2018).
[70] Interview with Emanuela Locati, conducted by author in her law office in Turin on January 18, 2018.
[71] Interview with Anna Cagna and Davide Lovisolo, conducted at the Casa delle Donne in Turin by the author on November 27, 2017.
[72] Barille and Sinigaglia, eds., *La piuma e la montagna*, 96**.**

medical help and advising.[73] Though initially viewed with skepticism, more and more women slowly joined the discussion groups and sought help at the clinic. When Gilberto Angeloro's wife, Raffaella, spoke about the clinic, she related "they helped a great number of women" and shared some very personal details about a procedure she underwent there.[74] She went on to describe how she started using birth control because of the clinic's assistance. In her interview, Carmela Selvaggio referred to help with abortions or women who were in danger of losing their fetus, and "anything else that you needed."[75] The women's clinic filled in where public services were lacking, providing medical and counseling support for women. It also created space for subversive performances of citizenship as women pushed back at gendered regimes of knowledge and provided services that were not yet legalized by the state. Most importantly, though, the women's groups and clinic created a sense of community and belonging for those who had often been pushed to the fringes.

Outside extraparliamentary groups such as LC, AO, and those involved in the concurrent feminist movement thus viewed the Falchera occupation as an important symbol for a variety of goals and motivations. By sharing similarities in protest strategies, groups could often collaborate together to support the occupiers. For instance, big banners reading "Lotta Continua" often accompanied occupiers and supporters on street marches and demonstrations. Moreover, according to Davide Lovisolo, all communications – such as leaflets and flyers – were co-authored by committee representatives and allied activists, then printed outside of the occupations. As a result, allied radical groups provided logistical support for the occupation.

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[73] Interview with Anna Cagna and Davide Lovisolo, conducted at the Casa delle Donne in Turin by the author on November 27, 2017.

[74] Interview with Gilberto and Raffaella Angeloro, conducted in the Angeloro home by the author on December 14, 2017.

[75] Interview with Carmela Selvaggio with the assistance of Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author on January 27, 2018 at her home in Turin.

However, differences in end goals, most particularly the conflict between grassroots and institutionalized practices – and various forms of discrimination in interpersonal relationships – meant that outsiders could also impede or detract from occupiers' own desired outcomes or community relations.

Government Conundrums: Determining Who "Deserves" Public Housing?

Due to the large-scale nature of the Falchera occupation in Turin, city representatives knew that a full eviction had the potential to incite protest in the streets, potentially leading to violence. Even the Italian Communist Party (PCI) remained on the fence in their response to the occupation and was deeply divided internally. Though city leaders would not refer to the threat of domestic terrorism as explicitly as Frankfurt leadership, the reality was that attacks orchestrated by the left-wing terrorist group *Brigate Rosse* (Red Brigades) and the bombing of Piazza Fontana in Milan by right-wing terrorists in 1969 had placed Italians similarly on edge. However, as a "civil society [that] remains a home to a culture of social movement activism far surpassing similar instances in any other European state," mass demonstrations were perhaps perceived to be less threatening than the West German context.[76] Though localized political discourses also focused on a differentiation between "instigators" and those who occupied out of social need, debate within city council meetings reveals a great deal of time and attention given over to which citizens "deserved" social services and the parameters for accessing state aid. This is perhaps due to the fact that city leadership was in the hands of the DC at the time of the Falchera occupation, rather than an administration of the political left, such as Frankfurt. One other notable difference to the Frankfurt case is that there seemed to be a general acknowledgement that social service administration channels were riddled with problems; thus,

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[76] Horn, *The Spirit of '68*, 111.

most of Turin's government conundrums centered on how to fix it and for whom, rather than endlessly debating about the use of police force in evictions.

Perhaps the most fraught response to housing occupations was that of the PCI itself. With the New Left continually gaining traction, the PCI struggled to regain its footing. Between 1956 and 1966, the PCI lost nearly a quarter of its membership as representatives "talked endlessly of reform" but then "left expectations unfulfilled."[77] As historian Geoff Eley points out, the PCI (and other established labor parties) were bound by an industrial collectivism "whose values and institutions were shaped by needs of diminishing relevance in the new post-Fordist capitalist societies coalescing since the 1960s."[78] As a result, new cultures, rhetoric, and strategies were threatening their previously broader base of support, particularly among blue-collar workers. In addition, the new general secretary of the PCI, Enrico Berlinguer, was convinced that the PCI needed to change strategy or Italy would face the ascension of an extreme political right that had engulfed Chile and, in the not-so-distant past, Fascist Italy – a threat made real by the right-wing bombing of Piazza Fontana. As a result, Berlinguer orchestrated the "Historic Compromise" of the 1970s, proposing to "abandon the goal of radical transformation" and instead pursing "a collaboration with the popular forces inspired by Catholicism, socialism and communism."[79] His overtures were received and encouraged by the DC Prime Minister, Aldo Moro, who "was aware that what had taken place in the postwar period in Italy was a warped democracy, paralyzed by ideological contrast" and "thought it was time to assign responsibility to the Communist Party and bestow a legitimacy upon it."[80] As part of pursuing a path to legitimacy and mainstream

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[77] Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 290, 298.

[78] Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 471.

[79] Daniela Saresella, *Catholics and Communists in Twentieth-Century Italy: Between Conflict and Dialogue* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 108.

[80] Saresella, *Catholics and Communists*, 108.

political power, national PCI leadership also "decided to take the second path, or alternative to violence, by reorienting itself towards the state as a 'party of order'" and "broke ties with all extremist groups" in 1974-1975.[81] This was also a move to reassert control over the political left, or an attempt to counter the growing support of the New Left. The PCI's reorientation to less revolutionary political goals and less provocative protest tactics, as epitomized by the "Historic Compromise," led many who hoped for widescale reform or even upheaval to distrust or distance themselves from the party. It also became increasingly difficult for the PCI to display a united front.

Portraying itself as a party that represented the interests of blue-collar workers became increasingly complex when many of their constituents began to occupy in Turin and elsewhere. For instance, in an official statement after initial occupations in Strada della Cacce in Turin, during which the young girl died, the PCI acknowledged the "gravely serious situation in the housing sector of Turin caused by the inertia of public authorities," but also strongly condemned "the provocateurs who exploit the need of families in order to create trouble."[82] In this careful dance, then, the PCI attempted to avoid alienating the actual occupiers, instead condemning the "provocateurs." As occupations escalated, the PCI continued its censure of more overtly radical groups on the far-left, claiming that *Lotta Continua* and others did not have the interests of the workers at heart, but prioritized their own aims and goals instead.[83] The PCI's characterization of occupiers – as opposed to extraparliamentary groups – as acting out of social need was echoed in

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[81] Ermanno Taviani, "Il terrorismo rosso, la violenza e la crisi della cultura politica del PCI" in Angelo Ventrone, ed., *I dannati della rivoluzione: Violenza politica e storia d'Italia negli anni Sessanta e Settanta* (Macerata: edizioni università di marcerata, 2010), 110-111, 116-124.

[82] "A Mirafiori, in strada delle Cacce altri 60 alloggi occupati stanotte," *La Stampa*, September 28, 1974.

[83] See, for instance, PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Sub-Collection: Valentina Donvito, File: 006720, dated October 1, 1970.

their news organ, *L'Unità*, whose journalists often depicted occupations as "extreme" acts of "a group of desperate citizens," citing the IACP and city governments as aggravating the problem.[84]

Some occupiers who saw themselves as acting out of desperation, however, were not so convinced that the PCI remained in their corner. Carmine, who decided to occupy after spending years applying to public housing through the IACP, criticized the inaction of the PCI. In an interview in November of 1974, he related that the PCI "slept" through workers' movements for reform, including the housing question in Turin. Although he still remained within the party, he lamented that what had been an "avant-garde party has moved on to a more moderate position."[85] Franco, Carmine's neighbor and Falchera assignee, had a similar opinion, in spite of having legal claim to his apartment. He emphasized that he was still a PCI member "and won't change my mind," but agreed that the PCI "slept a little bit" when it came to workers' needs.[86] He was one of the assignees who accepted his neighboring occupiers' claims on the welfare state as legitimate; he felt their accusations of inequity and inefficiency represented challenges he and others in his same social position faced. Though the PCI pushed for reform on behalf of all workers and those generally of poor socioeconomic status, for many occupiers it was not enough.

To compound things further, not all PCI members agreed that even some occupiers were in the right. Now responsible for coordinating electric utilities for public housing in present-day Turin, Sebastiano Solano reflected on why he was against the Falchera and other occupations during the 1970s. He recounted that the PCI promoted various methods of protest, but made a distinction between protest and "rebellion." In Solano's words, the PCI was "against certain

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[84] "L'inerzia del Comune e dell'IACP ha aggravato il problema della casa," *L'Unità*, September 26, 1970.

[85] "Il posto di lavoro e' sacrosanto e non si tocca, la casa e' sacrosanta e la teniamo: Parlano alcuni compagni operai che occupano le case a Torino," *Lotta Continua,* November 15, 1974. Though this is an interview conducted by *Lotta Continua*, one would hope that the direct quotes do come from Carmine himself.

[86] "Il posto di lavoro e' sacrosanto e non si tocca, la casa e' sacrosanta e la teniamo: Parlano alcuni compagni operai che occupano le case a Torino," *Lotta Continua,* November 15, 1974.

forms of extreme rebellion, such as *Lotta Continua.* They [LC] did not have a national perspective." Solano, too, adhered to the importance of a politics with a larger and supposedly longer-lasting perspective. He continued, "I was for constructing houses, not occupying them…It's necessary to demonstrate and protest, of course, but to occupy definitively means to create a war among the poor…Because occupying a house means taking away a right from someone who has the same right." [87] The fact that Solano also referenced a "war among the poor" demonstrates how widespread this term was during this time. Moreover, he insinuated that housing was a "right" for occupiers and assignees alike, but distinguished between how that right was accessed or legitimized.

As underscored by city council meeting notes, Turin's city leadership was almost as equally torn between party representatives. Though the DC party had largely governed throughout the 1960s, the current DC mayor, Giovanni Picco, had only held office for less than a year as the last of three mayors attempting to lead a "precarious balance" between coalition parties of the center-left – the DC, PSI, PSDI, and PRI (Christian Democracy, Italian Socialist Party, Italian Social-Democratic Party, and Italian Republican Party). In addition, he assumed leadership just as the OAPEC oil embargo catalyzed a global financial crisis – one that affected the automobile industry in Turin in particular as petroleum not only fueled their products but also their production of cars, such as tires. As a result, "the city was hit by an economic and social crisis of vast proportions, which arose from the difficult economic situation, the shortage of houses and the disorganization of the most indispensable social services."[88] Due to the socioeconomic crises faced by Picco's administration, in addition to the fragile center-left

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[87] Interview with Sebastiano Solano, conducted by the author in his office in Turin, January 25, 2018.
[88] Adriana Castagnoli, "Le istituzioni locali e le classi dirigenti dal dopoguerra alla metà degli anni Ottanta," in Nicola Tranfaglia, ed., *Gli anni della Repubblica IX: Storia di Torino* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1999), 132-133

coalition he headed, the mayor was in desperate straits to find solutions to the dearth of housing and other social services that threatened the life and health of Turin's population.

A few months before the Falchera was occupied, for instance, Mayor Picco considered mitigating the vast shortage of apartments available by using a legal precent that allowed for the government requisition of housing. First established after earthquakes in Naples near the mid-19th century displaced a large number of inhabitants, the decree gave the mayor executive power to temporarily take over housing for individuals and families in need. Gesturing to a number of difficulties faced by the public housing authority (IACP), Mayor Picco proposed that the use of the law "demonstrates our willingness to act," namely to ameliorate, in part, the city's housing crisis. He admitted that its implementation would be "questionable" and even "painful in some respects," but found it to be the best strategy.[89] His comments reflect the amount of pressure placed on the administration to intervene, spurring leadership to look at all legislative possibilities.

Turin representatives' responses to the proposed requisitions were heated, however. Ugo Martinat, member of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI) political party, was one of Mayor Picco's most outspoken critics. In addressing the mayor, he claimed that Mayor Picco suggested this type of proposal because he had "water at [his] throat," or was under severe pressure. He encouraged the city to negotiate a new building plan with the private sector rather than give in to the pressure generated by the occupations, referring to requisitions as "pure demagoguery."[90] As a representative of a far-right nationalist party, he proposed a neoliberal capitalist solution, pressing for privatization rather than more government involvement. In coming months, he questioned why the administration would penalize law abiding citizens

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[89] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: June 3, 1974.
[90] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: June 3, 1974.

(landlords) when occupiers were acting outside of the law, prioritizing the discourse of legality versus illegality over that of social need.

Once the Falchera was occupied, these political divisions over who was conforming to both the law and established norms of acceptable behavior became even more pronounced. Diego Novelli (PCI) painted himself as the champion of the occupiers. He encouraged the city to activate public utilities for the occupied buildings and agreed with Mayor Picco's requisition plans. He believed that if Turin took over otherwise vacant housing for the occupiers, other cities would follow their lead, thus improving conditions for the socioeconomic strata that made up a large number of PCI membership.[91] Once again, Ugo Martinat opposed such actions, prioritizing the privileges of citizenship for those who owned private housing over those in state-sponsored accommodations. His solution was an audit of all residents currently in public housing to identify those who sublet their apartment, thereby taking advantage of the system. Similar to the letter from a private citizen to the mayor, he claimed that "hundreds and hundreds of these families have cars of a certain quality and have the possibility of paying rents on the free market."[92] If one lived in public housing but could also afford a car, and not just any car but one of "certain quality," they did not constitute the "deserving" poor. Instead, they broke the requirements of receiving state aid and should consequently not qualify for its administration.

Some city leaders, though, focused on other citizens who were in violation of a supposed civic duty, namely landlords who kept apartments empty to drive up prices in a time of great demand. Indeed, this was Diego Novelli's rejoinder to Martinat and other critics the following week when he asked, "Is it more illegal to occupy or to keep houses vacant?" He then proceeded to call out his colleague Attilio Bastianini, representative for conservative Italian Liberal Party

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[91] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 21, 1974.
[92] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 21, 1974.

(PLI), who had previously criticized the administration for allowing "1500 families, who certainly have a right to housing, to go and occupy the houses built for other entitled persons."[93] Though the PLI incorporated some elements of the left after the Second World War, the party's left-wing exited in the mid-1950s. By the early 1970s, the PLI opposed center-left coalitions and moved further to the right when it came to economic questions; thus Bastianini likely espoused a position more similar to Martinat and the MSI in prioritizing those who went through official channels in order to obtain their housing. In his remarks, Novelli posited the following: "So I ask you [Bastianini], as an engineer, as a liberal, as a Christian – which I suppose you are – if it is more illegitimate, if it is more of an abuse to occupy housing because you are in need, or if it is more irresponsible to keep housing vacant because…you want to play the market and you do not wish to submit to the law."[94] Perhaps in Italy more so than the FRG, ties between politics and religion came into play, showing how politicians similarly marshalled the language of morality for political purposes. In this instance, Novelli attempted to use moral judgements in his political arguments, criticizing Bastianini for supposedly not pursuing a political program that corresponded with what he believed to be Christian beliefs. In so doing, he called out his colleagues for what he perceived as hypocrisy. Furthermore, Novelli painted the occupiers as the "deserving" poor whose actions, though illegal, were more legitimate than property owners. Bastianini, in his defense, retorted that good laws lead to good results.[95] Bastianini brought the argument back to questions of legality; he did not negate the responsibility of the state in protecting its inhabitants, but prioritized order and procedure over reactive policy decisions.

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[93] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 21, 1974.
[94] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 28, 1974.
[95] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 28, 1974.

In spite of internal conflict within the city council over the ethics of requisitions, Mayor Picco's plans for accommodation did go forward with the support of other DC representatives. As DC representative Aceto perhaps reluctantly acknowledged, "Obviously we realize that the number of occupants is such that a solution in a very short time is ultimately not conceivable. This is why we will try to urgently address, in the space of a few days, the problem of those who are truly in a state of serious discomfort and who can no longer bear the current state of occupation, nor return to their homes."[96] To attend to those occupiers in the situation described by Aceto, the mayor established a committee on October 22, 1974 to find "accommodation elsewhere for families who are in an effective state of need" and to return the vacated housing to the "legitimate assignees."[97] The committee was instructed to assess the needs of occupiers with an eye to the availability of housing on the market, which would serve as a baseline for the number of requisitions needed. By taking action, Mayor Picco acknowledged a responsibility on behalf of the state to provide for its citizens. Yet, though he referred to families in need, he still prefaced his description of assignees as "legitimate," implying that occupiers had instead illegitimately laid claim to public housing, even as they pursued a plan to assist them. As a result, his statement was an incomplete acceptance of occupiers' claims.

In order to respond to the committee's findings and procure actual housing for the occupiers, the mayor had to implement exceptional measures. Rather than requisitioning private housing, however, on November 5, 1974, the Prefect of Turin announced that owing to the occupation of over 950 public housing units, the mayor would take over all public housing that had been or was in the process of being assigned. The mayor would then assign public housing

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[96] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: October 28, 1974.
[97] "Casa: Il Comune rinvia le decisioni 'abusivi' in 64 alloggi private," *Torino Cronaca*, October 22, 1974. *Torino Cronaca* is likely an insert of *La Stampa*, though it had no identifying information.

"to impoverished families according to a scale of need," establishing a ranking system calibrated around household conditions and apartment availability.[98] It is important to note that there was still a way to measure degrees of need or "deservingness" as some occupiers were excluded from receiving aid. On November 26, 1974, based on the committee's research, the city administration reached an official agreement with representatives from the Falchera occupation and others throughout the city, including Strada delle Cacce. They established that almost 900 households in occupations throughout the city qualified for assistance, and divided them into four groups:

Group A (368 households) – most urgent need
Group B (325 households) – to be relocated in three months
Group C (180 households) – to be relocated by the end of the year
Group D – those who did not qualify for state assistance[99]

 In addition to prioritizing tenants with the most need, the city made other concessions, such as revamping the application process for being assigned public housing, restructuring the IACP "for a better use of the financial resources made available," a redistribution of regional funds for further construction of public housing, and regulation over the redevelopment of the downtown area.[100] In return, the occupiers agreed to leave the premises by December 5, 1974 while they awaited a new assignment. The fact that the three largest trade and workers' unions (CGIL – CISL – UIL) also signed the agreement lent even more institutional weight to the compromise, as it would help damper any potential for strikes or opposition within the factories.

Not all organizations were satisfied with this newly signed accord. The Italian Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI) – which was part of the city's governing coalition – released a statement that they were opposed to the agreement because "it does not resolve the housing

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[98] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Sub-Collection: Filippo Falcone, File: A. 3307/GAB, dated November 5, 1974.
[99] ASdC, Collection: Ass. Problemi della casa: Relazione sullo stato delle occupazioni, "Assessorato ai Problemi della Casa Edilizia Pubblica e Privata."
[100] PG, Collection: Marcello Vitale, Sub-Collection: Filippo Falcone, "Accordo sulla casa del 26 Novembre 1974."

question, creates illusions and panic, and could easily lead to demagoguery…penalizing, moreover, the worker who did not "occupy" but has the same right to a home after years of waiting."[101] The PSDI recognized the many issues that plagued the social service system, but prioritized deserving and undeserving recipients based on their adherence to established standards of behavior. Not all political organizations which were active in the occupations agreed with the compromise between city and occupiers either. For example, *Lotta Comunista* (not to be mistaken for *Lotta Continua*) had helped coordinate the occupation in Strada delle Cacce and felt that city did not concede enough. According to Gilberto Angeloro, they wanted "everything immediately," rather than the solution of assigning occupiers to public housing over an extended period of time.[102] This created even deeper fissures of tensions among extraparliamentary political groups who constantly had to negotiate (and often table) their differences in their dealings with public officials. When the occupiers accepted the city's proposal, *Lotta Comunista* broke from the other allied organizations, ending their collaboration.

In contrast, some representatives from both LC and AO agreed to help coordinate the implementation of the agreement for Falchera occupiers, deciding that reform was enough for the moment. According to Davide Lovisolo, 90% of Falchera inhabitants qualified for the city's priority groups. The remaining 10% either found their own accommodation or did not qualify (see Figure 5.8 for a copy of a preliminary list exclusive to the Falchera occupation). In addition to ranking the occupiers, Davide went around with city police as they attempted to requisition vacant housing. In an interview he related, "It was one of the biggest [accomplishments] for me

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[101] "Questione abusivi, nuove difficoltà: Socialdemocratici contro la soluzione per le case," *La Stampa*, November 28, 1974.

[102] Interview with Gilberto and Raffaella Angeloro, conducted in the Angeloro home by the author on December 14, 2017. Gilberto's description of *Lotta Comunista* is likely a reference to the slogan "vogliamo tutto," or "we want everything" that was widespread among radical activists who considered themselves "militants."

personally – the relationship between an [extraparliamentary] movement and institutions."[103] It

was a rare moment in which AO was able to advocate and expand social rights, receiving both

the green light and cooperation of local governing authorities in order to do so in a concrete

manner.

Figure 5.8 Initial List for Falchera Groupings, Signed by the Falchera Joint Committee[104]

By mid-December of 1974, however, it was clear that things were not going as planned.

Gilberto Angeloro, who was in charge of double-checking the list of ranked groups within the

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[103] Interview with Davide Lovisolo, conducted by author at Turin's Women's Archive on November 27, 2017.
[104] Photo from private collection of Gilberto Angeloro. Reproduced with permission. This is not the finalized list, nor does it include families and individuals from other occupations. Members of the joint committee included Falchera representatives, political representatives, and municipal and IACP officials. Gilberto Angeloro's signature is the third down on the left.

Falchera, recalled that "they [the municipality] didn't even accept the first list."[105] In a *La Stampa* article entitled, "The Municipality Violates the Housing Agreement," journalists reported that in theory, all 368 families throughout the city assigned to Group A should have received housing by December 5, 1974. By the date of the article, December 12, 1974, "no more than 220 housing units had been allocated for Group A (of which 47 turned out to be uninhabitable in practice)."[106] The title of the article also highlighted a slight shift in public opinion. For many months, *La Stampa* had placed the onus of blame on the occupiers. This time, however, editors communicated that it was the municipality in breach of the social contract between citizens and the local governing body.

The slowed timeline led to tensions between the occupiers and municipal authorities, and only increased in the first few months of 1975. On April 10, 1975, occupiers "invaded" city hall to protest the delay in city action, a protest that was led, in large part, by women.[107] Carmela Selvaggio was particularly excited to relate her experience occupying city hall for three days. She described that once inside, city officials "did not want us to eat" as a way of breaking the action. Their solution was to rig a pulley system to pull food to the balcony, enabling them to stay for three days. She explained that the women wanted to be the ones occupying city hall because "they would have willingly arrested the men." In an interesting preface, she related, "I was always the first. Because those of us who had the most need [for a home], like Lucia, we put ourselves in front, in front of the men." Perhaps they were most determined because they had the most to lose should they be evicted from the apartments they had taken over. Or perhaps the

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[105] Interview with Gilberto and Raffaella Angeloro, conducted in the Angeloro home by the author on December 14, 2017.

[106] "Torino – il comune viola l'acordo sulla casa – Ferma risposta dei comitati di lotta," *La Stampa*, December 11, 1974.

[107] "Abusivi invadono il Municipio perche' non ha rispettato i patti," *La Stampa*, April 10, 1975.

image of the neediest occupiers at the front encouraged other participants or observers. When the city hall occupation eventually turned violent and the police began to deliver physical blows to the women, Carmela's friend Lucia stood in front of the police and displayed the bruises she had received from an unrelated medical procedure. She blamed the police by saying "Look, look what you did to me!" and the police finally left the women alone.[108] By tapping into the cultural taboo of hitting women, female occupiers turned the discourse of violence and war on its head, portraying the police force and governing authorities as the ones instigating violence. Furthermore, the protesters stated their claims to the rights and protections of the welfare state in corporeal terms by occupying spaces representative of state power. And, if we hold to Judith Butler's theorization that "to attack the body is to attack the right itself," police force enacted upon the women's bodies symbolized an attack on the very rights they were demanding, or their embodied questioning of the social state.[109] As such, their accusations of state violence enacted on their physical bodies, and perhaps symbolically on their theoretical rights, furthered their claims of injustice and inequality.

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[108] Interview with Carmela Selvaggio with the assistance of Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author on January 27, 2018 at her home in Turin.

[109] Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," (2011), https://transversal.at/transversal/1011/butler/en, accessed February 10, 2021.

Figure 5.9 Occupation of Turin's Municipal Offices[110]

A later report published by Turin's city assessor, a city-appointed employee, seems to

confirm that the administration was at fault for violating the agreement, and even potentially for

the violence related to the municipal protest:

> The implementation of the November 26th agreement therefore suffered a serious crisis of credibility in the first months of 1975, resulting in a dangerous increase in tension that the signing of the agreement had temporarily eased. Clashes between occupiers and the assignees reignited; the latter, impatient by the long wait that a peaceful solution to the problem entailed, were increasingly resorting to the magistrate to assert their rights. Thus, demonstrations resumed in city streets and in front of city hall, followed by the peaceful occupation of municipal offices and the city council room for two days, while the bloodiest [event] occurred a few weeks later – the occupation of the IACP in Corso Dante – which ended in an eviction by the police force.[111]

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[110] Photo from personal collection of Gilberto Angeloro. Reproduced with permission.
[111] ASdC, Assessorato ai Problemi della Casa Edilizia Pubblica e Privata, October 1977.

In this document, the assessor acknowledged that city failings contributed to a "serious crisis of credibility," illustrating a slight shift in perception and even perhaps even public opinion. No longer were occupiers in the wrong, rather city officials and administrators. In addition, the assessor seems to imply that a lack of fulfillment on the side of the city led to violence with his characterization of the clearing of Corso Dante as the "bloodiest" ramification. Though some may view this connection as too stark, it is quite clear that the city was on the defensive and the entity not upholding its end of the housing bargain.

Thus, in spite of divisions within city administration and within the party that claimed to promote social reform and progress (the PCI), governing officials attempted to ameliorate the housing crisis with accommodation rather than the "hard line" pursued by Frankfurt representatives. This decision was somewhat exceptional as the city determined to widen the net of the social state at a moment of crisis and when neoliberalism (or the privatization of social services in this case) was gaining momentum across western Europe and elsewhere. At the same time, parameters for acceptable qualifications for social aid continued to be debated in city council meetings and in the ranking system for households receiving state aid. One had to demonstrate that one was "truly" in need in order to gain access to social services. These distinctions decreased in importance, however, when the city reneged on its promised timeline, thus granting strength to occupiers' claims of injustice. Occupiers' argument that they had been wronged – first by the system, and then by city administration – would only gain ground in the throes of great misfortune.

Turning Point: Tragedy at the Falchera

Momentum and public opinion swung in the direction of occupiers when their leader, Tonino Miccichè, became a martyr for their cause. On April 17, 1975, a former security guard

shot and killed Tonino Miccichè, the "Mayor of the Falchera," over a disagreement about a garage. The loss of Miccichè dealt a tremendous internal blow to the occupation: not only did his charismatic personality and leadership create a sense of unity, he was also one of the primary negotiators with city representatives. However, the tragedy only seemed to fuel support for the occupation, as representatives from local workers' unions and other organizations widely attended Miccichè's funeral. Criticism over the government's handling of the occupation, and particularly its delay in implementing the November 26th agreement, came to the fore. Thus, Miccichè's death marks a significant turning point in the struggle for housing access in Turin and was followed by a dramatic shift in city leadership. The Falchera leader's death became a symbol of the plight of marginalized citizens as Miccichè – himself an immigrant of low socio-economic circumstances from Sicily who worked for Fiat – embodied the tension over the failure of the government to provide what was perceived to be a basic right.

Miccichè's killer, Paulo Fiocco, was not an occupier, rather an IACP assignee who already had one garage that corresponded to his apartment in the Falchera. However, Fiocco was apparently the owner of two cars, and decided to park his second car in a vacant garage.[112] If one were to go along with Representative Martinat's reasoning, then, this demonstration of wealth calls into question whether he should have received public housing in the first place. Falchera meetings were initially held at the school, but the coordinating committee had planned on creating a headquarters in the garage in anticipation of school starting for the children. According to the recollections of the woman whose apartment was directly over the garage, she repeatedly informed Fiocco that it was not assigned to him, rather one of her neighbors, but "he replied not to bother him." Miccichè then approached Fiocco to communicate that it was needed

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[112] "Gli e' andato vicino senza dire una parola ha preso la pistola e gli ha sparato in viso," *La Stampa*, April 18, 1975.

either for the headquarters or "someone who does not have one." In response, Fiocco replied, "You are the abusers here, and you use violence to conduct politics – I will never change my attitude."[113] By referring to the occupiers as "abusers," Fiocco established himself as higher up on a hierarchy of legitimacy, negating occupiers' claims to Falchera housing.

The day after Miccichè approached Fiocco, a few youth and a handful of female occupiers decided to take the situation into their own hands. They opened the garage and moved Fiocco's car out. According to Carmela, Fiocco's wife came out to confront them, yelling "Enough! You've already stolen the apartments, go back to the gutters where you belong." Mrs. Fiocco apparently slapped and even bit Carmela. At this, another woman, Caterina Grande, said she pushed Mrs. Fiocco away and told her that they didn't want trouble.[114] Tonino Miccichè was outside in the vicinity, playing with Carmela Selvaggio's nephew, accompanied by Carmela's wheelchair-bound husband and their daughter, Patricia. When he saw the commotion, he went over to see what was happening around the same time that Paulo Fiocco similarly reached the group. According to Angeloro's and Caterina's account, Pauolo Fiocco shot Tonino Miccichè without uttering a single word.[115] When Fiocco turned himself in to the local police station late that evening, however, he claimed to have been concerned about his wife's well-being, taking his pistol to break up the group. He told police, "I didn't want to shoot, but a shot went off."[116] In the ensuing trial and months ahead, Fiocco repeated this story, "The group yelled and mocked me: I

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[113] "Gli e' andato vicino senza dire una parola ha preso la pistola e gli ha sparato in viso," *La Stampa*, April 18, 1975.
[114] "Gli e' andato vicino senza dire una parola ha preso la pistola e gli ha sparato in viso," *La Stampa*, April 18, 1975.
[115] Interview with Carmela Selvaggio with the assistance of Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author on January 27, 2018 at her home in Turin.; "Gli e' andato vicino senza dire una parola ha preso la pistola e gli ha sparato in viso," *La Stampa*, April 18, 1975.
[116] "Gli e' andato vicino senza dire una parola ha preso la pistola e gli ha sparato in viso," *La Stampa*, April 18, 1975.

shot only to intimidate them."[117] Fiocco's sentence was eventually reduced from 19 years to 13

years in prison. The Miccichè family refused monetary restitution.

Figure 5.10 Memorial Service for Tonino Miccichè in Front of Falchera Buildings[118]

The response to Tonino's death illuminated the continuing tug-of-war of rights among

Turin residents and city leadership. On April 18th, the day after his death, a procession from the

Falchera traveled from the northern outskirts to Turin's city center, a distance of some eight or

nine kilometers. So many participants took part in the funeral oration that traffic was blocked for

a number of hours. Workers' councils from a variety of factories sent messages of solidarity,

highlighting the socioeconomic plight of marginalized workers that played a large role in the

Falchera occupation.[119] In his accounting of the funeral, Giovanni De Luna, one of Turin LC's

leaders and now historian, described the participants as "workers of Mirafiori…the

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[117] "La morte di Tonino Miccichè, durante la 'guerra per la casa,'" *La Stampa*, February 3, 1979.
[118] From the personal files of Gilberto Algeloro. Reproduced with permission.
[119] Filippo Falcone, *Morte di un militante siciliano*, 53.

representatives of all the factory councils, the PCI, the PSI, the other 'official' political forces and, last but not least…more than 10,000 people."[120] This tremendous showing of support illustrated a swing toward the occupiers in public opinion, as a martyrdom so often does in boosting the perceived legitimacy of a cause. Even the PCI, which had previously denounced the occupations as "extreme," sent representatives to the funeral.

La Stampa similarly changed track and portrayed Miccichè and his leadership of the occupiers in a positive light. Their journalists described Miccichè as a "moderate" who "wanted to avoid any form of violence." They also printed comments from a fellow occupier who related that Miccichè was still sending money home to Sicily and that he "wholly dedicated himself to our problems." He also recounted how Miccichè had been wrongly imprisoned for a crime that he did not commit, and even upon release, was fired by Fiat. *La Stampa*'s tone differed sharply from the language of "war among the poor" often invoked by the same outlet. Moreover, the *La Stampa* article subtly criticized the municipality by referring to lack of fulfillment of the promises laid out in the November 26th agreement, conveying, "The situation of those illegally occupying housing at the Falchera is a heavy one. No less than a week ago, one of their delegations peacefully occupied town hall to highlight the problem. 'So many promises,' Tonino Miccichè said in an impromptu press conference at that time, 'but we hope to obtain something with the elections coming up.'"[121] Implied is a possible connection that if the city had followed through with their agreement, tension between occupiers and the assignee Fiocco may not have resulted in death. Though generally opposed to the occupations, *La Stampa*, too, communicated a level of respect for the deceased leader.

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[120] Giovanni De Luna, *Le ragioni di un decennio*, 15. Mirafiori refers to the area of the city that housed a large portion of the Fiat factories.
[121] "Gli e' andato vicino senza dire una parola ha preso la pistola e gli ha sparato in viso," *La Stampa*, April 18, 1975.

Shortly after Tonino Miccichè's passing, Turin residents voted out the center-left and voted in a PCI-PSI coalition in June of 1975, joining similar movements toward the political left mirrored in cities such as Bologna and Florence. Whether Miccichè's death significantly influenced the 1975 election is up for debate. However, many viewed his passing as a catalyst that shifted Turin's leadership. For example, Giovanni de Luna was convinced the election and the events surrounding the Falchera were related. In his history of the 1970s he related that "A few months later [following the death of Miccichè], during the June 15th administrative elections, the success of the leftist parties and the launch of the 'red junta' in Turin seemed to confirm the sensation [of anger and force] on the electoral level as well."[122] Implied in his accounting are ties between the sentiments expressed at Miccichè's funeral protest march, the explosive socioeconomic crisis that had not seemed to diminished under DC leadership, and the subsequent political elections.

An early defender of the occupation, Diego Novelli (PCI) was appointed mayor to lead the new coalition. In the immediate days following his appointment, Novelli signed a new agreement providing housing for occupiers. In the opinion of Davide Lovisolo, Gilberto Angeloro, and other Falchera residents, the question of housing occupations was the principal factor in Novelli's electoral victory. Davide Lovisolo gave most of the credit to the Falchera occupiers, recounting, "This occupation was not the only one, but [it was] the main driver behind the fact that the communist socialists won the June 1975 election for the first time." Gilberto Angeloro agreed, but with a healthy amount of skepticism. After Tonino's death, the mantle of leadership fell on Angeloro as one of the few representatives the occupiers trusted, seeing as he himself had been on the waiting list for public housing for years and was personally recruited by

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[122] Giovanni De Luna, *Le ragioni di un decennio*, 18.

Tonino to occupy. Notably, he was involved with the trade unions but not with *LC* or *AO*. In his recollections, the workers' unions and Novelli came to an agreement. Because so many workers now supported the occupations, they would vote for the "official" party of the left – the PCI – if the occupations were both accepted and supported. In spite of the fact that this compromise bore fruit, Angeloro related that most occupiers continued to view Novelli with a measure of distrust. Although he had promoted the November 26th agreement in violation of the PCI's official stance against it, he arrived at the actual occupation "ten days after the agreement." Therefore, according to Angeloro, all of the photos of Novelli at the occupation prior to his election constituted a photo opportunity that misconstrued reality.[123]

Many residents did seem to respond to the photos, though, drawing connections between the occupation and Novelli's success. A Turin resident who was originally from Puglia cited housing issues as the reason he and his fellow citizens voted for Novelli in a letter to the new mayor shortly after the election. After referring to the housing problems that the "old Christian Democratic administrations have left to you as heir," he related that "we citizens…wanted and obtained a shift to the left." He then urged Novelli that "it's up to you, who represent the city and have the authority to destroy this mafia that was created in the so-called boom years; you need to annihilate these dishonest speculators."[124] In his opinion, speculators were the ones most at fault for the lack of affordable housing, apparently with the blessing (or collusion) of DC leadership. Here, too, one notices the perception of crisis – the "mafia" of redevelopment that emerged during the "so-called boom years" (1950s and 1960s) was followed by widespread skepticism of both economic and political systems during the socioeconomic crises that plagued Turin (and

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[123] Interview with Gilberto and Raffaella Angeloro, conducted in the Angeloro home by the author on December 14, 2017.
[124] Giordanino, *Diego Novelli*, 81.

elsewhere) in the 1970s.[125] He affirmed that housing was the most pressing problem for Novelli to solve, and the reason that many constituents voted him into office.

Novelli's election not only seemed to be a confirmation for occupiers that their claims were valid, it also lent them a newfound sense of confidence. In referring to the aftermath of the election, Davide related, "Another thing changed. Observing a large mass of people makes one think. When they [the occupiers] went to go to the municipality or the IACP, they left in a procession of 50-60 cars and acted as if it were a southern wedding. It makes one notice, no?"[126] Far from a scene of desperation, then, occupiers' protests and demonstrations shifted to a tone of confidence and even levity. In Davide's eyes, they embraced some of their cultural roots, treating communal action like "a southern wedding." Furthermore, they presented their claims as a celebration, avoiding any implication of the potential for violence now that city officials were listening. These attitudes, coupled with the guarantee to housing manifest in a new agreement with Novelli, potentially symbolized greater inclusion within Turinese society, *without* having to give up their southern identity in exchange for a recognition of what they viewed as their rights.

Although Tonino Miccichè's death was a tragedy for Falchera occupiers, it opened up both social and political space for greater compromise and recognition. Though one must be careful in drawing too direct of a comparison, the Turinese electorate voted in a leftist government just months after his burial; though Turin had been a "red" city in the past, it had not been headed by the PCI in over twenty years. Diego Novelli did not necessarily change strategy from his predecessor, but strengthened the municipality's commitment to delivering on renewed agreements that would provide both occupiers and assignees decent and affordable apartments.

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[125] For an analysis of a general trend from prosperity to skepticism from the 1950s to the 1970s, see Nail Ferguson et. al., eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
[126] Interview with Anna Cagna and Davide Lovisolo, conducted at the Casa delle Donne in Turin by the author on November 27, 2017.

Recognition: Reformulations of Access to Social Services and the Protection of the Welfare State

For Novelli, the transition to mayor was a difficult one. He was no longer on the "other side of the table" but was the one responsible for making policy and logistical decisions as the first PCI mayor of Turin since 1951. Within three hours of his appointment, he recalled that "the police were already looking for me to inform me that about thirty people had invaded town hall to obtain a house."[127] Novelli was elected, in part, because of his commitment to expand housing rights to all residents of Turin. Now, however, he was faced with the practical matter of putting his promises into practice. Though he would continue to face opposition from other city council members, his administration gradually managed to partially plug the hole in social services while the delayed search for longer-term solutions continued.

In order to provide apartments to the occupiers, Novelli turned to the actions of his predecessor and continued to requisition housing. Yet there was one important difference in the eyes of Guido Laganà. In contrast to Mayor Picco, who took over all aspects of *public* housing, Novelli started to requisition greater numbers of *private* housing. In Laganà's opinion, the requisitions themselves were not all that effective, nonetheless they had "a strong impact because it was the first time that private property was touched."[128] To avoid association with "authoritarianism" as opponents termed it (a nod to Italy's fascist past and potentially Cold War-era fears of Communism), Novelli's model incorporated market prices when an apartment met the requirements for requisition. According to the agreement with occupiers, families were required to pay 12% of their salary while the municipality made up the rest, paying rent based on comparable figures obtained from the private market. This temporary solution was meant to last

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[127] Giordanino, *Diego Novelli*, 5.
[128] Interview with Guido Laganà, conducted by the author in his office on January 19, 2018.

between 12 and 18 months until a more permanent resolution could be found. In spite of its temporary nature, the city sent a message, then, that the right to inhabit housing transcended the right to own housing if one refused to rent out one's property. This represented a significant shift in ensuring that a decent home as a social right. Furthermore, by providing housing for occupiers, Novelli also affirmed the responsibility of the state in providing for all Italian citizens.

In November of 1975, five months after his election, Novelli gave a report on the state of affairs and illustrated the success of his administration in making good on their promises. He began by reviewing that 1,090 apartments had been occupied by November of the year prior, and reminded other representatives that the occupiers, city council, and the three largest trade unions (CGIL – CISL – UIL) had signed the November 26th agreement with the former administration. He then related the following updated trajectory:

> The situation to date is the following: out of one thousand ninety (1090) families, four hundred and sixty (460) have already been assigned, two hundred seventeen (217) will have accommodation within a few weeks – it is anticipated by December 15; that is to say, six hundred ninety-seven (697) families are practically settled. Three hundred and ninety-three (393) families remain for whom the Turin municipality has taken the responsibility to find a solution to the problem by December 31st [1975].[129]

In addition, the committee had already located 170 apartments for the remaining third of occupiers, but these accommodations would not be ready until mid- or late January. This left the city with the task of finding 223 apartments. Novelli issued an appeal to homeowner associations, real estate agents, and insurance agents to help identify possible buildings, but his actions implied he would be willing to requisition if one did not volunteer. He asserted, "We believe that it is absolutely impossible to disregard the commitment we all made together in

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[129] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: November 17, 1975.

November 1974."[130] Even though it was taking an additional year to fulfill, Novelli was clearly determined to carry it out.

Not all city representatives shared his enthusiasm and voiced opposition to the requisitions, even those within Novelli's same party. Giancarlo Quagliotti, a fellow PCI delegate, alluded to the short-sightedness of the occupiers' and the administration's solutions in a city council meeting. He related, "He who goes to occupy a house or goes on strike alone…does not take into account the complexity of the situation." DC representative Giuseppe Gatti was more direct in his criticism during the same session, stressing that requisitions "end up creating a situation of distrust and tension within the whole construction sector…it will not be solved by occupations nor should we reward occupations."[131] For Gatti, the assignment of a house was a "reward" rather than a social right. Even Quagliotti implied that one must follow established protocol to qualify for the benefits of substantive citizenship.

Novelli, however, defended city actions with both data and rationale. He communicated that by the time of the meeting in which both Gatti and Quagliotti expressed criticism, January 19, 1976, only forty more apartments were needed to house all of the families. He addressed accusations that by requisitioning, "we would have stolen the private property of those who are well off." He countered with "extreme clarity" that "we have not taken anything away from anyone; we simply requisitioned empty or vacant housing. We pay rent at the market price for private property, so they don't lose a penny." After emphasizing the administration's commitment to return the properties in the same condition they were given, Novelli decreed that

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[130] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: November 17, 1975.
[131] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: January 19, 1976.

any claims that the families would depreciate the value of the property "must be firmly rejected."[132]

Through his language and the act of requisitioning private property, Novelli included occupiers in circles of both political and social belonging, pushing back on stereotypes of class and culture. Rather than being treated as second-class citizens, families assigned housing had the commitment of his administration. In prioritizing the right to live in a home over the right to own a home, Novelli affirmed the claim to a home as a basic necessity – and the responsibility of the state in guaranteeing an established standard of living. As demonstrated above, Novelli went beyond fulfilling the social contract between state and citizen, however. He expanded the definitions of urban citizenship by administering the benefits of substantive citizenship to those that had previously been denied based on cultural and social differences rather than their formal citizenship status; he also pushed back at those who posited that ex-occupiers would fail to take care of the requisitioned properties. Finally, occupiers' claims to decent apartments and the right to call Turin a home began to be realized.

Conclusion

It must be emphasized that Turin's solution was only a temporary one. When a new wave of occupations took place in 1976, Diego Novelli condemned the collective action as "individualistic" and one which would only solve the housing problem for "small groups" while leading to "discrimination against and harm for other workers." Instead, Novelli reiterated the need for national reforms, such as new legislation on "land use, fair rent, multi-year planning, [and] the rigorous use of public resources for new forms of development," as prerequisites for solving the cause of the housing crisis, rather than placing a bandage over top.[133]

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[132] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: January 19, 1976.
[133] ASdC Collection: Consiglio Comunale - Sessioni Straordinari. Session: March 22, 1976.

It would take a couple more years for federal solutions to catch up and provide said lasting reform to social services. In 1978 the Italian Federal government did pass the Fair Rent Act which "brought about a system of controlled rents, and rent was made conditional on the quality of the house."[134] For instance, Article I determined that a rental contract was required to have a duration of a minimum of four years, and the rate could not exceed 3.85% of the property value. It also dictated that landlords would have to wait for over two months of unpaid rent and an additional 20 days of non-payment of late fees before eviction could be considered. Moreover, Article III set out stipulations for state aid, including how to calculate a subsidy for tenants who qualified.[135] However, by not fixing rents in relation to a workers' wages but instead calculating them by property value, the Fair Rent Act already incorporated a neoliberal framework that used market value as its basis. Only at its very best did the law serve as a baseline for controlling prices to ensure that exorbitant amounts could no longer be charged for poor quality.

Italy's housing industry as a whole suffered a serious backlash from the 1978 legislation as fewer investors wished to build with the government capping their potential for profits. Furthermore, landlords who had previously rented decided to inhabit their apartments themselves; the number of eviction notices so that the premises could be used for the owner and/or their family increased from 35,000 a year to 139,000 a year between 1981 and 1983, for instance.[136] In spite of greater protections for renters, then, availability still did not increase at the rate needed. In contrast to the FRG (and many other developed countries), housing policy in Italy

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[134] Ireneus van Hees, "The Italian Housing Market: Its Failures and Their Causes," *Urban Studies* 28, no. 1 (1991): 21.

[135] La Gazzetta Ufficiale, n. 211, L. 27 luglio 1978, n. 392, Disciplina delle locazioni di immobili urbani

[136] van Hees, "The Italian Housing Market," 21.

continued (and continues, many would argue) to be characterized by "weak intervention of the state in the provision of social and affordable housing and/or direct support to tenants."[137]

Still, the recognition that occupiers, and particularly those of the Falchera, received from city administration meant that there was a precedent for more government involvement in administering social services. Though opponents referred to the November 26 and subsequent agreements as "demagoguery," city officials decided to step in where state-affiliated public housing entities had failed. By putting forth an embodied claim to rights, occupiers' highly visible collective action forced policymakers to reexamine how one accessed the rights of citizenship and admit that the social state was not delivering on its promises to protect inhabitants from harm, particularly as the political economy drifted closer and closer to neoliberalism. Requisitioning spaces may have only been a temporary solution, but reforms to the regional public housing entity and how public housing was assigned would last much longer than the year and a half that the Falchera occupation took place. And for individuals like Carmela who has not moved from her occupied apartment, she finally had a safe and secure home. As she told me in 2018, "I fought for years for this house, and I haven't moved since."[138]

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[137] Cesare Di Feliciantonio and Manuel Aalbers, "The Prehistories of Neoliberal Housing Policies in Italy and Spain and Their Reification in Times of Crisis," *Housing Policy Debate* 28 no. 1 (2018): 139. For those who still argue that neoliberalism and the lack of government intervention harms Italian housing policy, see Gastone Ave, *Urban land and property markets in Italy* (London: UCL Press, 1996); Paolo Berdini, *La città in vendita: Centri storici e mercato senza* (Rome: Donzelli, 2008); and Ferdinando Terranova, "Dalle case popolari al social housing. Successi e miserie delle politiche sociali per la casa in Italia," *Techne: Journal of Technology for Architecture and Environment,* 1 (2011): 36–47.

[138] Interview with Carmela Selvaggio with the assistance of Gilberto Angeloro, conducted by author on January 27, 2018 at her home in Turin.

CONCLUSION

Reflections on Citizenship, Housing, and Social Policy

The 1970s are often characterized as a time of great transition and unease. In addition to the economic difficulties surrounding the 1973 oil embargo, there existed what Niall Ferguson described as a "widespread *perception* of crisis in the 1970s – and very often a crisis that was global in scale."[1] The 1950s and 1960s had been distinguished as a time of economic plenty, stability, and prosperity – conditions that brought many migrants to Turin and Frankfurt for work. In the 1970s, however, the outlook generally shifted from "euphoria to skepticism about the future."[2] The housing occupations that emerged during the first half of the decade may be considered symbolic of the economic and sociopolitical crises faced by western Europe as the EEC and various nation-states struggled to adapt to a continually globalizing world. One of the most visible manifestations of crisis illuminated by tenants' collective protest actions was that of the welfare state, a crisis that historian Hartmut Kaelble claims remains unconquered to this day."[3]

Comparing Frankfurt and Turin

To understand state responses to questions of social service reform when confronting said crisis, it is useful to first examine the similarities and differences in occupiers' approaches and city administrations' responses. First, migrant and other socioeconomically disadvantaged tenants focused their actions in Frankfurt on privately owned apartment buildings. This was due, in part, to a more obvious criticism of the city's role in the urban renewal plans that exacerbated housing price and availability. Moreover, by the mid-1950s, the West German housing aid

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[1] Niall Ferguson et al., eds., *Shock of the Global: 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2010), 14.
[2] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000: Recovery and Transformation after Two World Wars,* trans. Liesel Tarquini (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 250.
[3] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe*, 259.

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strategy centered on subsidies of apartments built by "individuals and non-profit housing enterprises," rather than large swaths of public housing constructed by state-affiliated entities.[4] In this vein, occupiers in Frankfurt may be seen as protesting the economic and political forces contributing to the housing crisis, of which access to social services was but a part. However, if one looks more particularly at migrant occupiers' interactions with city administrators, one can identify a desire on the part of migrants for greater inclusion of non-formal citizens within the welfare state structure, as evidenced by the negotiations which resulted in the procurement of social housing or apartments subsidized by the state.

In contrast, housing occupiers in Turin and elsewhere throughout Italy concentrated their protest actions on public housing, predominately apartment structures built by the IACP (Autonomous Public Housing Institute). In so doing, Italian housing occupiers' actions served as an even more direct criticism of the administration of the welfare state, including the process for being assigned public housing. As formal citizens of Italy, *meridionali* were entitled to state aid, at least on paper. By taking over public housing, they not only pressed for access to social services to be expanded, but for the process to become more equitable in nature. Though urban renewal plans displacing residents from the city center certainly played a role, it was not nearly so large as in the case of Frankfurt, as even the newer public housing units were built on the peripheries. Instead, housing occupations uncovered the inefficiency of national, regional, and municipal housing administration, particularly in areas that experienced an unprecedented growth in population. More than commentary on speculation and redevelopment, the occupation

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[4] Graham Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies in West Germany and Britain: A Record of Success and Failure* (London: MacMillan Press, 1977), 8. Hans F. Zacher, *Social Policy in the Federal Republic of Germany: The Constitution of the Social*, vol. 3 (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), 193-194.

of IACP buildings pointed to the lack of planning and inability of city administrations to procure real estate for low-income housing other than on the urban fringes.

Leadership in both cities experienced changes while attempting to navigate the wave of housing occupations that swept their urban spaces. In Frankfurt, the SPD (Social Democratic Party) maintained the political majority for all of the years in question. When mayor Walter Möller died, however, Rudi Arndt took a much stricter approach in 1971, using the police to pursue a policy of eviction more frequently. This approach was not universal, though. Following some of the precedents set by his predecessor, Arndt and his administration did continue to differentiate between occupations that were need-based and those perceived to have more overtly radical political implications, particularly when students and self-identifying activists began to occupy in larger numbers. Migrant occupiers, as evidenced by the Italians in Bettinastraße, were generally viewed to be non-threatening and their motivations as less politically centered. Though the city leadership's response often oscillated and backtracked, in the end most Italian occupiers received some form of state assistance or aid in obtaining safe and affordable housing.

Turin, on the other hand, was led by a fragile coalition headed by the DC (Christian Democracy) party. Widespread public outrage after the death of Tonino Miccichè, the "Mayor of the Falchera," partly help catalyze a transition to a PCI-led (Italian Communist Party) administration in 1975. At this point, city council debates over "legitimate" and "illegitimate" tenants based on who had jumped through the cumbersome hoops of the Italian public housing system soon faded, or at least were overcome by Mayor Diego Novelli's efforts to renew a prior agreement between housing occupiers and city administrators. Though Turin officials, including Novelli himself, would discourage and speak out against subsequent occupations, for a number of months city administration sought to fill in where the state-affiliated IACP was failing. This

was done through a massive administrative effort, including the requisition of private housing, until more substantive reforms to the public housing system could increase the number of buildings built and the process for receiving public housing.

Comparing National Housing Approaches

With its transition to leadership of the political left, Turin was one of eight large cities within Italy led by "red" governments in the mid-1970s who initiated quick reforms even as federal housing legislation lagged. In this instance, Turin more clearly resembled the broader state response in the FRG, proving to be an exception to Italy's national trend. As historian Lutz Raphael has noted, Italy "was a particularly striking case of powerful veto power coming from the conservative forces in economy and politics against any strategy of far-reaching reform" in the 1970s.[5] Indeed, the forces preventing reform, combined with Italy's economic situation, meant that any plans to make the national Italian social system more universal in nature and less-bounded to provisions dating from the Fascist era made little headway. Instead, the state attempted to decentralize the social services system – a process that took over ten years and "generated a lot of uncertainty in programs' implementation and difficult relations between Regions and State [sic]."[6] As regions attempted to provide for their residents, their efforts meant that "locally there was an expansion of services and consequently an increase in costs for the regions" which only added to the national deficit.[7]

Two laws that addressed housing were passed at the national level in Italy in 1978. As mentioned in chapter five, though the 1978 *equo canone* (Fair Rent Act) legislation protected

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[5] Lutz Raphael, "The 1970s – a Period of Structural Rupture in Germany and Italy?" in Martin Baumeister, Bruno Bonomo and Dieter Schott, eds., *Cities Contested: Urban Politics, Heritage, and Social Movements in Italy and West Germany in the 1970s.* (Frankfurt/M: Campus, 2017), 34.

[6] Nadia Caruso, *Policies and Practices in Italian Welfare Housing: Turin, up to the Current Neo-Liberal Approach and Social Innovation Practices* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 32.

[7] Fulvio Conti and Gianni Silei, *Breve storia dello Stato sociale* (Rome: Carocci editore, 2005), 194.

renters, it discouraged individuals and investors from building due to the number of restrictions for landlords, further hampering the housing situation. Law 457, also passed in 1978, set out a national plan that theoretically financed the housing sector for ten years. Though some regions and local governing entities took advantage of the funds and fulfilled the requirements to submit plans for their social housing projects, this trend quickly evaporated. As the rental housing stock continued to decline, "emergency legislation" became the norm after the two laws passed in 1978. As urban studies researcher Nadia Caruso asserts, "public investment in housing fell sharply and the ratio between investments in social housing and subsidised home ownership increasingly shifted in favour of the latter, with a constant diminution of the rental market in favour of the owner-occupied one."[8] The transition to subsidized ownership over social housing is illustrative of a neoliberal trend toward privatization in the 1980s.

In sum, the case of housing occupations in Turin is illustrative of Italy's contradictory *stato sociale*. In the years following their occurrence, over 80% of total social spending went toward healthcare and pensions alone, leaving little else for other social services and generating a sense of "pessimism" about "the resilience of the main social security institutions."[9] Even as spending on social services reached 23% of the gross domestic product in 1990, it was unevenly applied through mismanagement and continuing forms of clientelism, with aid often still being tied to work.[10] Though housing occupiers' demands in the 1970s may have helped a limited population for a restricted period of time, some of their same criticisms of access and equality thus continued to be perpetuated in subsequent decades.

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[8] Nadia Caruso, *Policies and Practices in Italian Welfare Housing*, 33.
[9] Conti and Silei, *Breve storia dello Stato sociale*, 192.
[10] Conti and Silei, *Breve storia dello Stato sociale*, 194. See also Raphael, "The 1970s – a Period of Structural Rupture in Germany and Italy?," 37.

In comparison to the national situation in Italy, the Social Democratic-liberal government in the FRG was initially much more adept at "quickly initiating reforms" in the first half of the 1970s, in part in response to the sociopolitical protests originally stemming from 1968.[11] As mentioned in chapter four, the 1971 Tenancy Protection Act offered more protection to renters and housing subsidies were extended to migrants. This legislation was initially intended to be a temporary measure to "moderate the rate of rent rises," but was made permanent law in 1974.[12] Federal strategy also further shifted from "supply support" and construction subsidies to a "comprehensive housing allowance system" in the 1970s in order to encourage continued private investment in housing construction – one that prevented West Germany from experiencing the same decline in building that followed the passage of Italy's Fair Rent Act in 1978. As West Germany already had a decentralized system, the housing subsidies were jointly funded by both federal and state (region) governments.[13]

In contrast to the Italian system that favored homeownership, the combination of housing subsidies and rental protections in the FRG's 1971 Tenancy Protection Act meant that renting "provided an attractive alternative to owner-occupancy" and thus accounted for 58% of housing in the latter 1980s, of which 18% was social rented housing owned by non-profit entities. These associations lost their tax privileges with reunification in 1989 and thus became private housing.[14] Moreover, in the 1980s the FRG federal government once again responded to a new wave of immigration by proposing "expanded subsidies for new rental construction," showing it to be flexible in terms of housing regulation and intervention to encourage more building.[15]

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[11] Raphael, "The 1970s – a Period of Structural Rupture in Germany and Italy?," 34.
[12] Hallett, *Housing and Land Policies in West Germany and Britain*, 28.
[13] Douglas Diamond and Michael Lea, "Germany," *Journal of Housing Research* 3, no. 1 (1992): 83.
[14] According to Diamond and Lea, 40% of German households lived in private rentals and 18% lived in social rented housing in 1987. See "Germany," 83.
[15] Diamond and Lea, "Germany," 83.

Though Italy was paying 23% of its GDP to social services in 1990, the number was 17% for the FRG in 1989, an increase from 10% in 1960.[16]

Overall, both nation-states increased their spending on the social state even as it suffered from a series of crises in the transition to neoliberalism. Though this may appear counter to the widespread criticism and perception of a welfare state crisis, historian Hartmut Kaelble reminds us that "the rise in expenses as of the 1970s was more an indicator of climbing unemployment, increasing health costs, growing poverty, an aging population, and a swelling number of retirees."[17] Still, West Germany seemed to adapt better than Italy did, or at least much more quickly. When examining the housing sector, most key differences center on approach and implementation. West German legislation was passed earlier on and its social security system did not have to face the challenge of decentralization. Moreover, by prioritizing housing subsidies, the West German housing sector was more easily able to maintain buy-in and investment from the private sector; individual investors who would still be able to earn a profit even as the state protected tenants from the fluctuations of the market, thus countering the potential problem of continuing housing shortages.

The Development of the European Union and the Idea of "Transnational Social Rights"

Though the timeframe falls far outside the purview of this study, it is worth briefly mentioning changes that the European Union (EU) instigated in the 1990s in relation to public social security in its efforts to morph into something truly beyond the realm of a common economic market. In the 1990s, the EU pushed for "transnational access to social rights on an equal footing with nationals of the host country" as part of the guarantee of free moment for EU

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[16] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe*, 260.
[17] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe*, 264.

citizens between member-states.[18] If this had been fully implemented, then migration within the EU would have been "as secure as migration within a nation-state," though this study shows just how insecure internal migration can be.[19] In spite of its shortcomings, EU policy sought to create a baseline standard of rights across all member-states, including the right to housing.

The legislation codifying the guarantee of social rights across member-states emerged from questions of migrant workers and their families similar to those discussed in this study. Ironically, the supranational court's justification for regulating transnational social rights centered on economic reasons, illustrating the EU's continued identity as an economic market, even as it attempted to establish a form of European citizenship no longer bound by the nation-state. The EU court of justice related that migrants' "social integration" within host societies was "an instrument for promoting participation within the EU internal market and within its economic objective of free movement of factors of production, even when their productivity may be rather low." The rationale went on to state that "this case law has more to do with the internal market than with combating social exclusion, even if this actually contributes to the latter."[20] It is somewhat remarkable that equitable access to social services was steeped in economic terms; migrants still "contribute to the well-being of the society" even when in need of state aid.[21] In many ways, this mirrors the argument of "contributor rights" used by some housing occupiers in the 1970s, as discussed in chapter four.

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[18] Stefano Giubboni, "Free movement of persons and transnational solidarity in the European Union: A melancholic eulogy," in Stefano Civitarese Matteucci and Simon Halliday, eds., *Social Rights in Europe in an Age of Austerity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 273.

[19] Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe*, 269.

[20] Herwig Verschueren, "Union Law and the Fight against Poverty: Which Legal Instruments?" in Bea Cantillon, Herwig Verschueren and Paula Ploscar, eds., *Social Inclusion and Social Protection in the EU: Interaction between Law and Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Intersentia, 2012), 217.

[21] Giubboni, "Free movement of persons and transnational solidarity in the European Union," 276.

In spite of the EU's best efforts to decouple citizenship from nationality, however, multiple crises (particularly in 2008) have meant regression back toward a form of economic agreement as social rights and benefits retreated to the nation-state.[22] Indeed, the philosopher Étienne Balibar referred back to the influence of the social movements in the 1970s and 1980s as influential in public debates surrounding the parameters of citizenship and *droit de cité*, or the right to the city for immigrants in his now-foundational 2004 work, *We, the people of Europe?* He also pointed to "the European implications of the national blockage of social citizenship" as one of four aspects contributing to what he potently labeled as "apartheid" within nation-states and within the EU more generally.[23] Indeed, the emblems of "apartheid" began to be (and continue) to be reified by the EU justice system. The Court of Justice, which previously ruled in favor of a transnational guarantee of protection, now "demands that economic migrants, especially frontier workers, give proof of a certain degree of integration in the society of the host country in order to have access to social advantages and benefits on par with the nationals of that State."[24] As evidenced most recently by Brexit, the idea of a European citizen that emerged in the 1990s is slowly dying as a resurgence of nationalism seeks to more firmly (re)tie citizenship to the nation-state.

Final Reflections on Citizenship, Identity, and Social Rights

Though the above sections appear to treat citizenship as dictated "from above" through legislation, policy, and court rulings, the point of this study has been to show how it is also "contingent and contested" from below.[25] Migrant participation in housing occupations in the

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[22] See Frans Pennings and Martin Seeleib-Kaiser, eds., *EU Citizenship and Social Rights: Entitlements and Impediments to Accessing Welfare* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2018).
[23] Étienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe?: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 33.
[24] Giubboni, "Free movement of persons and transnational solidarity in the European Union," 285.
[25] Kathleen Canning, "Reflections on the Vocabulary of Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany" in Eley and Palmowski eds., *Citizenship and National Identity*, 216.

early 1970s give a brief glimpse into the possibility of extending the rights and protections of formal citizenship within one's nation-state, as well as what a form of transnational citizenship could have looked like. Migrants pushed back on their treatment as second-class citizens by engaging in various aspects of "participatory citizenship." They articulated their claims to housing on the streets, on the balconies, within and in front of municipal offices, and in occupied spaces. Their grievances were picked up and amplified by news media with differing degrees of support and criticism, nonetheless catalyzing further public discussion and debate within city administrations. Allied groups, such as the *Jusos*, *Lotta Continua*, the *Unione Inquilini*, local neighborhood committees, and the AGW (Westend Action Collective) provided further resources and opportunities for disadvantaged tenants to make their claims visible to neighbors and other community members.

The implications of city administrations' reluctant and fraught responses transcend immediate concerns about shelter. In agreeing to offer state aid or social housing to marginalized residents, many of whom were migrants, city officials (perhaps unwittingly) acknowledged the failure of social services supposedly guaranteed by the nation-state or via supranational agreements – from the 1955 bilateral labor agreement between the FRG and Italy to provisions within the European Economic Community. By affirming migrant and other occupiers' demands to a "more liveable set of economic, social, and political conditions," reigning notions of who was a citizen and who had access to the rights and protections of citizenship shifted.[26] In many ways, urban renewal plans and issues between the center and periphery uncovered the physical manifestations of differentiation, or "entrenched regimes of inegalitarian citizenship."[27] By using

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[26] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2015), 11.

[27] James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 4.

the very spaces that had previously reinforced their collective precarity – apartment buildings and other living spaces – migrants destabilized the differentiation that had produced their marginality. In so doing, they revealed citizenship to be what it is: relational, constructed, and contested. They successfully made some of their own meanings of citizenship by asserting housing to be a right, and their meanings were at least partially adopted by those in power.

As has been the case in other areas around the world, housing occupiers' articulation of rights in Turin and Frankfurt in the 1970s "was like a performative that changes that status of performers…from subjects historically denied rights, whom the state and its elites did not recognize as national (or transnational) citizens who intrinsically bear rights, to citizens who do so regardless of other attributes."[28] Regardless of their socioeconomic position or status as outsiders, housing occupations led to an at least partial recognition that migrants were not just temporary residents or subjects who could be denied rights, but were urban citizens who had a legitimate claim to safe and affordable housing. In other words, migrants did indeed have some "right to the city," and the right to belong.

Epilogue

By 1975, those returning to Italy and to their southern hometowns "outnumbered emigrants for the first time in modern memory."[29] Though the majority of Italians in the FRG would return home, many of them did stay. For the *meridionali* who chose to remain, their ability to afford and then invest in their own house remained central to creating a sense of belonging and permanence for themselves and their families. When asked why she decided to stay in Cologne, Vincenza Brancato replied, "In fact, we did not want to stay. But then you have kids, and then they get married, and then come the grandkids. No one goes back to Italy."

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[28] James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*, 263.
[29] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 457.

Though she and her husband have changed houses several times, it was always just a few streets distance from the previous house. She displayed an attachment to her neighborhood, describing her neighbors and their connections to the local area.

Her sister-in-law, Giovanna Graneuto, also emphasized the years of work they put into building their own apartment building in the same neighborhood in Cologne where they opened a restaurant. Her children still live in their building with families of their own. She related, "Back then, we always said that we wanted to go back to Sicily. But then time kept getting away, kept passing, [and] the kids needed to go to school. We stayed here, and that was it. We will be here forever."[30] For both Vincenza and Giovanna, they still think of themselves as Italian, associating every Thursday with compatriots to eat traditional food and sing karaoke along with beloved songs from the south. And yet they both displayed affinities towards the physical spaces of their homes and the surrounding neighborhood, reflective of the ways they crafted new ways of identifying with and belonging to places far from where they originated. Though Giovanna did end up constructing a house in Sicily, she related, "it is closed up. We only use it when we go on vacation."[31] Thus, through modes of participatory citizenship, they became dual citizens in many ways, illustrating that the overlap of formal and informal belonging shapes perceptions of what it means to be home.

For *meridionali* in Turin, their southern Italian roots have instead changed part of the city's identity, where many of them remain to this day. Already by the mid-1970s, the mayor Diego Novelli declared Turin to be the third largest "southern" city, exceeded in population of *meridionali* only by Naples and Palermo. Jumping ahead to 2016, the popular Italian writer Roberto Saviano wrote to *La Stampa*, "Turin, a city in which it is difficult to find native

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[30] Interview Vincenza Brancato and Giovanna Graneuto, conducted in Cologne by the author, October 11, 2018.
[31] Interview Vincenza Brancato and Giovanna Graneuto, conducted in Cologne by the author, October 11, 2018.

Turinese; a city that the southerners have conquered with work, have garrisoned with the dreams of a normal life…In short, this is my Turin, the southernmost city in Italy."[32] For Carmela Selvaggio and the Angeloros who occupied in the Falchera, however, their dreams of a normal life have resulted in a mixed reality. While I walked around the neighborhood with Gilberto Angeloro in 2017, he described how the city administration has "abandoned" their community. Though the streets are labeled as public, for instance, the municipality considers them private, leaving residents to clean them and remove the snow. Authorities also backtracked on earlier promises; although they promised to rebuild the community center, it remains a blackened hull after a fire damaged most of its interior. Moreover, after residents' communal garden was given over to the region for the construction of the giant highway connecting Turin to Milan, public officials are now asking for Fachera residents to pay for new gardens, in spite of their guarantees that they would be free in exchange for what was given up.

In 2016, the Falchera was once again the site of an occupation movement as twenty families – both Italian and immigrant – took over empty apartments. When I spoke with the organization who assisted the occupiers, the Association of Tenants and Inhabitants (Associazioni Inquilini e Abitanti), they described the shortage of low-income housing that continues to persist in Italy. According to two of their representatives, state officials pulled funding for the building of public housing in the 1990s, exacerbating an already dire situation for the socioeconomically disadvantaged. The housing situation only worsened with the 2008 economic downturn. When I asked their specific reasons for occupying in 2016, they related that when three families were evicted from the Falchera neighborhood, "the neighborhood

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[32] "Saviano: 'Torino è la città più a sud d'italia che la 'ndrangheta considera suo territorio," *Redazione Quotidiano Piemontese*, June 16, 2016, https://www.quotidianopiemontese.it/2016/06/16/saviano-torino-e-la-citta-piu-a-sud-ditalia-che-la-ndrangheta-considera-sua-territorio/.

mobilized" in their defense. In a fashion that resembled the "*comitati di quartiere*" in the 1970s, they established a neighborhood committee to occupy and prevent future evictions. Instead of calling it something generic, the residents selected the name "Figli di Miccichè," or "Children of Miccichè" as "everyone there knows his story."[33]

Though Tonino passed in 1974, it is clear that his legacy lives on in the Falchera as residents continue to agitate for what they view as their rights. Sometimes their collective actions consist of continually calling the municipality to get their trash picked up or their roads plowed. Other times, it consists of the tried-and-true method of occupying. Turin is not an exception either. Just last year officials in Rome feared a COVID-19 outbreak within the "Selam Palace," a building on the outskirts of the city illegally occupied by "about 800 people, mostly Africans, Somalis, and Sudanese," according to reporters of *il Giornale*, one of Italy's daily newspapers.[34] Moreover, police continue to clear current occupations in Berlin and elsewhere.[35] Because citizenship is contingent and contested it is also always in flux. And individuals will continue to gather in the streets and to occupy buildings in an embodied demand to rights, citizenship, and above all, to belong.

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[33] Interview with Fabio Cremaschini and Carlotta Guaragna, conducted by author at their union headquarters (ASIA – USB) in Turin on February 1, 2018.

[34] Roberta Damiata, "Prima 'Zona Rossa' a Roma: è un edificio con 800 migranti. Tampone su due sudanesi," *il Giornale,* April 7, 2020, https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/zona-rossa-roma-edificio-800-migranti-1850884.html.

[35] In October of 2020, for instance, police cleared an occupation in house 34 of Liebigstraße in Berlin. See "Ausschreitungen bei Hausräummung in Berlin," *Deutsche Welle*, October 9, 2020, https://www.dw.com/de/ausschreitungen-bei-hausr%C3%A4umung-in-berlin/a-55215037.

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ASdC   Archivio Storico della Città (Historic Archive of the City), Turin, Italy

DOMiD   Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland e.V. (Documentation and Museum of Migration in Germany), Cologne, Germany

FF   Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation), Milan, Italy

IfS   Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt (Frankfurt Institute for City History), Frankfurt am Main, Germany

IG   Fondazione Istituto Piemontese Antonio Gramsci Onlus (Piedmont Foundation Antonio Gramsci Institute Onlus), Turin, Italy

ISEC   Fondazione Istituto per la Storia Dell'Età Contemporanea (Foundation Institution for Contemporary History), Milan, Italy

MP   Archivio Storico della Nuova Sinistra "Marco Pezzi" (Historic Archive of the New Left "Marco Pezzi"), Bologna, Italy

PG   Centro Studi Piero Gobetti (Piero Gobetti Study Center), Turin, Italy

PM   Archivio Primo Moroni (Primo Moroni Achive), Milan, Italy

Polo '900   Archivio e Biblioteca del Polo del '900 (Archive and Library of the Polo del '900), Turin, Italy

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Il Giornale

Il giornale dell'Unione inquiline

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Oral Interviews

Angeloro, Gilberto. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on December 14, 2017. Turin, Italy.

Angeloro, Raffaella. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on December 14, 2017. Turin, Italy.

Brancato, Vincenza. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on October 11, 2018. Cologne, Germany.

Cagna, Anna. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on November 27, 2017. Turin, Italy.

Cremaschini, Fabio. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on February 1, 2018. Turin, Italy.

Giorgio. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on March 6, 2018. Milan, Italy.

Graneuto, Giovanna. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on October 11, 2018. Cologne, Germany.

Guaragna, Carlotta. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on February 1, 2018. Turin, Italy.

Laganà, Guido. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on January 19, 2018. Turin, Italy.

Leccardi, Carmen. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on March 6, 2018. Milan, Italy.

Locati, Emanuela. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on January 18, 2018. Turin, Italy.

Loiero, Aldo. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on July 3, 2018. Frankfurt/M, Germany.

Lovisolo, Davide. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on November 27, 2017. Turin, Italy.

Müller, Erna. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on June 3, 2018. Frankfurt/M, Germany.

Piazzola, Anna. Interviewed by Sarah Jacobson on February 3, 2018. Turin, Italy.

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