Alienated Social Reproduction: A study on the politics of neoliberal urban restructuring in Leipzig, East Germany

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis untangles the influence of neoliberal urban restructuring on political polarization in Leipzig, East Germany, and demonstrates how in turn the local, politicized relations of tenants marked by solidarities, fragmentation and authoritarianism, impact urban restructuring. Uncovering the interrelation of housing privatization and financialization driven urban change since the end of state socialism with tenants' political subjectivation, it offers an interdisciplinary contribution to urban political economy and the political, sociological, and geographical study of the formation of political subjectivities. Through retroductive research based on a qualitative and ethnographic empirical case study, it proposes a relational lens to inquire the interdependence of neoliberal urban restructuring and emergent relations of, among and between tenants.

After illustrating the *affectively mediated* patterns of housing financialization at the base of the neoliberal restructuring of an exceptional, East German boomtown, the thesis then shows how this structural process is reproduced through the stratified effects of residential alienation. Therewith, a multi-scalar theorization of residential alienation is developed in its dialectical counterpart with appropriation. The analysis of its structural, stratified psychosocial, and meso-relational aspects reveals that neoliberal urban restructuring reproduces hierarchical class divisions among tenants. These interplay with tenants' spatialized (dis)identification and temporalities of belonging and constitute a context favourable for the emergence of fragmentations between tenants and groups of tenants. Introducing this concept as a pivotal part of residential alienation, it is demonstrated how fragmentations (a) shape the politically polarized climate of Leipzig by limiting solidarities and nurturing authoritarian divisions, and (b) tendentially reproduce neoliberal urban restructuring.

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1. Introduction

Traverso writes that communism, "as a promise of liberation" was "buried under the debris of the Berlin wall" (Traverso, 2017, p.2). Many analyses of the past decades' trajectory of emancipatory movements, ideas and struggles come back to the end of state socialism as a central turning point, with which a "society of individuals […] market and competition" became the global norm (ibid., p.3). In this society of individuals, a leftist defeatism is paralleled by flourishing authoritarian currents, "the wind is blowing from the right" (Bernet, 2019, p.7). [1] The global success of authoritarian leaders is paralleled by "old ressentiments" appearing in "new radicality" in Germany (Decker and Brähler, 2020). This thesis traces the granular formation of both such authoritarian ressentiments, and progressive solidarities in their interplay with a context of urban restructuring under the premises of competitive neoliberalism.

It is the city of Leipzig, as the stories go, where the fall of the Berlin wall was triggered, with the famous Monday demonstrations. The history of the so called "peaceful revolution" is a welcome branding opportunity towards tourists, invited to visit the central Nikolai church when they tour the beautifully reconstructed inner city. However, as rumors go – or rather, as solid ethnographic data proves – originally, much of the dissident thought, action and preparation for the demonstrations was fomented in a decayed, inner city, working-class neighbourhood. Here, in Leipzig's inner East, where democratic socialist, anarchist or just nonconforming intellectuals squatted derelict apartments in the historical housing stock next to manual workers and tiny backyard factories (Jankowski, 1999), the *current* political climate cannot be described otherwise than polarized. Small-scale electoral maps of the 2017 German parliamentary elections reveal astonishing physical proximity of strong approval for the far-right *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD – alternative for Germany) and its near complete absence, coupled with extraordinary support for the left party (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021; see also graph 3, p.6).

It is from this neighbourhood and the city that it is part, and in many ways a prism of, that this thesis inquires the granular formation of the diagnosed society of competing individuals. From here, I make a contribution to political and academic debates about urban neoliberal restructuring and political subjectivation. Trying to understand the formation of political subjects through the relations they develop to one another and the society they are embedded

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[1] This, like all following citations from German literature in this thesis, was translated to English by me.

in, reproduce, or transform, this dissertation studies its interdependence with a restructuring context.

Mirroring the East German "laboratory" of West German or even European neoliberalism (Buck and Hönke, 2013), Leipzig's former working-class inner East is marked by high levels of unemployment, unstable temporary working conditions, and a negligible share of homeownership. It underwent massive restructuring, combining extreme neglect and shrinkage with the subsequent commodification and financialization of housing and urban space. From this context, where less than half of the adult population lives on income from wage labour, but 87% reside in rental housing (Stadt Leipzig, 2019a; Stadt Leipzig, 2020), this thesis studies, first, housing relations. Considering tenants' rent-relations of "secondary exploitation" (Soederberg, 2020, p.63) as one of their central economic relations to the world, I attribute them increasing relevance in contexts of diminishing classic labour relations (of 'primary' exploitation). However, the relations inquired in this thesis do not merely concern immediate rent and housing conditions. Acknowledging the centrality of daily life (beyond or without workplaces) for both granular processes of subjectivation, as well as the overall reproduction of capitalist societies (Lefebvre, 1977; Bhattacharya and Vogel, 2017; Dalla Costa, 2019), this thesis also studies the impact of neoliberal urbanization *beyond the household* on tenant's daily lives. In that sense, peoples' relations to one another and the multi-scalar urban transformations that are hous*ing* these relations are inquired for their reciprocal influence. Hence, in the absence of potentially unifying experiences of exploitation and sociability of workplaces, does the neighbourhood as a "social factory" (Dalla Costa, 2019) provide a breeding ground of emancipatory solidarities? Does the common local concern with a globally resurging (rental) "housing question" (Gonzales, 2010; Rink et al., 2015; Soederberg, 2018) create forms of class consciousness or solidarity among tenants? Or contrarily, does capitalist urbanization – the production of "abstract space" (Lefebvre, 1991) – divide tenants from each other, and if so why and how?

To provide an overview of how I get to the bottom of these questions, the remainder of this introduction provides the reader with a first insight into the context and object of study, followed by a preview of guiding theoretical concepts and emergent contributions to these. Subsequently, an overview of the research design, question and aims gives a first impression of how these contributions were generated. Finally, a roadmap to the chapters is intended to serve as an inviting teaser for the thesis.

1.1 Politics in a post-shrinking city

In the heart of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), surrounded by (formerly) shrinking cities, a structurally weak region and the internationally observed housing struggles in Berlin, the city of Leipzig is referred to by some as the success story of a reurbanized post-socialist city (Haase, Kabisch and Steinführer, 2004). The advertised "capital of monuments" (Region Leipzig website) with its *Gründerzeit*[2] housing stock, left almost untouched by the wars, is finally approaching its desired growth goal of a population of 700 000 again, after a long period of shrinkage. Whilst some activists and scholars alarmedly observe the dramatically rising ground rents and quickly multiplying prices for yet unrefurbished historical residential housing, academics have begun to diagnose gentrification but long been hesitant to determine displacement (Rink et al., 2012; Vogelpohl et al., 2017). In the meantime, representatives of the housing industry are licking their fingers for the arriving investors expected to be leaving the nearby city of Berlin due to its regulatory climate (I-I3).

Map 1: Population predictions demarcate the post-shrinking boomtown of Leipzig from its continuously shrinking, East-German context. Source: Slupina et al., 2019.

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[2] Wilhelminian houses built during a time of massive urban growth between 1871 and 1914

Although housing financialization is extremely difficult to research under German privacy regulations that keep the holy grail of private property safe from the public eye (see for example Bernt, Colini and Förste, 2017), Leipzig, and particularly it's inner East provides plenty of evidence for it. Its central driver, "financialized privatization" of rental housing (Wijburg and Aalbers, 2017) manifests in the historical and ongoing sale of (partially entire blocks) of multi-family rental homes to a few very large real estate companies (like Vonovia); the dominance of medium-sized, stock listed property developers, asset managers and landlords (for example instone real estate; GRK); the re-selling of historical rental houses with increasing speed and price rises, currently especially in the inner East; intransparent ownership structures pointing to the growing presence of West German and international investors; and of course, the continuous tightening of the housing market (I-I1; I-I2; I-I3; I-I5; II-I6; III-I9; Stadt Leipzig, 2018a; Gutachterausschuss der Stadt Leipzig, 2020; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). It is this financialization of rental housing, as will be argued in chapter 2.1, that centrally drives neoliberal urban restructuring.

Image 1: May 2019 – Leipzig's inner East between decay and refurbishment

Map 2: Project map of the German Architects' Forum, displaying the density of current redevelopment projects in the inner East (and inner West) in November 2019. Source: Deutsches Architekturforum, 2019.

Those who will be most affected by the ongoing upgrading of Leipzig are the city's tenants, that constitute an overwhelming majority (87%[3]) and of whom many are poor (22%[4]). Some of them are dedicating a lot of time and energy to a small variety of urban struggles, with anti-gentrification protests repeatedly having made it to the national media in the last years (Wille, 2019; taz, 2020; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2020). Historically, Leipzig is marked by urban movements fighting for their say in the city's restructuring (Holm and Kuhn, 2016; Vogelpohl et al., 2017). However, these seem limited to a homogenous milieu and are accused by critics of merely producing an "alternative well-being island, that could (yet) not find an answer to the current exploitation of land and real estate" (Rokitte, 2020, p.348). Simultaneously, another considerable share of tenants seems to have directed their political attention elsewhere. Discourses concerning apparent problems with "foreigners" in the neighbourhoods, crime and racialized territorial stigmata (Wacquant, 2008) are mediated by the far-right party AfD, who are subsuming a resurging housing question under the general problematization of immigration perceived as a threat (Bescherer et al., 2019). A recent study shows that this promises to fall on fertile grounds with voters. Regarding their worries and concerns, AfD voters differ most significantly from those of other parties in the fear of violence and crime in their neighbourhoods (Hilmer et al., 2017).

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[3] Stadt Leipzig, 2020, p.11
[4] The 22% indicate the city's share of population that lived below an income of 60% of the national median in 2018 (Stadt Leipzig, 2019a, p.38)

Considering tenants as political actors that shape the city, this thesis aims at making sense of both the political status quo in Leipzig, and the city's neoliberal development. Trying to understand the effects of urban restructuring on emergent struggles and divisions, along with the role that these have for the city's political economic trajectory, it thus asks: How does urban restructuring affect political subjectivation, and in turn how does that reproduce or challenge urban restructuring? In other words, the central aim is to understand the societal reproduction of neoliberal urban restructuring from above and below, along with its political, societal implications.

Map 3: Small scale AFD results in the neighbourhood around Eisenbahnstraße, 2017 parliamentary elections. Source: Reichle, Bescherer, 2021, own calculations.

In the following section, the conceptual tools to theorize this interrelation are presented. The referenced and targeted bodies of scholarship are addressed and an outline of the envisaged contribution is sketched.

1.2 Urban restructuring meets political subjectivation – conceptual dialogue

To inquire both the societal and political consequences of neoliberal restructuring in Leipzig, and respectively, the role of polarized political dynamics on urban change, a theoretical dialogue between different disciplines is attempted. Through a relational perspective that interrogates the political economy of urban restructuring on one analytical level with tenants' political subjectivation, the thesis proposes an conceptual contribution to multiple fields. For this, urban political economy is dialogued with sociological and geographical perspectives on the formation of political subjectivities. The suggested link is strengthened with Marxist feminist theories of social reproduction, substantiated by a combination of relational philosophies. Therewith, parallel debates from different disciplines are mobilized for their mutual enrichment.

Urban political economic literatures foundational to understand the current process of capitalist urbanization (Lefebvre, 2003), or global "urban warfare" (Rolnik, 2019), along with its manifestations in Leipzig, tend to remain confined to structure-heavy analyses of the

institutionalized interdependence of real estate markets, governance and (de)regulation at different state levels (for example Schönig and Schipper, 2016; Aalbers, 2019a; Davies, 2021; for a good analysis of Leipzig see Haase and Rink, 2015). They show how first the commodification and then the financialization of (rental) housing changes urban landscapes. *Alternatively*, research perspectives are concerned with local outcomes of these processes, mostly focussing on physical displacement (for recent critical summaries see Davidson, 2008; Zuk et al., 2018; Wynne and Rogers, 2021). Through an empirical case study, this thesis contributes to the field of urban political economy, by engaging with and pushing approaches that try to conceive these different moments of urban political economy relationally in their interdependence (Harvey, 1978; Peck, 2017; Davies, 2021; Angelo and Goh, 2021).

This is achieved, first, through the development of an *affective* lens to analyse political economic trajectories of housing commodification, financialization and (de)regulation. Addressing affective gaps in political (urban) theory (Bargetz and Sauer, 2010; Ben Anderson, 2016), the affectively mediated, lived realities of political economic path-dependencies are unveiled. This leads to the analysis of collective, yet stratified *moods* influencing the city's trajectory of housing financialization and neoliberal urbanization. Thereby, an analytical level is created, that inquires at once structural, institutionalized processes and tenants' (lack of) collective agency in their respective interdependence with the city's political-economic history and respective power dynamics.

Consequentially, challenging a corpus of literatures on displacement predominantly concerned with the *effects* of market- or state-driven gentrification, the thesis instead sets out to study the political *role* of tenants. This is, in contrast to existing work on urban struggles (Fields, 2017; Gray, 2018b) however, not confined to a social movement or resistance analysis. Instead, a perspective is developed that interrogates the reproduction or challenging of urban restructuring through meso-relations and divisions between tenants, which feed into the collective sentiments previously attested. Therewith, the thesis reconciles literatures on surging authoritarianism and urban struggles, to speak to studies on political subjectivation, which are regaining popularity in the wake of the current, global, alarming "great regression" (Geiselberger et al., 2017). In turn informed by urban perspectives, these are complemented with a hitherto mostly lacking spatio-temporal perspective (Ansell and McNamara, 2018; Mullis, 2021).

The relational method employed to dialogue urban political economy and sociological analyses of political subjectivation is based on two central theoretical pillars. First, a nuanced theory of

(residential) alienation is developed, permitting a study of urban restructuring from the vantage point of the "negative relationship between social structures and humans in heteronomous societies" (Fuchs, 2018, p.465). This conceptualization, by pushing beyond the research focus of classical displacement research, highlights the structural link between a range of manifestations of neoliberal restructuring in both the political-economic *and* the psychosocial realm (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Bayırbağ and Penpecioğlu, 2017; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). Complementing it with a theorization of appropriation (Ollman, 1977; Jaeggi, 2016), it does justice to the contested, shifting nature of subjectivation into and within existing relations of domination, difference, and exploitation (Bourdieu, 1987; du Gay, Evans and Redman, 2000; Rehmann, 2008). The political implications of these granular processes, overall, but specifically *for* the trajectory of urban restructuring, are then subject to empirical analysis.

To enable this analysis, the second conceptual pillar draws from theories of societal reproduction, that theorize at once the reproduction of capitalist societies and individuals (Fraser, 2017; Mezzadri, 2019; Munro, 2019). These frame the question of how, in a structural context of residential alienation, neoliberal urban restructuring is reproduced through processes of subjectivation. Beyond a mere theoretical contribution to the interdependence of capitalist urbanization and collective political subjectivation, or what Gray defines as "spatial composition" (Gray, 2018c, p.235), this question is tackled empirically by operationalizing the proposed relational method, informed by three relational philosophies.

Borrowing the philosophical approach of ways of relating between relations and divisions from Adamczak (2017), these are defined and related to a theory of alienation with Ollman's (1977) relational reading of Marx and operationalized with Archer's (2010; 2015) concept of social morphogenesis, that allows for a study of relational emergence. The latter is targeted at the introduced scale of meso-relations, referring to relations and separations transcending individual ties or animosities in daily life. Through the central emergent concept of *fragmentations* these meso-relations are conceptualized as a pivotal factor in the (lacking) generation of collective, stratified affective mediations from below.

The following subchapter briefly explains how this conceptual framework and the empirical analysis have informed each other throughout the research process.

1.3 Retroductive research – questions and aims

To empirically get to the bottom of the interdependence of urban restructuring and political subjectivation, a case study approach was adopted for the research of tenants' meso-relations. Within a field of urban studies bickering about abstraction and difference (Oswin and Pratt, 2021), this means that a local, largely qualitative and ethnographic research project was undertaken, "to extract the general from the unique" (Burawoy, 1998, p.5). Thereby, the research of tenants' relations was driven by the following empirical research question:

How do tenants' relations change in a restructuring city?

Trying to understand the context and mechanisms of emergence, as well as the political implications of solidarities and divisions, this question was tackled in retroductive manner. In contrast to inductive or deductive approaches, the critical realist research method of retroduction implies the spiral back-and forth movement between engagement with existing critical theories and open-minded empirical research to complement, enhance or challenge the previous (Jessop, 2005; Belfrage and Hauf, 2017). In the present research project, this was realized through four research phases combining qualitative and ethnographic research on several levels of inquiry with preceding and intermittent literature reviews and preliminary analyses.

The empirical phases were guided by five subsidiary aims:

1. Uncovering the political and geographical patterns of urban restructuring in the reurbanized, regrowing, post-socialist city of Leipzig.
2. Understanding how and why tenants experience urban restructuring in daily life and how they perceive their own role in the process.
3. Defining (tenants') solidarities and divisions existent and emerging in a politically polarized city.
4. Analysing why and how these solidarities and divisions are emerging.
5. Illuminating how existing relations of solidarity and divisions/exclusions between tenants mediate their experience of and relational reaction to urban restructuring.

To capture city wide dynamics of urban restructuring, generate an analysis of its political economic mechanisms and provide a backdrop to the inquiry of tenants' experiences, the first aim was mainly addressed through expert interviews and minor accompanying data and policy

analyses. Partially, these sources also provided insights into the social effects of restructuring, hence tenants' experiences. However, these, and their relational manifestations, were predominantly studied *from below*, through narrative tenant interviews, ethnographic research and one focus group discussion.

Unmissably interrupted by a pandemic, the course of the research project, despite initial shock waves, was not significantly altered. Whereas some research methods became unfeasible, the apprehended major transformation of either the thesis or it's object of study held off. Instead, the observation of pandemic conditions served as a "magnifier" (Dörre, 2020) for relational dynamics in Leipzig and its inner East, strengthening the analysis of socio-spatial morphogenesis – hence the spatio-temporally contingent reproduction and transformation of tenants' relations.

Giving a preview of the contributions and arguments produced with this retroductive research project, the following subchapter contains a brief guide to the thesis and its structure.

1.4 Roadmap to the thesis

Establishing the conceptual framework, chapter 2 serves as an introduction to the urban political economic, geographical, and sociological theories that this thesis engages with. In the first part, preparing the contribution to urban political economy, a review of literatures on capitalist urban restructuring under neoliberal austerity leads to the assessment of *affective gaps* in urban political economy and proposes to theorize affect as a mediation of political-economic processes with path-shaping consequences. The subsequent critique of displacement scholarship calls for centring belonging and its disruption in the research on urban restructuring's psychosocial effects. Perspectives on urban restructuring from above and below are then reconciled with a differentiated theorization of residential alienation.

This is complemented, in the second part of chapter 2, with an introduction to theories of subjectivation, refined with a spatio-temporal perspective. Through the abovementioned theorization of relational societal reproduction, an inquiry of collective and fragmented political subjectivation is suggested, permitting the simultaneous analysis of urban solidary struggles and authoritarian divisions. Current discussions on both phenomena, usually researched distinctly, are briefly introduced at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the research philosophy, methodology and methods adopted and employed in this study. Engaging with critical realist research philosophy (Sayer, 1992; Sayer, 2000); the

extended case method (Burawoy, 1998); and reflexive anthropology (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006), the methodolodgical perspective is set. Next, the retroductive research design (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017) is elaborated through a brief overview of the different research stages. A reflection of the methods employed illustrates how these, with their respective implications, have enabled different conceptual contributions. Additionally, a subchapter is dedicated to the pandemic state of exception and its (minor) impact on both the thesis and the object of study.

Chapters 4-6 contain the empirical-analytical centrepiece of the thesis. Following the structure of the conceptual framework, they travel from affect-sensitive perspectives on urban restructuring *from above from below*, via nuanced descriptions of tenants' subjectivation, to a relational analysis of their interdependence and its political consequences.

Chapter 4 maps out the patterns of urban restructuring in Leipzig since German reunification, with a focus on the commodification, financialization and contested (lack of) regulation of rental housing. Therein, it brings forward the promised affective lens, demonstrating how political actors' transformative capacities are mutually constitutive of their collective, yet stratified affective mediation of political economic processes. Illustrating the dialectic interplay of post-shrinkage-depression and -hope, two central nodes generated from the empirical material, it argues that hopeful moments mutually reinforce actors' transformative powers, whereas depressive sentiments hinder actions. As a (lacking) collective spirit, the latter is attested to an overall mass of Leipzig's tenants.

Moving from the city to one of its current post-shrinkage-prisms, chapter 5 adopts an ethnographic lens and depicts the stratified psychosocial manifestations of residential alienation through the portraits of five tenants in Leipzig's inner East. Theorizing their experiences, the chapter argues that neoliberal urbanization reproduces hierarchized class divisions through residential alienation, shaping tenants' individual subjectivation in a spatio-temporal power matrix. This argument is supported by the developed concepts of *strategies of appropriation* and *temporalities of belonging*, which are shown to be interdependent and affecting tenants (dis)identification and different transformative capacities in a structurally alienating context.

Chapter 6 then builds on these findings and rounds off the relational analysis. It shows how stratified individual subjectivations in an alienating context fuel nascent solidarities in a few cases, whilst structurally hindering their emergence in most others. It is argued that the context of neoliberal urban restructuring generally reproduces *fragmentations*, which partially nurture

authoritarian divisions. The analysis is led by an empirical meso-level study of emergent solidarities, divisions and fragmentations and their conditions of emergence. Through disentangling these spatio-temporally, it is uncovered how political subjectivation occurs through interdependent, nested spatio-temporal scales, coined by Leipzig's specific post-socialist, East-German, post-shrinkage, neoliberalizing urban trajectory. These scales are shown to not only tendentially produce fragmented political subjectivation, but also present windows of opportunity for emergent solidarities. These have different(ly transformative) perspectives, contingent on common (classed) interests and reflexivity, but also, crucially, shared spaces and temporalities of belonging.

Drawing together the different conclusions and arguments, the thesis is rounded off with a conclusion that connects the different arguments made in the chapters, illustrating how the emergence and disruption of tenants' relations feeds into collective political sentiments that reproduce, and sometimes challenge the city's neoliberal trajectory. Thereby, the thesis' contribution to urban theory and understandings of political subjectivation is finalized, hoping to stimulate both local and international, political, and academic debate.

2. Urban restructuring and political societal reproduction – an interdisciplinary, relational inquiry

In ongoing controversies about urban theory generation, abstracting conceptualizations of planetary urbanizations are waged against differential knowledge production centring around (situated) alterity (Roy, 2009; Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Peake et al., 2018; Oswin and Pratt, 2021). From a scholarly perspective on the border of political sociology, geography and urban political economy, the following body of work rejects this dualistic debate and aims instead at a contribution to collective abstraction through an empirical study enabled by interdisciplinary conceptual dialogue. This contribution is achieved through a meso-relational and affect-sensitive inquiry of urban restructuring and its societal reproduction in Leipzig, theorizing from "the grounds of politics where social actors are made and act on the shifting conditions of their lives" (Katz, 2021, p.599).

The conceptual contribution attempted is twofold. First, as an intervention into the field of urban political economy, mostly divided into historically structure-heavy inquiries "from above", hence on the interplay of land-rent and capital with states and institutions of governance (for example Walker, 1974; Hackworth and Smith, 2001; Smith, 2002; Jäger, 2003; Peck, 2012; Rolnik, 2013; Ward and Aalbers, 2016; Unger, 2016) and granular perspectives of urban dwellers' experiences, hence "from below" (for example Marcuse, 1985; Newman and Wyly, 2006; Davidson, 2009; Shaw and Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015; Watt, 2018; Zuk et al., 2018; Wynne and Rogers, 2021), a sociologically inspired, meso-relational method of analysis is offered. It seeks to operationalize and research the interrelation between residents' everyday realities and the urban governance of neoliberal restructuring. Addressing an affective gap in political economic analyses (Bargetz and Sauer, 2010; Ben Anderson, 2016), this method inspects institutional politics from above, from below, through an affect-sensitive lens, whilst inquiring tenants' experiences for their political potential through theories of societal reproduction (Bhattacharya and Vogel, 2017; Katz, 2017; Katz, 2017; Mezzadri, 2019). Proposing to discuss structural political-economic conditions and granular politization on one analytical level, a theoretical refinement of residential alienation (Madden and Marcuse, 2016) is developed as the first central conceptual pillar of this thesis. To do so, the latter is reframed as multi-scalar – thus transcending the immediate rent or debt-relation of a tenant/homeowner – and theorized in its dialectical relation with appropriation. As a universal yet stratified and contested condition of capitalist urban restructuring, the alienation theory developed not only

permits but *requires* the analytical realignment of perspectives on urban restructuring from above (flows of capital and (supra-)state regulation) and below (daily life).

Therewith, secondly, a contribution to political, sociological, and recently geographical debates on political subjectivation, mainly focusing on the urgent East German, but also global problem of surging authoritarianism (for example Demirović et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Nachtwey and Heumann, 2019; Huke, 2019; Bernet et al., 2019; Bescherer, 2019; Decker and Brähler, 2020; Mullis and Zschocke, 2020; Henkelmann et al., 2020; Belina, 2020) is made by theorizing the interdependence between residential alienation, appropriation, and political subjectivation. Aided by urbanist, geographical perspectives and a recent theorization of temporalities (Sharma, 2014), a multi-dimensional research gap around the *spatiality and temporality* of political subjectivation is tackled (Massey, 1992; Ansell and McNamara, 2018; Miggelbrink, 2020). Scaling up these perspectives on subjectivation and completing the interdisciplinary dialogue, relational philosophies and societal reproduction theories are joined into the second conceptual pillar of this thesis. The developed multi-scalar, relational perspective on societal reproduction "enables a discussion of intimate and informal, as well as institutionalized and formalized relations on one terminological level." (Adamczak, 2017, p.247; Donati and Archer, 2015; Katz, 2017; Dalla Costa, 2019; Bhattacharya and Vogel, 2017; Federici, 2018; Mezzadri, 2019)

To prepare this twofold, interdisciplinary contribution, chapter 2 walks the reader through the different conceptual bodies of work that this thesis speaks to, highlighting addressed shortcomings, fleshing out the proposed methodological and conceptual approaches, and announcing their empirical and analytical realization. The first half of the chapter begins with a summary of previous research on urban restructuring from above and below. The second half continues with a sociological intervention discussing theories of subjectivation and ends with a relational perspective on the politics of societal reproduction, exemplified by and dialoguing with research on both solidarities and authoritarianism.

2.1 Inquiring urban restructuring from above from below – affect and alienation

To frame this thesis's contribution to urban theory, this section engages critically, first with a body of work on housing commodification and financialization, gentrification and neglect under neoliberal austerity (perspectives from/on above) and subsequently with displacement literatures illuminating its social consequences (perspectives from/on below). It is argued that

the different emphases on institutionalized market-state versus residents' everyday relations frequently omits a meso-relational perspective valuable for the understanding of urban politics and the reproduction of neoliberal restructuring. To develop the first cornerstone of this perspective, several prominent examples of urban political economy are questioned regarding their relational dimensions. Diagnosing a meso-relational shortcoming, this is addressed through proposing an affect-sensitive mode of inquiring the governance of urban restructuring. Complementary, a body of displacement research is reviewed in terms of its (lacking) potential to theorize the political implications of tenants' experiences. Lastly, the subchapter proposes a framework centred around the concept of residential alienation to expose the relation between "political economic processes in the city and the phenomenological conditions of everyday, local urban life" (Qian and An, 2021, p.1). As a central contribution to the theory of (residential) alienation, *strategies of appropriation* are defined as empirically observable attempts of countering alienation from below, that can or cannot challenge neoliberal urban restructuring and thus interfere with or contribute to its reproduction.

Capitalist urban restructuring under austerity

What is categorized here as political economic scholarship on urban restructuring "from above", is concerned with a power laden social process entrenched in economic and political relations and institutions. The work reviewed in the following is thereby per definition relational. After untangling the different implications of this relationality in the first part of the section, I propose to contribute to the shared endeavour of developing relational perspectives, by strengthening a meso-level range of analysis. Against this backdrop, the second part of the section develops the meso-relational angle adopted in this study through a theorization of affective mediations of urban political economy.

Inter-scalar, property- and power relations

The scholarship previously summarized under the broad category "from above" by virtue of its empirical focus, has explored how *financialized* urban restructuring is deeply connected to the survival of neoliberalism (Rolnik, 2013; Fields, 2017; Fields, 2018). Financialization thereby describes "the increasing dominance of financial actors, markets, practices, measurements and narratives, at various scales, resulting in a structural transformation of economies, firms (including financial institutions), states and households." (Aalbers, 2019b, p.3) Albeit not the only pillar of neoliberal urban restructuring, as a central arena of revenue generation, the privatization and subsequent financialization of rental housing is one of its central drivers in

(East) Germany over the last decades (Wijburg and Aalbers, 2017). Because of this role, coupled with its function as a central locus of social reproduction, the transformation of the (rental) housing sector in Leipzig is the vantage point of the analysis of urban restructuring's political economic mechanisms in this thesis. Structurally, Harvey explains the political-economic backgrounds of capitalist urban restructuring with the necessity to bind surplus capital (in time- and resource intensive building projects), arguing that the financialization of the housing sector enables free circulation of values, allowing new dimensions of capital accumulation (Harvey, 1989; 2004; 2010). With Lefebvre, global urbanization indicates a process of capital switching, in which the built environment (vis à vis the productive sphere) gains increasing relevance for capitalist reproduction (Lefebvre, 2009). Theories of *Landnahme* illustrate how the ongoing seizure and incorporation of both spaces and arenas of (re)production into the valorization process is fundamental to the deferral of capitalist crises, and back the findings of privatization and financialization of rental housing in (East-) Germany (Luxemburg, 2003; Belina and Michel, 2010; Unger, 2016; Fields, 2018). Consequentially, urban restructuring designates changing macro political economic relations in evolving capitalist contexts but also the related principles of political regulation of and de- and reinvestment on the real estate market (Krätke, 1992; Smith, 2002; Jäger, 2003; Ward and Aalbers, 2016).

Besides referring to a new or exacerbated form of valorization and *Landnahme*, the term urban restructuring is used in urban literatures to equally describe the transformation of the built environment (Smith, 1979; Harvey, 2004) and the respective reorganization of social structures, considering both the social composition of inhabitants and dwellers and their social practices, behaviours and cultural adaption (Holm, 2006; Jessop, Brenner and Jones, 2008; Slater, 2011; Paton, 2014). However, despite the foundational recognition that accumulation through urban restructuring and lived experiences of those pushed around by it are "different sides of the same coin" (Harvey, 1978, p.100), these dimensions are rarely empirically analysed in their interdependence. This is illustrated in the following by highlighting the different analytical emphases laid in urban political economic research and pointing out remaining weaknesses addressed with this study.

Trying to grasp *how* urban space is restructured under neoliberalism, land rent theorists have tirelessly scrutinized the different economic processes at stake, holding the specificities of land and its economic role central to the production of urban space (Clark, 1987; Krätke, 1992; Jäger, 2003; Ward and Aalbers, 2016). Most prominently, Smith's rent gap theory constitutes an

astonishingly simple analytical tool (in theory) for understanding market-rational motives behind gentrification. He traces the simultaneous processes of urban renewal and neglect back to the "gap between the actual *capitalized* ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the *potential* ground rent that might be gleaned under a 'higher and better' use" (Smith, 1987, p.462 emphasis in original). This process can be at once incentive giver for strategic neglect of certain areas, and lucrative investment in others (Fields and Uffer, 2016). Therewith, Smith and his successors highlight a variety of ways in which rent and with it the socio-spatial hierarchies and conditions of urban life are institutionalized. Consequentially, this body of work is inherently relational in spatial and historical terms. Linking both inner- and inter-scalar processes of (de)valorization across time, the theorization of land rent uncovers the contingency of uneven development not just within cities but also between regions of different scales (Krätke, 1992; Harvey, 2006). Simply put, investment that shapes places, occurs where it is profitable. Even more foundationally however, land rent theories are relational in a traditional Marxist sense, theorizing the property relations at the base of this uneven development. They show that what all forms of land rent have in common, is their representation of social relations, that historically stem from the ability of landlords to appropriate natural land through the means of primitive accumulation and demand payment from others for their use (Ramirez, 2009, p.18). Addressing a longstanding shortcoming in financialization research, Fields and Raymonds have recently demonstrated the fundamental racialization of the social relations historically constitutional of, and continuously perpetuated through housing financialization. Their work thus points not just to the classed but also the racialized social difference reproduced by capitalism's need to "routinely turn to dispossession of non-capitalist and/or underdeveloped places and populations as a means of forestalling crisis and securing further accumulation" (Fields and Raymond, 2021, p.4). Furthermore, the authors show how the digitalization of housing financialization conceals this production of racialized divisions, which become "encoded and legitimized through abstraction" (ibid., p.7). Equally, property-based class relations are blurred in times of housing financialization, as landlords no longer constitute a separate class, but are the same rational agents of capital that, depending on profitablity, invest in production, try to make the highest use of urban land, or both (Walker, 1974; Unger, 2016; Rolnik, 2019; Aalbers, 2019c).

Taken together, these studies uncover the spatialized property relations constitutional of and generated by urban restructuring, along with the class and race relations simultaneously produced and blurred by housing financialization. However important this work to understand

the economic logics behind urban restructuring, it is largely limited to one side of the coin – the structural logics of accumulation through the built environment.

Inquiring the political organization of such property relations, scholars with a regulatory perspective have revealed the political and contested nature of rent and urban restructuring. They demonstrate that property markets are not natural phenomena, but actively shaped by those involved, which besides landlords are government institutions, the according judicial apparatus and other (new) institutions of governance (Jäger, 2003; Schipper and Latocha, 2018; Fields and Hodkinson, 2018; Rolnik, 2019). Hackworth and Smith, for example, through a New York case study, present the increasing governmental organization and facilitation of gentrification over time. Tax incentives in its early stages, local governance market-partnerships in the 80s and early 90s and the following dissolving of Keynesian style regulation instruments have all facilitated new levels of gentrification, accompanied by the marketization of urban politics resulting in extreme pro-business policies (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). Uitermark and colleagues (2007) point to another incentive-giver behind state-led gentrification: the more or less explicit aim of generating social order through spatial restructuring evokes recollection of the mass reorganization of Paris by Haussman in the mid 19th century, to prevent popular uprisings (Sennett, 1973, p.77). These are typical representations of what is termed research on "above" here, that analyses "both states and markets – as well as their interaction" in the production of urban space (Aalbers and Bernt, 2019, p.170).

Specifically, an extensive body of work on urban austerity illustrates how cooperation of the *local* state with (real estate) market actors has become typical under neoliberal state rescaling, where cities need to orient themselves towards a global market and competition (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Brenner, 2004a; Peck, 2012; Peck, 2012; Belina, 2014; Petzold, 2018). Taken together, these accounts of geo-economic mechanisms illustrate that urban restructuring, however much it is embedded in and pressured by planetary developments, is equally a terrain of local (contested) politics. Hence, these regulatory political-economic studies theorize relationally in their inquiry of market-state relations, on a supra- and transnational level, and on a national and local level.

Furthermore, a selection of the more politics-heavy approaches in this realm of urban political economy theorizes not only the role of different state scales, but a finer set of governance coalitions. Exemplary, Davies and Blanco incorporate civil society actors into their inquiry of the governance of urban austerity. Asking "what alliances are forged among which actors, mobilising

what resources in pursuit of which goals?" (Davies and Blanco, 2017, p.1520), they share a research subject with scholars seeking to theorize civil society anti-austerity mobilization (Annunziata and Lees, 2016; Bailey et al., 2018; Bailey et al., 2020). Conceptually, this reverberates Harvey's elementary Marxist proposition to theorize capitalist urban development through the relation between accumulation and class struggle (Harvey, 1978). Empirically, this work thus also targets the side of the coin so far underexplored – that of struggle.

What these recent political analyses provide then, is sophisticated research on the institutional mediation of the field of tension between spatialized accumulation and class struggle. In addition to the previously cited regulation theoretical approaches, they add a scalar layer through their inquiry of state-civil society relations. However, their analyses of "mainstream social actor[s]" (Davies and Blanco, 2017, p.1529) or "disruptive subjectivities" (Bailey et al., 2018, p.1) fall short of a meso-relational analysis of the *genesis* of that contestation or its absence, both theoretically and empirically. Whereas Davies and Blanco do point to historical factors, "political cultures" or "political inertia" (Davies and Blanco, 2017, pp.1518, 1528) somehow interrelated with the (lack of) collective contestation, the granular *formation* of these contestations remains nebulous. In the case of Bailey and colleagues, this is centrally owed to the lacking theorization of subjectivation despite the abundant use of the term "subjectivities", which is used haphazardly as a description for prototype-individuals or collective actors. It leaves the reader wondering: How do these come into being? Especially concerning their unanswered question on the relation of the analysed left-wing contestations of austerity to the "rise of authoritarian populist parties" (Bailey et al., 2020, p.3), this underexplored emergence is crucial. Before meeting this shortcoming by addressing theories of subjectivation and societal reproduction in the second half of this chapter, I however turn to another layer of relationality that is at stake in current urban scholarship and that is inherently related to the question of analytical scale.

In response to much of the above cited work in urban political economy, post-colonial and feminist interventions from marginalized perspectives and "ordinary cities" (Robinson, 2006; Peake et al., 2018; Oswin and Pratt, 2021) have recently critically questioned not so much the "EuroAmerican" (Roy, 2009) context of emergence of this knowledge production, but rather its potential for universal urban theorization. They have encouraged instead plural, open-minded, geographically, and theoretically diverse theory-generation, whilst (rightfully) pointing to the power-structures in modern academia that hinder it. Especially relevant for this study, their

interventions were recently followed by calls for the recognition of post-socialist, post soviet or central- and eastern-european urban path dependencies (Hirt, Ferenčuhová and Tuvikene, 2016; Haase, Rink and Grossmann, 2016a; Kubeš and Kovács, 2020). In an article titled *Shrinking cities from post-socialist Europe: What can we learn from their analysis for theory building today?*, urban sociologists from Leipzig request that, rather than envisioning such contexts as "not there yet" in comparison to North-Western cities, one must accept that "state socialist urban development simply represents a different trajectory of urbanization, in contrast to western cities but also to cities in Asia, Africa or Latin America" (Haase, Rink and Grossmann, 2016b, pp.310–312). In contrast to the (critical realist) mode of abstraction underlying much of the addressed "hegemonic" critical urban theory, Grossman and Haase suggest assemblage theories as a modus operandi for urban research (Grossmann and Haase, 2016). Albeit in a very different manner to the scalar-; property-; class-; race- and power-relational theories reviewed above, assemblage theorists too claim to think deeply relational, in "an attempt to describe relationalities of composition" (McFarlane, 2011, p.206). These are often studied as local phenomena "in relation to a (non-hierarchical) tangle of inter-urban flows and circuits" (critically Peck, 2015, p.168). However, criticized polemically, such approaches risk to become mere descriptive endless listings of 'related' human and non-human objects "with no clear basis for differentiating these in terms of efficacy or even relevance" (Tonkiss, 2011, p.585).

Frequently debates about hegemonic versus marginalized urban theorization end up as global-specific dualisms, hastily translated to abstraction-difference contradictions (Peck, 2015; Oswin and Pratt, 2021; critically Angelo and Goh, 2021). However, the critiques formulated for example by Roy and Robinson specifically point to the productivity of *abstracting/theorizing from* frequently ignored (geographical and topical) perspectives across space. These are seen to be "of crucial significance in the world economy" (Roy, 2009, p.824; Robinson, 2011; Robinson, 2016), as opposed to just generative of lists of potential markers of difference that complicate existing explanations. Additionally, the seemingly polarized discussion between abstraction=global/comparative versus difference=local/ethnographic is both solidified and simplified when "anti-essentialist" assemblage approaches are conflated with research on daily life; when research on "from the heady heights of headquarters" gets contrasted with that "from street level, and through close-focus explorations of the daily rhythms of emergence and possibility" (Peck, 2015, p.165). This dichotomous categorization implies a false equation of research philosophy, methodology and methods. Whereas the work previously categorized as research on urban restructuring "from above" because of its empirical focus on institutionalized,

multi-scalar market-governance relations, does fit the *abstraction fraction* by means of its research method*,* this does by no means reversely mean that research "from below", on daily life, must necessarily remain across the fence, in the *assemblage-theory fraction*.

In contrast, seeking to undermine this oversimplified polarization, this study proposes yet another approach to relationality that seeks to encompass both granular lived realities of daily life and historical political-economic (de)regulation, that works from the ground up without neglecting context or rejecting abstraction. Instead, it aims at "grounding analyses in a situated understanding of everyday life, while always seeing the praxis of everyday life as internally related to and constitutive of the planetary [or the abstract]" (Loftus, 2018, p.93). Therefore, the analysis of Leipzig's urban restructuring sets out for a multi-scalar, meso-relational perspective, convinced that "a full understanding of the current [local] dynamics must take into consideration a broader, more abstract set of processes." (Angelo and Goh, 2021, p.10) Reversely, as a strategic locational pick, meaning "a probably quite atypical but nevertheless strategically situated micro-situation […] which lies at the intersection of the key structures in contention or transformation" (Sayer, 2000, p.151), the granular empirical analysis from Leipzig is meant to inform further theoretical abstractions. Chapter 3 lays out in detail the methodological foundations of this endeavour along with its practical implementation.

Conceptually, this contribution is sought through a meso-relational perspective, that addresses what most of the previously introduced theories on urban restructuring fall short of – an account of politics that encompasses *both* complex institutionalized mechanisms and nuanced realities of daily life (Katz, 2021). The remainder of this section elaborates this endeavour. First, an attempt at "midlevel" analysis, seeking to relate above and below is reviewed (Peck, 2017; Davies, 2021), and secondly a refinement of this approach is proposed through tackling an affective gap in urban political economy, that parallels the general neglect of emotions and their role in hegemonic political theory (Bargetz and Sauer, 2010). In response, a conceptualization of affective mediations is prepared that allows researching institutionalized (de)regulation of neoliberal urban restructuring on an analytical level with the daily realities of tenants. Speaking with the previously introduced categories, this implies theorizing urban restructuring from above (governance-market relations) from below (in their affective dimensions).

Developing an affect-sensitive meso-relational angle

Much like "[n]eo-liberalism is […] not one thing" but "a long-term tendency", that is "'constantly' in process" (Hall, 2011, p.708), there is not one form of neoliberal restructuring. This is a simple

explanation for the necessity of continuous, plural, localized, grounded research. Based on this premise, Peck proposes "'conjunctural' urban analysis" as "a mode of analysis that works deliberately across levels of abstraction in dialogue with evolving midlevel formulations and connective concepts" (Peck, 2017, p.9). Methodologically, his proposition meets the critique of dominant theorization by suggesting to "spiral […] up and down through cases and contexts" to continuously rework an understanding of "the spaces (and scales) […] where in a substantive sense neoliberalisation has cut its zigzagging path […] as temporally evolving, politically contested, geographically unruly, always composite and less-than-determinate process of regulatory restructuring." (ibid., p.9,14)

Following this call and combining conjunctural analysis with comparative research, a recent research project has explored the governance of urban austerity in eight cities across three continents (Bua et al., 2018; Davies et al., 2020). Theorizing its findings, Davies' resulting analysis meets the objective of relational theorizing across geographical and analytical scales, by joining the analysis "from above" with an inquiry into the differentiated development of resistance and containment (Davies, 2021). Moving beyond the mere assessment of different resistance movements, cultures or prototype-subjectivities criticized above (Davies and Blanco, 2017; Bailey et al., 2018), it closely illustrates the variegated trajectories of (un)contested austerity governance on multiple scales and degrees of institutionalization. Therein, especially the analysis of emergent civil society resistance to planned water charges in Dublin grounds emergent political contestation in residents' lived experiences of austerity (ibid., 141-146; Gaynor, 2020).

I want to propose that one key factor to the successful meso-analysis, integrating the 'conjunctural' perspective on multi-scalar neoliberalization with that of the everyday, is the analytical attentiveness to affect. Reappearing throughout the different case studies in the "cynicism" of civil society respondents in Nantes, the "disillusionment" of Barcelona's activists, the "resentments" of Dublin's residents about the water charge and their "hopes" generated in the struggle against them; or the "memories of defeat" and resulting emotional "pessimism" among Leicester's trade unionists (Davies, 2021, pp.120, 129, 141, 144, 157), these notions of affect uncover the *palpable* link between historical conjunctures, granular resistance, passivity, contestation and defeat. However, as in most urban scholarship, these affects remain undertheorized regarding both the specific workings of their emergence and impact. Aspiring to generate a meso-analytical framework that illuminates a section of Peck's cross-scalar spiral that

remains mostly underexposed in urban political economy, that between daily life and local neoliberal restructuring, I thus propose to work with and beyond this mere *reading* of affect.

That urban politics, like every terrain of social life, is not merely rational, is no novelty. Calls for "post-rationalist geographies" (Anderson and Smith, 2001, p.3) twenty years ago stand in a long (feminist) tradition of cross-disciplinary critique of academic tendencies to split the rational from the emotional (Flam, 1990; Bargetz and Sauer, 2010). In the last decade, several extensive literature reviews of these traditions have been conducted (Pile, 2010; Anderson, 2014; Heaney, 2019). Furthermore, affects have recently reappeared on the agenda of political theory as a question of intellectual positioning between "Left-Wing Melancholia" (Traverso, 2017), hopeful scholarship (Dinerstein, 2012; Back, 2021; Dinerstein, 2021) or, in careful opposition to that, strategic pessimism (Davies, 2021). Whereas an affect-sensitive research agenda has also seeped into urban scholarship, this has mostly been concerned with "the emotional *consequences* of seemingly rational economic decisions" (Anderson and Smith, 2001, p.4 emphasis added), and thus the experiences of city dwellers (for example Butcher and Dickens, 2016; Pain, 2019; Gupta and Medappa, 2020). However, affects and emotions are generally neglected in urban political-economic analyses concerned with the processes *driving* urban restructuring, regeneration or gentrification (Bollens, 2012; Sandercock and Attili, 2014; Sandercock, 2015). A recent exception is Jakimow's exploration of affect in the interaction between local state representatives and citizens (Jakimow, 2020). She uncovers how specific, individual affective expressions in encounters reinforce power-imbalances in urban resource distribution. Following her plea to "account for the affective and emotional dimensions of urban governance" (ibid., 444) and Anderson's call for an affective research agenda concerned with the "real conditions of formation for neoliberal reason/objects […] central to understanding the momentum of policies, programmes and so on" (Ben Anderson, 2016, p.744) through an analysis of Leipzig's neoliberal urban restructuring, this gap is addressed empirically in chapter 4.

The empirical analysis is backed by a meso-relational conceptualization of affect, to understand the link *between* daily life and institutionalized, multi-scalar politics of (de)regulation. Different from Jakimow's analysis of individualized encounters, the aim is to read affects not from a psychological, psychoanalytical, or interactionist individual perspective, but as collective yet stratified phenomena, moods, or *atmospheres* (Anderson, 2014). This endeavour seems counterintuitive, considering the very corporal definition of affect as the capacity that "a body has to be affected (through an affection) and to affect (as the result of modifications)"

(Anderson, 2006, p.735), which, as opposed to emotion, is considered non or pre-cognitive (Pile, 2010). Yet, centring the *transpersonal* nature of this capacity means to inquire affects relationally, as something *between* different subjects and environments (ibid., Ahmed, 2014). Thus, affects are not investigated from an individual-centred perspective, but from one concerned with collective yet stratified, dialectical, ambivalent, political phenomena. To elaborate this, Anderson's notion of *atmospheres* is fruitful. "An atmosphere 'surrounds' and 'envelops' something particular, whilst also existing on the edge of semantic availability", that "press on a society 'from all sides' with a certain force […] albeit in a way that may be only tangentially related to any subject who feels." (Anderson, 2014, p.139)

In this sense, collective affects are defined by the "notion of intensity and its capacity, therefore, to 'do'" (Pile, 2010, p.13). To analyse them "as situated, historicized and relational – already formed and always changing – and affecting politics, as much as they are affected by politics, at a range of scales" (Pain, 2009, p.478), the intention in this thesis thus, instead of trying to unpick them in psychoanalytical depth, to look at what they *do*. With this aim, affects are theorized as holding a mediating, complexity reducing function, a distinct pace, and hence path-shaping consequences. Drawing from Sum and Jessop's (2013) account of discursive mediation of political economy, the latter is extended by an affective dimension. This implies that affect never exists on its own, that it is emergent from specific material life, yet not reducible to that, and that it has "an efficacy within these collectivities" (Anderson, 2014, pp.13-14).

It is this efficacy that makes affective mediations such a relevant subject of analysis for urban political economy. To understand it, and its role for the (variegated) development of (a case specific form of) neoliberal urban restructuring, the temporality of affective mediations is analysed. Whereas works on hope illustrate its inherent relation to the future (Anderson, 2006; Dinerstein, 2012; Back, 2021), both recent theoretical accounts of nostalgia and melancholia, and more generally, the consideration of affects as historically emergent, point to the relevance of the past (Ahmed, 2014; Traverso, 2017; Pain, 2019; Gupta and Medappa, 2020). As is elaborated through the empirical material in chapter 4, it is the temporal horizons, along with the pace of action generated or hindered through affective mediations, that account for their impact on political-economic processes.

Graph 1: A suggestion of theorizing affect in relation to urban governance – the granular level of daily life will be explored in the following section.

To strengthen a meso-relational understanding of urban restructuring, we can thus ask (with and beyond) the previously introduced theories, *how*, for example, beyond mere rational decision making, does speculation on potential ground rent occur, *why,* in affective terms, do struggles around housing emerge, *what mood or atmosphere* drives, envelopes or accompanies the generation of social order that restructuring is based on, or the consent/dissent to it? And lastly, how are these affective moments related across scales and degrees of political institutionalization?

To answer these questions in a manner that permits abstraction, empirical, qualitative research must be embedded into a multi-scalar perspective, alert to local path dependencies, strategies and selectivities (Sum and Jessop, 2013; Jessop, 2016), the role of different state interventions and that of (absent) contestation. In the case of Leipzig, this means theorizing the role of German reunification (Hannemann, 2003; Rink, 2010; Bernt et al., 2014; Intelmann, 2019b; Bernt and Holm, 2020), shrinkage and regrowth (Hannemann, 2003; Haase, Rink and Grossmann, 2016b) and the history of (urban) austerity and neoliberal urbanism in Germany (Belina and Schipper, 2009; Schipper and Schönig, 2016; Petzold, 2018). Considering these factors is necessary to make sense of the power(lessness), hope and depression of political actors on different scales.

It is the analysis of urban restructuring under these specific conditions then, that the promised contribution to urban theorizing emerges from. East Germany's comparably recent and exceptionally quick transformation from state-socialist to neoliberal urbanism, observed from its recently most rapidly growing – booming – city, allows for empirical research on neoliberal restructuring that documents its early dynamics both from a structural and a daily life

perspective of the actors involved. Furthermore, the very specific power-dynamics at play in Leipzig, what could be called markers of 'difference' (Lefebvre, 1991; Katz, 2021; Oswin and Pratt, 2021; Angelo and Goh, 2021), where inner-German power and class-dynamics intersect with other systems of domination and exploitation, might inform perspectives on the complexity of restructuring elsewhere.

Taken together, the empirical analysis of how these context factors play out in Leipzig, guided by the proposed conceptualization of affects as collective, yet stratified, influential *mediations* of political economy, constitute the first set of contributions of this study. Therewith, the analysis of moods around and between collective and atomized (a)political actors both on an institutional and an informal level, creates a meso-relational bridge between the analysis of political patterns of urban restructuring and that of tenants' lived experiences of alienation. The contribution sought is methodical, in proposing an affect-sensitive lens; conceptual, in developing the concept of *affective mediations*; and empirical. The empirical analysis of Leipzig's specific trajectory of post-shrinkage-dialectics is carried out in chapter 4.

Beyond displacement: belonging and its disruption

Having critically reviewed literatures on the political economy and governance of urban restructuring in the last section, this section turns to a body of research concerned with tenants' lived realities, thus the other side of the coin, with Harvey's metaphor (1978). Following the proposed conceptualization of collective affects that operate between and across analytical scales, this section proposes to transcend the approach of traditional gentrification-displacement literatures by inquiring how tenants' perspectives feed into the (lacking) development of both collective affects and their political expression. This is done through an engagement with scholarship that analyses belonging, place-attachment and perception throughout multiple scales of home.

As mentioned previously, *when* given space in urban theory, affects are mostly analysed in the experiences of residents and city dwellers (Fields, 2011; Till, 2012; Watt, 2018; Pain, 2019; Gupta and Medappa, 2020). Still, affect-sensitive perspectives equally remain in the minority in a field of critical research on the social consequences of urban restructuring. Instead, gentrification has been predominantly examined through quantitative-heavy displacement research, with most studies focussing on the tip of the iceberg, physical displacement (for example Atkinson, 2000; Hartman and Robinson, 2003; Newman and Wyly, 2006; Manzo, Kleit and Couch, 2008; Atkinson, 2008; Ross and Squires, 2011; Desmond and Shollenberger, 2015; Betancourt, 2016;

Förste and Bernt, Matthias, 2016; Helbrecht, Ilse, 2016; Üblacker and Lukas, 2019). As critical overviews of these studies have been written previously (Davidson, 2009; Zuk et al., 2018; Wynne and Rogers, 2021), this section does not repeat this literature review. Instead, exceptional approaches foregrounding cultural, affective, or relational forms of displacement are briefly referenced. Illustrating their multi-scalar, relational and temporal nature, these will be made productive for the subsequent theorization of residential alienation, continuing the development of a relational approach that allows an analysis of tenants' experiences and political-economic patterns on one conceptual level.

As opposed to the common Cartesian (logic and geometrical) spatial "fetishism" at the base of most quantitative displacement studies (Belina, 2017a; Davidson, 2009), the holistic approach sought in this thesis is inspired by studies on displacement pressure and exclusionary displacement (Marcuse, 1985; Valli, 2015), associated displacement anxiety (Ertelt et al., 2016; Watt, 2018; Üblacker and Lukas, 2019), "affective displacement" or "spatial dislocation" that occurs regardless of actual physical moves but nevertheless disturbs residents' affective relation to place, either through upgrading (Butcher and Dickens, 2016; see also Wynne and Rogers, 2021) or targeted neglect (Fields and Uffer, 2016). Besides not necessarily implying a physical move from place, these conceptualizations have in common that they consider the wider neighbourhood area to understand residents' experiences. Despite the previously adopted vantage point of rental housing financialization as a driver of neoliberal urban restructuring, the latter manifests in a broader reshuffling of space. Its consequences for tenants' daily lives thus deserve to be studied along multiple scales and spatialities.

This is in line with recent interventions into displacement research, foregrounding the mutli-scalarity of belonging (Pohl et al., 2020; Watt, 2021; Wynne and Rogers, 2021). Such considerations are productive for the aim of this study to capture tenants' experiences *beyond* their individual housing situation. As a central locus of both urban restructuring and daily life, especially for working-class, unemployed, youth and elderly tenants, "the neighbourhood—understood as overlapping social networks with specific and variable time-geographies—is an essential part of the way in which people are socialised into [the] wider social order" (Forrest and Kearns, 2001, p.2134; see also Shaw and Hagemans, 2015), and thus considered a crucial scale to understand the political implications of urban restructuring. Beyond the household, it is here where much research on belonging, neighbourhood identity, senses of place, or place attachment is grounded (Savage, Longhurst and Bagnall, 2005; Watt, 2006; Vandemark, 2007;

Duyvendak, 2011; May, 2011; Jones and Jackson, 2014; Clark, Duque-Calvache and Palomares-Linares, 2015).

For an empirical analysis of the multi-scalarity of experiences of displacement or disruptions to dwelling, Kearns and Parkinson's nested differentiation of neighbourhood is instructive. Spatially, they divide the neighbourhood into a close by "home area", important for identity and belonging (through quality of environment and perceptions of co-residents); a wider "locality", important for social status and residential activities; and "urban district or region", constituting a "landscape of social and economic opportunities" (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001, p.2104). More of a conceptual inspiration than a blueprint for relevant neighbourhood scales everywhere, this classification is again complicated by the understanding of the neighbourhood not "as just a territorially bounded entity but as a series of overlapping social networks" (Forrest and Kearns, 2001, p.2129). Furthermore, an analysis that fulfils the promise of combining macro-and micro perspectives must acknowledge the embeddedness of these scales in wider networks, scales and territories (Massey, 1994; Jessop, Brenner and Jones, 2008; Belina, 2017b; Belina, 2020; Miggelbrink, 2020). Incorporating this understanding into empirical research, this thesis studies tenants' "multiplicity of belongings, including the inter-relationships between different 'scales of belonging'" (Frost and Catney, 2020, p.2834). Empirically, this is carried out in chapters 5 and 6.

Scrutinizing *how* these scales of belonging are formed between spatial practice of material restructuring, its representations, and subjects daily lives, scholars have inquired the "social construction" of transforming neighbourhoods (Hwang, 2016). To do so, Martin (2003) has introduced the concept of "place frames", as a "collective work of assemblage" that can be understood as "a discursive construction through which place meanings acquire symbolic social function" (Bradley, 2017, p.236). From a similarly discursive approach, Hwang defines "neighborhoods [as...] meaningful collective representations that are derived from social interactions and imposed by external entities" (Hwang, 2016, p.100). She uses the concept of "boundary work" to explore inclusions and exclusions that "legitimate […] which group deserves and which group does not deserve resources such as access to opportunities, benefits, and information" (ibid., p.102). This is related closely to residents' management of their reflexive identities, generating feelings of similarity and group membership (Stevenson et al., 2019). Such "frame analyses" (Goffman, 2016) permit an interactionist perspective on lived realities in *representational spaces,* as well as an integration of structural influences of *representations of*

space (Lefebvre, 1991), as in processes of territorial stigmatization (Wacquant, 2008; Kallin and Slater, 2018).

Combining and extending these understandings of multi-scalar belonging and place-making from a context of restructuring, this thesis draws attention to the (different) temporalities significant for both political economic and social actors involved. The recurrent appearance of ontological security (and hence predictability) as a concept in displacement scholarship (Saegert, Fields and Libman, 2011; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Reichle, 2018; Watt, 2021) suggests that both urban restructuring and its effect on belonging are deeply processual (Massey, 1994). Therewith they are always intertwined equally with temporality and its perception (Giddens, 1984; Sharma, 2014; May, 2017). Recent sociological research demonstrates that entangled perceptions of past, present and future are manifold, dependent on socio-economic factors, interests and political attitudes and interdependent with perceptions of place (Lewis and May, 2020; Ringel, 2020). These are valuable insights to enrich a mere spatial focus of perception and social place-making.

With this in mind, the present work proposes to refine theories of belonging and subjectivation research (chapter 2.2) with a framework that incorporates temporalities of experience. As Sharma has shown, "the temporal operates as a form of social power and a type of social difference" (Sharma, 2014, p.9), meaning that temporalities differ complexly according to macrosocial relations of exploitation and power, shaping people's daily lives and subjectivities in a manner that is always relational, hence dependent on the temporalities of others. For an understanding of people's lived experience of urban restructuring, this points first, towards the interdependence of the pace of structural political economic processes with differently temporally mediated perceptions of place. Second, it highlights the co-existence and competition of temporally divergent "place-frames" and their impact on residents' subjectivation and place-making capacities. Dialoguing the introduced perspectives on temporality and spatial perception, identification and place-attachment, this thesis thus introduces a dimension termed *temporalities of belonging*, elaborated empirically in chapter 5.

Besides a given changing material environment, it is "particular interactions and experiences in a location that create the sense of attachment, and that these experiences yield expectations for [future...] interactions and events" (Shaw and Hagemans, 2015, p.327). In other words, besides being spatial and temporal, belonging is fundamentally relational. This becomes apparent in research on the relevance of neighbourhood for social cohesion, understood as

"getting by and getting on at the more mundane level of everyday life" (Forrest and Kearns, 2001, p.2127) within and through neighbouring relationships. Providing an excellent operationalization of the very flexible and potentially problematic concept of community (Hubbard and Lees, 2018, p.19), Blokland's (2017) work on community as urban practice synthesizes how long- and short-term, institutionalised and casual relationships build a relational, dynamic sense of belonging enabling subjects "to act in a socially significant manner that is recognized by others" (May, 2011, p.372).

Consequentially, also *disturbances* to belonging manifest in relations to others, as several studies on "cultural displacement" show. These capture the replacement of cultural places, histories, heritages, or norms of working-class, and often racialized long-term residents in a specific area with those of inmoving (often white, middle-class) newcomers (Cahill, 2007; Zukin, 2010; Hyra, 2015). This term is highly ambiguous, risking to reify culture as a cause of displacement, whereas, from a perspective of capitalist urban restructuring sketched out above, it is a result or mediation of this process. Nevertheless, the studies employing it are helpful to understand the relational processes at play, and therewith also potential political consequences.

In that line of enquiry, Valli's findings on a restructuring neighbourhood in New York reflect that an "emotional loss of place for disempowered groups" is initially triggered not by the changing built environment, but by the arrival of *newcomers* to the neighbourhood (Valli, 2015, p.1195). Her rich qualitative material points to a form of displacement, that is not rooted in the physical loss of a house, but in the "threat to the very identification of that place *as* 'home'" (ibid., p.1195, emphasis in original). Focussing on similar aspects of urban restructuring in London, Davidson illuminates how changes of meeting places and infrastructure are made to meet the needs and desires of inmoving middle class residents. Consequentially, these changes restrain the capacities of working class long-term residents to "define their own urban space" (Davidson, 2008, p.2402). Even without explicit displacement anxiety, yet closely related to changes in community structure, such forms of cultural, or affective displacement at a neighbourhood scale can diminish residents' sense of agency and power over place: "Some low-income people in redeveloping neighbourhoods are losing their political power and feelings of community attachment." (Hyra, 2015, p.1769) Thus, these studies are key to understand not just the complexities of urban restructuring's lived experiences, but also their political consequences. Butcher and Dickens' (2016) study on London youth ceasing to engage in active placemaking as they perceive "affective displacement" in an upgrading surrounding subtly illustrates the

relevance of holistic, nuanced, affect-sensitive approaches to place and belonging for an understanding of urban restructuring's political effects. These, along with their affective dimensions, are outlined even more directly in August's (2016) analysis of a contested restructuring project in Toronto. In this case, the intimidation by the fear of both direct and exclusionary displacement directly impacts tenants' courage and power to resist.

Besides causing anxiety and limiting tenant power, experiences of displacement as the "state that results from the loss of a familiar *physical* or *social* environment" (Vandemark, 2007, p.241, emphasis added), or perceived "non-spatial displacement" (Zuk et al., 2018, p.12) can also interdepend with racist stereotypes. This is revealed in a Berlin study, where tenants who claim to experience cultural displacement associate inmoving migrants with the neglect of the area (Beran and Nuissl, 2019, p.197). Similarly, Bescherer and colleagues hypothesize that continuously rising rents and the restructuring of a neighbourhood can lead to tenants' frustration, feelings of rejection and insecurity and be channelled through far-right politics (Bescherer et al., 2019; Bescherer, 2019). These are interesting complementary perspectives to that of racialized tenants in the US, who perceive white newcomers as the face of upgrading. Taken together they give an impression of the potential varieties of urban restructuring's political consequences, that this thesis sets out to research.

The aim is however not just to focus on these consequences, but also, respectively, research their role in the reproduction or transformation of urban restructuring. Whereas some of the above cited studies mention relational effects of restructuring on a granular level (stereotypes towards new neighbours for example), they rarely theorize their wider political impact. With the aim of doing this, the second half of this chapter constructs an operationalizable theorization of tenants' relations as relations of societal reproduction. Yet before, the next section rounds off the meso-relational intervention to urban studies and prepares the analysis of tenants' experiences and actions on a conceptual level with urban restructuring from above. This is achieved by developing a lens that combines power(lessness), ownership structures and control. Capturing all the above mentioned variations of displacement, estrangement and disturbance to belonging through centring tenants' lack of "control over space […] the ability to determine how space outside the home (and often within it too) look and feel, what qualities they have" (Fields, 2011, p.263), whilst relating them to the structural dimensions of urban restructuring, a theory of residential alienation is established. This serves as a *conceptual* foundation for

methodical and *empirical relational* contributions made to urban political economy with this thesis.

Residential alienation and appropriation

The concept of residential alienation links capitalist urban restructuring to the daily life of tenants. In 1975, Marcuse already suggested its usage, stating that "It is indeed curious that the idea of alienation is so scarce in the housing literature." (Marcuse, 1975, p.182) Fourty years later, he and Madden define it as what generally "happens when a capitalist class captures the housing process and exploits it for its own ends" (Madden and Marcuse, 2016, p.56). From a structural perspective, they argue that residential alienation is an inevitable part of capitalist rental housing relations: "To live in someone else's house is to live in alienated housing, in the straightforward legal sense as well as in the psychosocial sense" (ibid., p.76). They thus point to the inherent class conflicts of commodified rental housing. In the following, this concept is elaborated, scaled (up) to include a neighbourhood analysis, and strengthened dialectically with a theory of appropriation. Therewith, the first central conceptual pillar of the meso-relational angle of this thesis is completed.

With Marx, alienation means the prevention of human appropriation of the world via their own labour, of creativity and power to create, through socio-structural, mostly economic mechanisms (Ollman, 1977; Honneth, 2016). In that sense, alienation stems from relations of production, in which the individual is unfree in her praxis, because she has no control over the means of production (Marx, 1968; Fromm, 1972). As a result, she is alienated from her work, her product, nature, all others and finally herself. Central to the process of alienation is thus the question of (lacking/classed) control.

Philosophically, alienation is therefore *separation*, when a whole gets divided into classifications, or on a subjective level, an individual in an alienating society "is degenerating into an abstraction, those parts of his being which have been split off (which are no longer under his control) are undergoing their own transformation." (Ollman, 1977, p.134) Alienation's psychosocial consequences, with Jaeggi, imply a loss of sense, powerlessness and a form of unfamiliarity and unrelatedness, a deficient relation or a relation of relationlessness (Jaeggi, 2016).

This resonates with Lefebvre's (1977) critique of daily life. His work is fruitful to develop a spatialized perspective of alienation that transcends the sphere of wage-labour. Conceptually

disentangling the social production of space, Lefebvre introduces the analytical triad of spatial practice (l'espace perçu), representations of space (l'espace conçu) and representational spaces (l'espace vécu). *Spatial practice*, shaping perceived space, refers to the material structure and spatial characteristics of production and reproduction, the associated ordering of social spaces that enables cohesion and continuity – hence the structural side of capitalist urban restructuring. *Representations of space*, shaping the conceived, designed, or thought-out space, refer to the discursive and ideological productions of space, including the production (and questioning) of knowledge, codes, and symbols. *Representational spaces*, finally, are lived spaces shaping and shaped by daily life, which give meaning to and embody both the spatial practice and the representations of space (Lefebvre, 1991, pp.33–40; Schmid, 2010, pp.209–220). Whereas these moments of spatial production cannot be considered independently from one-another, it is *from* the spaces of daily life that Lefebvre's critique of alienation emerges (Lefebvre, 1977).

Taking this arena of daily life as both a crucial site where alienation manifests, and one where it is reproduced, the approach developed in this thesis extends Madden and Marcuse's concept of residential alienation beyond the individual household and beyond legal property relations around rental housing (or indebted homeownership). Hence, residential alienation is considered not just as a multi-level, but also a multi-scalar concept. Incorporating the multiple scales of belonging summarized above, it realigns a theory of capitalist urbanization as "a universal mechanism facilitating capital accumulation process" with "concrete result[s] of this process characterised by negative mental/ emotional implications for individuals and societies" (Bayırbağ and Penpecioğlu, 2017, p.2057)

Besides re-scaling the concept of residential alienation, this thesis seeks to develop it as a dialectical concept in a field of tension with appropriation. Critiquing totalizing theoretical perspectives on "universal alienation" (Harvey, 2018), or the subsumption of all social relations under a capitalist dynamic, Gray (forthcoming) argues for differentiated empirical analyses of real subsumption. Real subsumption describes the integration of moments of life into the mechanisms of the production process, and the respective transformation of these moments according to capitalist logics (endnotes, 2010b; endnotes, 2010a). Logically, it is thereby a close relative of alienation, designating the structural interdependence of the totality of life and the current accumulation regime. Engaging with Lefebvre's (2009) work on capital switching, where accumulation through investment in the built environment replaces the centrality of production,

Gray proposes to understand this as a *tendency*. He calls for a differentiated analysis of this tendency, to reveal the "limits of real subsumption*"* (Gray, forthcoming)*,* especially out of interest for potential political terrains of struggle. Approaching residential alienation from such a differentiated perspective means to study it in dialectical relation with appropriation as its counterpart.

For neither with Jaeggi nor with Ollman or Lefebvre, must alienation be understood as a homogenous, total process. Instead of drawing a conservative picture of alienation, where its negation means recurring to premodern times, Jaeggi (2016) pleads for an emancipatory understanding of alienation as a form of being unfree. In contrast, appropriating the world would mean being able to identify with it and acting in a self-determined manner. With Ollman, "'appropriation' means to utilize constructively, to build by incorporating […] the individual appropriates the nature he perceives and has become oriented to by making it in some way a part of himself with whatever effect this has on his senses and future orientation." (Ollman, 1977, p.89) Whereas appropriation, in structurally alienating conditions of capitalism, is never fully possible, a dialectical understanding of the "'possible' [as] an integral part of the real" (Busquet, 2012, p.7; Lefebvre, 1996) points to different possible forms of appropriation. Contributing to the theory of (residential) alienation, I therefore propose the term *strategies of appropriation*, to allow research on (residents') attempts at gaining control in alienated circumstances. To what extent strategies of appropriation *actually* work towards appropriation, the production of differential space (Lefebvre, 1991; Lefebvre, 2003) and challenging structural alienation, is an empirical question that will be addressed in chapter 5.

In that line, the current work proposes to conceptualize residential alienation in a differentiated, dialectical manner, despite its universal tendency rooted in the heteronomy of divided ownership structures inherent in capitalist urbanization and the accompanying lack of control of those in subaltern positions (Bayırbağ and Penpecioğlu, 2017; Harvey, 2018; Fuchs, 2018). Therewith, the thesis challenges universalizing alienation theories generally, and specifically proposes a theoretical and empirical elaboration of the concept of residential alienation. To the urban political economic bodies of work on capitalist urban restructuring and displacement research reviewed above, this offers both a methodical and a conceptual contribution, establishing a meso-relational link between them.

For empirical research on the consequences of urban restructuring, this means that whilst acknowledging residents' *structural lack of control* over their homes, neighbourhoods, and

spaces of social reproduction, their political role and *potential power* in the (re)production of these structural circumstances must nevertheless be seriously inquired. To do so, their differentiated potential and strategies of appropriation are studied in chapter 5 and 6.

To investigate how experiences of alienation, strategies of appropriation and tenants' capacities influence, challenge or reproduce urban restructuring, a research perspective that transcends individual experiences or actions is required. This implies studying the mutual interdependence of alienation, appropriation, and tenants' relations, both as necessary preconditions for building collective power, but also as crucial determinants of political action in any sense. To prepare this study, the next subchapter introduces a spatio-temporally sensitive perspective on (collective) subjectivation, societal reproduction and therewith the political reproduction of urban restructuring from below, establishing the second conceptual pillar of the thesis.

Graph 2: Simplified affect sensitive, relational framework to inquire residential alienation.

2.2 A sociological intervention – subjectivation as the grounds where political actors are made & their relations as what reproduces urban restructuring

The first section of this chapter has introduced urban scholarship from above and below, drawing from and pushing meso-relational perspectives to link them. To do so, a contribution to urban political economy was proposed through affect-sensitive research on the governance of neoliberal urban restructuring. Analytically, it was suggested to align this with the study of tenants' lived realities through the concept of residential alienation. Continuing the relational mode of inquiry, this second half of the chapter changes the viewing angle on the politics of

neoliberal urbanization by means of a sociological intervention. Zooming in on the granular implications of residential alienation, first, the impact of macro-structural processes on individual subjectivation is scrutinized. This, it is argued, is necessary to strengthen the understanding of theories of belonging discussed in chapter 2.1, which are reversely used to enrich sociological theories of subjectivation with a spatio-temporal understanding. Furthermore, the theorization of subjectivation serves as a precondition to understand the formation of collective subjectivities, of contestations but also of political passivity, collective lethargy or authoritarian divisions. To explore the genesis of these phenomena and their role for the reproduction of urban restructuring, second, an operationalizable concept of relations is developed, that allows to scale up tenants' experiences and actions and inquire their political consequences. Lastly, it is exemplified how the developed concept of *meso-relations* contributes to the research of urban politics by employing it to link studies on (surging) authoritarianism and (urban) solidarities. Thus, whereas affective mediations have been suggested as a relational concept to inquire urban restructuring from above, from below in chapter 2.1, *meso-relations* are introduced as a research subject illuminating the reproduction of urban restructuring through scaling up from below.

Identity and subjectivation

On a subjective level, alienation can be understood as a disruption of the "affective identification" of an individual to her preconditions (Jaeggi, 2016, p.279). Yet what is identification, how is identity defined? Although frequently mentioned, the concept of identity is hardly theoretically developed in the scholarship on displacement or belonging reviewed in the last chapter. However, to understand the interrelation of social structures and political economic processes (such as urban restructuring) with not just tenants' experiences, but also their political roles, positions, actions, and relations in society, addressing this gap is crucial.

Following Hall, "[i]dentification turns out to be one of the least well-understood concepts – almost as tricky as, though preferable to, 'identity' itself." (Hall, 2000, p.16) To Hall, identities are fragmented, "never singular" and "constantly in the process of change and transformation" (ibid., p.17). Identities are deeply political and always relational, as the construction of the self always occurs in a (power) relation or opposition to an *other* (ibid.; Massey, 1994).

In contrast to philosophical undertakings of defining a human essence, the underlying understanding of subjectivation (and hence identity formation) in this piece of work is grounded in subject theories of the second half of the 20th century, that seek to understand the interdependence of subjectivity and society (Wiede, 2019). These theories centre on social processes of subjectivation, that enable identification and identity, and hence the contingent self-conception and -location of the subject within society. In the words of Jambet, "[t]here is a subject […], because a certain type of 'relationship with the self' comes into being a culture." (Jambet in du Gay, 2000, p.282) This highlights two important aspects of subjectivation, and respectively, identity formation: its temporality, changing nature and emergence, and its dependence on social relations. With Bourdieu, identity, both in its reflective, narrative form, and in its practical, bodily form (habitus) can be understood as a kind of "short formula for the complex processes, with which the positions in class-, gender- [, racial] and generational relations, as supraindividual patterns, get 'inscribed' into the subjects and are stabilized" (Rehmann, 2008, p.130; Bourdieu, 2000; Bourdieu, 1993). Via "symbolic violence", it emerges as the "product of the incorporation of a social structure in the shape of a quasi-natural […] disposition" (Bourdieu in Rehmann, 2008, p.128). Central to Bourdieu's theory of subjectivation is his concept of the *field*, defined as a "configuration of 'objective relations between positions' […], that are defined 'through their actual situation (*situs*) in the structure and distribution of the different kinds of power (or capital)'" (ibid., p.124). Hence, subjectivation is a granular precondition for the reproduction of societal power structures.

In a recent geographical contribution, Belina has summarized how "[o]nce inscribed into physical space, […] 'naturalized, social structures […] will successively transform into structures of thought and predispositions', and hence be taken for granted. This is how spaces are produced, whose characteristics, in the shape of local or regional identities, become elements of subjectivation themselves. […] Identities and spaces are in that sense 'co-constitutive'." (Bourdieu and Massey in Belina, 2017b, p.101) In other words, neither the resulting "structured coherence" (Harvey in Belina, 2017b, p.100), nor (spatial) identities are fixed. Instead, as their underlying social relations, they are manifold, contested and transforming (Massey, 1994). In that sense, subjectivation is considered relational and thus inseparable from socialization in this thesis. As opposed to centring the formation of identity, socialization defines how subjects, in a dialectical relationship with their social environment, become "social *actors* by means of interiorizing norms and models" (Venegas, 2017, p.4).

Although rarely part of urban political economic analyses, I argue that studying the deeply spatio-temporal mechanisms of subjectivation-socialization is crucial for understanding the interdependence between urban restructuring, residential alienation, and its reproduction from below. This is demonstrated in the following through an illustration of the conflictual nature of (individual) subjectivation, and in the subsequent sections through a theorization of the reproduction of social relations.

According to critical theorists, the relations of power reproduced in current processes of subjectivation can be traced back, with Marx, to the social division of labour, and with it the emergence of classes and states, and therewith alienation (Maihofer, 2007; Rehmann, 2008). Yet the *fields* generated by this, as the structural counterpart to the habitus, are contested. They are manifold (and changing) and require different conflicting habitualizations (from the same individual) (Bourdieu, 1993). Hence, identity is never totally determined by structural preconditions, but can be reflected, experimented with, and transformed. Despite major disciplinary differences and different emphases on structural versus agential power (an elaboration of which would go beyond the scope of this chapter), psychoanalytical, post-structuralist, Marxist sociologist, or critical theory approaches share the insight that subjectivation always occurs in an interplay of structural conditions and relations of power, exploitation and domination, subjects' given positions within these and their agential reproduction/challenging/transformation of these (Althusser, 1977; Horkheimer and Adorno, 2003; Foucault, 2006; Maihofer, 2007; Rehmann, 2008). This means that an analysis of alienation, understood both as a major part of, and structurally induced disturbance to identity-formation, must be attentive to its bottom-up reproduction and challenging via different forms of appropriation. In other words, in a structurally alienated context (relation of relationlessness), (dis)identification occurs through building relations with one's social surroundings in a field of tension between subjection to their structurally alienated form and different strategies or tactics of appropriation.

Researching this process of (dis)identification, this study seeks to speak to current work on political subjectivation, whilst addressing its spatio-temporal gap (Ansell and McNamara, 2018; Miggelbrink, 2020; Reichle, 2021a). To do so, the interdisciplinary dialogue with theories of belonging synthesized above is sought. Despite recent advancements of geographical research on political subjectivation (Mullis, 2018; Mullis, 2021), temporality is hardly theorized as a part of political subjectivation. Meeting this shortcoming, the previously introduced concept

temporalities of belonging will be mobilized empirically, to research identification in a field of tension between alienation and appropriation, contingent on different, stratified, lived temporalities. This is then to be contextualized with spatial insights from urban studies reviewed in the last subchapter, that highlight how "[p]hysical places, emplaced practices and narratives of place appear to simultaneously shape each other in their influence on subjectivity and social interaction." (Di Masso and Dixon in Bradley, 2017, p.236).

Further on, transcending these perspectives on subjectivation, the current study considers the societal and political *impact* of (dis)identification in a field of tension between alienation and appropriation, which will be elaborated conceptually in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Relations and (their) reproduction

The last section proposed conceptual tools to explore how societal processes (like urban restructuring) play out in individual subjectivation. Reversely, the remainder of this chapter proposes a framework to analyse the (lack of) transformative potential of political subjectivation and strategies of appropriation. This is done by theorizing subjectivation and appropriation relationally. Whereas the reviewed approaches to subjectivation acknowledge the relational and contested nature of individual subjectivation, in the sense that subjectivation always depends on others, they hardly inquire the *role and impact* of political subjectivation in macro-structural, political economic processes. This parallels the lack of much of displacement and belonging scholarship to inquire the political consequences of city dwellers' experiences, criticized in chapter 2.1. This thesis seeks to challenge this deficit. Contextualizing a body of work on societal reproduction and class composition with a sociological/philosophical take on relations, a framework to research tenants' emerging relations and according (lack of) political agency as central to the reproduction or transformation of urban restructuring is prepared in the following.

Social reproduction theory provides a lens to inquire the link between subjectivation and structural phenomena addressed throughout this chapter, in both directions. Defined as "the activities and attitudes, behaviors [sic] and emotions, and responsibilities and relationships directly involved in maintaining life, on a daily basis and intergenerationally", social reproduction is understood as the foundation of life, social relations and societal systems (Brenner and Laslett, 1991, p.314). Feminist theorists of social reproduction therefore analyse how the "capitalist

system" in total and with it "how the economic impulse of capitalist production conditions the so-called noneconomic", are reproduced (Bhattacharya, 2017a, p.75). This includes both an analysis of the reproduction of capitalist societies' "categories of oppression" (Bhattacharya, 2017b, p.14), and "capitalism's human subjects" (Fraser, 2017, p.22).

At the foundation of theories of social reproduction lies the Marxist understanding that, as a precondition for capitalist economy, the working class and their labour power must be reproduced (Federici, 2004; Gonzales, 2013; Bhattacharya and Vogel, 2017; Jarrett, 2018; Federici, 2018; Giménez, 2019). This points not just to workers' physical survival and condition, but also their "historically determined 'habits'" (Bhattacharya, 2017a, p.73), that is, their (collective and individual) subjectivity. This crucially includes "what binds the worker to capital" – the need for "the means of her life, or subsistence" (ibid., p.77). Thus, on a structural level, social reproduction scholarship seeks to explain how material practices and relations reproduce and secure relations that stabilize capitalism and value production, exploitation, and relations of waged and unwaged, racialized, and gendered labour (Scholz, 2000; Scholz, 2009; Mezzadri, 2019). Meanwhile, these approaches are sensitive to the sphere of daily life, where subjects and immediate social relations of the family, the community and society are reproduced, and macro relations of dominance maintained or changed (Ferguson, 2017). "Social reproduction hence also encompasses the production and transformation of [...] subjectivations, specific [...] politics, ideologies and discourses" (PROKLA Redaktion, 2019, p.510). As part of this, feminist analyses reveal that the reproduction of class relations has historically always implied a (re)production of "difference" and hierarchies (Bhattacharya, 2017a, p.87; Dalla Costa, 2019).

However, this process of societal reproduction in capitalism has shown to be historically and inherently crisis prone. In the current neoliberal "crisis of social reproduction" (Mohandesi and Teitelman, 2017, p.66) austerity politics are "externalizing care work onto families and communities" while constant cutbacks (in wages, welfare, public infrastructure, …) have "simultaneously diminished their capacity to perform it" (Fraser, 2017, p.25). This is exemplified in the present commodification and financialization of housing and the "self-undermining quality of contemporary urbanization" (Madden, 2020). Following Gonzales, the increasing process of real subsumption throughout the 20th century manifests "in the home itself – that realm of reproduction whose separation from production produces the conditions for capitalist accumulation." (Gonzales, 2010, p.53) Even though housing, and the 'private sphere' is not the *existential* locus of either reproductive tasks or subjectivation, historically it has grown to be a

central arena of it (Federici, 2004; Madden, 2020). Furthermore, as Soederberg demonstrates, the interlacing of housing financialization, political production of scarcity and surplus, and the increasing relevance of private debt, plays a dominant role in the *societal* reproduction of a surplus working class, unwanted yet necessary for capitalist (re)production (Soederberg, 2020). Structurally, these aspects make housing a sphere of social relations inherent and indispensable to capitalist (re)production.

However, the sphere of social reproduction is not just fundamental for capitalism, but also as key to its transformation (Fraser, 2017; Bhattacharya, 2017b; Federici, 2018). With major shifts in the capitalist production-reproduction relation occurring through crises, also crises of social reproduction, and specifically the housing crises diagnosed, bear transformative potential, if they become the locus of struggle (Gray, 2018b; Madden, 2020).

Concerned with the historical and societal potential of struggle, Operaist theory has analysed the development of societal change, political subjectivity, and power through struggle and (collective) praxis *from below.* As a form of activist social theory, in the tradition of the Marxist conceptualization of class in itself (structural position in the process of production) versus class for itself (one that develops consciousness of its power through struggle) (Marx, 1972; Marx and Engels, 1986), Operaism is concerned with the role of workers' power and struggle in the development of capitalism (Cleaver, 2000; Gray, 2018a; Tronti, 2019). In that line of inquiry, it scrutinizes the development of "class composition", which can be understood as a process of collective political subjectivation, crucial for workers' power within class struggle (Gray, 2018a). Collective subjectivation is considered simultaneously important for, but also contingent on conflict and struggles, and the collective strategies developed within them.

Dalla Costa, a prominent author of the feminist strand of Operaismo, has exemplified such processes of collective subjectivation and the development of collective power in and through struggle as the necessary agenda for a new feminist movement: "In the new sociality of struggle women discover and exercise a power that effectively gives them a new identity. *The new identity is and can only be a new degree of social power*." (Dalla Costa, 2019, p.31 emphasis in original) Elaborating the concept of the "social factory", she has advanced the understanding of transformative struggles to include spheres of daily life beyond the workplace, underscoring the relevance of neighbourhood and community for political struggle. With her take on the concept, she explained the centrality of reproduction in homes and communities for both the production

of value in capitalism *and* the reproduction of capitalist subjects (Cleaver, 2000; Dalla Costa, 2019). To her and the *wages for housework* movement, this potential was the key to understanding both the specificity of women's oppression as a marginalized section of the working class, and to their revolutionary potential. Pointing to the dialectic of social reproduction, the "social factory" is hence considered "a key arena where the contradictions and crises of capitalism are managed" and at the same time a potential locus of social change and transformation, holding "reservoirs of possibility and potential change" (Katz, 2017, p.7). As it incorporates spheres of social reproduction within but also beyond the individual household, the social factory concept links back to the previously developed multi-scalar approach to residential alienation, proposing to analyse multiple spheres of belonging and their disruption to understand the political implications of urban restructuring.

Abstractly theorizing the interplay of capitalist urbanization, collective subjectivation through struggle and the development of power from below, Gray proposes the concept of "spatial composition", defined as "the relation between the technical [the division of labour etc., LR] and political composition [the development of political subjectivity, LR] of capital, focusing on the tendential shift from industrialisation to urbanisation" (Gray, 2018a, p.235). This conceptualization draws the link between political-economic theories of neoliberal urbanization and the development of tenants' collective political subjectivation, and respectively power and political influence within a context of urban restructuring.

Gray's concept of spatial composition provides yet another compelling lens through which the interdependence of urban restructuring from above and below can be regarded. Together with the synthesized theorizations of subjectivation, social reproduction, and political composition, it serves as a theoretical background for the empirical study of this interrelation. What all these theoretical approaches lack, however, is an operationalizable scale to study the political potential, or dangers, of tenants' experiences of residential alienation and strategies of appropriation. What is the link between individual subjectivation and societal reproduction or collective struggle?

To construct a framework suitable for this, yet another relational concept is developed in the following, with the help of Adamczak's philosophy of relation-ways, and Donati and Archer's critical realist perspective on relations (Donati and Archer, 2015; Adamczak, 2017; Adamczak, 2018). The generated concept of *meso-relations* permits both inter- and innerdisciplinary

debate, calling attention to the relation between different facets of political subjectivation, specifically solidarities and authoritarianism, to which this study then provides an empirical contribution.

In a ground-breaking philosophical contribution to recent debates in the German left, Adamzcak calls for a relational mode of thinking that "can ask, from which divisions a specific relation emerges, and which sustained divisions stabilize that relation. Following, one can assume which relations must be built to surpass these divisions and enable other relations." (Adamczak, 2017, p.247) She exemplifies her understanding of divisions with the relation of private property, "a way of relating of value, that creates generality through individualization, that connects through dividing" (ibid., pp.75-76). This parallels Donati and Archer's abstract understanding of relational evils, defined as the absence or failure of relational goods, hence the negation of relations targeted at a common enjoyment. As opposed to relational goods, typically emergent from the bottom up, relational evils in "late modernity […] tend to show the reverse tendency to work from the 'top downwards'" (Donati and Archer, 2015, p.320).

In spatial terms, this evokes the fragmented subjectivation enforced by neoliberal urbanization and the production of abstract space (Lefebvre, 1991; Lefebvre, 2003). Abstract space, as commodified space, relates people through dividing them and without caring about social change fuelled by curiosity towards others (as proposed by Sennett, 1973). Asking for ways of relating that are inherent in differential space, means asking for the shared base of an emergent common praxis that is different to the organization of dwelling and residing according to the principles of private property and exchange value. It is a way of organizing dwelling and housing based on relations that imply "mattering to one another" (Adamczak, 2017, p.266), hence, for example, through relations of solidarity.

To investigate how solidarities can or cannot emerge in a context of structural relational evils, an understanding of relational *emergence* is required. In this thesis, this is drawn from Archer's theory of social morphogenesis. Her sociological theory is based on the premise that all relations are emergent, hence coming into being, developing, transforming and ending, always subject to constant (re)production or change (Archer, 2000; 2010a; Donati and Archer, 2015). Emergence is theorized with the concept of morphogenetic cycles, which propose a *temporal primacy of structural relations* followed by the continuous emergence of transformative relations. To understand the transformative capacity of an emergent relation, one must interrogate its

context of emergence, defined by casual powers and necessities, and the relations' corresponding properties and powers. Relations in this sense are generative mechanisms, and not one-time events, yet they are always "bent back" on what emerged from previous interactions (Donati and Archer, 2015, p.110). This explains Archers' perspective on relational evils being tendentially top-down phenomena versus relational goods being bult from below, in a society structurally marked by relations of private property and exploitation. In the language of alienation developed previously, strategies of appropriation built relationally or collectively could be read as relational goods emergent within, yet constrained by, an alienating context.

Jessop's strategic relational approach (SRA) offers a spatio-temporal refinement of complex relational interdependencies on different levels (Jessop, 2005; see also Jessop, 2016). Social structures, which are never fully constituted, are understood as strategically and differentially selective of actions according to their spatio-temporal rhythms and specificity. Meanwhile, actions are considered as structurally constrained, but also context sensitive, reflexive, structurally oriented, strategic, and lastly (contingently) structuring. Yet the strategies of actors are not confined to their rational planning but can also point to practical consciousness in everyday life, hence tactics with De Certeau (1984). Incorporating this perpetual complexity into a perspective of structural primacy implies viewing the latter as multiply tendential: its social reproduction is tendential, potential interventions, counter actions and -strategies limit its coherence, it is always fallible and structural contradictions lead to strategic dilemmas (Jessop, 2005).

To research the tendential socio-political reproduction of a specific trajectory of urban restructuring from below, an operationalizable scale of morphogenetic relations is required. Paving the way for an analysis of the field of tension between emerging relations and separations, solidarities, and authoritarian divisions, I propose the concept of *meso-relations* (and separations). This refers to relations and separations that transcend individual strong or weak ties or animosities between concrete persons in daily life. Whereas meso-relations *can* consist of a set of individual relations, the defining factor is that these are part of certain group dynamics which also function independently of actual concrete relationships between actors. As such, they are always co-constituted by macro-structural relations of class, gender, race, citizenship, and their political, discursive, and affective mediation. Unlike Donati and Archer's collective goods and evils, that presuppose a collective relational subject developing meta or "collective reflexivity" (Donati and Archer, 2015, p.61), meso-relations, or specifically

separations also capture fragmenting dynamics as those reflected in Mullis' concept of regressive (and individualized) collectivity, where "the collective experience of being alone is not articulated collectively but alone. There is a collective experience at work, but this [...] remains in singular voices." (Mullis, 2021, p.144). To make an example, racist prejudice within a neighbourhood can very much manifest in a relationship between two individuals or between a group and a perceived outsider, but it can equally exist as a general (non)relation of fragmented individuals with a vague group, independent of specific (racialized) subjects. Thereby, the study of meso-relations is concerned with the link between granular subjectivation and supra-individual processes of societal reproduction, collective struggle or its absence and political phenomena defining inter-subjective or inter-group attitudes, behaviours, proximities, affinities, fragmentations, or hostilities.

Graph 3: Relational framework to inquire political role of tenants' relations in the reproduction of residential alienation

The definition of meso-relations put forward in this section rounds off the methodical, relational contribution constructed through reading theories of subjectivation and societal reproduction

with relational philosophies. It prepares both the theoretical dialogue between studies of solidarity and authoritarianism, and the empirical research of a range of relational moments.

Solidarity and authoritarian divisions – challenging or sustaining alienation?

Built on the framework elaborated thus far, this final section of the conceptual framework engages with literatures on solidarity and authoritarianism, proposing to analyse them as part of the same meso-relational spectrum and formulating their potential respective interdependence with residential alienation and appropriation. To develop a rarely theorized link between emergent solidarities and authoritarianism, they are reflected as multifaceted relational moments. As such they are conceptually linked to residential alienation, describing both a relation of relationlessness and a central feature of capitalist urbanization. This discussion prepares the empirical analysis of emerging solidarities and authoritarian divisions, conducted in chapter 6, where the (un)contested reproduction of urban restructuring from below is explored.

If collective struggle generates belonging, identification, and power towards appropriation, it is *through* the relations forged in that struggle that this occurs. Solidarity, in this understanding, refers to both a means to develop power and collective consciousness, and an end of struggle as an "active creation of new ways of relating" (Featherstone, 2012, p.5). Whereas Jessop frames it as an alternative mode of governance (Jessop, 2020), solidarity is mostly simply considered a *practice* or a *feature of practices* in literatures on urban struggles (Vaiou and Kalandides, 2016; Arampatzi, 2017; Blanco and León, 2017; Agustín and Jørgensen, 2019). In contrast to these approaches, this section proposes to perceive solidarity as a relation. This relation can *involve* concrete practices or *manifest* in modes of governance, but should be conceived as both "a [social] factor itself […] and also as a synonym of 'connection', as in speaking of the relation between different [social] factors" (Ollman, 1977, p.15). Solidarity therewith has the potential to counter alienation on two levels – by forging connections between subjects over separations, and through yet beyond that, by building power that challenges alienating circumstances.

Especially in times marked by a pandemic crisis of social reproduction, where appeals to solidarity are frequent, it becomes clear that there are many possible definitions of the term, and not all necessarily imply a general challenge to capitalist relations of domination and exploitation (Reichle, 2021b). Even pre-pandemic, solidarity could be considered "overloaded

and in that sense a 'floating signifier' i.e., a signifier that is open to continual contestation" (Agustín and Jørgensen, 2019, p.25). Additionally, critical debates on co-optation, "neoliberal self-help" (Gregory in Davies and Blanco, 2017), enclosure (Jeffrey, McFarlane and Vasudevan, 2012) or bourgeois attempts at strengthening community "harmony […] as an antidote to class war" (Harvey, 1978, p.128) illustrate that relationships of solidarity are not necessarily radically transformative in the second sense (building power to challenge alienating circumstances). Instead, much as in Boyd's analysis of community aspirations towards racial uplift through gentrification, mutual aid networks can also be a vehicle of liberal improvement for specific groups, that fails to challenge the structural premises out of which their inequality emerged in the first place (Boyd, 2005).

A recent analysis of mutual-aid responses to COVID-19 in Leipzig has resulted in the classification of understandings of solidarity into three analytical categories, which are never empirically distinct (Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2020a; Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021). These are "hegemonic views of 'coronal solidarity'" (Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021, p.40) based on moral appeals to compassion; solidarity based on shared identity and solidarity in common struggle. They all reveal relevant aspects of solidarity as a relation. Compassionate solidarity, as recurrently demanded of exemplary citizens by government authorities (especially in crises of social reproduction), builds on Christian values of charity, and therewith implies and reproduces both practices and relations marked by the hierarchy "between those who are vulnerable […] and […those] who help them" (Kavada, 2020). This conception of solidarity contradicts the emancipatory notion of transformative struggles through reifying existing power-relations. Furthermore, as many top-down appeals to it during the pandemic show, it is easily subject to enclosure/cooptation – which contradicts its potential to fundamentally challenge alienating circumstances. Conceptually it disrupts relationlessness through new, hierarchical relations. However, as emergent relations free of power dynamics are hard to imagine in neoliberal capitalism, this ambiguity is presumably part of most emergent solidarities. It remains subject to empirical scrutiny to identify to what extent emergent solidarities marked by existing power-relations can alter psychosocial experiences of residential alienation, or even challenge structural ownership relations of commodified housing and urban space.

Solidarity based on shared identities on the other hand presupposes a common ground, but is therefore often critically considered as exclusive (Sennett, 1973; August, 2020). Community-based self-help that aspires merely to the advancement of a limited group could be considered

under this term. This critique however neglects the complexity, emergent nature and unfixity of identity laid out in chapter 2. In this line, social movement scholars have praised the strength of flexible and time specific solidarity movement coalitions built on identities *emerging* through common experiences of struggle, much like in processes of class composition (Mühe, 2019; Bargetz, Scheele and Schneider, 2019; della Porta, 2020; Schwiertz and Schwenken, 2020). Understood this way, radically pluralist and transformative theorizations of identity-based solidarity, fluently merge into the definition of political solidarity as a relation built on common struggle against oppression (Featherstone, 2012). This struggle can be based on a common interest (Wasteman, 2012) or positioned against something or someone specific (Nuss, 2020). In recent abstract theorizations, the idea of a potential combative, yet universal solidarity is "based on an analysis of a concrete universalism implying that all are concerned differently by the same oppressive society" (Meißner, 2015; Adamczak, 2018; Struwe, 2019; Mühe, 2019; Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021). These perspectives presuppose both reflexivity about the oppressive systems generative of the situations that such solidarities emerge from, and intentionality towards the transformation of such systems. In chapter 6, the conditions of emergence of combative solidarities will be analysed empirically.

Scholars working on mutual aid have highlighted that less reflexive and strategic, spontaneous acts of mutual aid, targeted towards no common enemy, abstract interest or goal, can nevertheless contribute to building a "hyperlocal infrastructure of care" (Kavada, 2020). "[B]ased on ongoing embodied interactions in order to mutually come up with solutions to practical issues and commonly identified needs", acts of mutual aid can build "reciprocal relations and affinity bonds among the people involved" (Arampatzi, 2017, p.2161). They can "enable the satisfaction of previously alienated human needs; […] contribute to the generation of a more inclusive democratic governance" (Blanco and León, 2017, p.2175) and build collective power based on ideas diametrically opposed to that of competitive neoliberalism and austerity politics (ibid.; Graeber et al., 2020).

Whether strategically organized or not, solidarity in practice can gain historical relevance by building power and shaping political subjectivation as a form of relating to the world and to one another. Towards which ends this political power is mobilized, is a political question that depends on a set of contextual factors. In the empirical analysis, manifestations of solidarity and mutual help will thus be studied on a continuum between countering alienation through building

relations (disrupting relationlessness) and, with and beyond that, *also* countering it by challenging its systemic conditions of emergence.

To be transformative in the long-term, Adamczak requires solidarity to be "amicable without being personal" (Adamczak, 2017, p.270), demanding a commonality that can encompass difference, a conflictive and open commonality. In Sennett's *Uses of disorder* such a commonality is based on shared experience (Sennett, 1973). For him, daily life in an uncontrolled, diverse, and conflictive neighbourhood provides the potential breeding ground for such relations of solidarity, yet under what conditions they can emerge as opposed to rising divisions, remains an empirical question. In a Marxist version of *Solidarity of Strangers* (Dean, 2018), Wasteman (2012) instead presupposes a strong shared interest for the emergence of solidarity. Theoretically, the need for good, safe, and decent housing, the need to dwell (Heidegger in Davidson, 2009) along with the desire for home (Pohl et al., 2020), the need for social reproduction and the need for place-making could be the base for such a shared interest. Yet again, in which cases a shared interest is mobilized to an inclusive counter-hegemonic solidarity, and in which cases it is not, is to be explored empirically. Chapter 6 disentangles how in Leipzig the transformative horizon of tenant solidarities depends on (racialized and gendered) class positions, cultural capital, collective reflexivity, and temporalities of belonging.

In certain empirical cases, (identitarian) solidarity can turn to be exclusive and thus produce authoritarian divisions, as highlighted in Arampatzi's example of "what Featherstone (2015) calls 'nationed imaginaries' and practices, such as the 'Greeks-only' soup kitchens of the Golden Dawn ultra-right-wing party" (Arampatzi, 2017, p.2159; see also Agustín and Jørgensen, 2019). This not only illustrates that solidarities in practice are unlikely to perfectly fit analytical categorizations (Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021). Also, it gives depth to the relational spectrum of which solidarity can be considered a part. Seeking to illuminate a wide range of this spectrum, this thesis intends to push the critical literature on solidarities beyond the reflection-in-passing of its potentially exclusive outcomes. To do so, it engages with the idea of divisions.

In contrast to solidary relations, following Ollman's relational understanding of alienation, divisions are a central part of capitalism's structurally alienating nature (Ollman, 1977). In that sense, divisions are understood here as both social factors, and the absence, severing or hinderance of connections. Empirically, divisions, be they institutionalized in divided labour, or drawing on divisive ideologies, hinder the emergence of solidarity. Thus, their analysis is crucial

for understanding the political potential of tenants' relations existing and emerging in the context of capitalist urbanization.

The translation of Eribon's (2016) *Returning to Reims* into German fuelled the guilty interpretation that the young academic left (of which Eribon is a part) has failed to create relations of solidarity with workers in economically troubling times, dedicated their energy to culturalist identity politics and must now witness in consequence, that the working-class has frustratedly turned to the political right. Besides harsh critiques on the implicated conception of a historically homogenous, white, male working class (Dowling, van Dyk and Graefe, 2017), his story has inspired what one could call the *seduced working-class* hypothesis in German studies on the far-right. This basically implies, that the frustration of a working-class suffering from the daily life consequences of neoliberalization (alienation), was politically exploited by right wing populists and has been supported from a range of scholars (Nachtwey, 2016; Sablowski and Thien, 2018; Heitmeyer, 2018).

On the other hand, condemning the reduction of electoral behaviour and racist attitudes to economic reasons, others refuse to diagnose a homogenous class behaviour and state that what connects far right voters are "not their worries as such, but the ethnocentric, exclusive way, in which they process them", hence their "authoritarian and nationalist body of thought." (Eversberg, 2018, p.46) The assumption that authoritarianism is a problem of German culture and society as a whole, which knows no class differentiation, is underpinned by the long-term *Leipziger "Mitte"/Autoritarismus Studien* (Decker, Kiess and Brähler, 2016; Decker and Brähler, 2018; 2020). These empirical *"centre"/authoritarianism* studies confirm their theoretical approach: "the distribution of far-right and authoritarian attitudes was brought to the point with the 'centre'-term: the centre of society itself is affected by the antidemocratic dynamic." (Decker and Brähler, 2018, p.9)

Several recent contributions to the debate have aimed at nuanced theorizations of rising far-right attitudes and (voting) behaviour, indicating that the dualism of a primacy of the economic versus a primacy of the cultural might be the wrong question to argue about (Biskamp, 2019; Mullis and Zschocke, 2020; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). Especially geographically informed perspectives have advanced the discussion, demanding approaches that consider the role of specific spatialities for authoritarian attitudes (Bernet et al., 2019; Bescherer, 2019; Üblacker and Lukas, 2019; Miggelbrink, 2020; Belina, 2020; Reichle, 2021a; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021).

As Ansell and McNamara critically remark, despite increasing attention to this interconnection internationally, there has been still "relatively little development, in this recent literature and in political science more generally, of theoretical arguments about exactly *how* local geographies ought to matter" (Ansell and McNamara, 2018, p.2 emphasis added) This is where this study steps in by researching authoritarianism as part of a meso-relational spectrum emergent in a neoliberal, restructuring context. Speaking from a "transformation society" (Mau, 2019), about an 'East German problem' (Quent, 2012; Köpping, 2018; Bangel, 2019), it nevertheless hopes to conceptually inspire debates elsewhere, that engage with a global resurgence of popular approval to far-right parties and ideologies.

Inquiring specifically "urban conditions for the rise of the far right", Mullis has coined the term *regressive collectivity*, and defined it at an outcome of the interplay of austerity urbanism, post-democratic conditions and gentrification (Mullis, 2021). From a relational perspective, his conceptualization is appealing, as it centres divisions as part of a new form of collective subjectivation. Similarly, this study is invested in understanding the spatio-temporal, meso-relational mechanisms of regressive authoritarianism. To explore these, the very open concept of "authoritarian divisions" is employed, in order to avoid deductive complexity reduction (Reichle, 2021a). These are defined as "real or imagined relations or their absence, that are marked or determined by racist and social-chauvinist perspectives of group-related enmity (Heitmeyer, 2005). The term is consciously open, to describe both a lack of relations and active processes of demarcation, both deep seated racism and aggressive interpretations of social decline, without at the outset reducing the complexity of the debate around authoritarianism." (Reichle, 2021a)

Authoritarian divisions manifest in "treading downwards" like "the classical cyclist in the tram tracks pedalling/treading downwards, hunching upwards and always in the established pathways of convention" (Decker, 2010, p.37). This metaphor is borrowed from the seminal studies of Horkheimer, Adorno and Fromm on the authoritarian personality, researching "the unconditional recognition of that which is established and in power and the irrational emphasis on traditional conventions […] on the verge of condemning the one, who does not belong, or who one considers as below oneself, under all pretences." (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2003, pp.367–368)

In the context of residential alienation rooted in neoliberal austerity urbanism, the spatio-temporality of political subjectivation must be explored to understand the emergence of

authoritarian divisions. With Mullis "authoritarian and far-right political solutions can be interpreted as attempts to get back control of one's own life" (Mullis, 2021, pp.134–135). In that sense, the practices, beliefs and articulations sustaining authoritarian divisions can be conceived as strategies of appropriation that rely on what Coser has famously termed scapegoating (Coser, 1956). This means "shifting attention to a third and technically unrelated party [for] compensatory satisfaction" instead of targeting an actual conflict, when that conflict seems impossible to solve (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021, p.21). Scapegoating can be a response to the powerlessness implied in residential alienation and is predestined to take on authoritarian characteristics that rely on passing on frustration towards those perceived inferior in a social hierarchy. Retrospectively considering the political impact of authoritarian, divisive strategies *on* neoliberal urbanization, these, as opposed to transformative solidarities, however, by definition, fail to challenge their structural context of emergence. Consequentially, from a theoretical perspective, authoritarian divisions can be understood as sustaining alienation and exploitation along the lines of socially established hierarchies and hindering the emergence of (inclusive) solidarity.

The specific generative mechanisms of authoritarian divisions and their relation to that of emergent solidarities remain subject to empirical analysis. The framework established in this chapter lays the conceptual foundations for an empirically grounded contribution to the understanding of the interplay of neoliberal urban restructuring, (absent) urban solidarities and surging approval to authoritarian articulations and practices. Investigating specifically the interplay of these different meso-relational moments, their political implications, their context of emergence and their *effects* on the reproduction of urban restructuring is the intended contribution of this thesis to political economic urban scholarship and the sociology of political subjectivation.

Conclusion

With the privileges and burdens of an interdisciplinary scholar, the central conceptual contributions introduced in this two-part chapter emerged from the dialogue between urban political economy, political sociology, and geography. Intervening into disciplinary debates with reflections from other fields and bodies of work, chapter 2 has introduced the relational approach developed through this thesis and its two foundational conceptual pillars.

Through a sophisticated theorization of residential alienation in a dialectic relationship with appropriation, within a structurally alienating context, a lens of inquiry to urban restructuring was proposed that permits an analysis of the interdependence of institutionalized political-economic patterns with granular (de)politicization. Importantly, this involves conceiving residential alienation beyond the household, to understand its interplay with (disrupted) belonging in the neighbourhood, or the 'social factory'. With this theoretical contribution, simultaneously a *methodical* contribution to debates about the abstract and the concrete in urban political economy was made that elaborates meso-relational approaches, which inquire the connecting points between driving mechanisms behind, and experiences of urban restructuring.

This is to be realized, first, through an affect-sensitive study of the political economic mechanisms of urban restructuring, which challenges an affective gap in structure-heavy urban theories. The empirical-analytical implementation of this takes place in chapter 4. Second, pushing the limits of current theorizations of political subjectivation regarding its spatio-temporality, the research of multi-scalar *temporalities of belonging* and their potential disturbance was prepared. Furthermore, *strategies of appropriation* were introduced as tenants' potentially transformative attempts of gaining control over their living situation. Through an analysis of stratified residential alienation, these concepts will be empirically invigorated in chapter 5.

Finally, to inquire how, conversely, the field of tension between alienation and appropriation strategies influences and impacts structural processes of urban restructuring, a second conceptual pillar was introduced, reading theories of social reproduction through a Marxist-feminist and critical realist inspired philosophy of relations. Abstractly conceiving relations as both a nexus between daily life and societal structures, and a gear of societal reproduction and change through social morphogenesis, this conceptual discussion was operationalized into a palpable research agenda. Critical of narrow-focused analyses of political subjectivation that are *either* concerned with surging authoritarianism *or* urban solidarities, an empirical contribution to the debate was prepared through the methodological conceptualization of *meso-relations on a relational spectrum* that will be carried out in chapter 6. The study of these relations, their contexts, and mechanisms of emergence through morphogenetic cycles and their interdependence with neoliberal urban restructuring constitute the central *empirical* contribution of this thesis to both the understanding of societal reproduction of urban

restructuring, and the spatio-temporality of political subjectivation, from a post-shrinking boomtown within the East German transformation society.

Preparing this empirical contribution, the following chapter gives an overview of the methodical approach to the research of tenants' relations and its methodological implementation.

3. Research philosophy, methodology and methods

"'Method' suggests a carefully considered way of approaching the world so that we may understand it better." (Sayer, 1992, p.12)

Introducing the research philosophy; research strategy and design (methodology); and specific research methods adopted in this dissertation, chapter 3 illustrates the relation between the conceptual framework and the empirical contributions.

Briefly situating the project in contemporary disputes about fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions in social sciences, the first subchapter establishes the underlying research philosophy that enables a research project linking the local, concrete and the abstract.

The second subchapter explains the design of the research, in terms of "the research strategy that outlines the way one goes about undertaking a research project" (Howell, 2013, p.1). In line with the established research philosophy, it is shown how the adopted retroductive methodology translated the curiosity about the reproduction of urban restructuring into operationalizable research questions, specific aims, and concrete research practices. A brief review of the different research phases exemplifies how these relate the local to the abstract, pursuing the aspired relational contribution of this thesis in both conceptual and methodical terms.

Unpacking the methods toolkit, the third subchapter touches upon the different empirical methods employed. This includes expert interviews with key actors; narrative interviews with tenants; a group discussion and constant complementary ethnographic research. Reflecting the choice of methods, they are linked with the different conceptual contributions put forward in chapter 2.

A final subchapter reports on the pandemic impact on the research design. Looking back on the research challenges and opportunities throughout the pandemic, the state of exception is framed as a magnifying glass of previous dynamics and questioned in its role as a crisis with transformative potential for the object of study – tenants' relations.

3.1. Methodology I: Critical realist research philosophy

Before turning to the methodological approach and specific methods used in this thesis, this subchapter introduces the adopted *method* concerning "questions of how we conceptualize, theorize and abstract" (Sayer, 1992, p.2).

To address such questions was crucial not only for an informed research design, but also, even more foundationally, for developing research questions and aims. The method situates the project within an increasingly complicated and contested context of social sciences in dispute over the most foundational themes such as objectivity versus relativism, morality versus neutrality, truth versus positionality, and, as introduced in the proposed contribution to urban theory, local versus abstract. To develop a stable standing within these often messy debates, this dissertation draws on critical realist research philosophy (Sayer, 1992; Archer et al., 1998; Joseph, 1998; Sayer, 2000; Jessop, 2005), in dialogue with Bourdieu's reflexive anthropology and Burawoy's extended case method (Burawoy, 1991; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006).

Centrally, critical realists assume a material (social) ontology, whilst acknowledging that knowledge about it is socially constructed and historically contingent (Sayer, 1992; Archer et al., 1998; Sayer, 2000). Methodically, this follows Marx's method of political economy: "The 'concrete in the mind' that research eventually reconstructs remains distinct from the 'real subject [which] retains its autonomous existence outside the head just as before'" (Marx in Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron, 1991, p.147). As a theory of the social world, it parallels Bourdieu's understanding of the "double life" of the social structures –

> *"they exist twice, once in the 'objectivity of first order', that is defined by the distribution of material resources and the potential of acquisition of socially rare goods and values (different kinds of capital), and a second time in the 'objectivity of second order', that consist of the mental and bodily schemes, that function as a symbolic matrix of practical behaviour…"*
> *(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006, p.24)*

In critical realist terms, this differentiation is referred to as "intransitive" (objects studied) and "transitive" (theories and discourses) dimensions of knowledge (Sayer, 2000; Jessop, 2005). The

latter can, of course, also become objects of study in the social sciences. As part of the transitive sphere of knowledge, theories and discourses are considered as mediations of the material (social) world, and as fallible. Nevertheless, critical realists aim to empirically check and advance their theoretical knowledge and find "truth" in the sense of "practical adequacy" regarding "both necessity and possibility or potential in the world" (Sayer, 2000, p.43;11).

Furthermore, critical realism is based on the understanding of the (social) world as constantly changing and hence as characterized by emergence. A central task of critical realist research thus lies in analysing the properties of both emergent and constitutive phenomena. This implies asking for causation, hence "whatever is responsible for producing change" (ibid., p.94). Therein, causality is defined by necessary relations (for example landlord-tenant relation), actualized in a specific context defined by shifting, interdependent contingent relations (Lawson, 2001). Untangling these characterizes the central motivation behind this thesis – understanding the interdependence of neoliberal urban restructuring, relational emergence and political subjectivation.

Because the social world is complex and messy, and objects cannot be isolated from one another in experiment, this search for truth requires abstraction. Abstraction basically means taking "concrete objects" apart in thought (Sayer, 1992, p.87). This is a defining characteristic of the social practice of intellectual knowledge production, distinguishing it from other forms of knowledge production. Accepting this distinction leads to a specific stance towards the role of social science and requires a reflexive research strategy that is laid out in the next subchapter.

Breaking with the ideal of disengaged or supposedly neutral social science, critical realist research aims to produce *critical* knowledge in a twofold sense. First, it presupposes that to *better understand society*, (with the tool of abstraction) social science needs to critically engage with society's self-understanding, such as common sense. Practically, this implies uncovering illusions. This endeavour can result in unveiling false premises on which actions with unintended consequences are based, but it can also uncover reified ideas that support oppression, exploitation or human suffering (ibid.; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006, p.35). Whereas this stance is crucial to all discursive and affective moments of this thesis, its relevance becomes especially clear in the research of authoritarian divisions.

Secondly, critical realists assume that social practices are concept-dependent, and practice and meaning are "*reciprocally confirming*" (Sayer, 1992, p.33 emphasis in original). Thus, discourses

and knowledge can be transformative, when coupled with struggles over material constraints. "In this sense the role of social science and perhaps also the humanities may be critical, therapeutic and even emancipatory." (ibid., p.43)

As introduced in chapter 2, one central phenomenon of inquiry of this dissertation is the *affective mediation* of structural contexts. Based on the conceptualization of rationality and affect, the current work proposes that knowledge, discourse and affect are always intertwined (Bargetz and Sauer, 2010). In this sense, the pursued "intensive" research project, intended to uncover "what kind of universe of meaning" (Sayer, 2000, pp.20–21), not just in the rational, but also in the affective sense, exists in relation to urban restructuring in the particular context of Leipzig and it's inner East. From there, it theorizes the impact of these universes of meaning, aided by and contributing to existing theoretical frames.

As outlined briefly in the previous chapter, the specific case study is a strategic-locational pick, where several structural processes of interest for the research on urban restructuring and political subjectivation intersect and interplay. The recently and rapidly neoliberalizing, politically polarized boomtown inhabited by tenants that partially still remember the transition from state socialist housing provision lends itself to the inquiry of relational consequences of urban restructuring between emerging solidarities and divisions.

From here, the aim is to produce critical knowledge and contribute to both academic and political, both local and international discourses. Due to its exploratory nature and the specificity of the concrete case analysed, the research project might lack representativity in a classical (quantitative) understanding of sociological method. Yet, with the terms sketched out above, it nevertheless aims at producing *abstract* knowledge about "structures into which individuals are locked and their mechanisms", which might be revealing about "general processes and structures" elsewhere (Sayer, 2000, p.249). Despite its local approach, the analysis is therefore inspired by Burawoy's "extended case method, which examines how the [specific] social situation is shaped by external forces" and in turn, how "the macro world […] is shaped and conditioned by the micro world, the everyday world of face-to-face interaction." (Burawoy, 1991, p.6)

Practically combining structural analysis (dialoguing existing theories, previous studies and "expert knowledge", see chapter 3.2.1), and realist concrete study, the previous was drawn on, to develop the latter. Exactly how this was done, is explained in the next subchapter.

3.2 Methodology II: retroductive analysis and a cyclical research design

3.2.1 Research philosophy and practice: critical grounded theory

> *"Retroduction [...] describes a continuous, spiral movement between the*
> *abstract and the concrete, between theoretical and empirical work,*
> *involving both an interpretive and a causal dimension of explanation."*
> *(Belfrage and Hauf, 2017, p.10)*

In line with the research philosophy summarized above, the strategy adopted to study the social reproduction of neoliberal restructuring from above and below, along with its political, societal implications, was critical grounded theory (CGT).

Described as a qualitative, critical realist methodology by Belfrage and Hauf (2017), critical grounded theory differs from traditional inductive grounded theory approaches (a critical summary is given by Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr, 2010, pp.196–198) in several ways. Centrally, its research philosophy opposes the constructivism behind the inductive focus of (many) other grounded theory research programs. In contrast to both "the naïve realism of positivist research and the radical constructionism of much postmodernism", Belfrage and Hauf propose a "retroductive" critical realist research strategy as a "third way" of empirical research (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017, p.4).

Retroduction describes the "continuing process of confrontation between [...] theoretical hypotheses about intransitive objects and evidential statements generated in and through transitive enquiry" and differs from empirically inductive approaches (such as 'traditional' grounded theory) and logical deduction by "asking what the real world must be like for a specific explanandum to be actualised" (Jessop, 2005, p.43). Therein, the real designates "generative structures or causal mechanisms", the actual "events resulting from various real tendencies and countertendencies in specific initial conditions" and the empirical "observations or measurements of actual events and, in some circumstances, underlying structures or mechanisms" (ibid, p.41).

In line with the aim of critical knowledge production, it is both the empirical observation of social problems, and the engagement with existing critical theories abstracting them, that motivate CGT research projects. In an empirical context where political polarization, scattered tenants struggle, authoritarianism, and urban restructuring were calling my attention, the challenge was

combining existing conceptualizations of these phenomena with empirical research, to develop an abstraction of their interdependence.

Crucial for an initial recognition and contextualization of these processes were "sensitizing concepts" (Blumer in Witzel, 1985, p.231) from critical urban theory and other case studies concerned with variegated forms of the planetary problem of neoliberal "urban warfare" (Rolnik, 2019). Refining these in a phase of rigorous literature review was central to develop an initial set of questions, preparing the empirical research. Yet following a CGT approach, initial stages of deductive deskwork must be combined in a spiral "back and forth" movement with inductive fieldwork that accepts the premises of a complex, open ended social reality, and which is thus likely to complicate, contradict or critically contribute to these initial theories (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017, p.5). Much like Burawoy's *extended case method*, CGT does not theorize entirely from the ground up but "through the failure and then *reconstruction of existing theory*", with the intention not "to reject bad theories but to improve good theories" (Burawoy, 1991, pp.6–7). It is then in the stages of fieldwork, that CGT relies on the methodical toolkit of traditional grounded theory (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr, 2010).

For current purposes, whereas an initial literature review had set the direction of the research project, central markers kept changing throughout the different phases of fieldwork. Besides a shift in both temporal and spatial frame, which will be reflected later in this chapter (3.2.2), the research question was refined. The first phase of fieldwork had unveiled the limitations of the (originally intended) narrow framework of displacement, leading not only to a conceptual critique but also to the renewed search for adequate theoretical frameworks. Out of the dialogue of this critique, first empirical findings and the relational theories introduced in chapter 2, the current empirical research question was developed.

To understand how urban restructuring affects political subjectivation, and in turn how that reproduces or challenges urban restructuring, the guiding empirical research question emerged:

How do tenants' relations change in a restructuring city?

To explore this question, the spiral movement from deductive deskwork and inductive fieldwork was implemented practically throughout several stages of research. Especially the qualitative research endeavour of understanding urban restructuring's relational reproduction – partially from a granular perspective of tenants' experiences – required alertness to the field of tension between material, social ontology, and its semiotic and affective interpretation. Developing a

strategy to reflect on the distinctions, shifts and mutual constitutions of the intransitive and transitive aspects of the central concepts (urban restructuring, residential alienation) and the social relations impacting it and impacted by it, the following set of subsidiary aims was generated:

1. Uncovering the political and geographical patterns of urban restructuring in the reurbanized, regrowing, post-socialist city of Leipzig.

2. Understanding how and why tenants experience urban restructuring in daily life and how they perceive their own role in the process.

3. Defining tenants' solidarities and divisions existent and emerging in a politically polarized city.

4. Analysing why and how these solidarities and divisions are emerging.

5. Illuminating how existing relations of solidarity and divisions/exclusions between tenants mediate their experience of and relational reaction to urban restructuring.

These aims, reflecting different degrees and stages of abstraction, are mirrored and elaborated in the research phases presented in the subsequent sections.

3.2.2 The four empirical research phases

> *"Instead of specifying the entire research design and who and what we are going to study in advance we can, to a certain extent, establish this as we go along, as learning about one object or from one contact leads to others with whom they are linked, so that we build up a picture of the structures and causal groups of which they are a part."* (Sayer, 1992, p.244)

In practice, the cyclical empirical research design consisted of four phases of fieldwork between July 2019 and August 2020. Each phase was followed by a reflexive report, connecting empirical findings to first attempts of theoretical abstractions. Finally, the process of circular abstraction was continued in the phase of writing up.

The phases are displayed in graph 4 on the following page, and briefly described in the following, highlighting how each contributed to meeting the subsidiary aims. The specific methods employed are presented in chapter 3.3.

Oct 18-Jun 19
Deskwork/lit review
> review of literatures
> drafting first research question
> planning research design

Feb 20
Interim report II
> Patterns of urban restructuring (UR), city-level & neighbourhood
> experiences of UR

Oct 20
Interim report IV
> stratified residential alienation
> stratified effects
> belonging & identity

Jul - Aug 19
• 7 expert interviews (housing politics + economy in the city)
• neighbourhood ethnography (walks, public life)
• complementary document analysis

PHASE I

PHASE II

Dec 19 - Feb 20
• 17 expert interviews (housing politics/neighbourhood)
• 2 narrative tenant interviews
• neighbourhood ethnography (events, public life, informal talks)

Mar - May 20
• 1 focus group
• COVID-19
• 10 narrative tenant interviews (phone)
• neighbourhood ethnography (mutual help groups, online events, public life)

PHASE III

PHASE IV

Jul - Aug 20
• 14 narrative tenant interviews (outside)
• neighbourhood ethnography (online events, public life, informal talks, 12 activist interviews)

Oct 19
Formal review
> Preliminary analysis
> Adaption of research design & question

Jun 20
Interim report III
> Experiences of temporality of UR
> existing & emerging relations & divisions

Graph 4: The four phases of the cyclical retroductive research design.

Phase I – patterns of urban restructuring

The first exploratory research phase of two months in summer 2019 was dedicated to getting to know the field through the eyes of a researcher[5] and approaching the first research aim of *uncovering the political and geographical patterns of urban restructuring in the reurbanized, regrowing, post-socialist city of Leipzig*. This first aim was targeted at empirically scrutinizing concrete material, political-economic processes. It was intended to serve as a backdrop to both

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[5] As specified in chapter 3.3.4, I had lived in the neighbourhood already several years prior to my research.

the research on tenants' interpretations and experiences of these processes, and the analysis of mechanisms reproducing them. With this goal in mind, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with people identified as key actors, or experts, in the wider sphere of housing politics (and the housing market) throughout the city (referenced as I-I1 – I-I7). The method of expert interviews is specified in chapter 3.3.1. These interviews were complemented by a small document analysis of planning documents and housing market reports, and first attempts at urban ethnography (Wacquant, 2013; Thieme, Lancione and Rosa, 2017). The latter consisted mainly of neighbourhood walks, participant observation in public life and a general attentiveness to everything that happened around me. Fieldnotes from this phase are referenced as FN-I. Reflections on both the practicalities and "micropolitics" (Lancione, 2017) of this "doorstep ethnography" (Hall, 2018b) follow in chapter 3.3.4.

As a result of the first research phase, the research design and question were adapted. Furthermore, the findings confirmed the selection of the broad geographical case-study focus on Leipzig's inner East. All research participants from phase I had confirmed the initial assumption that the area was currently undergoing the most rapid and intense process of restructuring within the entire city. Yet the specific local focus around the central "Eisenbahnstraße" was yet to sharpen in dialogue with interview partners from phase II and tenants' stories.

Phase II – patterns of urban restructuring and tenants' experiences
Based on a first preliminary data analysis, a second phase of expert interviews between December 2019 and February 2020 was scheduled, to fill apparent gaps and focus additionally on the patterns of restructuring *within* the neighbourhood of Leipzig's inner East. Based on the inductive findings of affective mediations, a central aim was refining the understanding of these, their powers, and the context of contingent relations they were embedded in. In preparation of analysing tenants' subjective experiences and interpretations of urban restructuring, refining my own understanding of urban restructuring in Leipzig seemed crucial. Additionally, key actors that had an overview of *how and why tenants might experience urban restructuring in daily life* (aim 2) were interviewed, to prepare the sampling process. This included all kinds of people working with tenants in a professional or activist way (lawyers; organizers; social workers; … see chapter 3.3.1). These interviews furthermore gave first insights into the *types of (tenants') solidarities and divisions are existent and emerging in a politically polarized city* (aim 3).

As the opportunities came up, the first two narrative tenant interviews were also conducted, and as always, the research was embedded in ethnographic observations and conversations. The interviews of phase II are referenced as II-I1 – II-I20, and the fieldnotes as FN-II.

Phase III – tenants' experiences, solidarities, and divisions
Following a second analysis and report, the third phase dedicated to the perspectives of tenants was scheduled for March 2020. Its aim was complementing the emerging overview of potential tenants' experiences of urban restructuring, gained through the interviews with key actors/experts working with tenants in phase II. This meant addressing the second aim of *understanding how and why tenants experience urban restructuring in daily life and how they perceive their own role in the process,* whilst discovering and refining my *definitions of (tenants') solidarities and divisions* (aim 3). Additionally, data was generated to start *hypothesizing about why and how these solidarities and divisions are emerging* (aim 4) and *how existing relations of solidarity and divisions/exclusions between tenants mediate their experience of and relational reactions to urban restructuring* (aim 5).
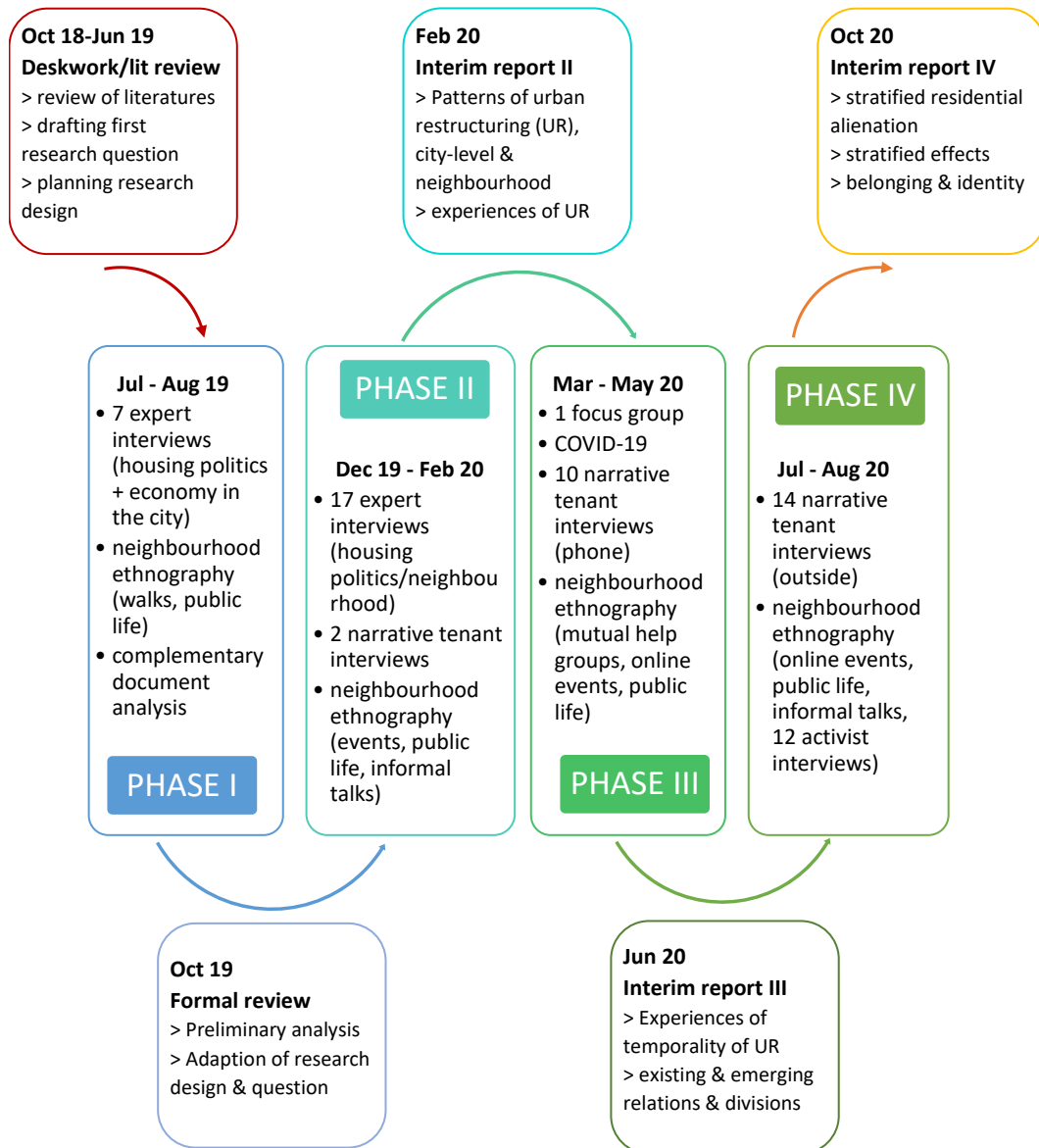
Drawing from the analysis of the empirical material from phase II, different groups of tenants had been defined, that should be included in the sample. Based on the interviews with key actors/experts working with tenants, different (blurry) groups of tenants in the neighbourhood were identified as specifically vulnerable to urban restructuring: elderly long-term tenants, white working-class tenants, immigrated lower middle- and working-class tenants, and financially precarious students. The plan was to conduct three to five focus group discussions with tenants from these groups, to then proceed with narrative interviews (chapter 3.3.2). Yet, as probably most readers have not yet managed to forget, COVID-19 came in the way of this project, right after the first focus group discussion with elderly tenants was conducted (referenced as GD). This nevertheless very productive discussion is described in chapter 3.3.3. An emergency-adaption of the research design followed, that led to ten quite diverse narrative phone interviews, mostly with students and elderly long-term residents (III-I1 – III-I10), and a lockdown-ethnography consisting of online and offline participant observation (FN-III). Both are reflected in chapter 3.4.

Phase IV – tenants' experiences, solidarities and divisions, part two
After an analysis of the fieldnotes and transcripts from this third phase in the form of yet another interim report, phase IV served as a continuation of this data collection in a slightly less lockdown-ridden situation.

As both my location and timing were lucky, COVID-19 numbers were very low in Leipzig during summer 2020, leading to a suspension of most of the local government's pandemic regulations. Having successfully gained a renewed ethics approval, conducting both narrative interviews, informal ethnographic conversations, and activist interviews with up to three people in outside spaces was possible. Fourteen narrative tenant interviews (IV-1 – IV-14), twelve activist interviews (AI-1.1 – AI-2.5) and observations and casual conversations part of the ethnographic research (FN-IV), complemented the prior data on tenants' perspectives. This phase was especially useful to fill a previous gap around the perspectives of immigrant tenants in the neighbourhood. The activist interviews in a central park of the neighbourhood additionally diversified the represented perspectives, as they led to conversations with research participants that could not have been reached through other ways of sampling. They are reflected in chapter 3.3.4.

Having carefully weighed the pitfalls and benefits of a circular, open-ended process versus the limitations and advantages of a temporally limited research schedule, I decided to close the process of fieldwork. From a pragmatic perspective, the research design had covered quite a wide range of perspectives and had reached saturation in the sense, that experiences and interpretations started repeating in tenants' stories.

Following, the research process continued with another interim report, preparing subsequent stages of circular analysis, theoretical framing, and abstraction.

3.2.3 Data analysis, interim reports, and theorizing

The spiral movement of the chosen CGT approach did not only characterize the overall research design, but also every phase of data analysis. After transforming the data into digital text material (downloading planning documents and housing market reports; transcribing interviews; typing out fieldnotes)[6], it was coded in a spiral multi-step process in NVIVO. Following grounded-theory steps of open coding, axial coding and selective coding, initially descriptive codes were rearranged, summarized and transformed into concepts, which became more abstract finally structured, organized and interrelated in the process (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr, 2010, pp.210–213). Finally, with each additional phase, the concepts of the different phases were compared, linked, and restructured with the help of mind maps, timelines,

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[6] Fun fact: Having calculated the total of pages analysed in a moment of procrastination, I came to the curious number of 1234.

and diagrams.[7] Throughout the process, theoretical and methodological memos were of great help to not lose productive, yet random thoughts that did not match the structure of the process.

At the end of each phase of data analysis, writing an interim report was the final step in drawing together a first analysis of the empirical material. The process of writing encouraged active priority setting, structuring thoughts, and recognizing links within the data gathered in the respective phase, and thus constituted a first step of abstraction, spelling out preliminary analyses. As the phases were by and large structured to meet the different research aims, the interim reports addressed the research question from different angles, that somewhat parallel the organization of chapters within this thesis.

Following the last interim report, the final stage of writing up was once more composed of a circular movement between first-hand empirical data, existing preliminary analyses from the interim reports and conceptual framing. Drawn from the data generated to meet the different subsequent aims, the observations of changing tenants' relations were contextualized with the set of interdisciplinary critical theories presented in chapter 2. With this retroductive approach, the observed events and processes were inquired regarding the generative structures and causal mechanisms at their base, to understand the societal reproduction of neoliberal reproduction from above and below in its interplay with political subjectivation.

Before however turning to the results of this inquiry, the specific empirical research methods are presented, followed by a brief reflection of the pandemic's influence on the research project.

3.3 Methods: the toolkit

> *Examined knowledge, be it 'science' or humanities, is not content with*
> *partial practical adequacy, with 'making do', but seeks to maximize its*
> *adequacy in all spheres. To achieve this and to understand the*
> *differentiated character of the relation between subject and object we must*
> *therefore abandon the usual methodologists' quest for the holy grail of a*
> *single model for all purposes—which is not, of course, to encourage people*
> *to use any old methods for any purpose or to lapse into a permissive*
> *eclecticism. (Sayer, 1992, pp.150–151)*

Addressing the research question through a case study approach, I did not stick to one specific means of data collection, but carefully sketched out a research design with complementary

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[7] Several conceptual mind maps can be found in the appendix.

methods that would meet the different aims. As described above, the development of the research design was processual, influenced by the circular CGT approach and the changing circumstances. In the first two phases, expert interviews were the central method, whereas the phases centring on tenants' experiences were dominated by narrative interviews and ethnographic research. Unfortunately, only one group discussion could be carried out, but this was of central relevance for the project. The following subchapters provide short reports about the different methods, explaining and reflecting each procedure. An overview of the interview partners; three sets of interview guidelines and information sheets and consent forms can be found in the appendix.

3.3.1 Expert interviews

Despite the notion of experts being a contested method in times of "reflexive modernization" (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994), they were a useful tool for the early stages of the research project. Expert interviews are often conducted for pragmatic reasons, believed to provide easy access to (specialized) knowledge, meant to represent larger institutions or used to make contact to gatekeepers, hoping for easier access to certain populations (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009).

The term expert and with it the method of the expert interview are under critique in recent, especially activist reflections on research. Trying to break with the historical, authoritative hierarchy between "the expert" and "the man on the street" (Schütz, 1946, p.465), researchers have advocated the perspective of everyone being an "expert of her or his own life" (critical: Meuser and Nagel, 2009, p.18; Bisaillon, 2012).

Despite the noble aim behind this gesture, the mere *nominal* shift of calling everyone an expert, risks to hide the continuously existing, even if complicated and diversified, hierarchies in knowledge (production) and access to it. Considering an expert as "a person in the field who has (co-)shaped it" (Kleres, 2015, p.19) or who has considerable power in defining it (Meuser and Nagel, 2009), does not only imply giving the expert power as a researcher (although this might contribute to stabilizing it), but also acknowledging existing social positions and hierarchies.

In this research project, experts were thus sampled as actors who, due to their specific position in structures relevant to the context, could be expected to have access to knowledge that is simultaneously more specialized and broader, than common-sense knowledge (ibid.). Drawing from the terms introduced in chapter 3.1, this does not imply, that expert knowledge is

necessarily critical or has undergone a theoretical process of abstraction. Quite contrary, the expert's specific positions must be reflexively considered when analysing the interview material – thus a real estate agent presumably has a different (and less critical) perspective than an activist, on *why* the city is restructuring, and especially what the benefits and downsides of this process are. But she might have a similar or even greater ability of defining *how* and *where* it is restructuring and *who* is involved in the process. And, due to their intensive engagement with the matter and their active involvement (in shaping the field), both the activist's and the real estate agent's analyses of these processes are presumably closer to *real* structures, than that of the tenant, who receives an eviction notice (experiencing an *actual* event) without knowing about investment programs, changing tax subsidies or the geo-strategic location of the city/neighbourhood (although she could become an expert on the matter, for example, in the process of struggle, gathering information, etc.).

Depending on the experts' positions in certain relational contexts, semi-structured interview guidelines were adapted to make the best out of their specific knowledge. A self-descriptive introductory question (e.g. "How would you describe your role in the city and its housing politics?") and an open style of interviewing permitted the adaption of guidelines during the interview, adjusting to unexpected thematic focuses. This was particularly relevant to develop sensitivity for the emergent emotional, affective components of the interviews, enabling the emergence of the concept *affective mediations*. In the first research phase, the interviews were conducted with seven actors with different strategic positions in the city's landscape of housing politics: a housing researcher involved in advising a range of political actors; an activist; a city planner working in the city administration; a central real estate agent publishing several real estate magazines; a city councillor; a person from a neighbourhood centre involved in participatory planning and an employee of the city working as a networker between different social and cultural initiatives at the neighbourhood level. They all had access to different spheres of knowledge on the city's restructuring process and the politics behind it and were very helpful in addressing my first subsidiary aim of *uncovering the political and geographical patterns of urban restructuring.*

In the second phase of research 18 key actors working with tenants were interviewed, to gain an overview of different possible aspects of residential alienation (both on the structural and on the psychosocial, experiential side). These were people working or volunteering in different neighbourhood associations; social counsellors of a housing association; a lawyer; a tenant

organizer; an employee of a city program against homelessness; a representative of a tenant association; an employee of a city program targeted at combating unemployment in the neighbourhood; an artist who had engaged in interactive projects in the neighbourhood; a former activist from a donation based neighbourhood café; two (Christian) benevolent landlords and several different social workers. The latter were all confronted to some extent with the topic of housing through their work in supporting refugees in the search for housing; supporting victims of domestic violence; low-income tenants and seniors. Despite most of these actors being tenants themselves, some even in the neighbourhood of study, their activist/professional engagement with either housing politics, tenants' experiences, or both, permitted a slightly more abstract perspective on of *how and why tenants might experience urban restructuring in daily life*.

In summary, the expert interviews contributed both to the development of a structural analysis regarding patterns of urban restructuring and a more concrete preliminary analysis of its frequent impacts on tenants' daily lives.

3.3.2 Narrative tenant interviews

26 narrative interviews with tenants account for the central body of data generated in this research project. In contrast to expert interviews, narrative interviews are based entirely on openness and non-standardizability, aiming at the development of new hypothesis and theories (Rosenthal, 2005). They facilitate an understanding of experiences and life realities "from within" (Flick in Küsters, 2009, p.19).

The narrative tenant interviews were meant to complement a structural analysis of ongoing restructuring, in order to understand tenants' interpretations of structures and processes, and therewith also the motivations between their related (re)actions. Equally, they were intended to enhance the understanding of urban restructuring and residential alienation as phenomena per se, as "the perspectives and the interpretations of actors are an indispensable part of the *entire* reality of the social world [despite its objective structure]" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006, p.26, emphasis added).

One aspect of each tenant interview was discovering to what extent the social problem presupposed by the research question (neoliberal urban restructuring), was related to individual problem constructions. To not pre-empt tenants' interpretations, this was done very openly through asking them about changes in the neighbourhood and their rent relations. This guided

me to their identification of problematic experiences, breaks, ruptures or "negative chains of events", which from a "sociological-theoretical [perspective] can be assumed […] to hold relevance for people's lives" and therewith co-constitute perspective, actions and identities (Schütze, 1983, p.284). Thus, the tenant interviews were a crucial part of answering the doubly problem-centred question on urban restructuring, illuminating not just the structural, but also the psychosocial side of residential alienation *from below*.

The simultaneity of theoretical problem pre-definition and flexibility throughout the interview situation, mirrors the challenges of the overall CGT research design. In the narrative, yet problem-centred interview, this challenge is met by sensitively giving and recognizing thematic impulses. This demands high levels of concentration, and "ad-hoc strategies" from the interviewer (Witzel, 1985, p.234). Already in the interview situation, one must try to understand the sensemaking of the interviewee, to react appropriately to the story. Consequentially, interesting aspects can be followed up on, and interviewees nudged to specify these. Simultaneously the general narrative logic is supported.

Overall, the narrative interview is strongly characterized by the premises of openness, process-orientation and in that sense, communicative data collection and authentic appearance and interest before and within the interview process (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr, 2010). A very open and narrative introductory question sets the course for the interview, giving the interviewee the space to set their priorities, offering them something like an "empty page" (Witzel, 1985, p.245; Schütze, 1983). This stimulus also provides the interviewee with time and space to adapt to the situation and its narrative character. With this purpose, I asked the people to tell me very generally about their relation to the neighbourhood, what it meant to them and how they would describe it.

A good narrative interview depends centrally on the generation of trust before and throughout an interview situation in which both conversation partners are comfortable (Witzel, 1985). In my case, this suggested visiting tenants where they felt at ease, going to their spaces, which often meant their homes. Yet, confronted with COVID-19, this was possible only in three early interviews. During the fourth research phase in summer 2020, meetings in public spaces in the neighbourhood, chosen by the interviewees, also guaranteed a certain level of familiarity with the environment. Additionally, this encouraged tenants to reference specific changes in the visible and palpable surroundings. Yet especially in the phone interviews, generating a comfortable interview situation was challenging. At the same time, the apparent anonymity

during the phone interviews gave space for racist articulations that seemed easier to voice than in face to face situations (Nettelbladt and Reichle, 2021).

In summary, the narrative interviews were intended to uncover tenants' universes of meaning around urban restructuring and to understand their experiences, interpretations, perceptions of and (relational) reactions to the process. Besides a very empathic interview strategy, this required a rigorous analysis reflective of the problem of the "double hermeneutic", hence the fact that already the data to be interpreted is an interpretation of the world, with both layers of interpretation being dependent on the context of their production (Giddens, 1984; Burawoy, 1991; Sayer, 2000). This problem was met by contextualizing tenants' stories with the (structural) analysis of urban restructuring and an analysis of interlacing structures and power relations that indicated their social position(s) within the city/neighbourhood.

3.3.3 Group discussion

Focus groups are very valuable for exploratory research projects on "topics about which little is known or where the issues are unclear […] to gain diversity of experiences and perspectives on the study topic" (Hennink, 2014, p.13). Therefore, the original research design incorporated three to five different focus groups at the beginning of the first research phase on tenant perspectives. Intended were discussions with elderly, long-term tenants attending a senior's social centre; potentially younger (mostly) white working-class (unemployed) tenants engaged in a neighbourhood project recently displaced; first and second generation immigrant tenants part of a network around an international women's centre; financially precarious students that had moved to the neighbourhood in the past five to ten years; and potentially a diverse group of residents from a recently privatized bloc, experiencing brazen strategies of rent-raising. These were to provide an insight into diverse perspectives and facilitate further sampling for narrative interviews. Yet, as the pandemic hit Germany right after the first focus group discussion with elderly tenants, the other ones were never conducted. Nevertheless, an extra subchapter is dedicated to this one group discussion, as it was of central relevance for the research project and as I consider the method of great interest for CGT research.

As an introduction to discovering tenants' perspectives, the first focus group was planned with elderly long-term residents, to shed light on the "history of the process" (CIMAS, 2015, p.58) of urban restructuring and refine the understanding of its temporality. For this a participatory timeline was planned, a method on which, besides a short subchapter in a Spanish textbook on

participatory methodology, I have found few references. Yet with the support of my supervisor Mercè Cortina-Oriol, who had conducted similar focus groups before (Ahedo et al., 2008), the collective creation of a timeline was planned. This was set up in cooperation with a seniors' neighbourhood centre, where an expert interview with two social workers had been conducted previously. Three participants over 65 joined for a *Kaffeeklatsch* (chat/gossip over coffee), the social workers prepared coffee and cake and I had a big empty paper, a bunch of post its and markers at hand.

Relying on inductive openness, the start date for the timeline was left up for debate. The timeline was created in an open discussion, guided by questions on changes in the neighbourhood and changes of neighbourliness. These were specified spontaneously by me, based on my existing knowledge on structural changes, and a social worker, based on her knowledge of the present tenants. We wrote keywords on post its and I structured them around the emerging timeline in dialogue with the participants.

The most significant outcome of this focus group discussion was the readjustment of the temporal framework regarding urban restructuring and my sensitivity to the very differential perception of time among tenants. The participants' memories did not, as anticipated, create a crowded timeline. Instead, for a long time, the only temporal marker on the timeline remained *die Wende* (German reunification in 1989). Yet this was associated with many stories and memories, ruptures and the complete restructuring of the city, their lives, and the neighbourhood. Secondly and relatedly, everything that had happened in the neighbourhood since, was only remembered in a blur and assigned less significance. It was hard to date any transformations or developments. The most significant changes perceived were related to the arrival of different groups of immigrants.

The focus group method enables capturing both spontaneous ideas and "community norms, views, and behavior [sic]" (Hennink, 2014, p.24). In this case, it revealed a finding that repeated in multiple subsequent tenant interviews with white, German, senior, long-term tenants: a very specific perception of temporality and a strong focus on immigration, when thinking of urban restructuring. Thus, the focus group discussion was central in bringing forward the concept of *temporality of belonging*. Beyond that, it encouraged an adaption of the temporal framework of the entire structural analysis. In line with the principles of CGT, this led to much more intensive 'deskwork' engagement with East German history, specifically the organization of housing and

dwelling. This provided crucial in the further understanding of perspectives of long-term tenants socialized in the GDR, and, centrally, the difference between their perspectives and that of tenants who had moved to the city after reunification.

Image 2 (left): The timeline, "Wende" on the upper half marking reunification.

Image 3 (above): Two participants of the focus group, which was organized around coffee and cake in a seniors' social centre, the picture was taken and used with their permission.

3.3.4 "Doorstep ethnography"

"Doorstep ethnographies add an unusual ingredient to [ethnographic] traditions, because the researcher does not leave the field in ways typical of early anthropological work. Nor are they always entirely unfamiliar with the culture of the group with whom they research" (Hall, 2018b, p.5).

As should have become clear throughout this chapter, the ethnographic research conducted in this project was no ethnography in the classical sense of dedicating all attention and energy to building few long-term relations of trust in a specific field (Atkinson, 2015). Rather it was a constant complementation of the other methodologies, shaped *also* by my own daily life in the neighbourhood. This did consist of longer-term engagement with *some* people, but equally of witnessing daily life in different parts of the neighbourhood. I was thus a constant participant observer, without deeply immersing into a very specific group. Instead, the ethnographic research took me to very diverse places, people, conversations, sensations, and subtle observations that went beyond the engagement in formal interviews or scheduled focus groups.

These manifold ethnographic practices and encounters were of help to uncover the "messy realities on the ground, especially where people, places and practices do not fit neatly into prescribed categories" (Thieme, Lancione and Rosa, 2017, p.130).

Participant observation is probably what distinguishes ethnography most from other qualitative research methods, by making sense of people's actions and not just words (Burawoy, 1991; Herbert, 2000). The practice of participant observation undertaken for this dissertation consisted of formally planned, and informal, random, and partly quite personal aspects. Targeted participant observation of events in the neighbourhood led me to a row of happenings, both on- and offline. These included plenaries of initiatives; cultural and political events in neighbourhood centres; coordination meetings of institutionalized social initiatives in the wider neighbourhood; street festivals and a formal workshop for first generation immigrants on housing and renting formalities. This was complemented by both consciously planned and completely unplanned neighbourhood walks.[8] The boundaries of the research got blurrier and my double role as a researcher and tenant of the neighbourhood productive, as I myself received a rent raise. In this double role, I visited three different tenant counselling spaces, from completely grassroots, self-organized to a student-union supported lawyer-activist cooperation, to formalized legal advice from the city's tenants' association. Similarly, the search for a new flat turned into a form of participant observation, informative with regards to ownership changes, landlords' attitudes, rent developments, housing conditions and even (otherwise probably completely invisible) cases of displacement. All this was accompanied and fleshed out by informal conversations; via chat or e-mail, but mostly in person, in the streets; in cafés; kitchens; parks; supermarkets; demonstrations and the hallways of my house, with others looking for housing; with friends; acquaintances; neighbours and random people on the terraces of bars and cafés.

In the last research phase, additionally 12 activist interviews were conducted in a central park. These represent a hybrid between ethnographic research and tenant interviews. The unrecorded conversations of five minutes to half an hour, with five scheduled questions, were helpful to widen the sample of the research. They are here referred to as *activist interviews,* as opposed to "activating interviews", which take a similar form but are mostly targeted at

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[8] Walking through the neighbourhood with a visiting friend I once suddenly stopped, as I had noticed a new fence in front of a construction site. As he realized that I had stopped listening to him, he teased me impatiently "Leon, are you working again?"

participatory planning (Richers and Habermann, 2005). Differing from this method, the *activist interviews* were not meant to direct tenants to a specific form of engagement. Nevertheless, they were a form of intervention. One could argue, that this holds true for all social science research (Lancione, 2017), yet in this case, intervention was a conscious intention. In the sense of a *tenants' inquiry* (a bit like the workers' inquiry, Woodcock, 2014), these interviews were used to ask tenants specifically about problems with their housing situations and main problems in the neighbourhood. This meant encouraging, whilst trying to understand, tenants' reflections of residential alienation, giving them space for potential anger and engaging in dialogue that affirmed their (potential) problematization of housing (and neighbourhood) commodification.

The double-role of the case study as my home and subject of inquiry had considerable implications for my role as a researcher navigating the classical ethnographic inside-outside question. Therefore, Hall's (2018b) concept of the "doorstep ethnography" is helpful, because I am, and have been a tenant of Leipzig's inner East myself (on and off) for ten years at the point of writing. This meant that, first, time was required to differentiate the familiar and unfamiliar in the neighbourhood, develop an alert perspective of a researching observer and refocus my attention. This was facilitated, together with the cyclical research design, through periods of physical distance – going to the UK for the first phase of deskwork and in between the first and second, and second and third field work phase.[9]

In analytical terms, the navigation between understanding and explanation meant having to "occupy the perspective of the actors under study and the perspective of a theoretically informed and logically rigorous social scientist; one empathetically gathers data, yet engages those data in an ongoing, reflexive conversation with comparatively 'cold-hearted' theory" (Herbert, 2000, p.552). Casting "exaggerated light on the tensions and dilemmas that are definitive of all social science" (Burawoy, 1991, pp.3–4) this dilemma was once more addressed through the retroductive method, interpreting fieldnotes in dialogue with existing theories. This was inspired by Burawoy's *extended case method*, which "bursts the conventional limits of participant observation, which stereotypically is restricted to micro and ahistorical sociology." (Burawoy, 1991, p.6) With this practice, everyday life, in a Lefebvrian sense, is understood as a

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[9] After initial difficulties of finding the boundaries of the fieldwork, I developed mechanisms to clarify what was research and when it ended. Although sometimes, it never did end, learning to write fieldnotes was a central part of this, and I am grateful for my (ethnographer) friend Mario Hernandez Trejo's advice on this. Considering my proud collection of hats, my friend Ali suggested, I should have a fieldwork hat.

site of both (local) reproduction and challenging of marco-social processes like capitalist urbanization (Lefebvre, 1977; Lefebvre, 1991).

3.4 Pandemic creativity and experiential knowledge – crisis, or magnifying glass

As previously mentioned, COVID-19 struck Leipzig at the beginning of this project's third research phase, which was targeted at gathering tenants' perspectives. The implications this had both for fieldwork and theory generation are briefly reflected in this subchapter.

Methodologically, the pandemic meant having to give up on a neatly structured approach and shifting to a trial-and-error strategy. The only firm continuity was writing field notes about daily life in the neighbourhood on a regular basis. The other emergent forms of research were phone interviews; a video-call group interview; participant observation in emerging mutual-aid chat groups in the neighbourhood; continuous (physically distanced) casual conversations in the staircase with other residents in the building and a related side research project on COVID solidarities with a colleague (Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2020b; Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021). Despite the limited and partly chaotic nature of the research, its reflections were revealing also in terms of the pandemics impact as a magnifying glass on previous relational dynamics (Ludwig and Voss, 2020; Nettelbladt and Reichle, 2021).

The drastic implications of COVID-19 on relations of (production and) reproduction (Mezzadra, 2020; Harvey, 2020) also manifested locally in Leipzig's inner East, and its relations of "community as urban practice" (Blokland, 2017). An interviewee described a very palpable impact of socio-spatial pandemic transformations in the streets of the neighbourhood: "There's a sort of COVID-ballet happening in the streets, everyone is dancing around one another trying to keep maximum distance" (III-I3). This spatial reshuffling had a range of consequences, as social relations are contingent on space (Massey, 1994). The closure of social spaces, the mandatory self-isolation and physical distancing had massive effects not just on tenants' relations, but also on my research practice. Not only was there an official ban of face-to-face research. Furthermore, two central access points to tenants were lost: specific social spaces (focus groups) and, more generally, public space.

This meant, that through the research practice (not just through the analysis), I was confronted with "pandemic relational polarization", defined as the "exacerbation of existing divisions, barriers, segregation, isolation, but also bonds in the Leipzig neighbourhood during the

pandemic." (Nettelbladt and Reichle, 2021; Reichle, 2020b) The "bubbles", as several interviewees described them, thus the proximity within, yet also limitations of and divisions between different social networks within the neighbourhood were intensified through the pandemic context.

Trying to overcome these divisions, I posted 100 letters with a brief description of the research project, an invitation for an interview, and a phone number set up specifically for this. Posting these letters manually to houses sampled through previous observation and online research on housing platforms, turned into an ethnographic observation of housing conditions of receivers (names on doorbells, conditions of mailboxes and staircases…). The resulting ethnographic walks left me wary of whether anyone would answer my call for an interview.

Yet three residents called, all of them elderly women. One was a nearly blind woman with a strong Russian accent, who could only make out the phone number printed in bold. After a short clumsy chat, it turned out that she was very isolated, anxious and in need of support during the lockdown. Aware of the multiple help offers springing up everywhere in the neighbourhood, having difficulties to establish contacts with the residents they wanted to reach, I offered to organize help with her shopping. Although tempted to accept my offer at first, she changed her mind and decided she did not want to burden me. Soon, we stopped our conversation after she had thanked me continuously. Among others, this ethnographic experience confronted me with the difficulties of ethical behaviour in ethnographic research that is "profoundly […] emergent" (Atkinson, 2015, p.179).

Three other phone interviews (one through snowballing), despite being short and sometimes awkward, not only revealed very interesting perspectives, but also created links with tenants that would otherwise have been completely out of reach. They were neither organized nor regular visitors to any association through which contact could have been established, we had no common spaces or relational links. Generally, the three women turned out to live a very withdrawn life. Hence, the lockdown-creativity led to few but valuable interview partners, bridging gaps of relational polarization.

Together, these ethnographic experiences and phone interviews provided valuable insights for the research project, not only through their content, but specifically through the practical experience of their generation. The pandemic limitations, as well as the trial-and-error adoption of strategies, provided me with "experiential knowledge" (Reichert et al., 2000) of relational

dynamics in the neighbourhood. Not only did they give rise to the hypothesis of pandemic relational polarization, but through that, they shed light on existing fragmentations (and solidarities) in the neighbourhood. *Experiencing* the specific importance of material spaces of encounter in the neighbourhood reinforced fed into the emergent theorization of socio-spatial morphogenesis, elaborated in chapter 6.

Despite initial hypotheses on the pandemic's role as a crisis generative not only of polarization but also of opportunity structures for newly emergent solidarity, these remained limited. The side-research with solidarity initiatives, along with a detour to activist scholarship that quickly lost its scholarship component, proved that the pandemic's main impact regarding solidarity structures in the neighbourhood was on the reflexivity of activists (Reichle, 2021b). The role of the pandemic rather as an amplifier of previous dynamics than a turning point in Leipzig's urban politics is reflected in its presence throughout this thesis. Contrary to previous plans, there is no extra pandemic chapter, but its impact is referenced when needed.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 has given an insight into the generation of the thesis' empirical contributions on different levels of abstraction. Introducing critical realist research philosophy as a methodological precondition for the intended contribution to relational urban theory generation, it was then specified how this shaped the research strategy. Through brief reports on the different stages of empirical fieldwork and data analysis, the research design based on critical grounded theory was elaborated and linked to a set of subsidiary aims addressed with this thesis. A review of the set of methods employed illustrated how these were concretely researched. Reflections of the different methods furthermore showed how, by means of their respective implications (addressing specific types of knowledge, narrative openness, participatory timeline creation), these brought forward some of the conceptual contributions made in this dissertation. Finally, a review of the pandemic's implication for the research design illustrated how experiencing the spatial reshuffling of neighbourhood space led to several analytical conclusions, strengthening previous hypotheses instead of generating major transformations, neither regarding urban relations nor for the structure of the present work.

4. Between depression and hope: post-shrinkage dialectics – patterns of urban restructuring in Leipzig since German reunification

"Well in the administration, there is still this shrinking-depression", one of my first interviewees, an employee of Leipzig's city administration declared frustratedly, trying to explain the lack of administrative intervention into the tightening housing market, driven by increasing housing financialization in the regrowing city (I-I5).

After a complicated process of restitutions (post-socialist re-privatization); initially unsuccessful attempts of stimulating the rental housing market post reunification with national and international funding and incentives in the 1990s (Rink et al., 2012); the subsequent state driven destruction of housing until 2014 (Bernt, 2009); the continuous quasi legally enforced sell-off of housing cooperations' stock to private landlords (lwb, 2016; Bernt and Holm, 2020); and finally successful growth politics in the last decade, the city of Leipzig is by now a popular target for real estate investors (Pisa Immobilien, 2018). Even without going through the investigative detective work required to trace its exact dimensions, one can diagnose housing financialization in Leipzig. Indicators are the surging number of real estate sales, recently particularly in the inner East, and the prominence of speculation-oriented actors on the market (I-I2; I-I3; I-I5; II-I17; Stadt Leipzig, 2018a; Gutachterausschuss der Stadt Leipzig, 2020). These include Leipzig's born and bred listed developers like Instone Real Estate and GRK holding who have made their fortune largely out of state sponsored (luxury) refurbishment. The latter sold off a majority of its shares to a European real estate fund manager registered on the canary islands in 2015 (Cowen Blog, 2015). Besides them large corporate landlords like Vonovia are trying to establish themselves in Leipzig (Ratsversammlung Stadt Leipzig, 2019); along with called intransparent "letterbox companies" with untraceable ownership structures (I-I1; I-I2; II-I6; II-17). Whereas the latter reappear in stories of semi- and illegal displacement strategies (I-I1; II-I6; III-I9), companies like Vonovia seem to pursue more subtle approaches of slow rent raises and coupling obscure billing of incidentials with neglect (FN-I-IV; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). What is more, the increase in ground prices and rents resulting from the ongoing (partly speculative) resales constantly aggravates the pressure on the relatively poor population of renters, that make up 87% of the city's population (Stadt Leipzig, 2018a; Stadt Leipzig, 2019a; Gutachterausschuss der Stadt Leipzig, 2020; Stadt Leipzig, 2020).

Despite Germany's comparably good tenant protection laws, at least on an international scale, and the existence of a row of *potential* regulatory instruments to intervene in tightening rental markets; despite the city's tradition as a strong-hold of socially oriented left-wing politics (both inner and extraparliamentary), neoliberal urban restructuring has continued its path in Leipzig in a largely unregulatedly manner. Addressing the first aim of this study, to understand patterns of urban restructuring in Leipzig, chapter 4 scrutinizes the political development of this trajectory through an affect-sensitive lens.

Taking the reader to the once shrinking and now booming East German city of Leipzig, chapter 4 sets the stage for the current project by introducing the city's political economic context and tracing its history of housing provision since German reunification in 1989, hence the rupture with state socialism and the imposition of West German neoliberalism. Theorizing from this particular post-socialist context, the first step of a relational analysis into neoliberal urban restructuring is conducted. This analysis follows the call of (feminist) political scientists and sociologists to expose the inevitable entanglement of affect and reason in Leipzig's housing politics (Flam, 2002; Bargetz and Sauer, 2010; Ahmed, 2014; Leser and Spissinger, 2020). With this intention, shifting political-economic contexts, a range of housing political actors and their aims, (inter)actions and (lack of) struggles are studied. Central to the analysis, the concepts post-shrinkage depression (PSD) and post-shrinkag-hope (PSH) are developed. A recurrent theme in the first phase of this dissertation's fieldwork, that consisted mainly of expert interviews and ethnographic research, PSD emerged as an inductive node descriptive of a wide-spread depressedly lethargic political mood in the city. Its dialectical counterpart, PSH was generated out of a broader range of hopeful accounts, ranging from euphoric speculations to hopefully pessimistic activism. Together these concepts constitute the empirical foundation for the affect-sensitive theorization of urban political economic processes proposed in this thesis.

Based on studies of affect among urban dwellers, PSD and PSH are not conceived as individual psychological conditions (Till, 2012; Mankekar, 2015; Gupta and Medappa, 2020). Instead, they denote collective yet multifaceted, nuanced and dialectical, path-dependent and path-shaping structure action concepts that "can be seen not only as the result of historical/ contemporary [restructuring] but as essential to sustaining both" (Pain, 2019, p.386). Thereby, as theorized in the conceptual framework in chapter 2, affect describes the "transpersonal capacity […] to be affected (through an affection) and to affect" (Anderson, 2006, p.735). Addressing a gap in political analyses more generally and urban political economy specifically (Thrift, 2004; Ben

Anderson, 2016), this chapter intervenes into abstract-concrete disputes by proposing to abstract from the granular, affect-laden realities of path-dependent structural contexts and theorize the role of *affective mediations* in neoliberal urban restructuring. Therein the developed conceptualization of *multiple hermeneutics of affect* underpins the analysis of the (often irrational seeming) reproduction of a context of neoliberalization and urban austerity, marked by the increasing dominance of market-based governance with its undeniably anti-social effects (Peck, 2012; Schipper and Schönig, 2016; Coleman, 2016; Cooper and Paton, 2019; Davies et al., 2020; Hall, 2020; Davies, 2021). Based on the framework of residential alienation introduced in chapter 2, chapter 4 thus explores its structural reproduction through (lethargically) depressive and (speculatively) hopeful moments of Leipzig's development. Thereby, the focus on hope and depression by no means implies that these are the only affects relevant in and for neoliberal urban restructuring. Rather, emergent from the analysis of the specific case study, these are two prominent clusters of a multiplicity of different shades of affect that appear central in Leipzig's specific geo-historical conjuncture. Focussing on these is a matter of priorization and simplification that facilitates the theoretical abstraction called for in chapter 2, which seeks to transcend a mere *reading* of affect and instead inquire what it *does* in urban governance.

Through a close analysis of PSD and PSH and their dialectical interplay across the board of actors in Leipzig's housing political trajectory, affects are thus conceptualized as multifaceted, dialectical mediations of political economic processes, contexts, and (often East vs West German) power relations. Assuming that urban restructuring is reproduced through the complex interplay of selective contexts with political actors' contesting interactions (Tilly, 1997; Jessop, 2010), the chapter centrally argues that political actors' transformative capacities are co-constituted by and co-constitutive of these affective mediations. Thereby, hopeful moments mutually reinforce power, as opposed to depressive moments, which hinder actions.

This central argument can be divided into three retroductively generated hypotheses based on, yet transcending the cultural political economic assumption that different actors react on/exploit the same geo-economic process in different ways, mediated by their understandings of it, which once again depend tendentially on their (economic and political) standing (Sum and Jessop, 2013).

First, it is argued that these understandings and political interpretations are not merely rational, but also *affective*. This is why the psychosocial metaphors *post-shrinkage-depression* (PSD), and *post-shrinkage-hope* (PSH) are introduced, to define two central long-term affective crystallizations. Their nuanced, multifaceted, and stratified appearance brings forth the concept of *multiple hermeneutics of hope and depression*. Secondly, it is demonstrated that despite being repeatedly reinforced through material, political-economic circumstances, affective mediations also develop distinct *temporalities*, accounting for their path-shaping impact. Whereas depressive moments are marked by a concern with past and present and can thus outdate their material context of emergence, hopeful tendencies are directed to present or future and anticipate conditions to come. Finally, it is proposed that PSD and PSH are two path-dependent and path-shaping moments of the dialectical, open ended constitution of Leipzig's urban development. Their parallel, interdependent, or conflictive interplay shapes *affective corridors*. These stand for the sedimentation and stabilization of a certain range of thinkable, perceivable, and affectively understandable political actions.

The chapter is structured as follows: After an introduction into the changing (housing) political economic contexts of Leipzig since German reunification, several major housing political actors are presented, along with the multiple hermeneutics of hope and depression amongst them. Following, the specific temporalities of PSD and PSH are illustrated to account for their path-shaping influence. Building on this, their path-dependent, dialectical interplay is fleshed out in another brief summary of the city's trajectory and the analysis of a conflictive moment in recent policy making. The debated policies are particularly relevant to the city's inner East, a rapidly upgrading district where the interplay of PSD and PSH are currently culminating. This long shrinking and in the last decade massively regrowing neighbourhood, locus of the subsequent study of tenants' relations, is established throughout the chapter as a recent prism of the city's development. It is also where the subsequent analysis of tenants' relations is grounded.

4.1 Changing contexts, introduction to a post-shrinking city

To trace the role of affective mediations in Leipzig, the geo-economic context of the study merits some attention. In the heart of the former GDR, Leipzig, as all East Germany witnessed a massive exodus of population and capital after German reunification. This lead to a process for which de-industrialization is a euphemism. The "erosion of any economic base" (Hannemann in Rink, 2010) went hand in hand with privatizations and the targeted shut-down of industries (Lang, 2013) and has economic consequences until today. Thus, East Germany can statistically still be

considered a "dependent economy" (Intelmann, 2020). Politically, reunification was coupled with an exchange of political, economic, intellectual and media elites (Bertram, Kollmorgen and Wollmann, 2001; Ahbe, 2013) and a turnaround in political and economic rationalities. With that, East Germany was considered a "laboratory of the 21st century" (Hiesmann in Buck and Hönke, 2013, p.41), not least considering the neoliberalization of society, as this newspaper quote from the early 2000s highlights:

> *"What is happening in East Germany now, has model character for the entire country. The West can observe in the East, what still awaits them: longer working hours, less payment, more flexibility […] the restructuring that the East just went through, still lies in the future for the West" (Goos and Kneip in Hoff and Kausch, 2013, p.99)*

Culturally, the collapse of East Germany was accompanied by a stigmatization of its inhabitants that is prevalent until today (Buck and Hönke, 2013; Foroutan et al., 2019), and the devaluation of large parts of an entire lifestyle, along with its products, habits and accomplishments (Pates and Schochow, 2013; Ahbe, 2013).

The predominant urban transformation resulting from this upheaval was urban shrinkage (Rink, 2010; Nelle et al., 2017; Rink, 2020). Definable as the loss of population and capital, this process centrally contradicts the neoliberal paradigm of competitive urban growth (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Logan and Molotch, 2010). It's post-Wende path made Leipzig a prominent example of shrinkage in urban scholarship (Bernt, 2009; Rink et al., 2012; Rink et al., 2012; Grossman et al., 2013), yet its recent development have earned it the assessment of successful "reurbanization" (Haase et al., 2012; Haase and Rink, 2015). Much as the adjective post-socialism "makes a theoretical case for […] cities' past, present, and partially, their future" (Hirt, 2016), the term of post-shrinkage is employed in this chapter, centring the historical process of shrinkage in Leipzig's development. The present contribution made is thus one from a post-socialist, post-shrinking context.

Although shrinkage in Leipzig had already begun previously through a persistent decrease from slightly over 700 000 inhabitants in the 30s to slightly over 500 000 at the end of the GDR, it was after this "turnaround" (*die Wende*) in 1989-90, that it became fast and "dramatic", with the population decreasing by another near 100 000 in less than a decade (Rink et al., 2012, p.167; Haase and Rink, 2015). Within the city, shrinkage was particularly exacerbated in the inner East, a very decayed, working-class neighbourhood where many small-scale industries and a popular

local shopping infrastructure died down in the process. Deindustrialization, prevalent all over East Germany in the 1990s was a central driver to the massive outmigration. Mostly ascribed to the new *Länder's* (federal states) encounter "with international or even global competition 'overnight'" (Haase and Rink, 2015, p.226), it was very centrally also owed to the intentional privatization and liquidation of East German industries between 1990-94 through the *Treuhandanstalt*, the responsible national agency (Lang, 2013; Böick, 2018).

Image 4: June 2020 – "Treuhand vs. Tax support?" Graffiti in the inner East.

Image 5: May 2019 – The inner East between decay and refurbishments: a closing rent gap.

Concerning the 'turnaround' in housing policy, Bernt and Holm (2020) have recently emphasized the relevance of newly-reunited Germany's debt and restitution policy as a common origin of the seemingly inevitable neoliberal reorientation. Restitutions, already defined in the reunification treaty, paved the way for massive privatizations in the 90s. The over 2 million applications undergoing a complex and tedious bureaucratic procedure, led to long delays in the reconstructions of the old housing stock (Rink, 2010). In the long run they produced rent gaps in

the decayed historical districts like Leipzig's inner East (Clark, 1987; Smith, 1987). With a vast majority of former owners hardly interested in their (often decayed) houses, 92-95% of the restituted stock was sold to profit-seeking landlords. As those were predominantly domiciled in West Germany, this was part of the beginning of a long-lasting, and still prevalent, capital-outflow from East to West Germany (Intelmann, 2020; Bernt and Holm, 2020). Simultaneously, long-term "credits", formerly given to GDR housing cooperatives by the GDR state bank, which in socialist terms were intended rather as "state mechanisms of redistribution and control and money circulation", were translated into debts with German private banks in the wake of reunification (Bernt and Holm, 2020, p.105). For East German housing cooperatives this meant starting their pathway into the new market economy with a total debt of 37,4 billion DM. This often overlooked detail is a crucial historical explanation for ongoing inner-German power-imbalances playing out in Leipzig's housing policy.

The East German developments must be contextualized with West German neoliberalization and rescaling of housing politics taking place simultaneously. In 1989, the federal 'housing non-profit status' (*Gemeinnützigkeit* – for the common good) providing tax subsidies to housing cooperatives dedicated to the provision of social housing, was abolished and replaced with individualized housing aid (Uffer, 2011; Unger, 2016; Soederberg, 2018). The latter have since been key for the exploitative strategies of financial investors, also in East Germany (Bernt, Colini and Förste, 2017), whilst communal housing cooperatives were forced to both compete with and follow the logic of profit-oriented companies. Simultaneously, the overall German developments towards "job cuts in the municipal sector (Keller, 2014), and a somewhat permanent fiscal crisis on local state level" (Schipper and Schönig, 2016, p.8) was exacerbated in the new Eastern *Länder* in the face of massive indebtment. Personnel expenses in the communal sector were reduced by 16% in the second half of the 1990s, and the federal states passed on a large share of their financial burdens to the local level through cuts in allocations (Vesper, 2004). Their parallel introduction to (West) European capital markets amplified this "conflict between 'individual' and collective rationality" both at the federal and municipal level, exemplified by the first subjections to credit assessments through rating agencies in the 90s (Schnackmann-Fallis and Snelting, 1999, p.105). These interplays of "roll back austerity" (Petzold, 2018, p.77) and inevitable "locational competitiveness" (Brenner, 2004b, p.3) are textbook examples of austerity rescaling. This refers to the offloading social, environmental and economic responsibilities downwards, "while at the same time enforcing unflinching fiscal restraint" and "further incapacitat[ing] the state and the public sphere through the outsourcing,

marketization and privatization of governmental services and social supports" (Peck, 2012, p.650).

In Leipzig, this austere situation initiated a dependence on national and later supranational subventions (Haase et al., 2019). National support was generously made available during the 90s through tax reductions for refurbishment and public subsidies especially in thirteen "formally chosen renovation areas" where subventions were intended to "raise the ground rent of properties through an improvement of the general urban situation" (Stadt Leipzig website). One of the oldest of these renewal areas is in Leipzig's inner East, which underwent a first wave of renovations in the 90s.

The combination of inexpensive living due to shrinkage, a good living standard funded by subsidies and a large university were predominant factors that attracted a row of young newcomers to the city. Thanks to this populational influx, shrinkage finally came to a halt around the turn of the millennium. Following, the first decade of the 2000s was defined by "reindustrialization and economic upswing [and] reurbanization"(Haase and Rink, 2015, p.243). Marked by the gradual population growth of predominantly young professionals connected inter alia to the settlement of several major industries currently serving as the city's largest employers (Porsche; BMW; Amazon, …), the new decade nevertheless began with a crisis of the housing economy, resulting from oversupply, vacancy, and fragmentation (ibid.; Haase et al., 2010). To meet this widespread East-German phenomenon, the national policy plan *Stadtumbau Ost* ('city redevelopment East') was introduced in 2002, subsidizing targeted "backwards building" – a euphemism for the demolition of residential housing (Bernt, 2009). In Leipzig, this federal program was carried out until 2014, despite the by then rapid growth of the city.

With the city's population increasing intensively from about 2010 on, Leipzig gained a secure rank among the fastest growing cities in Germany for several years. The very cheap inner East, having been one of the most stubbornly vacancy-coined inner-city neighbourhoods, witnessed a significant population increase beginning in 2010, which skyrocketed from 2015 on. In the overall city, and recently particularly in the inner East, population growth went hand in hand with mounting interest and success of investors, buying multi-family houses and demanding continuously raising rents. Simultaneously, the city sold off entire areas to influential developers like the Leipzig's CG Group, which has been in the crossfire of critique from anti-gentrification initiatives for accelerating upgrading and respective displacement through expensive new built gentrification in the past years, and whose founder previously narrowly got away with charges

of tax evasion (Nößler, 2019). Thus, the beautiful historical trading city, with a privileged geo-strategic location and a large university became renowned as a cosmopolitan exception in East Germany (this is exemplified wonderfully by posters of the local branch of a satirical party "die Partei" in a recent election campaign, reading "Leipzig raus aus Sachsen – Leipzig leave Saxony"). It turned into a "large city […] hardly distinguishable from other large capitalist cities" (Rokitte, 2020, p.348). Causing massive pressure for the city's overall poor population, whose raise in employment with reindustrialization has not translated into a significant decline in poverty levels (Stadt Leipzig, 2019a), the rising cost of housing was at the heart of conflicts around (de)regulation, pushed by a few tenants and housing activists. Yet their position of strength remained limited in a strategically selective context of overall neoliberal urbanism and *austerity-reinforcing regulation obstacles generated by chaotic multi-scalar mismatches*.

The complex federal structure of housing policies and legal regulations, together with the diverging development of Saxony and the "boomtown" of Leipzig meant that many federal juridical and economic preconditions for municipal housing market regulations were simply missing or unfitting. Saxony-wide social housing subsidies, for example, were targeted at floor plans prevalent in the Saxon capital Dresden, but hardly matching those in Leipzig (I-I5). The legal regulation of rental housing conversion (*Zweckentfremdungsverbot* – 'housing misuse ban'), irrelevant for the largest part of shrinking Saxony at the time but needed in Leipzig, was lacking a federal model. However, at the point of writing (2021), a policy to regulate (luxury)refurbishments in areas considered under threat of displacement was just implemented. Its realization followed a long and tedious struggle, and a coalition of young administration employees, activists and city councillors is pushing forward the demand of legal requirements for other regulatory instruments even at the federal state level.

Thus, Leipzig's upgrading, tightening housing market and financialization are not self-explanatory in nature, but instead characterize a process of urban restructuring that is reproduced and challenged by different actors, acting in a context of shifting, strategically selective contexts (Jessop, 2010; Jessop, 2016). To summarize them again, these are defined by the takeover of West German neoliberalism along with material and cultural devaluation of East German socialist history; massive deindustrialization and concomitant urban shrinkage; the national regulation of restitutions, large-scale demolition and so called "old debts"; the combination of urban austerity with national and supranational funding and tax reductions for (mostly private investors') renovations; subsequent regrowth and path-dependent multi-scalar

mismatches inhibiting housing market regulations. To inquire how these structural factors have been reproduced in an interplay of different actors into increasing housing commodification and financialization, along with rising rents and an increasingly tense housing market, the following section introduces some of the central actors in Leipzig's housing politics, along with the multiple hermeneutics of hope and depression co-constitutive of their actions and capacities.

4.2 Multiple hermeneutics of depression and hope

The multiple hermeneutics of depression and hope denote the multifaceted and multi-layered affective mediations of shifting contexts by different actors in Leipzig. They refer to collective yet stratified and nuanced political, path-shaping and path-dependent *sentiments* in the city, among its activists, its housing cooperatives, politicians, administrators, planners, landlords and residents. Affects are not only understood as ambivalent "results of historically specific interpretation- and definition processes, always symbolically coded and socially constructed" (Bargetz and Sauer, 2010, p.143). They are also considered to shape interpretations, and hence future (political) actions in their indivisible interplay with rational thought (Flam, 1990; Pain, 2019; Leser and Spissinger, 2020). Much like Anderson's atmospheres of neoliberalism, they "emanate from and fold back into dynamic constellations of people, things and ideas" (Ben Anderson, 2016, p.744). Centrally, in relation to the abovementioned contexts of urban restructuring, they are not only context, but also highly power dependant. By introducing different manifestations of PSD and PSH "enveloping" (Anderson, 2014, p.21) several key actors of Leipzig's housing political economy, this section gives a first impression of their multifaceted appearance and their relation to (political) actions, projects and power.

The first central PSD-ridden actor in Leipzig's story of urban restructuring, whose path-shaping role is heavily contingent on the abovementioned "old debts", restitutions, and large-scale demolition, is Leipzig's communal and largest housing association LWB (*Leipziger Wohnungsbaugenossenschaft*), descendant of the local state socialist VEB GWL (*Volkseigener Betrieb Gebäudewirtschaft Leipzig*). This largest of Leipzig's housing associations, and the one by now under the mandate of providing "social housing", is often complained about as an actor that insufficiently cares or provides for affordable housing in the city (I-I1; II-I2; II-I3). To a critical housing scholar, the recent publication of its history reads like a social housing horror novel (lwb, 2016). Interpreting the association's current harsh market rationality as shaped by a historical form of PSD, the latter can be described as a desperate spirit of resignation, followed by an anxiously paranoid attitude towards regulatory instruments, elaborated in the next subchapter.

Deeply indebted and faced with restitution claims for 6000 out of 10500 properties, the cooperative began its work in the new market economy by selling 60 houses and was forced to stop its first building and renovation attempts in the early 90s (lwb, 2016, p.78). This marks the beginning of a long story of austerity and privatization and the early root of PSD. "[T]he company and its employees were insecure"; "overwhelmed" by the debt and "looking into the abyss" (ibid., pp.16-20). "The starting conditions, that could not have been worse, have left their mark on the company and its employees" (ibid., p.17). Soon after (in 2002), the national "Stadtumbau Ost" policy contributed to the depressing trajectory. In an informal conversation I learned that several of the vacant lots still shaping the landscape of Leipzig's inner East today, are a result of mass demolition. In these times of ongoing indebtment, the LWB apparently "got 60 DM per square meter for demolishing and that was way more lucrative then selling at the time." In 2006 the city council decided that the association additionally needed to sell part of its stock to reduce the debts, and in 2008 initial sales began. A landlord remembers the consequences: "1000 houses appeared on the market in one go and you recognized them by their drop-shaped sign next to the door, you knew that you'd just need to call to buy the house." (II-I17) As a result, their housing stock in historical and now gentrifying districts like the inner East is fragmented, leaving them neither very sensitive to gentrification, nor affirmative of respective regulatory measures.

The investigation of the city administration's role shows that regulatory measures to contain housing commodification were not exactly a common phenomenon in Leipzig's post-socialist history, even with incipient regrowth in the 2010s and a tightening housing market. Quite contrarily, constituting a central root of PSD among administration employees, the local austerity has generated ongoing *regulation reluctancy*. In a context of public cuts, scarce resources and lacking experience with neoliberal housing policy, the changing requirements hardly led to joyful exclamations of "oh new tasks, great that's what we want!" (I-I5), as an informant ironically reported from her daily work life. Although originating in the 90s, this persistent urban austerity has path-shaping consequences until today, preventing a speedy recovery from PSD, and regulatory self-confidence. It leads to what an activist quoting a Munich city council called the "structural disinterest of the administration." (I-I1) Having been "economized to death", its capacities are still limited. In the language of alienation, one could speak of a city administration alienated from its purpose by structural constraints surpassing its control.

However, right after reunification, the new *leading ranks* of this PSD-ridden administration had a very hopeful, even euphoric spirit. What seems paradoxical at first, can be understood in the context of inner-German power relations and respective experiences of both pre-*Wende* neoliberal versus state socialist economics and post-*Wende* East German stigma coupled with an exchange of East with West German elites throughout society (Bertram and Kollmorgen, 2001; Pates and Schochow, 2013). As East German scholars observed at the time, as opposed to the main body of employees, "the [new] senior management of the city administration is predominantly staffed with West Germans. […] They are well rehearsed in positive thinking." (Doehler and Rink, 1996, p.270) The management's speculatively hopeful visions imagined Leipzig's future as "the model of a service metropolis of European importance" (Rink et al., 2012), a new global banking hub and marked by immediate growth. They acquired massive national (or rather, West German funded) subsidies and encouraged several mega projects that partly contributed to the city's reindustrialization but failed to achieve the spectacular growth aspirations.

In contrast to such hopeful speculations, one of the leading figures in the administration appeared to hold a diverging PSH perspective. Also coming from the West (of Germany), the new head of the planning office considered himself "a communist" and was "one of many that came to the East hoping to practice a *different* kind of politics" (II-I3), as an architect remembers. For him, like most probably for the other new management figures, the seemingly vacant East represented the possibility for a new start, yet their envisioned directions were divergent. The different shades of hope shaping the imaginaries and efforts of these leading figures indicate the many nuances PSH can take, along with its different political implications. Illustrative of the multiple hermeneutics of affective mediations, these different forms of PSH were again at the base of other emergent layers of affect-shaped interpretations by a range of very different actors.

Paralleling the housing associations' depressing entrance into the market economy, the euphoric hype generated by most of the administration's new leaders marked the context of arrival for investors and for-profit landlords, hopefully speculating on restitutions, and exploiting the government tax reductions for refurbishment on a major scale. A general "goldminer's mood" that a West German landlord remembers when he "came to Leipzig in 93, this unprecedented euphoria" (II-I17) was prevalent across the board. With a few exceptions, most early buyers were "speculating that Leipzig would supersede Munich [one of Germany's most

expensive cities] within five to eight years" (II-I17). Paralleling the depressing story of the local housing cooperative LWB, the new speculators' PSH was partly contingent on forced privatizations, but more centrally a parallel outcome of the same contextual factors of housing commodification, coupled with a specifically West-German perspective marked by speculative confidence. Nevertheless, their optimistic attitude was eventually thwarted by material restraints, as hopeful predictions of population growth remained unfulfilled, national subsidies encouraged new built constructions, and contributed to the oversupply of housing. Prices reached a low point and residential mobility increased, making Leipzig "the 'capital of housing vacancy' around 2000" (Haase and Rink, 2015, p. 235). Many investors "literally crashed" (II-I17), leading to a row of foreclosures, especially in the historical housing stock.

Leipzig's context suggests that both the administration directors' and investors' almost lunatically hopeful speculations were not merely based on rational market behaviour, but also on an affective mediation of their specific position of power, economic and cultural capacity as West Germans in a seemingly empty, devalued East German context.

The failure of investors and the subsequent withdrawal of many reinforced the depressed spirit within the administration. Remembering the financial desperation around the millennium, coupled with the actual restraints to making profit with real estate investments in the fragmented city, an interviewee came up with the figure of the "shy investor-deer" to characterize the long-lasting approach of city council and administration towards urban development:

> *"You had a long time, where they kissed the feet of anyone who came and said: I'll do something here, I'll put some money in this shack. Even the biggest pricks, because <u>finally</u> someone does something and <u>oh the investor</u>. And that is an image, which is of course linked to the history of this city. First, they all came, and then they were all gone again because everything collapsed and then really everyone had to fight. So [...] the investor really was this shy deer that had to be lured and pampered." (I-I1)*

The experience of a necessary political orientation towards "luring and pampering" investors shaped not just the overall housing politics, but also the personal biographies of many still working in the administration and communal politics. Their professional orientation towards the highest goal of attracting real estate capital was reinforced by lacking experiences in regulatory politics. This is one aspect of what several interviewees refer to as an ongoing "political culture"

(II-I3) that does not allow for a self-confident regulation of the housing market as it is observed in the case of Berlin.

First euphoric and then daring speculator landlords were not the only ones drawn to the "lawless space" (II-I17) generated by both a shrinking context and an overwhelmed city government. This context also attracted a generation of dreamers not interested in profit. Mainly arriving in the city's south, which was least decayed and marked by a lively squatting movement in the 90s (Holm and Kuhn, 2016), young people from all over Germany came to the fragmented inner cities:

> *I too came to Leipzig in '94 and what I considered the best thing in the*
> *world, were these free spaces, in which we could ... be who we were,*
> *experiment, open up spaces and close them again, open up galleries and*
> *close them again, sit on the streets without the pressure to consume [...]*
> *especially coming from [south West Germany], this was really paradise on*
> *earth for a young person. (I-I15)*

The young tenants' memories of these times serve as a poignant example of newcomers' excited PSH. As Intelmann wonderfully described in his essay "Leipzig-city of longing", this was conditional on their specific socio-structural positionality, as mainly "young, well educated ('beautiful') people" from "some random West German city" made use of the so conceived experimental "playground" (Intelmann, 2016, pp.182–188). Besides living an alternative life, these enthusiastic newcomers acted in different degrees of institutionalization, hoping for a use-value oriented restructuring process divergent from the general capitalist development. Their self-confident present and future orientation was coupled with easy access to national and supranational funds for the more institutionalized groups. This resulted in newly founded local associations that stepped into an institutional post-Wende void, especially on a neighbourhood level. To them, the 1990s was a time "for experimentation, they were given money, here do something, and then [...] started building. And that turned into good structures" (II-I4), consisting of cultural initiatives and civil society associations.

Yet these associations did not halt segregation within the city (Großmann et al., 2015). Together with the vacancy-induced tenants' market, the fragmentation and parallel co-existence of experiences and their affective mediations rendered any sort of collective tenants' movement, advocacy, or bottom-up involvement in housing politics implausible. Paralleling these often, but not exclusively, West German newcomers' collaborative PSH, many remaining long-term tenants experienced job losses, outmigration of friends, neighbours and colleagues, and an

overnight change of political system. These experiences were individualizing and, according to a resident and social worker marked by "shame, so, that many rather closed the door and tried to deal with their problems on their own" (II-I9). Clearly vocalizing a depressing loss of perceived political agency, a former neighbourhood organizer remembered how even previously organized tenants, who had been hoping for a new start after reunification, felt that "in the middle of the 90s the dream was dead [...] the people had pretty much all moved away resignedly." (II-I1)

These divergent sentiments furthered the lack of a palpable common interest among Leipzig's tenants. Their lethargic fragmentation is mirrored in the local tenants' association forming in the 1990s, which some activists still today jokingly refer to as a "*Nebenkostenabrechnungsverein*" (I-I1; II-I3). This translates into "association for the calculation of ancillary costs" and stands for the association's uncombative nature. Although this apolitical stance arose from times of shrinkage, its institutionalization in the tenants' association nevertheless had lasting consequences – explicitly *not* setting the course for a common combative trajectory, but rather inhibiting the emergence of a collective imaginary or even struggle of tenants.

To summarize, the multiple hermeneutics of hope and depression can be described as parallel and overlapping layers of affective mediations (of affective mediations) of structural political-economic and cultural contexts of East Germany's specific transformation to neoliberal austerity urbanism and Leipzig's trajectory of regrowth, land and housing privatization and financialization. Based on the nodes emergent from the fieldwork in this context, this chapter focusses on two central affective crystallizations, PSD and PSH.

PSD denotes affective mediations influencing both actions and their absence within the administration, the city council, housing cooperatives, and a general mood in the city and among its tenants. Paraphrased in interviews with a range of actors, this affective context has been described as a "kind of atmosphere" (I-I6); or a "political culture" (II-I3); being "languid and cumbersome" (I-I1); marked by "anxiety" (I-I5); or "reluctance" (II-I2). Manifestations of PSD are similar across the board of actors, in that they are all marked by a lack of engagement regardless of political conviction – which is crucially owed to PSD's paralyzing effect. In contrast, PSH as an action-driving mediation, comes in a row of different shades.

In the accounts provided in this chapter, PSH can be naïve or critically pessimistic, oriented towards neoliberal growth or "a different kind of [urban/housing] politics" (II-I3), it is sometimes

described as "experimental" (II-I4), or more impassioned as an "awakening" (II-I6), a sense of "adventure" or even "euphoria" (II-I17). Such hopeful interpretations stem from the stories of activists, employees of different socio-cultural initiatives, residents, small business owners, but also landlords and a few figures in the management of the city council and administration. Emergent from the same context of (post-)shrinkage, the different variations of PSH tendentially represent the respective backgrounds, histories, political convictions and positionalities of actors in Leipzig's housing politics. Compared to their PSD counterparts, these actors often have privileged economic and cultural preconditions, rooted partially in their West versus East German background, motivating their intuitively or reflexively hopeful attitude or enhancing their power to engage in transformative action, whilst others also strategically exploit the situation with a clear political agenda. To what ends they mobilize their pessimistically stubborn or enthusiastically speculative hopes, depends on the rationalities these are unseparably entangled with (Bargetz and Sauer, 2010).

In the following subchapter, the different temporalities of affective mediations are studied, to inquire their path-shaping influence.

4.3 Temporalities of depression and hope: regulatory obstacles and stubborn struggle

Having introduced the multiple hermeneutics of affective mediations, what is their relevance for the political reproduction or transformation of neoliberal urban restructuring? What is it, that they *do*? Depicting the distinct temporalities of various forms of PSD and PSH throughout different parts of the city administration and government, among the local housing association LWB and the small nascent tenant initiative Stadt für Alle (SFA – city for all), the following section demonstrates how, in transcending their immediate material context of emergence, these affective mediations can develop path-shaping impact.

The multiple nuances of PSD introduced in the previous subchapter have in common their slow temporality, which is a crucial dimension for PSD's (lack of) political impact. Although concerned rather with residents' affective experience than the political economic mechanisms at their heart, both Till's consideration of "past injustices that continue to haunt contemporary cities" (Till, 2012, p.3) and Shield's writing on memory rituals as a way of "both bury[ing] and invoke[ing] the past" (Shields, 2012, p.16) are instructive examples for scrutinizing the temporal dimensions of urban affects. Temporally *outliving* the material context of shrinkage, the manifestations of PSD can be understood to continuously feed into a strategically selective

context that on one hand motivates and legitimizes, on the other fails to restrain and regulate excessive, neoliberal growth politics in the post-shrinking city today. In this vein, the economic bleeding dry of the city, the drastic political changes and the vast population decline must all be considered as components triggering a collective, yet stratified urban condition, a long-lingering state of depression, which subsequently re-actualizes itself through its backward orientation. As shown in the following, the precise *affective* dimension of PSD as a cultural mediation of political-economic context, be it shrinkage, austerity urbanism or federally mandated backwards building, accounts for a temporal lag between the persistent collective sentiment and its material context of emergence. The paralyzing or anxiety provoking effects of PSD therewith contribute to its path-shaping impact.

These slow depressing mediations interplay with a row of affective dialectical counterparts, or different affective "windows" (Loftus, 2012, p.xix) through which the city's development is experienced, interpreted and influenced. These are temporally defined by not merely being "concerned with […] what is, but also with what might be" (Back, 2021, p.4). Yet instead of denoting a carefully hopeful interpretative framework imposed by the critical scholar, as Back or Dinerstein advocate for in political theory (Dinerstein, 2012; Back, 2021; Dinerstein, 2021), PSH denotes multiple hermeneutics of a sentiment running counter to PSD. These, other than Back's and Dinerstein's concepts, are not necessarily shaped by critical or emancipatory aspirations. Instead they are coupled with a diverse range of rationalities and motives. Their commonality is their orientation towards present, transformation and future. Regardless of their political implications, their temporal orientation therewith generates good preconditions for a strategic exploitation of PSD induced lethargy in some instances, whilst being thwarted by the latter in others.

The previously mentioned regulation reluctancy in the city administration, is re-actualized by ongoing austerity, as "you either have the necessary staff, or you just don't" (I-I7). In some regards however, it outdates its context of emergence. Whereas multi-scalar-mismatches inhibiting housing market regulations remain, and challenging them would require scarce recourses, the stubborn memory of a history of (perceived) powerlessness has also generated inner-administrative conflicts, where regulation prone (new) employees have tried to push for a reappropriation of administrative agency. Confronted with hesitations, as "we've never done this before" (I-I5), proposals for regulatory intervention from within or outside the institution, whether consciously or not, have been blocked by both spirit and means of *reluctant*

temporality. Attempts at introducing support structures for local tenants' counselling or a brochure for tenants within the planning office for example, "were stuck in the administrative corridors" (I-I5) for long periods of time. In another matter, "the city [administration] is way too reserved" (II-I2) according to a left wing city councillor, regarding the urgent problem of unregulated new-built gentrification in districts where upgrading is well-advanced, like the inner South (Holm, Marcinczak and Ogrodowczyk, 2015). [10] The ongoing instinctively depressive lethargy within parts of the administration shows that despite the obvious shift in context from shrinkage and oversupply towards growth and financialization, the historical PSD ridden experiences have continuous path-shaping consequences.

Additionally, the general administrative PSD encouraged the urban land office's feverish attempts to sell off big plots of land for the highest gain. This has been and still is cause for struggles with cultural initiatives using empty land for makeshift meeting places. The phenomenon is exemplified by the statements of the enraged director of a former GDR cinema on Leipzig's Eisenbahnstraße, who had witnessed many changes in property ownership over the years: "They always wanted to sell it, the way the urban land office has always done it since the Wende, everything to the highest bidder. To some random dude that comes along and claims that he has a few millions left, regardless of what he does, they flogged off everything in the East, didn't they." (II-I10) Whereas this could be considered part of the general administrative depression, it is relevant to state that different administrative offices were also governed by different political fractions. With the urban land office being historically under conservative, centre-right rule, its ongoing strategy of selling land can be interpreted as a strategic exploitation of the PSD context, quite in the neoliberal 'TINA' spirit. Beyond resonating with Davies and colleagues' (2020, p.59) concept of "austerian realism", denoting a "practical imperative to deliver austerity diligently [...] for lack of any perceived alternative, while attempting to preserve services, manage human crises, and build a competitive city", Leipzig's urban land office's 'TINA' spirit was also a political choice driving the privatization of land and the financialization of housing.

The pro-growth orientation, co-constituted by what one could call *instinctively depressive reluctancy* on the one hand and *strategic exploitation* of the latter on the other, aligned well with the visions of the new social democrat mayor who came into office in 2006. A key figure in

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[10] With a glance to the many empty lots caused by "backwards building" and decay, and following recent observations in the neighbourhood, this is also soon going to be a problem in the inner East.

the local real estate business warmly describes him as "a brilliant marketing man […] whom I would not like to swap with any other mayor I know" (I-I3). Stories of meetings with real estate agents and or few administrative managers behind closed doors, side-lining potential pathways for democratic intervention and overhauling the cumbersome inner-administrative lethargy illustrated above, suggest a reinforcement of his political power through a hopeful, briskly paced, and self-confident attitude, contrasting the administrative PSD, if not a strategic exploitation of the latter (I-I2; I-I3; I-I5). Part of both German and European city networks, his strategically hopeful approach for Leipzig is coined by a clear, future oriented growth-agenda, in line with cosmopolitan, competitive urbanism. His friendly relations with investors are not last exemplified in his campaign sponsorship by the real estate firm Hildebrandt & Jürgens, ill-reputed among tenants for their ruthless profit-orientation, and a local developer owned by an investor from Berlin (LVZ, 2014).

In the meantime, the housing cooperatives, who could be meaningful actors in the maintenance and creation of affordable housing, remained branded both by uneven development in the city and their decades long experience of depressing debt. Following the previously mentioned early experience of powerlessness, the communal LWB's PSD was reinforced until the 2010s by a continuous corset of debt and dictated property sales. A prominent example is the sale of 2600 flats and commercial properties to the West German real estate giant Brack Capital Properties NV in 2011 (lwb, 2016, p.85), accompanied by the piece-by-piece ongoing sale of single Wilhelminian multi-family houses in the historical districts, like Leipzig's inner East. As a result, the cooperative, for the first time in its history, ended the financial year of 2011 with black figures. This economic turning point could indicate an end of their depressed, reluctant attitude. Yet the decades long PSD experiences had aftermaths, not least represented by the fragmentation of the association's housing stock, with most of the communal and thus affordable properties nowadays lying outside of the city-centre, where gentrification is no primary concern (yet). When confronted with proposals to collectively develop strategies to inhibit gentrification or develop stronger regulations (for example for new developments and their share of social housing) in the last decade, the housing associations were "not at all willing to cooperate- I think they are still afraid that one day they have to tear down their houses again." (I-I5) Following this administration employee's analysis, their backward-looking paranoia as a repercussion of PSD, along with their strong market-orientation, are indicative of the long-term effects of urban shrinkage and its affective mediation. The resulting distinct (irrationally)

recalcitrant temporality is a central hinderance to interventions into the predominantly marketized restructuring of the city, as illustrated in the next subchapter.

In 2011, one incident of envisaged displacement through an LWB sale in the city centre gave birth to a hopefully pessimistic municipal activist initiative that gained remarkable agency in shaping the city's housing politics throughout the years: Stadt für Alle (SfA in the following – city for all). In the wake of the administrative overload and the lack of a vocal tenants' representation, they became a central actor challenging the city's path towards profit-oriented housing politics. In cooperation with sympathizing academics, a few legalized squats and emerging *Hausprojekte* (house projects)[11], they too strategically exploited the PSD-induced institutional void: "we developed a certain political impact […] that was quite relevant and also depended on our position in a city with relatively few civil society actors at all. This means you're already visible with a small group if you do something." (II-I3)

The initiative of about 15 activists is, by self-definition, a rather "nerdy group" (I-I1). Having gained expert knowledge on housing politics throughout the years, they continuously tried to influence the city's development on a policy level through self-engaging in political debates and pressuring decision-makers. In contrast to Rokitte's critique of their approach as "consensual" and "un-conflictual" (Rokitte, 2020, p.354), I suggest considering it as strategic and "hopefully pessimistic", following Coleman (2016). In her understanding, hopeful pessimism is at once a "mood that involves being worn out by debt and austerity" coupled nevertheless with a simultaneous "resistance to this wearing out" (ibid., p.100). An activist cited by Rokitte (2020, p.354) states that "we know the scope of actions and our expectations aren't too utopian". Despite this pessimistic outlook, their ongoing struggle for housing justice points to an interesting form of PSH where the "future may be regarded […] more in hope than expectation" (Coleman, 2016, p.99), yet in a particular form of hope, different from the blue-eyed visions of early investors. Their hope instead is "*without* optimism", but oriented to present and future in terms of potential emergence, combining "*critical reflection* and *attentiveness*" (Back, 2021, p.7 emphasis in original). Somewhat rebutting Rokitte's critiques, the following section on the conflictual interplay of affective corridors demonstrates that their continuously hopefully

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[11] "House projects" refer to different kinds of communally owned houses. The most frequent variant in Leipzig belongs to a syndicate that through its complex legal structure prevents the reselling of houses, thus making it always partially the property of a larger collective and the current inhabitants, who pay low rents to pay off credits, generate money for repairs and keep the syndicate running.

pessimistic interventions revealed transformative powers, as their struggles have sedimented in current policies.

Attempts to push the city council and administration towards stronger regulation of housing politics and the support of alternative projects were also facilitated by people like the abovementioned imported "communist" city planner from the West. Together with a few employees of the administration "that are socialized in the West and know this kind of cooperation with local initiatives" (II-I3), he introduced a participatory governance approach to urban planning, encouraging their interventions. Along with the parallel administrative lethargy and lack of experience and the tenants' association "hardly noticeable as a political actor" (II-I16), this marked a strategically selective context between PSD and PSH that the activists from SfA tried to exploit. Whereas sometimes this was thwarted by administrative lethargy, their interventions were partly successful, making the group an advocate for tenants' interests recognized throughout the city.

While the backward looking, anxious, or paranoid depressive lethargy in parts of the administration and among housing associations reinforced their political powerlessness, competing forward-oriented hopeful spirits, be they confidently growth oriented as in the case of the mayor, real estate agents or centre-right administrative heads, or pessimistically stubborn as in SFA's struggle against antisocial upgrading, have backed the agency of actors exploiting the depressive void. The specific temporalities of these multiple affective hermeneutics contribute to the political agency and transformative capacities of different actors, within specific contexts. Exemplifying PSD and PHS's path-dependant interplay, which has become apparent throughout the chapter, with a recent conflictive culmination, the following section demonstrates how it sedimented in the city's housing political trajectory.

4.4 Affective corridors in the contested reproduction of neoliberal urban restructuring: upgrading versus lethargic intervention

Having established that PSD and PSH are nuanced, multifaceted and layered collective yet stratified affective mediations with distinct temporalities accounting for their path-shaping impact on political-economic contexts, this last section once more revisits how their dialectical interplay has played out in Leipzig's housing political trajectory. For this, political processes are conceptualized as complex and conflictive affective "corridors", designating sedimentation processes of previous struggles, that result in the reproduction, transformation and stabilization

of a certain range of not just "viable and reasonable" but also *affectively feasible* "action, frameworks and thinking, as well as policy-making" (Brand, 2013, p.433; Cox and Nilsen, 2014; García Linera, 2019). It is argued that, in the case of Leipzig, this sedimentation occurs through a *dialectic interplay* of PSD and PSH. This means that their relation is not simply defined by causality or interdependence, but instead formed through the simultaneity of distinctive yet sometimes overlapping moments, that can interdepend, but also co-evolve, reinforce, contradict each other or transform ecologically like in a Lefebvrian "heterotopy" (Lefebvre, 2003, p.39; McFarlane and Silver, 2017).

In that sense, the city's housing political development since reunification was co-constituted through parallel, competing, and conflicting corridors. A recent, non-binding housing political policy and the subsequent (belated) introduction of a 'social preservation' statue exemplify culmination points of these corridors.

The first post-Wende decade of deindustrialization and shrinkage was the material breeding ground for multiple, partly interdependent but mostly parallel and co-evolving, political-affective corridors. Whereas both local housing cooperatives and most of the city administration experienced a depressing phase shaped by and shaping their alienating lack of agency, both euphoric investors and a few powerful, newly immigrated leading figures developed high hopes for the future of the city. Parallel, in the apparent urban political void and thus hardly in conflict with market actors or local authorities, local initiatives and young, often West German, "adventurous" newcomers hopefully created alternative urban spaces. Thus, the 1990s remained a phase of parallel co-evolving enthusiastically hopeful projects and depressive lethargy, which seemed to be rarely conflicting in the big, shrinking city.

The 2000s can be considered a starting point for the convergence and competition of previously co-evolving path-dependencies in Leipzig's housing political trajectory: National future-oriented, top-down economic growth prescriptions for a profit-oriented housing economy were realized through the depressing destruction of mostly cooperative owned houses. This mirrored the perpetuated dependence of the local administration on nested regulation (obstacles), national and supranational plans and funds and centrally, investors. The latter's perennial speculative hopes were in turn encouraged by the administration's powerlessness, co-constitutive of, but also co-constituted by their depressed lethargy. The increasing power of real estate capital caused "gentle gentrification" (Wiest and Hill, 2004) that was rarely openly conflictive, yet indicates the nascent competition of enthusiastic use-value oriented hopes with

speculative growth-oriented ones and persistent depressive lethargy. The made investments were at the base of future ongoing price and rent increases. With most investors residing or registered in West Germany (or abroad), illustrated by the figure of the "Stuttgarter Zahnwalt" (I-I1), a neologism of an activist combining "*Zahnarzt*" (dentist) and "*Anwalt*" (lawyer) from Stuttgart (wealthy south-western city), their hopeful speculation reinforced capital flow from East to West (Intelmann, 2020; Bernt and Holm, 2020). This materially cemented inner German economic power imbalances, in turn furthering the ongoing depressing austerity of Leipzig and East German cities in general.

The most recent decade of enquiry stands in the light of emerging conflicts between the previously fragmented, then converging and competing political-affective pathways and projects. In the context of massive regrowth, the ongoing regulation reluctant anxiety both within parts of the administration and among the housing cooperatives, along with their strategic exploitation by growth-oriented politicians and real estate investors, led to intensifying pressure on the housing market. Contingent on the respective development of population and housing stock, rent gaps have travelled through the historical districts of city, were partly at the heart of different struggles, and began to close. Simplifying the development, one could say that the South is the most gentrified, followed by the West and now the inner East, somewhat a straggler in these developments due to its extreme process of shrinkage and regrowth (Hovestadt and Schultz, 2019). Here, the local housing cooperative who used to own most of the historical stock, only had 13 houses left in 2016 (lwb, 2016). Ownership has become fragmented, second and third waves of (luxury) refurbishment are rolling through the neighbourhood and the previously comparatively low rents and housing prices have begun to rise drastically (Stadt Leipzig, 2018a). Whereas a few additional houses were bought by left-wing collectives in the first half of the 2010s, aiming to "take the houses off the market" (Reichle, 2018), the larger part of the inner-city district underwent multiple sales, often through untransparent share deals. The concern with the resulting increase of residential alienation not only caused inner-administrative conflicts between regulation prone newcomers and established staff. More centrally, it politicized a small fraction of tenants struggling against gentrification and for decent housing.

In 2015, the discussions for a collectively developed non-binding housing policy concept brought together the different actors introduced throughout this chapter. Whereas the tenants' initiative SFA had to pressure its way to the table in a stubborn, pessimistically hopeful manner,

the official tenants' association stayed strikingly quiet, mirroring the ongoing fragmented, seemingly apolitical, and passive spirits of a majority of the city's tenants (I-I1; I-I2; II-I3). On the other side, the real estate industry, included in the concept's preparation from the start, presumably not least owed to their friendly relations with the mayor, "funded the concept to an extent of 80%" (I-I3), as a lobbyist proclaimed proudly. Siding entirely with the involved large real estate players, the housing cooperatives remained passive or paranoidly opposed any attempts at regulatory policies in the discussions (I-I1; I-I2; I-I5). They were represented by the same agent as developers and investors, a central figure in Leipzig's real estate industry, who hosts congresses, meetings and publishes a magazine with the self-proclaimed aim of "reaching the real estate industry like no one else [...] building platforms and doing proactive lobby work." (I-I3)

The policy's outcome, described by several interviewees as a "consent paper" with little impact can be described as an exemplary sedimentation of the PSD-PSH dialectics, accompanying struggles and strategies and their temporal orientations (I-I1; I-I2; I-I3; I-I5; II-I3). Whereas it entails praising words for alternative self-organized structures and ownership forms (in no need for intervening regulatory policies), it takes no influence on the city's ongoing upgrading and financialization. Cooperation – one of the most used terms in the concept – between city planning and "housing market actors to find solutions for the maintenance and creation of affordable housing" (Stadt Leipzig, 2015, p.23), is vaguely envisioned and the upgrading of 'less demanded' areas is clear aim to 'dampen' the pressure on other districts. Regulations intervening into refurbishments or new constructions on the other hand, are only mentioned as a potential future worst-case scenario. "In 2019 it already makes you wonder; it seems like from another time... [...] because it's always this weird balancing act, it needs to be affordable, but it should also work well for the businesses" (I-I1), an activist reflected. Whereas different regulatory instruments, like a policy called *Soziale Erhaltungssatzung* ('statute of social preservation') or the regulation of conversion of rental housing, "have been listed [in the concept], everything is formulated very cautiously [...] and *if one day* the housing market will be tense, then we could think about...(laughs)" (I-I1) This assessment highlights the temporal gap between affectively mediated conflicts and ongoing political economic developments.

Five years later, in 2020, following long and very controversial discussions in the city council; a decision in 2019 supported by greens, left party, pirate party, and social democrats; several commissioned gentrification studies (of whom some were not taken into account after all);

inner-administrative "blockages" as those mentioned above, a social preservation policy was finally introduced in six different areas, among them Leipzig's inner East (Redaktion Immobilien Aktuell, 2020). It regulates possible modernizations (*one* of the main drivers of rent increases) and enables the city to intervene in speculative real estate sales in targeted areas to protect the current population. The policy is described as "the sharpest of all blunt swords" (I-I1) by an activist and as the hysterical result of economically uninformed and unexperienced, ideologically motivated city councillors by the real estate lobbyist. Yet this will probably not suffice to break the entrepreneurial hope among real estate investors, as "things here are going well *anyways*." (I-I3)

Nevertheless, this policy is to some extent a success story of activist intervention, with a few initiatives, mostly SFA, having worked for several years towards its implementation, hoping to hinder the increasing commodification and financialization of housing in the city. With its bumpy development and as an outcome that nobody is happy with, it is a prototype of a sedimented struggle having followed non-linear, but rather spiral pathways shaped by the dialectic interplay of PSD and PSH.

However, the city's upgrading overhauls such cumbersome sedimentation spirals. With the developments described above, new built gentrification and speculative acquisitions by investors with a row of peculiar rent-increasing tactics are presumably going to be a relevant problem for tenants. With many refurbishments already passed, the regulation of modernizations is certainly sensible, but clearly belated to halt displacement pressure and residential alienation (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021).

Thus, in a strategically selective neoliberal context of urban austerity and chaotic multi-scalar mismatches, the interplay of competing speculative hopeful projects of (West German) investors and pessimistic hopes of a few local housing activists, with a depressed administration, first powerless and then fearful cooperatives, and a fragmented mass of tenants has sedimented in developments favourable to growth orientation, land and housing commodification and financialization. The backward-looking depression, lethargy and hesitancy of both administration and housing cooperatives were not only constituted by, but also centrally reinforcing the lacking power of regulatory politics. Despite the activists' strategic exploitation of the (depressed) political void, the latter also came with the scarcity of powerful allies or a broad tenant movement. This is what the following chapters explore, looking first into the societal and then the political effects of an increasingly pressured, financializing housing market.

The political implications between solidarities, fragmentations and authoritarian divisions are then studied for their role in the reproduction of neoliberal urban restructuring and tenants' (lack of) contestation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, Leipzig's political, economic, historical, and geographical patterns of urban restructuring were uncovered. Telling this East German history of urban austerity is both a contribution to the understanding of variegated German neoliberal urbanisms and has central importance for this thesis, familiarizing both researcher and reader with political economic processes at play in Leipzig. Concerning the overall research trajectory, this structural analysis of urban restructuring serves as a point of reference for the following realist concrete study on tenants' experiences of the latter (Sayer, 2000).

In terms of both academic and political *local* contribution, this analysis, relying much on previous research on Leipzig's urban development, enriches the latter with a decidedly political dimension. This is achieved through proposing a method to extend urban political-economic analyses *more generally*. Combining a cultural political economy-sympathizing approach, alert to not merely material, political-economic processes at play, but also their semiotic mediations, with a critique of affective gaps in political and urban theory, their *affective mediations* were traced in relation to Leipzig's urban restructuring. Sketching the dialectical interplay of common, partly inter-, and independent, co-constitutive, converging and competing elements of *affective corridors*, these were shown to develop a path-shaping impact contingent on their respective temporalities.

Conditional on Leipzig's specific economic and populational development since 1989, and emerging inductively from the fieldwork, the structure-action concepts post-shrinkage-depression and post-shrinkage-hope were introduced. These are two examples of prominent crystallizations of nuanced affective mediations prevalent in Leipzig, used to construct a theoretical framework and intended to encourage the reading and interpretation of prevalent collective moods elsewhere. Without ascribing these affects independent causal powers, it was shown how they emerged from and in turn shaped Leipzig's urban political context. Depending on actors' specific trajectories and positions in the city's political landscape, the analysis has demonstrated how sentimental mediations have continuously impacted the strategies and scope of actions of different actors, be it intuitively, reflexively or through strategic political

exploitation. Therewith PSD and PSH not only emerged from, but also influenced actors' positionalities in the urban (housing) political landscape and the according transformative power of their actions.

In parts, their positionalities, along with the hopeful versus depressive spirit of actors, is owed to West versus East German backgrounds and the stabilization of a steep power imbalance that parallels the disparate distribution of wealth, credibility and political power, but also the ongoing capital outflow and transfer-dependence of East Germany since reunification (Bertram and Kollmorgen, 2001; Pates and Schochow, 2013; Grabka, 2014; Foroutan and Kubiak, 2018; Köpping, 2018; Ragnitz et al., 2019; Mau, 2019; Intelmann, 2020). This manifests on different levels, be it in the hopeful mood of euphoric young West German newcomers, as residents or investors, as opposed to the disillusionment among East German neighbourhood activists, or in the different atmospheres in the top ranks versus employee range of the city administration. Whereas these local and historical hierarchies, power relations and the context dependent assertiveness of different strategies are quite specific to an East German context, similar patterns or mechanisms could be at play elsewhere in different constellations, dependent on local histories of uneven development.

Despite the small-scale local nature of the analysis, a structural primacy is assumed (Archer, 2000), manifesting in the irrefutable limits and circumstances imposed by the East German context of de-industrialization, shrinkage (regrowth) and austerity. However, scrutinizing local complexities closely, a more nuanced understanding of tendential strategic selectivity of context seems instructive (Jessop, 2005). This manifests inter alia in the fact that the dichotomous Eastern/Western actors division does not suffice to explain PSD – PSH dynamics, dialectics, and struggles, as demonstrated by the activist initiative SFA that is "mainly constituted of people from the East" (II-I3). This is owed to the inextricable linking of affect, rationality and conviction. Represented by the differentiation of optimistic and pessimistic hopes, one can distinguish between (irrationally) optimistic or euphoric hopefulness, owed to a confident position of power; and pessimistic hope based on strong, left-wing convictions despite lacking power (of activists). However, this differentiation is a simplification, as shown by the rational strategic actions of some powerful optimists (urban land office/mayor), and the coupling of radical conviction, power and optimism in others (communist head of city planning).

Thus, different shades of PSD and PSH should and can not explain the entire conflict between neoliberal growth-orientation and tenants-oriented, alternative urban planning. Instead, they are intermingled with political and class interests of the actors involved, which do not only influence how they interpret, but also how they strategically exploit the post-shrinkage-context. This was exemplified not only by very different shades of hope prevalent in the case study, but also by the more nuanced conflicts within offices of the city administration, that can partly be explained by PSD-logics, but are accompanied by larger political conflict lines. Hence, the post-shrinkage context, and the reflexive exploitation of administrative depression and lethargy, can be assumed to be interpreted and utilized differently, by actors with different political and economic stances. Thus, the findings on PSD and PSH are no answer to the question of what emotions uphold power structures (Flam, 2005, p.19). Hopeful or depressive mediations do not in themselves stand for the resistance to or the reproduction of neoliberal restructuring. Rather, *tendentially* contingent on the political and economic power of actors and coupled with their specific political orientations, they account for different *capacities* to engage in transformative action.

That the *multiple hermeneutics of depression and hope* impact the power of different actors and strategies was shown through different examples. Functioning as a form of interpretation/mediation, a defining factor in their impact lies in temporality. Paralleling Pain's (2019) trauma theoretical approach, the effect of depression can be considered as an "affectively dis-empowering melancholia" (Shields, 2012, p.16), whereas hope is "'anchored in the present' and attentive to what is unfolding at any given moment" (Eagleton in Back, 2021, p.7). The empirical research showed that, whereas the anxiously, paranoid or simply lethargic depressive mediation of urban restructuring is stuck and concerned with the past (interplaying with many other structural factors like austerity), the hopeful mediations, are either speculatively oriented towards the future (investors, neoliberal politicians), or in a hopefully pessimistic manner, alert to the changing circumstances of the present (activists).

Differently aimed strategies and hopeful and depressive reflexes were shown to come in conflict with each other, sometimes fail, sometimes parallel one another and all together constitute a sedimentation process of the dialectic interplay of different, affectively mediated moments of capitalist urban development and its (lack of) regulation. Its chaotic nature was exacerbated by urban austerity and scalar dependencies often unfitting for regulatory purposes. Nevertheless,

as the recent social preservation policy demonstrates, regulation is continuously struggled for by hopeful(ly pessimistic) activists.

Their attempts could be strengthened by a wide tenants' movement, which is largely absent in the city, despite increasing pressure on tenants in the last decade. Yet, on top of the regulation-reluctant administrative and governing bodies in the city, a passive "political culture" (II-I3) has also been attested to Leipzig's largely uncombative tenants by my interviewees. Intrigued by this and complementing the relational analysis initiated in this chapter, the following chapters explore the lived realities, housing experiences and political role of tenants in a post-shrinking city.

This analysis from below focuses on Leipzig's inner East, mentioned throughout chapter 4 as a prism for the city's shrinkage-regrowth dynamics. Both qualitative testimonies and statistical data reveal that the inner East is where conflicts between hopeful newcomers, hopeful investors, reluctant regulators, a lethargic tenants' association, and a slightly anxious and no longer predominantly property-owning local housing cooperative, is currently peaking (I-I1; I-I2; I-I3; I-I4; I-I5; I-I6; II-I2; II-I3; II-I14; II-I17; II-I19; Stadt Leipzig, 2018a; Hovestadt and Schultz, 2019; Stadt Leipzig, 2019b). Chapters 5 and 6 study residential alienation from below, inquire its effect on tenants' relations and scrutinize their political role in the restructuring city.

5. Experiences of urban restructuring – differentiated residential alienation and appropriation

For Marx, those things with which the individual is closely related but which
he does not control are, in fact, controlling him. (Ollman, 1977, p.145)

The last chapter illustrated the history of neoliberal urban restructuring in Leipzig, representing the structural political-economic patterns driving residential alienation. In doing so, it revealed that Leipzig's majority of tenants is no force to reckon with in the struggle against housing financialization or neoliberal restructuring, despite an increasingly tense housing market. Taking a closer look at their apparent overall passive role in urban restructuring, this chapter turns to the analysis of tenants' experiences and perceptions of urban restructuring, against the background of processes described in the last chapter. Through a lens of subjectivation, understood as the process of self-conception and -location of subjects in society, occurring in a field of tension between (contested) subject*ion* and subject*ing* to societal power-relations (du Gay, Evans and Redman, 2000; Maihofer, 2007; Rehmann, 2008), chapter 5 begins to inquire both the socio-political effects of neoliberal urban restructuring and its (contested) reproduction from below.

By means of a fine-grained operationalization of residential alienation, defined as both a central part of spatio-temporal socialization in neoliberal urban austerity, and a disturbance to identity formation, this chapter seeks to enrich two bodies of work. Through an interdisciplinary, empirically grounded analysis, it speaks to both sociological understandings of (political) subjectivation and urban studies concerned with effects of the commodification of rental housing and capitalist urbanization. Contributing to current debates about spaces of subjectivation (Ansell and McNamara, 2018; Miggelbrink, 2020), belonging is empirically fleshed out as a power-dependent and not only spatially, but also temporally mediated form of (dis)identification in a field of tension between alienation and appropriation. Furthermore, displacement literatures reviewed in chapter 2 are complemented with a holistic perspective on experiences of urban restructuring from below, attentive to their political implications. Empirically fleshing out the conceptualization of residential alienation developed in chapter 2, the field of tension between residential alienation and strategies of appropriation is carefully depicted with empirical examples, to understand not just concrete local and historical forms of alienation (Yuill, 2018), but also to prepare an analysis of its limits and potential contestation.

Based on ethnographic fieldnotes and interviews with tenants, the psychosocial manifestations of residential alienation are laid out. Extending Madden and Marcuse's (2016) seminal definition of residential alienation *beyond* experiences within "someone else's four walls" (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021, p.17), the interdependence of these with experiences of urban restructuring in the neighbourhood is traced. The rent relation and the neighbourhood are shown to contain different scales of belonging (Watt, 2021; Wynne and Rogers, 2021), which are tightly entangled. The analysis reveals how the perception of changes in the neighbourhood affects the alienating effect of pressure in the rent relation and vice versa. Drawing on a Marxist reading of alienation (Marx, 1968; Ollman, 1977), the core connecting point of structural and psychosocial aspects of residential alienation is shown to crystallize in residents' lack of control over their surroundings. Yet despite the universality of this phenomenon under capitalist urban restructuring, different *strategies of appropriation through place-making,* developed by tenants, are highlighted. Contingent on tenants' histories and biographies in and beyond the neighbourhood, and their experiences coined by racialized and gendered class relations, strategies of appropriation are shown to stand in a constantly shifting field of tension with residential alienation. To inquire how this field of tension interdepends with and co-constitutes tenants' subjectivation, their (dis)identification with different scales of home is analysed. Illustrating the relevance of temporality in this process of (dis)identification, tenants' diverging *temporalities of belonging* are sketched out. These denote the temporal orientation of tenants' sense of belonging, its anchoring in past, present, and future and its relation to the pace of neoliberal urban restructuring.[12] Revealing the power-dependent spatio-temporal nexus of belonging through the stories of a range of tenants with diverging socio-economic backgrounds and experiences, an analysis of the stratification of residential alienation and potential appropriation is developed.

This undergirds the central argument of the current chapter. It proclaims that through the stratified effects of residential alienation, neoliberal urbanization shapes tenants' subjectivation within a spatio-temporal power matrix anchored in hierarchized class relations. Thereby,

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[12] Much as discussed in terms of PSD and PSH in the previous chapter, these temporalities are closely intertwined with affect. However, scrutinizing intimate, individual experiences as opposed to collective sentiments here, these will not be broken down to two central crystallizations such as PSD and PSH. Instead, they are reflected in their nuances in passing. It is in their variegated and fragmented nature that they co-constitute the collective lethargically depressive sentiment attest to tenants in chapter 4.

neoliberal urban restructuring contributes to the reproduction of hierarchical, racialized, gendered, generational and inner-German class divisions.

The argument can be broken down as follows. Firstly, although structurally all subdued to residential alienation, tenants are subjecting themselves in a differentiated manner, according to the stratified agency they develop through appropriating their dwelling situation – both within their rent-relation and within the wider neighbourhood. Residential alienation thus appears in different guises depending on tenants' complex positioning in social power relations. The different appropriation strategies are mutually constitutive of tenants' context-dependent (dis)identification and temporalities of belonging. Their strategies of appropriation have divergent transformative capacities and horizons, defining both individual coping-mechanisms with residential alienation's psycho-social effects, and imaginable and accessible futures in society. The interplay of stratified alienation and appropriation strategies feeds into the reproduction of immediate societal, political, hierarchized class divisions. Based on this argument, the analysis undertaken in chapter 5 provides a base for understanding tenants' political role in the city, examined via the existence and emergence of solidarities, divisions, and political polarizations in chapter 6.

Leipzig's inner East is the strategic locational pick for this endeavour, as a prism of developments in an East German boomtown, that has witnessed a quite recent and rapid "turnaround" (*Wende*) from state-socialist to neoliberal housing provision. It is here where the reader is taken and introduced to the lived realities of different tenants, with their stories providing an (ethnographic) insight into the microcosm of the current research project.

Parallel to the commodification and financialization of housing, the regrowth of the city and the rise in real estate prices and rent, Leipzig's tenants have not become proportionally richer. Despite the settlement of new industries and the continuous decrease of unemployment, many of the newly gained employments were low-paid and precarious (Rokitte, 2020). With the 10% unemployment reduction between 2006 and 2016, the city's at-risk-of-poverty rate hardly fell. Lately, it shows to have remained at a continuously high rate of 22% (Stadt Leipzig, 2019b). The lowest income groups are hit hardest by the rising rents (Vogelpohl et al., 2017; Julke, 2020). Leipzig's inner East is the current culmination point of the city's post-shrinkage dialectics, as indicated in the last chapter. A glance at the city's populational statistic, real estate market reports, and the many responses of interviewees confirms that the contradictions of marketized upgrading presently peak in Leipzig's inner East (I-I1; I-I2; I-I3; I-I5; II-I2; Pisa Immobilien, 2018;

Stadt Leipzig, 2018a; Hovestadt and Schultz, 2019). Simultaneously, it is a historical working class neighbourhood and since the 1990s a "neighbourhood of arrival", mainly for international, but also inner-German immigrants (Haase et al., 2020). Still today demographic statistics are marked by over average levels of unemployment and an income below the city's median (Stadt Leipzig, 2018b). Thus, despite the comparably still low level of rents in the area, their increase and the respective rent burden on the predominantly poor tenants exceed that of all other districts (Stadt Leipzig, 2018b; Stadt Leipzig, 2018a). This neighbourhood therefore is not just a current magnifying glass of post-shrinkage dialectics, but also a "strategically situated micro-situation" (Sayer, 2000, p.151) *within* Leipzig, where the empirical analysis of psychosocial manifestations of residential alienation is grounded.

To illustrate the spatio-temporal reproduction of complexly stratified class hierarchies, chapter 5 begins by operationalizing residential alienation. This is achieved through five tenant portraits, complemented with accounts of other tenants with similar socio-demographic characteristics. Therewith patterns and particularities within a spectrum of alienating experiences prevalent among tenants in Leipzig's inner East are sketched. Following, building from these tenants' stories, an analysis of the stratification of residential alienation's psychosocial effects is developed. This is achieved through recapitulating its different empirical manifestations, in part exacerbated during a pandemic state of exception. Relatedly, tenants' varying ways of coping with precarious rent relations and a transforming neighbourhood where cherished social spaces diminish, are explored against the backdrop of their socio-economic positionalities, experiences, and power relations. These are then shown to be closely entangled with temporalities of belonging and different biographical trajectories of (dis)identification within the neighbourhood, contingent on tenants' shifting positions within a spatio-temporal power matrix. Leaving a thorough analysis of the *political* consequences of residential alienation, and thereby its implications for the development of collective subjectivation and political agency to the next chapter, the chapter closes by emphasizing the uneven preconditions for developing solidarities and divisions caused by the consolidation of social inequalities through the stratified effects of neoliberal urban restructuring on tenants' homes and spheres of reproduction.

5.1 Operationalizing Residential Alienation

Conceiving alienation as "neither purely objective nor purely subjective, but a negative relationship between social structures and humans in heteronomous societies" with Fuchs (2018, p.456), chapter 2 conceptually highlighted different sides of residential alienation– the

structural dimension of value extraction through the built environment in capitalist/neoliberal urban restructuring under austerity, explored in the last chapter, and the psychosocial dimension of "liv[ing] in someone else's house" (Madden and Marcuse, 2016, p.76) which this chapter turns to. Challenging a universalist understanding of alienation, the conceptual field of tension between appropriation and residential alienation will be explored empirically. Thereby, it is shown how residential alienation's psychosocial manifestations are irreducible to the scale of housing, but always entangled with alienation-appropriation dynamics in the wider neighbourhood.

Appropriation, with Marx, is understood as a process of employing human powers "constructively, to build by incorporating […] making it [nature/things] in some way a part of himself [sic]" (Ollman, 1977, p.89; Marx, 1968; Marx and Engels, 2018) hence a process of identification through praxis (Jaeggi, 2016). Alienation then is an outcome of (socially created) structures, that dominate and hamper the human potential of appropriation. Focussing on *residential* alienation, and based on spatially sensitive and feminist readings of Marx introduced in chapter 2, the orthodox understanding of *building* is consciously extended to practices of social reproduction in everyday life (Lefebvre, 1977; Lefebvre, 1991; Young, 2005; Mezzadri, 2019). Concerned with the specific relation of these to place, the following examination of residential alienation scrutinizes experiences of dwelling and place-making throughout different scales of home and residence, including the household, but also the building and the neighbourhood, particularly with its shared social spaces (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001; Watt, 2021; Wynne and Rogers, 2021). Inhibiting the human potential to "affectively identify" (Jaeggi, 2016, p.279) with her surroundings, residential alienation is thus analytically inseparable from belonging, sense of place, and place-attachment. In relation to the previously developed analysis of urban restructuring, these localized experiences are studied along the dimension of individual's "control of the structures that affect their everyday lives" (Fuchs, 2018, p.456; Marx, 1968; Ollman, 1977), or more concretely, tenants' "control over space[s]" of home and belonging (Fields, 2011, p.263). In other words, residential alienation is shown to limit the human potential of homing or place-making as spatialized forms of appropriation. Therewith, it is assumed to have a pivotal influence on processes of subjectivation.

If the "loss of control over the own housing situation affects people's sense of place and home and results in unfamiliarity" (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021), then the spatialized analysis of residential alienation must be coupled with a temporal dimension. As the notion of *loss*

indicates, belonging and identification, as well as appropriation and alienation are fundamentally processual concepts and always intertwined with *temporality* and its perception (Massey, 1992; Sharma, 2014; May, 2017; Lewis and May, 2020). Thereby the "temporal is not a general sense of time particular to an epoch of history but a specific experience of time that is structured in specific political and economic contexts" (Sharma, 2014, p.9). Although often neglected in neighbourhood studies on belonging, the sociological research reviewed in chapter 2 points to the interdependence of place- and time perception (Ringel, 2013; Lewis and May, 2020). As will be shown, tenants' different temporalities of experience interdepend with psychosocial effects of residential alienation and their implications for place-attachment, bringing forward the concept of temporalities of belonging.

Through the following tenants' stories this nexus of urban restructuring and residential alienation, place attachment, belonging, and temporality perception is scrutinized. Whilst building on Marx' logical "high-level abstraction that isolates alienation to its simplest the purest logical form", chapter 5 empirically explores its concrete *local and* "*historical* form […analysing] how that set of relations is instantiated in the flow of human history, how it is actually experienced" (Yuill, 2018, p.277 emphasis added). With that aim, I shift to an ethnographic perspective, inviting the reader to immerse into different lived realities in a field of tension between residential alienation and appropriation. Through the subsequent analysis, the understanding of a spatialized form of alienation is refined, by showing how dynamics of residential alienation and appropriation affect tenants' sense of place via different experiences of temporality.

Annett and welfare dependant long-term tenants

Annett[13] (FN-I-IV) is approximately in her mid-fifties, her age being hard to guess with her curly hair dyed blonde and her practical, colourful, and sportive outfits. Coming from the area, she has moved to the neighbourhood in 2009. This was before it started upgrading, and "when you could still watch the fox family on the fallow" close to her house. She lives with two dogs, and I keep meeting her on ethnographic walks throughout my entire year of fieldwork, because she spends most of her days walking them. In summer, she works in an ice cream parlour to earn some extra money on top of her unemployment benefits. After some initial exchanges I ask her for an interview, but she prefers casual chats. She always has news about the developments in

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[13] Alle names are pseudonyms. The empirical data sources of the main introduced characters in this chapter are only referenced at the beginning of each according section, to facilitate readability.

the neighbourhood that she keeps collecting on her dog walks when stopping to talk to acquaintances, neighbours, friends, and other dog walkers.

We both live in comparably cheap flats in Wilhelminian houses, and our conversations mostly circle around her bad housing conditions: "Yeah, well constantly something is broken, several times a year there's an issue. But then, nice Christmas present, a rent rise." Since she moved to her flat, the building has changed hands from a lady living in the house herself to two west German lawyers Annett has never met. They pay a property management firm, which is never available. She gives up quickly on calling them, and instead has her brother over occasionally to fix those things that she cannot take care of herself, due to her arthrosis. Once when the heating fails in winter, and her neighbours, struggling with the same issue, have finally managed to get the property management to call a plumber, she just intercepts him in the hallway and convinces him to inspect her gas heater too. Whilst dealing pragmatically with these issues of neglect, what really threatens Annett are the continuous rent rises.

Since the house was sold, "every two years […] the rent goes up. And the problem is also that you can't find any other flats here anymore." By now, her rent has doubled and "if I go to work again, it's only for the rent, right?" When that is paid, "there's not much left" to live. Especially in relation to the continuous issues of neglect, she considers this illegitimate and decides to simply refuse paying the rise. Even after receiving a reminder, "I just didn't pay it […] let's see what happens." Unlike her younger student neighbours, she is not in contact with the tenants' association or in any form of dialogue with the property management. Seemingly, until now, her coping strategy was successful in the sense that she still lives in her apartment. Yet in the long run, legally, this implies an accumulation of rental debt, enabling the property management to enforce displacement. Despite her awareness of exclusionary displacement and the potential difficulty of finding a new place in the neighbourhood, Annett ignores this perspective.

This is not owed to a lack of attachment to the neighbourhood. In contrast, she has a strong sense of belonging to her surroundings, an identification developed through practical commitment. Here she is not only well connected through her dog walks, but also because of her long-term engagement in a project next door. On a big vacant lot between two intersecting streets, she was part of the "little city farm". This was the home of two sheep, some chicken, a few ponies, several rabbits, and, to the pride of everyone (but bullied by the sheep), a pot-belly pig. Despite the scepticism of left-wing activists concerned about the animal's wellbeing or visitors wearing Neo-Nazi brands, the farm's initiator's goal was connecting kids from the area

despite "language barriers." (FN-I) In contrast to most other non-commercial social initiatives in the neighbourhood, a city employee referred to the project as an initiative of people "*not* part of an educated middle class, but who with unbelievable initiative […] set something up that was pretty rad […] actually the only neighbourhood initiative reaching 'long-established [East] Germans'." (I-I4)

Annett brought water and her organic waste to the farm every day and looked after the animals. An old neighbour fed them from his window. The space was a locus of local community, of place-making and neighbourhood appropriation. But at some point, the landowner received permission to build – so the little city farm was kicked off, with no alternative space available. Its absence is harshly felt in Annett's daily life, especially because the loss of community it entailed. As soon as vacating the plot became unavoidable, the social space dissipated. To her, the end was sad: "where was everyone, who always hung out there? I stood there on my own to clean it up."

Nevertheless, she remains loosely linked to a row of neighbours through the common anger at the landowner and their imaginaries of discreet revenge. Annett collects their stories and rumours on her dog walks. Around Christmas 2019, when they had already vacated the plot, she tells me about a "*really* wonderful Christmas present" – apparently the developer was denied the permission to build. She speculates that this was achieved through collective effort: "I think everyone did their part – the guy from the house here [points], […] he witnessed everything, maybe he told them about something about the trees, he [the landlord] is not just allowed to cut them down – and then the tiny old woman, she also knew about something, and then maybe they all, […] I would be happy if they all said something [laughs]." She cannot explain to *whom* these neighbours would have said something, and how exactly that would have worked, but the thought delights her. A year later, the trees have fallen, and the plot looks treacherously like a construction site.

Annett is witnessing neglect and displacement pressure in her rent relation, which is especially threatening regarding her strong attachment to the increasingly expensive neighbourhood. Whereas she finds strategies to deal with issues of neglect, keeping some control over her quality of living, she ignores the threat of displacement, deferring it to the future. Regarding the wider neighbourhood development, this is impossible, as her main social space of encounter has disappeared. However, she does not easily give up on her sense of agency in this matter either. Instead, she interprets the slow process of construction as a successful act of collective, quiet

sabotage. It is uncertain for how long this idea will be sustainable. Whereas psychologically Annett's different coping strategies are temporally successful to retain her present sense of place, it is unclear for how long they will be materially tenable. What could be interpreted as a form of "hopeful pessimism" (Coleman, 2016), might be a form of resilience in the present, but is hardly strategic regarding the future, which is timed according to the pace of other, more powerful actors.

Other interviewees dependent on transfer incomes and facing similar issues of neglect and anxieties of displacement, address their lack of perspective within and agency over the development of their surroundings more openly and fearfully. Two young mothers interviewed in the park, who are very attached to the neighbourhood as they were born there, feel the parallel displacement pressure and exclusionary displacement. One complains about her housing conditions but has no option to leave: "I can find absolutely no flat here, and I really need to leave [mine ...] I mean, I am on benefits [...] it's really bad it got super expensive." The other one is "really happy with my apartment, but the money is just not enough! And if you need an affordable flat, where will you land then? In [the outskirts], let me say, where you really don't want to go!" To them and other unemployed tenants, the situation feels outright hopeless "what should I do? What can I do?", and "There's nothing you can do." (AI-2.1)

Dirk, his buddies and poor long-established pensioners

I meet Dirk and his two buddies (FN-IV) on a bar terrace in summer 2020, when COVID-19 numbers are low, bars reopened, and I resume outdoor fieldwork. They are very happy about my request to hear about the neighbourhood's development. Having grown up here, they have a strong, nostalgic sense of belonging to it and are glad to share stories. The oldest is born in 1950 and wears a white shirt, Dirk and the third one are some ten years younger. Dirk has long blond hair, his moustache is dyed black, and he is wearing a leather jacket. The third has his white undershirt pulled up in the heat, revealing his belly button. They meet in this bar every Wednesday.

"The sad part is, we are the last ones remaining", Dirk tells me. A central driver behind the disappearance of their friends is the rising rent. "They move over there [points north] into the houses that are still in worse condition, where it's a bit cheaper." He himself has received continuous rent raises since 2013, when his building was bought by the abovementioned GRK – a locally founded real estate firm of a former racing driver, which by now has fused into a listed company with another real estate company and sold off large shares to a European fund

manager. "If it continues like this, in one or two years, I can go." They all agree that this is both especially stressful and especially unjust because their pensions are so low. Their former GDR jobs ended with the *Wende* and after initial unemployment "I worked for the windmills, you can imagine what we earned in the East [laughs] and now for our pension we get nothing. And then the rents go up [...] it's starting to be like *over there*", one of them says with resignation, making several indirect references to West Germany and inner-German power relations. West German owned wind parks in East Germany, established after thorough deindustrialization and land reforms, much like rental housing, are a central factor in capital flows from East to West (Land, 2003).

Dirk is not the only research participant who describes the pattern of former friends and neighbours "moving across the train rails." Several interviewees name rising rents or changing jobcentre regulations as frequent "silent" displacement causes, and a social worker even reports about specific landlord strategies targeted at long-term, elderly residents, like turning off elevators (II-I13). Asked about his prospects if the rent increases further, Dirk stubbornly shouts "I'm not leaving! We stay here! This is our neighbourhood!" One of his friends interrupts this outbreak provocatively: "but she's asking where *would* you go? Where could you still go? Where? Where?", indicating that despite the heroic display of local patriotism, they have few remaining options. "Yeah, I can't afford the other neighbourhoods either...", Dirk responds resignedly. And then, he adds, desperately "But I can only survive here, with important friends." Their slightly alcoholised display of emotions reveals a strong nostalgic place attachment. Their nostalgia, which "can be a way to release frustration and discontent [...] to face political realities" (Barney, 2009, p.133) points to dissatisfaction and perceived powerlessness in the face of present developments and their (lacking) future in the neighbourhood.

This is not just mirrored in the rising housing prices. Despite their social attachment to the neighbourhood, Dirk and his buddies are very unhappy with the neighbourhood restructuring. It turns out that the neighbourhood they feel attached to is not the current one, but a lost one. It is mainly the changing infrastructure they bemoan – "it was a dream, we had an old swimming pool, but it was not good enough [...] we had cinemas [...] they tore everything down! So many bars! It was lively!" Nostalgically recollecting the stories of different bars, the encounters they had there, the food that was served, they identify reunification as the turning point. As the last quote highlights, their stories are marked by a bitterness stemming from what they see as a lack of recognition for their remembered former neighbourhood with its cultural and social spaces.

Accompanying the experienced devaluation of careers and employment biographies, the exodus of friends and the collapse of local infrastructure along with the demolition of houses for them translates to a misrecognition of their former social and daily lives, their routines and cultural joys, their way of dwelling. The recent upgrading exacerbates their isolating anonymizing and alienating post-Wende experience and further impedes their place attachment. Yet their constant reactivation of nostalgia can be considered as an attempt of maintaining a sense of belonging through memories, coping with present changes and their actual position of powerlessness (May, 2017). Whereas East German nostalgia, "Ostalgie", has been identified as a mechanism of upholding a sense of collective identity (Berdahl, 1999; Barney, 2009), the specific *place-bound nostalgia* of Dirk and his friends is a way of sustaining localized identity, place attachment and a (retrograde) sense of belonging.

Several other pensioned long-term tenants, all of them women, express similar experiences of rising rents, disappearing neighbours, a changing environment and increasing anonymization. Their reactions vary between a lack of understanding, displacement anxieties and complete withdrawal. Reporting on the displacement of a former, job-centre dependant elderly neighbour, Mrs Meyer's perspective is marked by disbelief "I didn't understand it, I said you can't understand something like that." Learning about the rent rise of her new neighbours, her disbelief is coupled with displacement anxieties: "and now I was wondering […] I didn't understand it, I said, I hope they did not just forget me and then one day I will get a huge bill [laughs insecurely], you don't know all these things!" As a retired cleaner her pensions are low and she is aware that her building, being the last unrefurbished one in the street, is also the only one in the area where she can still afford to live. Her flat now marks her central attachment to the neighbourhood, as she, much like Dirk and his friends, feels discontented with and separated from the changes around. Besides giving a few examples of infrastructural changes she dislikes, Mrs Meyer laughs insecurely when asked about her general opinion regarding the neighbourhood change: "what do I know, I can't decide these things." (III-I1)

These stories of neighbourhood changes and displacement pressure highlight how closely the different scales of home and neighbourhood are intertwined, when it comes to place attachment. The population change triggered by refurbishments and the rising rents; the according disappearance of former residents; the closure of bars and social spaces, all have an anonymizing effect and impede tenants' sense of place, home, belonging to and identification with their building and the neighbourhood. However, this is contested with nostalgic place

attachment through which their sense of belonging is refreshed by memories the past, whilst being clearly severed from active place-making and spatial appropriation in the present. Their experiences of neighbourhood change highlight both the *processual* nature of residential alienation and the *spatial* mediation of East-German "transformation experiences" (Leidereiter, 2020).

Image 6: March 2020 – A container bar, frequented by long term residents, that disappeared during my fieldwork in the wake of rising ground rents and more profitable investment models.

Marwa, refugee women and mothers

In contrast, Marwa (IV-I4) thinks that in the past years, the neighbourhood has changed "very quickly and become really good." The Iraqi social worker in a women's centre has lived in the neighbourhood for 16 years and proudly raised seven daughters here, the two oldest ones already living on their own and one of them now an apprentice in the local pharmacy. Marwa has seen parts of the restructuring process that Dirk and his friends complain about from a different angle. Having followed her husband to Leipzig, who worked in one of the first international supermarkets on Eisenbahnstraße, she proudly remembers how they have contributed to rebuilding the neighbourhood. She finds, that now "it is getting really beautiful. Sometimes we say, slowly, slowly Eisenbahnstraße is becoming like Sonnenallee in Berlin.[14] [...] Because it was a neighbourhood with many immigrants, and the others heard it and came, they are trying to build an atmosphere like at home, here you find Arabic restaurants and Arabic groceries." Most immigrant women interviewed share Marwa's appreciation of the

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[14] A lively street with many international businesses in a gentrifying neighbourhood

neighbourhood around "Eisenbahnstraße, with many shops, and all sorts of Arabic food", the proximity to the centre and the nearby schools and kindergartens (IV-I05). Yet in comparison to more recently immigrated tenants, Marwa's attachment is especially strong. It can be regarded as a form of appropriation through practical engagement in and with the neighbourhood, via place-making praxis that transforms both herself and the surroundings through a process of *affective identification*. This shows most clearly when I ask her about her wishes for the neighbourhood. In contrast to most interviewees who do not feel like they have a say in the neighbourhood's restructuring, Marwa has a clear list of pragmatic issues, as if it had been waiting on her desk for a local political campaign: change the speed limit in the main street, set up a few more red lights for pedestrians (she has exact propositions as where to put them), less police cars in the park, … Her self-confident answers demonstrate her sense of agency within the neighbourhood, which is not to be thought independently from her education, previous employment (in Iraq) as a lawyer and upward social mobility since the arrival in Germany. Following Boyd's (2005) analysis, her commitment to the neighbourhood's future is both shaped and motivated by a belief in racial uplift, strengthening immigrants' potential of social upward mobility through an affirmation of regeneration.

Her housing experiences demonstrate that this endeavour meets structural limits in a context of neoliberal urbanisation. She likes her neighbours and her apartment, despite it being a bit crowded with the whole family. But "every two years it gets a bit more expensive" and "two [neighbouring families] have already moved out" because of rent rises. Her family too is under increasing pressure: "I have a job and my husband too […] and if it increases more, we won't manage. […] Of course, with five people, it is difficult." Since a long time, she has "looked everywhere for another flat with five rooms but is very difficult." Despite her worries, she feels fortunate to have this flat. Among the women she works with who are mostly unemployed or in low paying jobs, as among my interviewees with similar profiles, the mixture of exclusionary displacement and overcrowding constitutes a pressing concern. The continuously rising rents additionally increase the pressure on these tenants, who experience displacement anxieties (Watt, 2018) in the face of lacking opportunities. Selma, dependent on welfare benefits, mother of four and living in two rooms tells me that her rent increases "since two years […] So, it is expensive, small and we need to find another one, but that's impossible." (IV-I2) The precarity of overcrowding, like most housing related problems, has become exacerbated during the pandemic.

Whereas displacement pressure is not unique to immigrant tenants, moving away, even if it is just "across the rails", like so many of the elderly tenants Dirk talks about, can have specific implications for them. Many "migrants […] want to live in the neighbourhood because [sighs] here uhm they can honestly blend in", as Alina, an activist in her 30s from Iran, who is currently trying to open a café, reflects. Having had to move out of the neighbourhood for a lack of affordable flats herself, she explains that her new "neighbourhood is not really that nice, it is different from here, I don't feel that safe there, […] It's on the wrong side of the railroad." To exemplify the political climate that she perceives in daily life in her new surroundings, she adds: "When there were elections in our area the competition was between AfD [far right party] and CDU [conservatives, Christian democrats]. And here it was CDU and Linke [left party]." In contrast, around Eisenbahnstraße, "I kind of feel safe […], to be honest. Because I'm a foreigner, I don't speak German, uhm. […] There are quite many things here, that feel, that make us feel comfortable. Like the food, the shops, lot of migrants […], that gives this safety, that we can kind of blend in in a way, or we cannot be noticed easily, we are like everybody else in the street." (IV-I12)

This mix of present place attachment and displacement pressure caused by exclusionary displacement, overcrowding and rising rents is exemplary for all seven interviews with immigrant women ranging from petit bourgeoisie to "indispensable yet disposable" (Soederberg, 2020, p.274) unemployed or precariously part-time employed workers. Being cheerful when talking about the neighbourhood they have grown to appreciate, the interviewees turn worried and serious when it comes to their housing conditions and future prospects. When asked about the consequences of the intermingling exclusionary displacement, rent rises and issues of overcrowding, another social worker working with immigrants says "Hopelessness. […] Yeah hopelessness, in the beginning they are very motivated and search a lot, and then they are frustrated, demotivated." A colleague who works with young girls confirms this. The girls, who often translate for their parents in the unpromising search for housing "at some point say, 'it does not make sense anyways', but they also have the feeling that they are not welcome […] this pressure and the feeling of not being welcome, it is very deeply anchored within the girls, it coins their daily life and also their feelings, they don't like to go home, many girls live in a two room apartment with six people […], and you can tell they don't want to leave from here [girls' social centre], because it's nice and they have so much space…" (III-I4)

Overcrowding and exclusionary displacement of immigrant tenants affect both their sense of place in the present and impede the construction of a future in the neighbourhood. Their alienating experiences of exclusion and displacement anxieties stand in a field of tension with the place attachment that many have developed through appropriating their surroundings of arrival socially and by contributing to the local infrastructure. Whereas many rate the changes of the last years in the neighbourhood positively, their visions of the future are crowded with worries.

Image 7: December 2019 – "Searching follow-up tenant", sign in an Afghan restaurant on Eisenbahnstraße.

Tareq and young, working poor or unemployed immigrant men

Issues of density and exclusionary displacement are not merely a problem for large families. Tareq (AI-1.2), with whom I conducted an activist interview in the park, does not want to be at home in his shared flat, because it is so crowded and loud. He is in his early twenties and was born in Libya but lives in Germany since his teens. His hair is freshly cut and neatly styled, he is wearing a trendy polo shirt and short jeans. Yet, sitting next to the basketball court, his posture is hunched and while we talk, I realize that his eyes are red. His friendly tone turns to frustration as soon as we touch the topic of housing – "I am looking for a new flat, but that is super difficult, because I have lost my job."

After having separated from his German partner and moving out of her flat, he has been employed in a series of temporary precarious jobs, mainly to be able to afford the rent in a new place: "I have only done shit, construction site, painting, building, everything. But temporary work is only for three months, and I don't want to work there anymore, because it is simply so stressful. You know, at Porsche, my head was so *full* [...] so much stress." The temporary nature of his employments inhibited his search for a flat on his own, which he has been longing for "for a while, so I can withdraw", because he became repeatedly dependent on the jobcentre. This again complicated the search for a flat, due to tricky bureaucratic restrictions and many landlords' refusal of unemployed tenants.

As a result, he "rents informally [...] in a shared flat". The resulting housing conditions exacerbate his mental stress linked to the dependence on recurring precarious employments. What is a chosen and temporary lifestyle for his flatmates, is an involuntary burden on him. He tells me that now, he is in the park because he does not want to be in his flat. "I can't handle to be there, they are all students, it is really disgusting, they never wash their dishes and then they pile up. And they sleep all day and don't have anything to do, while I need to work, and then they are noisy at night." This is a problem especially in times of employment, where Tareq "always ha[s] to get up at three thirty, then I go to bed at ten, but until one the music is loud!" It got worse when his flatmate decided to share his room with a friend, "so he only has to pay half of the rent."

For Tareq, housing precarity means involuntary living densely with people whose lifestyle he does not share and who do not respect his. This pressures him psychologically and directly impacts his capacity to withdraw and, in the Marxist (feminist) terms, to reproduce: "I have not cooked in a year because it so disgusting."

As a result, he spends a lot of time in public space, which is ambiguous too. Although he initially claims to appreciate the neighbourhood, where he frequently plays soccer with friends, it is also a space where is frustration is easily channelled into drug use. This becomes apparent in his angry outburst towards the end of our conversation, "I *hate* this street [... where I] take alcohol and drugs, [...] I just want a space to calm down." Additionally, the stigmatized neighbourhood is under extreme police monitoring, which he, like most racialized young men I have spoken to, had to experience first-hand. Humiliating experiences increased especially since a 'weapon prohibition zone' was introduced in November 2018, legally legitimizing "random", yet often racialized controls (Hurlin, 2019). Since the outbreak of COVID, even the soccer games have

ceased, while police controls have intensified, especially for racialized young men (FN-III, FN-IV). Once Tareq was taken to a police station and handcuffed and "simply beaten in my face… And here [he takes off his watch and shows me his wrist], it still feels like it is electrical […] he [the police officer] turned my wrist and since then it feels like this." Asked about the main problems in the neighbourhood, Hussein, another young, male and racialized interview partner, confirms this: "Only the police. They come here on their own rules, they can control everyone." (IV-I10)

All these factors increase Tareq's desperation in the search for a flat. Based on his previous experiences, his hopes are not very high: "with private landlords it could work, but not with LWB." This touches on an issue that several interviewees accounted. The local housing society seems to make a point of the composition of inhabitants, with frequently reported exclusionary consequences for refugee tenants. A tenant from Syria tells me that when he called the LWB, they did not have a flat, but then "my [German] colleague said he had found a flat – where? LWB! 'Give me 2000€, I'll give you the flat.' […] What should I do, that's not normal is it?!" (AI-I.6) And a man from Kurdistan reports that a landlord recently simply hung up on a friend of his when she announced that she was calling on behalf of someone without German nationality (AI-2.3). A study on the Saxon housing market confirms the structural nature of this racialized exclusion (Hummel et al., 2017).

Tareq's story is a case in point for Soederberg's (2020) macro-analysis of the reproduction of surplus populations, and on a micro-scale probably the most extreme example of residential alienation's psychosocial consequences. His frustration mirrors not only in his perceived lack of options and possible actions but has a direct impact on his mental and physical health. For him, there is no perceived scope of appropriation, as becomes apparent in his desperate and angry outburst about the neighbourhood, that overshadows even good memories of meeting friends.

Phillip and the (West German) educated, (activist) young precariat

Phillip (III-I9) is around thirty and works as a part time educator since he finished his studies. Coming from the south-West of Germany, like many students at the time he moved to Leipzig's inner East eight years ago, attracted by the "uncomplicated" housing market. With short brown hair, wearing a casual sweater and headphones, he is one of my few online interviewees during the pandemic, sitting in front of a webcam in his room in a shared flat. He remembers that when he moved there it was quite expensive for the area with 4,50€ per square meter, but they were given a special offer of three months rent-free housing, as the owner had trouble finding tenants in the then half-vacant and stigmatized neighbourhood.

Despite experiencing many issues of neglect over the years, he always perceived his relationship with the property management to be "pretty neutral", until three years ago, when he and his flatmates received a letter that alerted them. Active himself in neighbourhood organizing in the by then gentrifying area, Philipp was attentive to signs of rent rises and recognized the announcement of planned balconies as one of them. "Two weeks later we received a notice, that our house was sold to an investment fund from Berlin." Thereafter, they obtained a "dubious announcement, like, yeah, we'd like to refurbish, what about you, wouldn't you like to move out?" Seeking the conversation with both their neighbours and representatives of the investment fund, they learned that "their aim was that everyone moved out so they could refurbish the flats and turn them into condominiums […] demanding prices of three and a half to four and a half thousand Euro per square meter." Even if they were to be able to keep renting from a future owner, their rent would far more than double. Thus, they decided to take action against the landlord, who had just banned new tenants from joining the lease, initiating a slow process of vacation. Based on the initiative of three shared flats, for whom the new rule was especially problematic due to student's fluctuating lifestyle, the tenants of the building got together in protest and organised "a little festival in front of the house and then they [the landlord firm] suddenly reacted to us, apparently that really scared them, in any case they were worried about a bad reputation." Having joined the local tenants' association mainly for its legal insurance and receiving support from a self-organized local initiative, they soon terminated the subsequent negotiations with the investment fund, after one of the flatmates was threatened in a personal conversation by a representative. "Our will to stay, not to give up" was strengthened by their anger and solidarity among each other. Nevertheless, "in so many moments, […] it is simply exhausting. The permanent fear at home, the caution […] to know, we cannot make mistakes, otherwise we will be […] kicked out […] you have the expectation that any moment something could happen, and you have to act right away, that's simply tiring."

Despite their well-organized struggle and good support networks, Phillip and his housemates are confronted with constant displacement anxiety. Their social and cultural capital enabled them to win small battles with the landlord and experience moments of agency and even joy in the course, as with the small festival, whilst creating strong ties among themselves and with the few remaining neighbours. Yet the awareness of potential escalation is constant. And finding a comparable flat in the area for the educated but poor tenants would be difficult. Since Phillip's arrival in Leipzig's East "you can almost speak of a duplication of rents for new flats", which not just for him, but for other financially precarious tenants "creates … a whole different sort of

pressure." Another interviewee, who lives in a house owned by exceptionally benevolent landlords that do not raise the rent out of principle, confirms this. Even if he would like to, he could never consider moving, as "my whole way of life […] would in no way be possible if I had to pay more rent. So, the cheap rent is the mainstay of everything I do [laughs]." He describes this as being "rented stuck" and draws the analogy between the housing market and musical chairs: "these cheap flats, it's a bit like […] this game where you remove a chair and the one who is unable to sit down, lost." (II-I7)

Phillip recalls that it was these cheap rents that enabled a lively subculture and activism when he moved to the neighbourhood. Appreciating the "many empty houses and free spaces, empty lots and vacant buildings", he actively engaged in what could be considered a process of socio-spatial appropriation. He developed a sense of belonging, a "close relationship to the neighbourhood" through active place-making. With the possibility to "rent cheap spaces, especially in the beginning there were many spontaneous projects […] for a long time I too was active in a *Ladenprojekt*,[15] where I did neighbourhood organizing […], which means I always was very grounded here, doing stuff with people locally […] when I move through the neighbourhood, I meet a bunch of different people who I can talk to, with whom I've played soccer before, or who I conducted an activist interview with in front of a supermarket…" But with the rising rents, not just the pressure on tenants, but also on activist projects and spaces increased. He observed how "the neighbourhood somehow obtained *new meaning*, the *Ladenprojekte* came under pressure, everyone had to figure out, how do we get the money […] the subcultural spaces came under attack [by regulatory offices…] so they are either less public because they are scared to be detected, or they have changed into a commercial direction."

Kim, a non-binary long-term student who has lived in the area for seven years, confirms the commercialization of subculture caused by rising rents and the according pressure: "Now the projects and the bars have to be more established and so one can just come to the neighbourhood to *consume* it." (III-I3) The story of Marco, a former art student from Italy who moved to Leipzig's inner East nine years ago and used to be active in yet another, now displaced *Ladenprojekt,* vividly highlights the implication of these recent transformations for young, educated activist tenants' sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. "I think to me it was… the

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[15] "Shop floor projects" are a characteristic feature of Leipzig's left-wing subculture. The ground floors of residential buildings formerly contained small businesses, of whom many disappeared after reunification. In the following period of vacancy, it was exceptionally easy to rent these very cheaply and landlords were often content if they were used at all.

main way of accessing the neighbourhood." Following a long process of struggle with a new landlord and finally the displacement of the project, by now he feels "a bit out… and disappointed too." Being "out" means that he has withdrawn from neighbourhood activism and respective networks. Accordingly, his sense of place has changed drastically "by now the neighbourhood is very small for me [… laughs] it changed. […] Now it's memories of a former time." (IV-I8)

Marco, Kim, and Phillip's disappointment over the recent commercialization of neighbourhood social spaces is representative of many informal conversations and six narrative interviews with young, educated tenants who have moved to the neighbourhood before its rapid upgrading. Whereas Phillip's struggle against displacement is an attempt to defy residential alienation in the context of his rent relation and to maintain some agency over his home by staying put, the interviewees' stories indicate that maintaining control is hardly possible on a neighbourhood level. Their somewhat disappointed and frustrated perceptions of recent transformations indicate the changing possibilities of spatial appropriation in the process of urban restructuring. In Marxist terms, one "can only appropriate an object in ways the latter will allow, which each of its qualities serving as a limiting condition" (Ollman, 1977, p.94). At the time of arrival of these interviewees, profit-oriented urbanization was difficult in the half vacant neighbourhood and thus collective appropriation of urban space could take quite an immediate form. By now, the process of successful marketization not just of housing but of urban space in general changed these residents' relation to the area into one centrally mediated by exchange value and competition. This transformation has foundationally altered young, formerly activist tenants' relation to place in the present, as Marco melancholically reflects: "It doesn't mean so much to me anymore to live here. […] I have become a bit estranged by now." (IV-I8) For them, moving elsewhere is a very real future option. One young interviewee has already left the neighbourhood and some, like Kim "have a desire of moving away." (III-I3)

5.2 Differentiated subjection, (dis)identification and temporalities of belonging

Although with Marx, alienation can be understood as an overall condition in capitalist societies, where needs and powers are always mediated and determined by exploitative relations of production and class (Marx, 1968; Harvey, 2018), *historical* "forms of alienation differ for each class because their position and style of life differ" (Ollman, 1977, p.132). As indicated previously, the concrete, historical form of *residential* alienation in Leipzig's inner East is defined by a specific history of capitalist and neoliberal urban restructuring and its psychosocial impact

on tenants and their sense of place. Yet, although rarely theorized, these psychosocial experiences of housing precarity and heteronomous, profit oriented neighbourhood upgrading are not just spatial, but also deeply temporal. This can be demonstrated along the recurrent reference to ontological (in)security in displacement studies. "Residential alienation above all manifests as insecurity." (Madden and Marcuse, 2016, p.67; Saegert, Fields and Libman, 2011; Watt, 2018; Reichle, 2018; Watt, 2021).

In Giddens' (1984) reading of the psychoanalytic work of Erikson (1993), ontological security is learned in early childhood, through experiences of absence and following return instead of abandonment. Following, ontological security is representative of the foreseeability of daily life and thence the "*autonomy of bodily control* within *predictable routines.*" (Giddens, 1984, p.50 emphasis in original) With regards to housing and dwelling in the neighbourhood, both central sites of everyday life and routines of social reproduction, ontological *in*security therefore captures at once the lack or *loss* of control over these and an *uncertainty of the future* of one's different scales of home. As a psychosocial element of residential alienation, ontological insecurity is defined by past experiences, future expectations, agency, and its perception. Considering time as "multiple, relational, and deeply uneven" (Sharma, 2013, p.312) implies that belonging, identity and sense of place are always contingent on "where one stands in relation to others (space) as well as how one's experience of time is always tied to another's temporality" (ibid., p.314).

First, recapitulating tenants' alienating experiences within their rent relation and exploring their different strategies of appropriation, this subchapter develops an analysis of the differentiated subjection to residential alienation, contingent on stratified potentials of appropriation. Therewith, the reproduction of hierarchized class divisions through residential alienation is demonstrated. Secondly, contextualizing tenants' alienating experiences within their rent relation with their perception of wider neighbourhood changes, their (dis)identification is traced in relation to different temporalities of belonging. Demonstrating the effect of this interrelation on tenants' experiences of alienation and strategies of appropriation in its complexly stratified manner, this nexus is situated within "power geometries" (Massey, 1992, p.81) and "power chronographies" (Sharma, 2014). Tenants' positioning within a time/space/power matrix is shown to shape their subjectivation – co-constitutive of their potential of appropriation.

Differentiated subjection and strategies of appropriation in the rent relation

Throughout the tenants' housing stories, a central concern is neglect. Especially pronounced in Annett's case, it inhibits her daily life and housing quality and brings with it a certain kind of uncertainty as to when the next major damage will arise. Much like other tenants, she deals with these issues hands-on and finds informal, makeshift solutions, allowing her some agency over her daily routines in the present. The same holds true for Phillip, who muddles through issues of neglect or Hayet, a mother of three from Tunisia, who buys "the material [to fix things] and my friends come help. I always do it like that." (IV-I7)

Similarly, overcrowding burdens tenants' life at home. Whereas this is centrally a problem for large families, in the sample of this study mainly welfare dependent, working- or lower-middle class immigrant ones, Tareq's case exemplifies that it is not limited to these. In relation to his experience of overcrowding, his story demonstrates most pointedly, how closely working and housing conditions are interrelated. When accepting horrible jobs, according working hours and stress to escape an overcrowded and involuntarily shared flat, these same housing conditions become even less bearable and severely impact his mental health. Yet the link between housing and working conditions is also expressed in the interviewed mothers' disproportionate responsibility with housing issues. With their husbands often working outside of the house, they are left to deal with all unwaged tasks of social reproduction, including maintaining the flat and dealing with the concern over their children's space of learning, playing, and resting, which is severely impacted by the overly dense housing conditions. During the pandemic, both overcrowding and its gendered effects were exacerbated. As Watt's (2021) study of displacement and relocation in London shows, it is women, and often mothers, who are most involved with processes of *homing*, be it through sustaining community relations in the building or caring for the flat. Consequentially, both precarious housing conditions and the threat of displacement affect them particularly.

Whereas Tareq's strategy of trying to escape his housing conditions and gain control over his home by finding a new flat has been fruitless, leaving him with despair, many of the interviewed mothers have found pragmatic solutions of coping with overcrowding through limiting their own private space. Alenya, living in two rooms with her husband and two kids says: "it's okay the kids are only three and one year old, she is still young, she can sleep with me." (IV-I3) However, as social workers from a women's shelter have reported, the coupling of a gendered division of labour and a tense housing market severely intensifies women's dependence on, sometimes

violent, husbands (II-I20). As the pandemic has shown, being locked in a dense space increases the burden on women and the threat of domestic violence (Hümmler and de Andrade, 2020). As several interviewees and conversation partners confirm, the tense housing market can be a reason for women to not leave, or even return to, their abusive relationship (II-I20; FN-II). This stands representatively for the enshrinement of their gendered, materially dependent position, exacerbated and thus becoming more visible during the pandemic.

In contrast, the evasion from overcrowded flats to public space in a stigmatized neighbourhood is particularly risky for racialized men. Shown by Tareq's example and other conversations, dwelling spaces in the neighbourhood that are frequented as alternatives to precarious housing conditions, are limited by police violence (FN-III; FN-IV; IV-I08; IV-I10). Their racialized and gendered navigation of private and public space too became increasingly difficult and its consequences exacerbated during the pandemic, when police controls increased with strict government regulations of social encounters.

On top of the precarious conditions of neglect and overcrowding that mainly hinder the day-to-day reproductive routines of tenants in their homes, displacement pressure, either through rising rents or outright attempts of eviction, coin all tenants' fears of the future (except Tareq – for the moment). Thereby their housing conditions restrain their possible and imaginable spatial and economic (self-) location in society. In Annett's case, pressure already manifests in the decreasing amount of money she has left to spend for anything but housing. Dirk's story is marked by a pressing concern of not being able to stay put. Like for Marwa and many other tenants, this is influenced by the experience of seeing friends and neighbours disappear because of the continuously rising housing costs. Behind Phillip's outright threat of eviction lingers the alternative of more than doubled rents in the flipped apartment. All their futures are contingent on the power dynamics of Leipzig's urban restructuring and the resulting pace of change. Therein the specific context of welfare segregation, where strict jobcentre regulations on the "allowed" size and cost of a flat limit unemployed tenants' housing options drastically, pose a specific threat to Leipzig's unemployed working class. By nature of the racialization and East-Germanization of Germany's surplus working class, this burden falls heavily on long-term tenants and immigrants.

Despite overlapping experiences of housing precarity, ways of coping with their situations vary greatly among the introduced tenants. With all tenants living on low incomes, their *strategies of appropriation* differ according to both social and cultural resources, and their temporally

mediated experiences of residential alienation in the wider neighbourhood. Phillip and his flatmates struggle against the prospect of rent rises even before they are implemented. This is contingent on their activist knowledge of these processes, their capacities to engage with them and their wide social networks, providing them with advice, solidarity, and emotional support. Their housing struggle is straining, but temporally successful. Annett tries to keep control over her increasing housing expenses by ignoring rent rises and refusing to pay. However, lacking the knowledge, experience and support of Phillip and his flatmates, this is much less strategic and thus carries a higher risk of future eviction. As an unemployed East German woman in her age, her futures elsewhere are additionally limited. Finally, Dirk, Marwa and many other tenants simply pay their rent rises and endure the mounting pressure out of a lack of perceived alternatives, with different implications according to their shifting positions in a spatio-temporal matrix.

As the next section shows, tenants' experiences of alienation, as well as their divergent appropriation strategies both within and beyond their rent relation are inseparable from their experiences in and relation to the neighbourhood. These manifest in different temporalities of belonging.

(Dis)identification and temporalities of belonging in the neighbourhood

Beyond the stratified resources of dealing with displacement pressure immediately, a pivotal factor in tenants' perception of and dealing with rent-related problems is their experience in the wider neighbourhood. The implications of straining rent relations differ according to tenants' (dis)identification, hence their attachment to the neighbourhood and their perception of alternatives. Both are contingent on tenants' sense of place, and hence closely entangled with their experiences of residential alienation that spatially exceed the walls they live in.

The different stories illustrate how attachment to the neighbourhood and (dis)identification depend on histories, practices of and limits to appropriation of neighbourhood space. This is intertwined with tenants' temporally mediated perception of urban restructuring and their temporalities of belonging. The descriptions of changing and alienating relations to the neighbourhood involve the transformation of its population, and more specifically the disappearance of friends, acquaintances, neighbours. This could be considered what Marcuse has termed "social alienation" as "the separation between the individual and society, the

individual and the community" (Marcuse, 1975, p.183), and will be scrutinized in depth in the following chapter.

Yet even more prominently, tenants' stories feature the change of social *spaces,* be it the displacement of the little city farm or the *Ladenprojekte*; or the changing infrastructure; facilities; shops; bars; restaurants. These spaces play such a central role in residents' changing sense of place in the neighbourhood, because they were part of their place-making activities, part of their ways of interacting with the neighbourhood in a manner that impacted both the neighbourhood and their daily lives. They were products of local appropriation and active dwelling. The non-commercial projects that Annett and the students were involved in, as well as the bars and cinemas of the past that Dirk and his friends remember, and the flourishing immigrant infrastructure that many immigrant interviewees refer to, must be understood as outcomes and vehicles of practical and social engagement in the neighbourhood, and thus of local identification through placemaking.

The former local neighbourhood infrastructure, mourned by long-term residents, was destroyed long ago, in the wake of Leipzig's post-unification shrinkage and restructuring. Like many long-term tenants, Dirk and his friends nostalgically remember it whilst failing to create a comparable relationship with the new shops, cafés, bars, and people. Interestingly, the only exception to this in Dirk's generation, whose narrative is not marked by a clear loss of *present-grounded* place attachment, is a former local journalist (IV-I9). He is also the only interviewee among those with a long history in the neighbourhood, who never changed his profession, and thus did not become part of a massive East German surplus working-class in the wake of neoliberal reunification (Becker and Naumann, 2020). Additionally, as a journalist he constantly met new inhabitants and could appropriate changes in context through his work. His biography is an exceptional one in a context of extreme rupture, in which not just the surroundings, but the entire social, work and daily lives of residents changed, followed by systematic and structural stigmatization and devaluation of East German biographies (Pates and Schochow, 2013; Buck and Hönke, 2013; Ahbe, 2018; Köpping, 2018). The other long term tenants' strong nostalgia has little effect on present or future neighbourhood changes. With May (2017) it can be understood as a means of psychologically appropriating their surroundings nevertheless. Their *nostalgic temporality of belonging* sustains their identification with a lost space, without encouraging any practical form of appropriation. Consequentially, their perceived threat of displacement stands in an ambiguous field of tension between leaving the neighbourhood they have come to despise

in its new form and leaving behind those memories and few remaining social contacts that constitute a firm base of their current sense of belonging and self. Additionally, and contingent on the transfer dependence or low pensions of many of these tenants, alternatives outside the neighbourhood are limited and decreasing. As a result of continuous gentrification and welfare segregation, even just following their previous neighbours "across the rails" threatens to become increasingly difficult.

The non-commercial social spaces that Annett and different interviewed students were involved in, were very much a by-product of the disappearing infrastructure bemoaned by Dirk and his friends. Via the easy access to cheap or free semi-public spaces, residents could actively shape the neighbourhood and create strong bonds with it. Yet in the last few years, all these projects increasingly came under pressure of upgrading and rising rents. For those involved, their displacement implies a loss of agency over the neighbourhood space and its development, a "disruption of this relation of appropriation" (Jaeggi, 2016, p.248). Annett temporally copes with this by weaving stories of revenge and imagined collective sabotage and through these, staying in touch with remaining neighbours. Along with her ignoring of rent raises, her temporality of belonging can be classified as *stubbornly present* – whilst her identification with the neighbourhood is hardly wavering, this form of appropriation has little transformative capacity, and therewith, future. Through her stories, Annett temporarily regains a fragile sense of agency for the moment, which once more roots her to the neighbourhood whilst making the prospect of potential displacement from her flat especially threatening.

Mostly having struggled unsuccessfully against unwanted neighbourhood transformations, the interviewed young (mostly West German) activists' place-attachment is shifting between *identification through struggle* and *resigned disidentification*. Philipp, Kim, and Marco very much perceive a loss of control over their environment. The project Kim was active in had to move out after one of the inhabitants of the house bought the building and decided to refurbish it, causing rents beyond the non-commercial projects' affordability. This "mix of contact within the house and suddenly they're the landlords, who you talk to", was prevalent in several interviews (III-I3; IV-I08; IV-I11; IV-I13). It highlights how the potential of making profit with real estate lays bare (emergent) class divisions within a young generation of dreamers, as some of them chose and could afford to become landlords, and others became dependent on their benevolence. Structurally, West German newcomers are much more likely to have the capital to do so, as their chance to inherit money from their parents is much greater than that of their East German peers,

who mostly inherit the legacy of a past working-class society. Some, like Kim and Marco have used their cultural and social capital to struggle against the (new) landlords, trying to find a collective way of re-gaining control/appropriating their projects and with them agency in the neighbourhood. However, defeated struggles led to frustrated withdrawal and a sense of nostalgia. Their nostalgia differs from that of long-term tenants, not least out of perceivable alternatives. It is much less functional for their (spatialized) identity than that of Dirk and his friends, as they can afford to sever their ties with the neighbourhood, considering alternative imaginable futures. In a spatialized "power chronography", their dependence on the timing of others is slightly attenuated through their young age, the lack of harsh East-German transformation experiences and their prospects of upward social mobility owing to the transferability of their social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1987). Their attachment to the neighbourhood diminishes, and several consider moving away.

In contrast to the disappearance of non-commercial projects, the commercial infrastructure that many immigrant tenants appreciate was flourishing right before the pandemic. Some, like Alina simply value it because of its familiarity and function as a sort of refuge from being different and subject to everyday racism. Others, like Marwa and her husband, have been personally involved in building it, carry an according sense of pride and attachment and are inclined to hopefully invest in the neighbourhood's upgrading. Their personal stakes in it are shaped by social upward mobility, at least since their arrival in Germany and coin their *conflictedly hopeful but threatened temporality of belonging*. Whilst aiming at future "racial uplift" (Boyd, 2005) of and through the neighbourhood, they face its limitation in the context of neoliberal restructuring and a competitive, racist housing market. Furthermore, the pandemic has revealed the fragile nature of individual social advancement, as many businesses closed, and government aids were contingent on being able to navigate complex bureaucracy in German. Simultaneously, their strong place attachment makes these tenants particularly vulnerable to the prospect of losing their home in the neighbourhood. Alina's case, along with stories from social workers who support refugees in the search for housing demonstrates, that this is not just a question of enjoying the immigrant culture around Eisenbahnstraße, but one of fear, insecurity, and actual racist threat (III-I3; II-I12).

Image 8: April 2020 – "This Tragedy": art galleries start replacing non-commercial Ladenprojekte, presumably also these will be temporary.

Image 9: December 2019 – people enjoying the winter sun on the terrace of a Turkish café.

Relatedly, the stories of Tareq and teenagers growing up in refugee shelters but going to school in the neighbourhood illustrate a *hopeless temporality of belonging, if it can even be considered such*, which, despite daily presence in the neighbourhood has little past, present, or future. The socialization of exclusion of working-class (or rather rendered surplus) immigrants results from outright exclusionary displacement on a structurally racist housing market. For those residing in the neighbourhood, their prospect of alternatives in the case of displacement, both within and beyond the neighbourhood, is limited. Tenants' potential not just of living but also of developing place attachment depends very much on Leipzig's "power geometry" of housing, where the access to and location of flats is not just contingent on income, but also on institutional racism,

welfare segregation and the lack of large flats for families. Its competitive nature is exacerbated for all those structurally and ideologically rendered undesirable.

Conclusion

Through a fine-grained ethnographic account, this chapter has developed an empirically based, nuanced account of residential alienation's psychosocial facets, stemming from tenants' lack of control over the spatio-temporal developments caused by neoliberal urban restructuring in Leipzig's inner East (Massey, 1991; Reichle, 2021a). The manifestations of residential alienation were shown to be stratified according to tenants' position in a spatio-temporal power matrix, influencing their potential of appropriation and the different temporalities of belonging and forms of (dis)identification entangled with these. Therewith, chapter 5 has illustrated neoliberal urban restructuring's divisive effects, (re)producing differentiated, hierarchized subjectivations of precarious and working-class tenants. In doing so, the conducted analysis speaks to a body of literatures on displacement, referenced in chapter 2. Challenging not only displacement studies' frequent limitation to physical displacement (critically Davidson, 2009; Zuk et al., 2018), the developed conceptual approach also permitted to understand tenants' stratified agency within a context of residential alienation. Pushing Madden and Marcuse's concept beyond a mere focus on housing (Marcuse, 1975; Madden and Marcuse, 2016), it was shown how alienation in the rent-relation is inextricably linked with alienation and appropriation in the neighbourhood. With the conducted analysis, furthermore its macro-social effects beyond spatial reshuffling were demonstrated. These are crucial for the subsequent *political* analysis of its implications.

Mentioned in passing, the pandemic was not centred further, as it showed to mainly exacerbate existing differences. It increased gendered and racialized effects of already precarious working, dwelling and housing conditions, and furthered unequal conditions of social reproduction. Its meso-relational effects are inquired in the following chapter.

Incorporating experiences of neglect; overcrowding; displacement pressure and anxiety; physical displacement, and the threat thereof; landlord harassment; exclusionary displacement; anonymization and the defamiliarization with the neighbourhood through the disappearance of social spaces; changes in infrastructure and population, residential alienation was shown to transcend tenants' individual rent relations. Their estrangement and loss or lack of control over spaces of dwelling instead resulted from the interdependence of housing problems and experiences of neighbourhood changes that can be summarized as disturbances to their

potential of spatial appropriation, and identification. Consequentially, residential alienation negatively impacted all tenants' sense of place and belonging. Yet their alienation, their "un-homing" (Elliott-Cooper, Hubbard and Lees, 2019) is not total. Similar to the idea of dis- and emplacement recently put forward by Wynne and Rogers (2021), tenants' relation to their homes and neighbourhood was shown instead to exists in a field of tension between residential alienation and different strategies of appropriation. In the competitive spirit of neoliberal urban restructuring, these are, however, differentiated according to previously existing class divisions.

Following the stories of Annett, Dirk, Marwa, Tareq, Philipp, and anecdotes from tenants with similar experiences, the entanglement of their attempts of place-making in the neighbourhood with parallel or subsequent experiences of residential alienation was shown to be closely related to their perception of and control over different temporalities. Guided by Sharma's (2014) approach to temporality, these must be conceived as inherently power dependent. Tenants' relation to past, present, and future mirrors the different psychosocial manifestations of residential alienation in their daily lives. Annett's stubborn endurance is not very promising for the future, as she has little real means to maintain control over the neighbourhood's upgrading or her landlord's plans. Nevertheless, it provides fragile support for her sense of agency and maintenance of place-attachment in the present. Similarly, Dirk and his friends have little power over either their rent raises or the continuous transformation of the neighbourhood. With their experience of powerlessness in the face of change dating back until German reunification, they have no remaining hopes for the future. Yet they sustain an ambiguous place-attachment through a strong, regressive nostalgia, clinging to "the repetition of the unrepeatable" (Boym, 2001, p.XVII). This inhibits active engagement and results in dislike of the present neighbourhood but equally causes fears of leaving it behind along with the memories tied to it, which constitute a strong basis of identification. Having known the neighbourhood for much shorter periods of time, the other interviewees differ from Dirk's generation most in their lack of specific, East German working class transformation experiences. Researching *Ostalgie*, Berdahl (1999, p.202) describes these through "the popular saying that we have 'emigrated without leaving'", representative of the extreme discrepancy between experience and agency.

Although Phillip and other young, educated, and mostly West German tenants have also developed a sense of nostalgia, stemming from their experiences of recent gentrification and the associated loss of non-commercial communal spaces, their nostalgia is much less constitutive of local identification. Despite temporary withdrawal and frustration, their class,

education, experience, and generation-based resources allow them to search for alternative futures elsewhere.

This is much harder to realize for all immigrant tenants interviewed. In contrast to the long-term working poor, unemployed, or poor, pensioned tenants from East Germany, some of their stories are marked by forward looking aspirations to social advancement or related positive perceptions of the flourishing immigrant infrastructure in the neighbourhood. Simultaneously, a racist climate worse in most of the remaining city, coupled with institutional racism on Leipzig's housing market, make them particularly vulnerable to exclusionary displacement. Together with hopes of upward mobility, these racialized exclusions, exacerbated by the structural under-classing of immigrants in Germany, shape a context of competitive subjectivation where the line between striving for upward mobility and complete resignation is fine.

The complex interrelations of neighbourhood and housing experiences illustrate a multidimensional matrix of power geometries and chronographies (Massey, 1992; Sharma, 2013), into which tenants are socialized according to their stratified backgrounds and hierarchized class positions. Tenants' experiences within Leipzig's upgrading housing market and neoliberal urbanization vary along dimensions of gender; racialization; welfare dependence and -access; education and class-background; and relatedly, inner German East/West relations and respective generational biographies; as well as working conditions determined by all these factors. Their dynamic subjectivation within this spatio-temporal matrix represents their (sense of) agency over urban restructuring across different scales of home, their different strategies and potentials of spatial appropriation and their access to alternative futures.

Even though all tenants experience overlapping negative psychosocial effects of urban restructuring, their potential of dealing with these, either through outright struggle or through differently sustainable strategies of appropriation, is stratified. In other words, their experience of residential alienation depends on the marginalization of their position in a process of spatial production (Reichle, 2021a). Hence, coming back to the concept of alienation, although residential alienation can be considered an overall condition in capitalist urbanization, its effects on tenants' daily lives, futures, and all social relations, are relative and contingent on pre-existing social divisions. Therewith, neoliberal urban restructuring perpetuates social inequalities by negatively impacting the spaces of social reproduction of all those living in someone else's housing and cities dominated by (finance) capital. Furthermore, through its differentially alienating effects on tenants' intimate spaces of subjectivation, it reproduces hierarchized

nuances of (dis)identification, experiences of time and (senses of) agency and control over place. Thereby it deepens divisions among precarious tenants, through reproducing and cementing classed, racialized, generational, inner-German, and gendered differences spatio-temporally. This leads to the next chapter on the political and relational effects of residential alienation.

6. Emerging relations, fragmentations, and divisions - the relational reproduction of urban restructuring from below

Following the analysis of political-economic patterns of urban restructuring (chapter 4) and the subsequent illustration of tenants' experiences of these (chapter 5), this chapter turns to the central relational contribution of this thesis, by investigating meso-relational, political consequences of residential alienation, whilst thereby equally interrogating its reproduction from below. It thus asks, how the collective lethargically depressed mood among Leipzig's tenants, diagnosed in chapter 4, emerges from the stratified individual experiences of residential alienation, described in chapter 5, via their relations to one another. Furthermore, along with the barriers to them, potential alternative pathways of emergent solidarities are analysed, as prerequisites to any (pessimistically) hopeful alliance of tenants that could challenge the reproduction of Leipzig's trajectory of urban commodification and financialization.

Focussing on the micro-level explorations of five tenants' daily lives, these were contextualized as always relational in the previous chapter. On a macro level, tenants' experiences of urban restructuring were shown to contribute to the reproduction of hierarchized class-relations, contingent on their shifting locations in a matrix of power geographies and chronographies (Massey, 1991; Sharma, 2014). Yet also *meso-scale* relations in the neighbourhood appeared as a defining factor for tenants' experiences, marked by anonymization, population change and solidarity networks. Chapter 6 reveals how urban restructuring impacts tenants' meso-relations, and which role these in turn play for collective or fragmented political subjectivation, the political power of tenants and thus the transformation/reproduction of trajectories of neoliberal urbanization from below. Contributing to urban political economy concerned with neoliberal urban restructuring, the chapter reveals how the latter is reproduced relationally via the nested spatio-temporal generation of fragmented and divided subjectivities, whilst pointing out

potentially transformative alternatives of communal and collectively combative subjectivation. In turn, speaking to the sociology of political subjectivation, quite specifically recently much debated with regards to rising approval of far-right populism both in (East) Germany and across the globe (Demirović et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Ansell and McNamara, 2018; Bernet et al., 2019; Belina, 2020; Mullis, 2021; Koch, forthcoming), chapter 6 takes forward the previous conceptualization of spatio-temporal (dis)identification between residential alienation and appropriation to inquire its political effects.

As critically remarked in chapter 2, analyses of political implications of neoliberal or austerian urban restructuring tend to centre around either struggles that imply the mobilization of inclusive solidarity (August, 2016; Blanco and León, 2017; Fields, 2017; Gray, 2018b; Madrazo, 2019), or around the threats of far-right, authoritarian responses (Mullis, 2018; Bescherer, 2019; Mullis and Zschocke, 2020; Belina, 2020; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021; Reichle, 2021a; Mullis, 2021). Applying a relational lens to the empirical research conducted in Leipzig, it is argued that these distinct foci constitute two shperes of a relational spectrum, that when thought together ameliorate the understanding of spatialized political subjectivation. In their paper on *Housing, Place and Populism*, Ansell and McNamara (2018) find that despite recent interest in the geography of political subjectivation, a refined conceptualization or even empirical analysis of the mechanisms of spatialized subjectivation remains unrealised. This gap is addressed in the current chapter through an empirical analysis that introduces *fragmentations* as a central, linking relational moment between emergent solidarities and divisions, and a defining factor of residential alienation. As such, the analysed fragmentations provide a detailed account of "'social alienation' [which] means the condition of estrangement between a person and his/her community" (Marcuse, 1975, p.183). Continuing the spatio-temporally sensitive method introduced in chapter 5, the requested geographically oriented analys of subjectivation is furthermore refined with a temporal dimension. As a result and refining the previous assessment of multiple scales of belonging, it is shown how political subjectivation occurs through nested spatio-temporal scales interdepending with tenants' position in hierarchized class relations.

To develop this analysis, the chapter traces the spectrum between relational goods and evils (Donati and Archer, 2015), solidarities and divisions (Adamczak, 2017) on the basis of the conducted qualitative and ethnographic research with tenants. In dialogue with findings from the previous chapter on tenants' spatio-temporal subjectivation into hierarchized class

positions, it will be explored how these feed into fragmentations and divisions on a meso level, and why and when instead solidarities and contestations emerge. Recalling the different, complexely interwoven forms of solidarity referenced in chapter 2, the emergent solidarities are furthermore studied with regard to their transformative aspirations vis-à-vis urban restructuring.

Beginning the chapter with a recourse to theories of relational emergence and spatio-temporal political subjectivation, the concept of meso-relations is elaborated. Meso-relations are considered to exist, be disrupted, and emerge within a relational spectrum. Based on a classification of empirical material, different types of solidarities, fragmentations, and divisions are identified on that spectrum. These are then illustrated and analysed with respect to their spatio-temporal context and conditions of emergence, and their impacts on tenants' political subjectivation and respective (relational) reactions to urban restructuring. In other words, the role of meso-relations for the reproduction or transformation of urban restructuring from below is studied.

For this endeavour, political subjectivation is defined as the subjection to, reproduction of or challenging of power relations, along with the emergence of political perspectives and actions through tenants' *relational* reactions to structural alienation. Shaping their political (self)understanding of (their role in) the social world, their relations to others and thus solidarities and divisions, political subjectivation consequentially accounts for both authoritarian dynamics among tenants, but also their potential to engage in (collective) actions and develop political power. Based on this and in line with Archer's (2000; 2010) morphogenetic approach, assuming that relational emergence is always bent back and contingent on previous (macro and meso) relations, three interrelated arguments are developed, defining this chapter's analytical contribution:

First, the stratified experiences of residential alienation in the studied context of exclusive, uneven, individualizing, and competitive neoliberal urban restructuring oriented towards profit instead of human need, illustrated in chapter 5, structurally limit the emergence of solidarities, whilst privileging the emergence of fragmentations, nurturing authoritarian divisions. These disempowering relational moments centrally contribute to the reproduction of urban restructuring from below.

Refining this finding spatio-temporally, it is secondly argued that political subjectivation occurs through nested spatio-temporal scales, shaped by Leipzig's specific trajectory of capitalist and neoliberal urban restructuring and interdepending with hierarchized class divisions (Reichle, 2021a). In the case analysed, these scales are specified as consisting of the flat, the building, the neighbourhood, the city, and the (divided) nation, intersecting with different histories, trajectories, and experiences of transformation.

Finally, these spatio-temporally nested scales of political subjectivation are shown to not only create barriers, but also windows of opportunity for emergent solidarities, and resulting tenant power. Depending on tenants' specific trajectories of subjectivation, these bear the potential for transformative interventions into the production of abstract space (and with it the reproduction of macro-social class divisions) from below in more or less immediate forms. The emergence of solidarities, their political direction and their transformative potential to counter alienation is contingent on tenants' class positions, common interest, and reflexivity, and crucially shared spaces and temporalities of belonging that provide a breeding ground for solidary socio-spatial morphogenesis.

6.1 Existing and emerging solidarities and divisions

Having explored individual relational experiences of residential alienation, such as changing relations to friends and neighbours in the last chapter, as well as the reproduction of macro-structural social relations that impact these, namely hierarchized class relations, this chapter centres around a meso-relational analysis to inquire tenants' political role in the restructuring city. This means that to define existing and emerging solidarities, relationships that transcend individual strong or weak ties or animosities between concrete persons are scrutinized. Whereas what is called meso-relations, fragmentations, and divisions in the following, *can* consist of a set of such individual relations, the defining factor is that these are part of certain group dynamics which *also* function independently of actual concrete relationships between individuals. As such, they are always co-constituted by macro-structural relations of class, gender, race, etc., and their political, discursive, and affective mediation. To make an example, racist prejudice within a neighbourhood can very much manifest in a relationship between two individuals, but it can equally exist as a general (non)relation with a vague group, independent of a specific (racialized) subject.

As shown in Stevenson and colleagues' (2019) analysis of social relations in a changing Protestant and Catholic population, such meso-scale relations are crucial for the development of spatialized belonging and (dis-)identification. As outlined in chapter 2, identification is processual, relational, power- and context-dependent (Bourdieu, 1987; Massey, 1994; Hall, 2000; du Gay, Evans and Redman, 2000). It occurs in a field of tension between structural pre-conditions, subjection to, reflection, and collective contestation of these (Cleaver, 2000; Maihofer, 2007; Rehmann, 2008; Gray, 2018a; Dalla Costa, 2019). To understand political subjectivation in a restructuring context, this chapter focusses on the *relational* implications of (dis)identification, hence the way it influences tenants' relations to others. In other words, political subjectivation is inquired in its contingency with emergent relations and divisions.

To analyse how and why meso-relations and divisions emerge in a restructuring context, the critical realist conception of social relations introduced in chapter 2 is applied. Recalling Archer's theory of social morphogenesis, relations are understood as emergent, hence constantly transforming but always bent back on previous relations (Archer, 2000; Archer, 2010). To understand both existing and emerging relations, it is thus crucial to interrogate both their context of emergence, and their reproductive or transformative dimensions. Drawing on Jessop's (2005) refinement of this approach, the strategic and differential selectivity of social structures, the strategic and reflexive power of different actions and the spatio-temporal rhythms of both, or in other words, the specificities of power-chronographies and geographies (Massey, 1992; Sharma, 2014), must be taken into account for this endeavour. This will be informed by the previous subchapters, which have identified both patterns of restructuring, and the matrix of spatio-temporal power-relations shaping individuals' experience of and (sense of) agency within these.

Finally, understanding tenants' relations as relations of both social reproduction, and thus indirectly, production (Bhattacharya and Vogel, 2017; Mezzadri, 2019; Madden, 2020; Soederberg, 2020), the chapter will scrutinize how political subjectivities are (re)produced through these meso-relations, fragmentations and divisions. Furthermore, the concluding analysis uncovers the political implications of these processes of subjectivation in a twofold manner. Their impact on the (polarized) political climate of Leipzig is illustrated through the emergence of authoritarian divisions, next to different forms of solidarities. Simultaneously, and in relation to that, the role of meso-relations is studied regarding the reproduction or transformation of a trajectory of capitalist and neoliberal urbanization, which, as shown in the

last chapter, reproduces social inequalities, class-divisions, and therewith exploitative relations of production.

Therefore, the following analysis will interrogate and flesh out the finding of chapter 4, that Leipzig's tenants are hardly visible as a collective political actor influencing urban restructuring from below. To do so, drawing from one year of fieldwork, three meso-relational moments in the neighbourhood are introduced in the next sections: solidarities, fragmentations, and authoritarian divisions. Informed by findings from research during the pandemic, it is illustrated how these are exacerbated in a moment of crisis, where COVID functions as a much cited "magnifying glass" of existing social dynamics and configurations (Ludwig and Voss, 2020; Pfister, 2020; Dörre, 2020; Freedland, 2020).

Solidarities

As has not least manifested during COVID and an accompanying upsurge of (interest for) mutual aid, there are multiple forms and definitions of solidarity, which are difficult to distinguish in empirical reality (Colectiva Sembrar, 2020; della Porta, 2020; Wood, 2020; Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2020b; August, 2020; Lessenich, 2020; Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021). The forms of solidarity prevalent among tenants in Leipzig's inner East, both in non-pandemic and pandemic times, range from combative solidarity forged through struggle and opposition to the violence of capitalist urbanization (Featherstone, 2012; Adamczak, 2017; Nuss, 2020); to forms of mutual support based on specific identifications, pre-existing communities or charitable norms (Bargetz, Scheele and Schneider, 2019; Schwiertz and Schwenken, 2020; critically August, 2020), a specific form of which is even termed "Leipzig Model" by an interviewee; and attempts of bridging exclusive community relations through reflexive outreach to individuals outside the own "bubble" or transformative organizing (Maruschke, 2014; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). In the following study of their emergence, these different solidarities are loosely classified as forms of communal and collectively combative subjectivation. Attempts at collective appropriation are thereby defined by the self-identificaiton of a group via a shared struggle, whereas communal appropriation is used more loosely as a shared (emergent) sense of belonging through practical self-help. These different yet overlapping variants of solidarity have diverging impacts in terms of reach, inclusivity, rhythms and political aims or visions of transformation vis-à-vis residential alienation. Nevertheless, they reveal central commonalities in their implications for tenants' sense of belonging and spatialized subjectivation. Taken together, they constitute the meso-

relational preconditions for the development of shared affective mediations of tenant experiences and hopeful collective atmospheres.

A collective and combative response to experiences of residential alienation was introduced in the last chapter through the example of Phillip (III-I9). Three other interviewees in their late twenties and early thirties tell similar stories of collectively opposing their landlords that were either very neglectful in providing decent housing conditions, tried to raise the rent, or attempted direct eviction (II-I6; III-I2; III-I3). All of them live in houses inhabited predominantly by young and academically educated residents and made an "effort to act collectively as a house" (III-I2), determined to "fight all together" (II-I6). Their experience can be classified as collective political subjectivation through struggle, that emerged from existing social networks rich in social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1983). This means, that through their struggle they build or strengthen not only the relationships among themselves, but also collective identification that establishes or enhances their collective power (towards landlords). Accompanied by reflections of the restructuring context, this shapes their common self-understanding as tenants opposing housing commodification. Their experiences and actions are a form of (attempted) collective appropriation.

Problems with exclusionary displacement, increasing rent burdens and complex bureaucratic barriers are met by many interviews through informal support, networks, and mutual aid. Borrowing money from friends or giving and receiving language translations, or help with "papers, a lot of paper" (IV-I7) helps most interviewed tenants with a migration biography to avoid threatening conflicts with their landlords or public authorities. Others support each other with information on how to find a flat, use networks to find housing that is not on the market (IV-I12) or informally "live with friends" (IV-I10) for free. What emerges through previous friendships, family ties and communities, is not directly collective struggle, yet a shared identification with the neighbourhood; its social construction, as a form of communally created spatial representation from below (Lefebvre, 1991); and the awareness of shared, material concerns.

Communal local identification is also forged through practices of mutual support with issues of neglect or simply informal, makeshift renovations. By young, left-leaning tenants living in shared housing, such practical mutual aid is highlighted not just as a mechanism of cost-saving, but also a positive experience: "this neighbourly help […] really amazing" (II-I7). Their experiences are embedded in wider networks, communities, or spaces and times of encounter, enabling

sympathies and common identification that can exist independent of a concrete relationship between two individuals (meso-relations), as shown by the "Leipzig model". One interviewee in his forties, who has been living in Leipzig all his life proudly explains this informal system of mutual aid that has apparently been named after the city by "sociologists". Working as "a big, indirect exchange ring", it basically denotes a system of sharing and giving based on trust instead of actual acquaintance. Because of this "Leipzig Model", that manifests in free-shops, email lists and chat groups where people share material and immaterial resources based on need and availability, "so many young, alternative [people] with an income as low as the welfare level […] are still happy and don't look starved." (IV-I13) Remembering his parents, he reflects that this is a long-lasting community tradition prevalent already in daily life in the GDR to meet shortcomings. Despite generating a strong, communal sense of belonging, these solidarities of mutual support are not per-se oppositional to neoliberal urban restructuring. Whilst generating socio-spatial preconditions for combative struggle, they can also lead to supra-individual, yet limited aspirations of social uplift, as will be shown in the following.

Partly, this is owed to the fact that such networks equally depend on and are limited by social hierarchies and (the absence of) shared experiences marked by proximities within a spatio-temporal power matrix and different *temporalities of belonging.* These, as the last chapter indicated, are closely entangled. Whereas many immigrant interviewees with a strong present- and future oriented place attachment emphasize the successful creation of relationships with German neighbours in the building, where even the "old [German] man says hello, very good" (IV-I1), and German neighbours "help with the mail" (IV-I5), several younger, German interviewees bemoan the ongoing experience with limited reach of support networks and the perceived loss of relations in the neighbourhood (III-I3; IV-I8).

Some of them reflexively try to break the exclusivity of existing solidarities and develop relational "bridges" (Putnam, 2000) by creating inclusive spaces where "social counselling" is offered to everyone; simply informally helping people on the street; or engaging in radical community organizing (III-I3; III-I9; IV-I8, Maruschke, 2014). The latter has resulted in a tenants' community in an estate in an adjacent neighbourhood, that struggles collectively against their financialized landlord, Vonovia (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). In a similar vein of bridging solidarity, teachers and social workers help refugees out in the seemingly impossible search for housing although "it is not our main task" (III-I4). Although such forms of support seem close to compassionate solidarities, they can create lasting friendships that minimize tenants'

vulnerability and bear the potential of future collective struggle. Hayet's current group of friends, which she also describes as an important mutual-support network, grew from an encounter with a voluntary translator (IV-I7). To different extents, these bridging micro-relationships are shaped by the individual reflexivity of tenants rich in social and cultural capital, towards existing power relations, and the motivation to counteract them. All emerging bridges, as elaborated in the second half of the chapter, are contingent on shared spaces and times. This became particularly apparent during the pandemic, that brought about a reconfiguration of public spaces, as will be discussed below.

Whereas some of these forms of solidarity emerge in direct opposition to mechanisms of housing commodification, others indicate forms of mutual support for survival within these. They have in common that tenants appropriate their living conditions collectively or communally, through existing and emerging relations. Therewith, these solidarities reinforce existing and sometimes reflexively forge new relations, strengthening tenants' attachment to place and sense of belonging. This results in collective or communal identification not just with the neighbourhood but also as being commonly concerned by similar problematics and difficulties of daily life under urban restructuring. Together, this sense of belonging and awareness of shared problems enable local, communal subjectivation, constituting a precondition for future mutual support (Kavada, 2020). As such, it contradicts the logics of competitive urbanism. However, whilst being a precondition for future solidarities, struggles, and organized interventions into neoliberal restructuring, it does not necessarily lead to these, as debates on neoliberal enclosure of social commons problematize (Jeffrey, McFarlane and Vasudevan, 2012). As in the case of several well-established immigrant interviewees grappling with the territorial stigma of the neighbourhood (IV-I4; IV-I6), a sense of belonging and shared problems can equally lead to the approval of upgrading. Especially for those benefiting economically from the local infrastructure, as part of an immigrant petit bourgeoisie, this is related to a hope of collective social ascent that neglects the necessity of surplus populations and their socio-spatial reproduction for neoliberal capitalism (Boyd, 2005; Soederberg, 2020). To which extent mutual support is politicized and thereby potentially transformative, is thus contingent on the problematization of existing injustices, depending on reflexivity but also class-position, previous experiences, and related aspirations. All these factors are shaped by and shaping alongside tenants' temporalities of belonging.

The variety of targeted and potential political transformative horizons of different forms of solidarity became very apparent during the pandemic state of exception, that gave birth to a row of initiatives trying to facilitate support among people differently affected by it – through giving out masks, organizing help with daily tasks of social reproduction, or translating information about government regulations. These took very different forms, from charitable support groups to radical attempts at challenging "an unjust system, where responsibility is dumped onto individuals, that's what we want to change, of course in the small scale, we won't manage the whole system [laughs]" (Reichle, 2020a).

Revealing of the literally conservative dimension of some forms of mutual aid, one charitable COVID support group in Leipzig explicitly chose to not use the word solidarity. They wanted to remain distinct from left-leaning initiatives as they did not support their all-over "socialist" criticism of capitalist social injustice. Another initiative, in the tradition of reformist community organizing, followed a liberal democratic horizon, trying to increase chances of political participation without condemning the structural capitalist necessity of exclusion (Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2020b). In contrast, two COVID-support groups in and around Leipzig's inner East had a radically transformative horizon, with the aim of de-individualizing problems resulting from the pandemic whilst uttering a general anti-capitalist critique and problematizing lacking state support. However, "all initiatives shared the problem of a limited reach among those to whom they wanted to offer help." (Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021, p.51) Whilst moved by the explicit aim of reaching those the presumed to be affected most harshly by the pandemic, elderly, working-class and immigrant tenants, most COVID solidarity initiatives remained very homogenous and limited to young, student networks. Besides being owed to stratified access to and different use of communicative technologies, this is ascribable both to existing fragmentations (and divisions) and relational polarization through their pandemic exacerbation.

Both pandemic and pre-pandemic forms of solidarity can thus be classified on a political continuum between mutual aid enabling immediate survival in a context of neoliberal austerity urbanism; building power to selectively intervene into it (for the benefit of some); and building power to radically oppose it. The boundaries between these categories are blurry. What all these forms of mutual aid and solidarity share, is that they counter the structural reproduction of alienated relationlessness. Thereby they enable the generation of any form of collective project, spirit, aspiration or *atmosphere*. Depending on tenants' intersectionally classed experiences, temporalities of belonging, and political standings, these can feed into confident, optimist hopes

towards liberal advancement (mutually beneficial for gentrification) or productive anger and pessimistically hopeful attempts at radical intervention into the structural conditions of residential alienation.

Fragmentations

Before turning to what was introduced in the literature review as the opposing pole to solidarities on a relational spectrum, (authoritarian) divisions, this section explores yet another variant of "relational evils" (Donati and Archer, 2015) which denotes the *absence* of relations. The analysis of what is called fragmentations here, is argued to be fundamental to understand both solidarities and (hostile) divisions and can be pictured as standing *between* them relationally, spatially, and temporally. As a proposed connecting contribution to literatures on solidarity and authoritarianism, the concept of fragmentations refers to micro-scale isolations, gaps between groups and a fluent (dis)relational process between tenants in general. Fragmentations furthermore constitute the meso-relational foundation for the collective lethargic depression attested to Leipzig's tenants as a (non-existent) collective actor in chapter 4.

Fragmentations are a central relational outcome of Leipzig's urban restructuring. As illustrated along the stratified experiences of residential alienation, Leipzig's post-Wende neoliberal urban restructuring as an individualizing, competitive reorganization of spaces of social reproduction, produces strategically selective conditions privileging the emergence of fragmentations over that of inclusive solidarities. Fragmentations manifest on the micro scale, when individuals are isolated, but also have a meso-dimension. They exist and emerge between individuals and groups.

As the experience of limited reach of COVID-mutual aid, along with the reflections of some young tenants in the last section have revealed, existing groups can be fragmented from one another when solidarity or mutual help is exclusive to their peers. The gaps or barriers between them frequently align with macro-social dimensions of class, education, migration background, gender, racialization, and the respective experience of urban restructuring. In that sense, one type of fragmentations is characterized by the often-mentioned phrase of "bubbles" (III-I2; III-I3; III-I10) or "parallel worlds" (II-I6; II-I7; IV-I13). In sociological terms, these are being reproduced through social closure (Giddens, 1981; Bourdieu, 1987; Weber, 2002).

That such fragmentations between groups can be quite stubborn is reflected not just by young well-educated tenants reflecting on the limited reach of their neighbourhood activities, but also by social workers working with German and immigrant women and families. When trying to organize a neighbourhood festival of encounter, "the [German] families just look out of the windows but don't go down" and if they do "the German families are one community and […] people meet among one another, Chechen, Arabic, Turkish…" (III-I4). Whereas the examples of support among German and non-German neighbours in the last section somewhat contradict this finding, especially German interviewees who try to set up institutionalized spaces, activities or networks remark this kind of fragmentation. For some, like Björn, the frustration over the homogeneity and limited reach of his project, despite its "very cosmopolitan [*weltoffen* – world open]" nature, results in the narrative of the "big problem, [… of] lacking integration" (IV-I13). The subsequent section reveals how such narratives of the non-integrating foreigner fuel racist divisions.

As the testimonies of elderly tenants have demonstrated, one specific demographic gap is hardly ever bridged. Long-term elderly tenants, socialized in the GDR, rarely have connections to the other communities described. However, their experienced fragmentation represents not only a relational barrier to other communities, but also an overall (dis)relational process among many elderly tenants in the neighbourhood. A central moment of this process is anonymization. Marco's encounters with elderly men point to the structural origins of their isolation, which are theorized spatio-temporally in the second half of the chapter. He recalls: "I visited so many elderly Saxon men at home, that always cried, drank a lot of alcohol, because they lost their job after reunification and felt useless and were so happy that someone visits them." (IV-I8) He is the only young person interviewed that randomly addresses elderly men in the street. Contradictive to his behaviour, several elderly tenants blame the young newcomers for furthering their sense of anonymity. They are described as ignorantly taking space in the streets, bars, and backyards, through lingering, graffiti and noise (FN-III; FN-IV; II-I18; III-I9; IV-I9). However, young tenants too feel irritated and alienated by the constant influx of students "so many people […] that you can't know one another anymore" (III-I3), and "now it feels more like people find this street or this neighbourhood more... hip or cool or interesting" (IV-I12). This appears similar to the findings of "cultural displacement" reviewed in chapter 2 (Cahill, 2007; Hyra, 2015; Valli, 2015). However, the differences between old and new residents are only partially classed. The demarcation of the self-identified first generation of young academics from the following ones is yet another specific fragmentation, that evokes Bourdieu's studies of

distinction (Bourdieu, 1987; Pinçon-Charlot and Pinçon, 2018). The second half of the chapter picks up the spatial dimensions of such distinctions.

Anonymization occurs as a mix of the loss of existing relations, familiarity, place-attachment and, mostly in response to that, the withdrawal of tenants. The graduated art student says that he is not sure what is more relevant, the disappearance of the people or the fact that as a result of all the changes and frustrations "I prefer to be on my own now or with people I know well" (IV-I8). The elderly Ms Schütz and her husband admit that "we don't pay attention [to changes], we have our allotment nearby, we go there […] we don't know the people anymore." (III-I5) A result of anonymization is mistrust, exemplified by the disruption and incipient malfunctioning of the "Leipzig model", as "one becomes more careful […] when there's this doubt" (IV-I13), as well as the impression of many that friendliness and mutual help decline both in houses and public spaces (II-I7; II-I18; III-I1; III-I3; IV-I12). Communal spatial representation is disturbed.

As opposed to collective subjectivations illustrated in the last section, fragmentations in the form of anonymization, fluctuation and withdrawal reinforce individualization and "relationlessness" (Jaeggi, 2016), a crucial feature of alienation. Based partly on lacking shared experiences, new collective experiences hardly emerge in a fragmented context. This manifests strongly during COVID, along with the stratified exacerbation of residential alienation, that I have called structural relational polarization elsewhere (Nettelbladt and Reichle, 2021). Although not primarily caused by the pandemic, the intensification of both homogenous social contact and fragmentations and divisions result from its magnifying effect on neoliberal urbanization. In non-pandemic times, fragmentations and divisions are challenged by reflexive, purposeful or spontaneous relational emergence, or in Lefebvre's (1991) terms the potential to differential space always inherent in abstract space. However, the spatial reshuffling and disappearance of spaces of encounter caused by the pandemic and its regulation thwart this potential of relational emergence.

Moreover, reproducing a vicious morphogenetic cycle, fragmentations disrupt tenants' sense of place, in that they feel less connected and trustful towards their surroundings. This was, for example, reflected in many accounts of elderly tenants' scruples of accepting support during COVID. Consequentially, whether with regards to pandemic restrictions or overall psychosocial problems resulting from urban restructuring, fragmentations leave tenants to either deal with these in closed circles, or in an isolated manner, by themselves. Therewith, these meso-

relational outcomes of urban restructuring hinder collective appropriation, leave neoliberal urbanization uncontested from below and facilitate its reproduction.

(Authoritarian) Divisions

Having briefly reviewed the (mostly) German debate on increasingly popular far-right politics in chapter 2, this section introduces the empirical analysis of local, relational manifestations of authoritarianism, "[i]nstead of trying to choose sides within a heated debate in (German) academia about the primacy of intensifying class contradictions versus the primacy of historically and culturally deep seated racism" (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021, p.11). To do so, the introduced definition of authoritarian divisions as "real or imagined relations or their absence" (Reichle, 2021a, p.4) is mobilized and empirically fleshed out. Whereas in the context of Leipzig's inner East most of these divisions are marked by racism, the umbrella term *authoritarian* is used to designate actions and attitudes transcending racist articulations. In line with a long tradition of critical theories and research projects, authoritarianism is understood as a divisive, submissive and sometimes violent acceptance and reproduction of (established) social hierarchies (Adorno, 1995; Horkheimer and Adorno, 2003; Heitmeyer, 2005; Decker, 2010; Nachtwey and Heumann, 2019; Decker and Brähler, 2020).

Exemplified by the complaint over lacking integration in the last section, existing fragmentations can merge into hostile divisions, manifesting in Björn's complaint about the "high concentration of people immigrated from abroad. With all the problems they bring." (IV-I13) The mechanism of such narratives is characteristic for many empirical manifestations of authoritarian divisions. Shifting the blame for perceived problems to a specific group of *others* is termed scapegoating in sociological literatures. Coser defines it as a way of deferring a specific "frustration" from "realistic conflicts" to "unrealistic" ones (Coser, 1956, p.49). Experiences of residential alienation, defined by (perceived) powerlessness can thus be met by "shifting attention to a third and technically unrelated party" (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021, p.21). This is defined here as *ideological appropriation*, as opposed to appropriation through communal or collective, solidary praxis. Scapegoating presupposes an understanding of social hierarchies, which can be shaped by material (and hence spatialized) experiences of social structures (spatial practice) or hegemonic discourses (representations of space). These constitute the power-laden selective context of social interactions in space (representational space) and competitive negotiations over place-frames (Lefebvre, 1991; Pierce, Martin and Murphy, 2011; Jessop, 2016; Hwang,

2016). How this plays out through specific spatio-temporalities, is elaborated in the subsequent section.

Several immigrant informants report experiences of racist prejudice in the neighbourhood, inhibiting emerging relations: "the Germans are concerned about refugees, they don't want to talk to me" (IV-I5), or even outright verbal or physical violence "we get shoved in the bus" (AI-I1.5). After a visit to an international women's centre, the social worker needs to unlock the door as I want to leave. She apologizes: "Sorry, we are so badly accepted in this neighbourhood. And Tuesday and Friday I work alone, so I lock the door." (FN-IV)

Among several white, long-term tenants, racist prejudice and scapegoating manifests in interpretations of their living conditions (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). Complaining about the poor housing quality, Anett is quick to blame it on "the Romanians" who are noisy and at whose "place it always smells like cat piss." (FN-III) Another long-term tenant in his fifties channels his dissatisfaction to anger about an unemployed "crazy" neighbour who cleans the house and sorts the trash without being paid for it. In his social chauvinist logic, it is her fault, that the official janitor and cleaners do not do their job properly (FN-IV).

Within the wider neighbourhood, several informants complain about the presence of "foreigners". Their racist accounts partly refer to concrete problems, for which immigrants are blamed. However, some simply verbalize an unspecific discontent with "too many foreigners" (AI-2.4), that crystallize in this elderly tenant's statement: "it's a good area, but the people don't fit! What's lingering around here!" (FN-IV). Several interviewees develop conspiracy theories about drug dealing, that involve racialized residents and government institutions. "I believe that they have contacts into the police, they always know when a razzia is coming" (AI-2.2), or "who is responsible [for the problems in the neighbourhood], ha, good question. The state I would say. If you let in so many people that earn their money like this" (AI-2.4). Instead of acknowledging racialized class dynamics or the exclusions from formal labour at the base of street level drug dealing, like this young woman who used to date a dealer: "they also need to earn money somehow" (AI-2.1), scapegoating myths shift the blame onto racialized and marginalized individuals. These, as the story of Tareq in chapter 4 demonstrated, meanwhile suffer from police brutality and racist exclusions from both the formal labour and housing market.

During the pandemic, a new variant of racialized scapegoating emerges. Lacking comprehension for the overcrowded housing conditions of many immigrant families who "flee outside, in order not to go nuts" (III-I4), several elderly tenants suspiciously eye immigrants' presence in public space. Relying on their boundary work within the neighbourhood, distancing themselves from its territorial stigma, they complain about the delinquent "crowded front" around the neighbourhood park referenced in the last chapter, contrasting it with the law-abiding "quiet back" where they reside (III-I1; III-I6; III-I7). In a similar vein, a German bar owner critically speculates about the abuse of government funds through other (mostly immigrant) businesses in the neighbourhood. His comment that "the state didn't just help those useless ones, but also me" (FN-IV) indicates not just his competitive positioning towards other businesses, but also its racialized tone. This stands in stark contrast to my observation of the closure of several immigrant businesses in the neighbourhood, inter alia because of the difficulty of navigating the necessary bureaucratic steps for state support in a language they were not fluent in (FN-IV).

In cases unrelated to the threat of COVID, authoritarianism manifests in reactions to residential alienation, when structural causes of precarious housing and dwelling experiences seem out of reach and compensatory conflict is sought with those believed to be inferior in a social hierarchy or equipped with less power (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2003; Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). Socially, authoritarian divisions result in the cementation of territorial stigma and fragmentations. Consequentially, for both those perpetuating racist stereotypes and those who are affected by these, authoritarian divisions impact tenants' sense of place in a divisive manner. Threatening racialized residents, they can be considered as an ideological attempt at appropriating alienated surroundings through white, German, and mostly long-term tenants. Whereas this ideological appropriation is co-constitutive of and co-constituted by the restoratively nostalgic sense of place of several elderly residents, it does not increase their political power as renters. Instead, authoritarian divisions inhibit emerging solidarities and increase polarization, whilst making tenants more vulnerable to divisive landlord strategies. Similar to the existing fragmentations that they are nurtured by, authoritarian divisions thus inhibit the generation of collective, hopeful political contestation, in which ever direction.

6.2 Nested spatio-temporal scales of political subjectivation

The empirical evidence of solidarities, fragmentations and authoritarian divisions has demonstrated that emerging relations are contingent on existing relations (and their absence) and therewith always embedded in concrete spaces and times (Massey, 1991; Bourdieu, 2018).

Exploring this further, this section is concerned with a spatio-temporally sensitive analysis of social morphogenesis (Archer, 2000; Archer, 2010; Donati and Archer, 2015). Structurally, capitalist cities are organized along exclusive lines of class, race and gender (Aalbers, 2006; Tonkiss, 2017; Pinçon-Charlot and Pinçon, 2018; Bourdieu, 2018) and housing conditions defined by positionalities in an exploitative system (Engels, 1970). Besides this spatial reproduction of social inequality (macro-relations), existing and emerging meso-relations like social movements are equally contingent on spaces of organization (Uhlmann, 2020). Likewise, encounters, routines and micro-relations in daily life are mediated by physical space and places (Reichle, 2021a). All these scales are shaped by and differently experienced according to the stratified rhythms of urban life and the profit-oriented pace of urban restructuring (Smith, 1987; Aramayona and García-Sánchez, 2019).

All relational moments represented in this chapter emerge out of the same alienating context of urban restructuring. Macro-relationally this is marked by what Soederberg (2020, p.63) terms "secondary exploitation […] through rent […] relations", the competition for increasingly scarce affordable housing and the disappearance of communal spaces of social reproduction in the "social factory" (Dalla Costa, 2019). As the last chapter has indicated, tenants' positionality in this competitive atmosphere is defined by racialized and gendered class hierarchies and respective exclusions. These include racialized exclusionary displacement; racialized and gendered division of labour and resulting dependence on others and low rents (Reichle and Kuschinski, 2020); and welfare segregation. Their positionality affects tenants' political subjectivation, shaped by experiences of residential alienation; their strategies of appropriation; and their relational reactions to it. Mutual help can be observed not only but predominantly among tenants with similar experiences; institutional support is targeted to specific groups; solidary struggles emerge mostly among young, educated tenants; and hostile, authoritarian divisions follow established social hierarchies and dominant stigmatizing narratives.

There are, however, missing links in this connection between socio-structural categories and emerging solidarities, fragmentations, and divisions. Firstly, even if emerging relations tend to be bent back on macro-social relations, how is it that similar experiences of residential alienation are sometimes met with solidarities, sometimes with withdrawal and fragmentation and sometimes with hostile divisions? Secondly, what accounts for the solidarities that transcend socio-structural categories or classic community solidarity? In other words, *how* do macro-social

power relations impact political subjectivation, meaning the relational subjection to, reproduction, reflection, or contestation of these power relations?

Analysing how emerging relations, fragmentations and divisions are bent back on structural relations, the remainder of the chapter uncovers how the diverging forms of emergence are shaped by nested spatio-temporal conditions and subjects' positions within them. With this aim, the section subsequently analyses the role of different spatial scales, intersecting with dominant temporality and stratified experiences of it – hence tenants' temporalities of belonging. Dominant temporality therein denotes that of unevenly developing global capitalism, which tends to subsume lives and experience under its pace, although in a differentiated manner (Massey, 1992; Sharma, 2014). The spatio-temporal scales, beginning with the broadest one, refer to the reunited nation; the restructuring city; the changing neighbourhood; the commodifying house; and the (in)secure flat.

The unevenly reunited nation

The spatio-temporal scale of the reunited nation is far from tenants' daily life, yet crucially determines it. The emergence of relations and fragmentations in Leipzig's inner East is not only contingent on shared mother tongues or language barriers, highlighted equally by native German speakers and those struggling with the local language (II-I1; II-I4; II-I5; III-I4; IV-I7; IV-I2; IV-I13). Social dynamics are also contingent on the shifting identification with "imagined communities" (Benedict Anderson, 2016), nationalist ideologies and class divisions mediated by nationality, citizenship and exclusion. In the present case study, all these factors are shaped by the specific history of Germany as a divided and reunited nation, its implication for Germany's uneven development, as well as the historical and current racialized governance of international immigration (Bertram and Kollmorgen, 2001; Becker and Naumann, 2020; Krahmer, Haase and Intelmann, 2020; Soederberg, 2020).

The experiences of immigrant tenants in the study, although mediated locally, are dependent on national politics of immigration, welfare, labour, and exclusion. Both solidarities among those with similar experiences and divisions from those perpetuating these exclusions are contingent on the material implications of nationality, imagined communities and boundary work associated with it. Moreover, the national-socialist terrorist group NSU with central actors socialized in Jena (Thuringia); the emergence of the PEGIDA-movement ("patriotic Europeans against the islamization of the occident") in Dresden (Saxony); recently revived memories of widespread far-right violence after German reunification in East Germany (Bangel, 2019) along

with continuously increasing incidents of racist violence; research on the targeted settlement of Neo-Nazi structures in the East German countryside (Röpke and Speit, 2019) and the generally more widespread prevalence of racist attitudes in East- than in West Germany (Foroutan and Kubiak, 2018) suggest that racialized violence, exclusion and marginalization are exacerbated in East Germany. "Here in the East its different than in Düsseldorf, West Germany. I keep asking myself why" (IV-I05), contemplates Mira, a Kurdish woman whose sister lives in Düsseldorf. Immigrant tenants' relations to place and others emerge before this backdrop of constant racist threat, in a field of tension between exclusion, strong attachment to the exceptionally international neighbourhood and feeling trapped in it, emergent community relations and disruptive experiences of divisive relations.

The experiences of long-term East German tenants interviewed are also contingent on their specific positionality in a reunited nation. According to a recent study on the marginalization of Muslim and East German people in Germany, though different in many regards, their experience reveals parallels to that of Muslim immigrants (Foroutan and Kubiak, 2018; Foroutan et al., 2019). Not only did East-Germans "basically [have] to move without (laughs) actually moving away, but we needed to rearrange our entire lives" (II-I10) with German reunification. Since then, they are furthermore underrepresented throughout all social elites and, not least economically, disadvantaged vis-à-vis West Germans (Pates and Schochow, 2013; Buck and Hönke, 2013; Leidereiter, 2020). Stratified nationality does not only impact class position for international lower-middle or working-class immigrants, historically pushed into precarious jobs or excluded from the labour market, but also for East and West Germans. Historical differences between East and West German socializations, into a worker-oriented versus a middle-class-oriented society, shape the subjective but also material foundation for current inequalities and (dis)identifications (Ahbe, 2018). These gained increasing meaning (symbolically and economically) with German reunification and the assertion of West German neoliberalism, in which East Germany became an extended workbench for the West (Intelmann, 2020; Becker and Naumann, 2020). The historical marker, *die Wende*, has manifested itself in the memories of long-term tenants, having brought change to their entire lives and consequentially their ways of relating to the world and others within it. The scale of the divided nation is fundamental to relational experiences perceived more locally and its history determines the recurrent, specific retrograde temporalities of belonging present in most GDR-socialized tenants' accounts. Many interlocutors hardly seem to remember recent neighbourhood changes, whereas reunification is a continuous point of reference (III-I; III-I5; III-I6; FN-IV; GD).

German reunification transformed East German cities, initiating the valorization and neoliberalization of housing and urban space. The subjectivizing impact of tenants' changing housing conditions is inseparable from German unequal development, causing deindustrialization and the post-Wende exodus of people from the region, the city, the neighbourhood "because they looked for work" (IV-I9). Equally, changes in the neighbourhood are associated "with the Wende!" Incipient anonymization "started with reunification, the coming and going" (III-I5). Individualizing and alienating fragmentations were reinforced by the withdrawal of remaining tenants thrown into unemployment, who then "closed the door and tried to deal with their problems on their own" (II-I9).

Besides shaped through a process of alienating urban restructuring, long-term tenants' experience of anonymization, the resulting fragmentations and divisions are co-constituted by a changing economy and working conditions with reunification. In the GDR, "work was more than that, it was a FAMILY for many." (II-I13) The subsequent deindustrialization, tertiarization and flexibilization radically changed labour relations. All elderly tenants describe retraining measures, underemployment, or joblessness. Among those trying to find employment in a context where "they [the Treuhand] closed all the businesses" (III-I1), a competitive spirit emerged. Whereas "in the cooperative, it was like brother and sister", after the Wende "some people had work, and some didn't. […] So, everyone just looked after themselves, was competing with one another suddenly." (GD)

Existing communities among tenants sharing the post-Wende experience are disrupted, and new ones impeded, by the restructuring of East German working and living conditions, the shifting composition of the local population, competition, withdrawal, and shame. Bridging relations to others are inhibited by the perceived lack of common experiences, with younger generations, with West Germans and with "foreigners" (III-I1; III-I6; FN-IV). According to a recent study, East Germans tend to identify more with being East German, than German (Ahbe, 2013), illustrating the ongoing division of the German imagined community. This is paralleled, or according to Foroutan and Kubiak (2018) triggered by West German stereotypes of East Germans (Pates and Schochow, 2013). The findings of this thesis in contrast suggest that this identification is strongly co-constituted by divergent temporalities of belonging, chronic collective traumata in the words of Pain (2019) and stratified access to hopeful futures.

The educated "bubbles" described by many young informants are not only predominantly German and perceived as exclusive to immigrant tenants (III-I4; IV-I10; AI-1.2). Their

composition also confirms that scepticism, disidentification and ignorance between East and West Germans are mutual. The West German dominance of these academic networks in Leipzig's inner East, as well as outright statements about "Assi-Saxons" (II-I7, assi meaning antisocial, pejorative for working class, unemployed or alcoholics in this case) illustrate the spatialized mediation of class-divisions at the base of these generational and inner-German fragmentations. Despite young tenants' lamentation about their homogenous networks, the observation of their spatial self-segregation, covered in the following sections, reveals their simultaneous reproduction of class-distinctions, social closure, and fragmentations.

Tenants' position within an unevenly reunited national scale, marked by origin, citizenship, generation, and experience, thus influences their class position, their access or exclusion to resources, networks, jobs, and housing, and respectively the stratified preconditions for local (dis)identification and relational emergence.

The restructuring city

Within East Germany, Leipzig underwent a specific process of urbanization through its recent, unparalleled regrowth, owed to the city's strategic location, historical housing stock, (sub)cultural and international tradition. The material restructuring (spatial practice) of Leipzig's inner East, the context of emergence of residential alienation in tenants' daily lives, is contingent on the patterns of urban restructuring marked not just by East German shrinkage, but also Leipzig's regrowth. These patterns have been illustrated in depth in chapter 4.

Neighbourhood policies concerning the inner East, emerging rent gaps and the development of ground rent, housing prices, and investors' interest transform in relation to city-wide dynamics. So does the flow of inhabitants, the political and discursive representation and stigmatization of the neighbourhood (representations of space) and the interaction between inhabitants. The trajectory of Leipzig's inner East, its exacerbated shrinkage and regrowth, can be considered as a micro example of uneven development within Leipzig (Harvey, 2006). A district of historical working-class housing; a breeding ground of left-wing critique during GDR times; partly neglected and partly torn down; a historical district of arrival for immigrants, its stigma has historical origins that made it an ideal part of the city to house unwanted (yet necessary) and racialized surplus populations (Soederberg, 2020). The exodus of the neighbourhood population was contingent on its massive decay, but equally city-wide policies like subsidized suburbanization (III-I6; Rink, 2010). The area's discursive and practical othering through security narratives and policies is furthermore politically instrumentalized even beyond the city, within

Saxon politics (II-I2; Hurlin, 2019). Finally, its deteriorated state made it a welcome "frontier" for gentrification (Gray and Mooney, 2011).

These political-economic patterns and dynamics of Leipzig's inner East as a scapegoat of Leipzig constitute the backdrop for local (dis)identification, where tenants navigate the complex field of tension between defending their stigmatized place of residence "that other people are afraid of" (FN-III) whilst dealing with problems of local destitution and reinforcing distinctions to others perceived lower in a social hierarchy.[16] The role of Leipzig's inner East *within* the restructuring city therewith influences the emergence and disruptions of relations in the neighbourhood, as well as strategies of appropriation in the face of residential alienation.

The changing neighbourhood between appropriation and alienation

The neighbourhood itself is the broadest analysed "scale[…] of belonging" (Frost and Catney, 2020, p.2834) of daily life, where solidarities, fragmentations or divisions emerge. The conducted analysis uncovers that the neighbourhood, as an everyday site of dwelling and "overlapping social networks with specific and variable time-geographies" (Forrest and Kearns, 2001, p.2134), is a site of political subjectivation and socio-spatial morphogenesis for tenants in two regards. Firstly, as a "collective representation" (Hwang, 2016) it is a multi-scalar area, in which (dis)identification occurs and boundaries are drawn through hegemonic discourses, material restructuring, and tenants day-to-day practices influenced by these. *Within* the neighbourhood of study, hegemonic representations of space are defined centrally by racist territorial stigma produced on and beyond a city-scale as illustrated above, co-constituted by spatial practice of policing, neglect and upgrading and reproduced or contested through tenants' lived experience and interactions (Wacquant, 2008; Gray and Mooney, 2011; Hurlin, 2019). Secondly, these lived experiences and interactions always occur in specific places of encounter, like shops, *Ladenprojekte*, parks or bars, which act both as "(exclusive) social spaces of political consolidation *and* prisms of urban restructuring" (Reichle, 2021a, p.1, emphasis added). Dependent on the pace of restructuring along with the changing ratio of surplus/scarcity of space, and according rent levels, these *relational nodes* function as representational spaces that shape tenants' relation to time and others (Lefebvre, 1991). Constituting not only social spaces

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[16] This complexity is beautifully highlighted in the local photo-newspaper "dangerous object: Eisenbahnstraße", portraying residents and their relation to the stigmatized street (unofficial pictures, 2020).

but also spaces of socialization, these impact tenants' (lack of) local identification, strategies of appropriation and political subjectivation.

Image 10: June 2020, neighbourhood space.

Image 11: April 2020 – neighbourhood space, empty lots appropriated.

As will be briefly reflected, the reconfiguration of neighbourhood space through the pandemic and related government measures underscores the centrality of both a general neighbourhood area and relational nodes for the emergence of solidarities and plural, spontaneous encounters challenging lethargic fragmentations caused by residential alienation.

A socially constructed neighbourhood – familiarity and territorial stigma

To several tenants the neighbourhood area is a locus of "community as urban practice" (Blokland, 2017) defined by proximate and casual, long- and short-term, institutionalised and informal relationships. These are based on experiences in the neighbourhood collected over time, either through regular events, long-term observations, or remarkable experiences. Not only do these relational experiences constitute a sense of familiarity that marks tenants' attachment to the neighbourhood. They also contribute to the development of communal representations of the neighbourhood, impacting tenants' behaviour. Thereby, previous, partly impersonal relational experiences in the neighbourhood (like the Leipzig Model) perpetuate local solidarities or mutual aid networks (IV-I6; IV-I7; IV-I9). As I run into a previous interview partner, Hussein, during my ethnography one day, he is asking random people whether they could lend him a bike for some hours. Successful after a while, he beams at me: "see, that's my life here [on Eisenbahnstraße]. I don't know him, I just talked to him, got his number and he said 'okay, a few hours, you can have my bike!'" (IV-I10). This exceptional form of reaching out and trusting does not rely on existing micro-relations, but a meso-relational sense of place based on previous experiences of solidarity in the neighbourhood. It hence contributes to an impersonal but spatialized form of social morphogenesis, where past solidarities associated with a certain space shape future interaction. As the next section demonstrates, such dynamics mostly take place in specific localities of the neighbourhood and their relevance for tenants' social belonging became particularly palpable with the pandemic induced changes in public space: "What completely ceased are the spontaneous encounters, generally one knows a lot of people on the street […], with whom one held a nice chat once or twice, and it's always really nice to meet them randomly, that completely stopped now…" (III-I3)

However, also in non-pandemic times, a sense of trustful familiarity is not shared among all tenants. Being determined crucially by previous experiences, belonging has been disrupted for a row of long-term tenants witnessing structural relational evils, the loss of friends and acquaintances and, importantly, social decline, contingent on the spatio-temporal scales analysed above. Whereas frustrated withdrawal is also a reaction of young and relatively new residents, who experience anonymization with the increasing density of the neighbourhood (III-I3; IV-I08; IV-I12), its fragmenting impact is much harsher among elderly long-term tenants. Contingent on the spatial dynamics induced by the extreme shrinkage and regrowth of the region, the city and the neighbourhood, and its accompanying deindustrialization, loss and change of infrastructure, the sense of familiarity of many elderly tenants was disrupted. In

accordance with their nostalgic temporality of belonging, their partly shameful or resigned withdrawal perpetuates isolation and fragmentation and furthers processes of disidentification with the present space. In contrast, urban changes are appropriated ideologically, "with a sense of restorative nostalgia out of lack of a perceivable future" (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021, p.28).

As seniors have "fewer and fewer reasons to go out […] inner fears and stressful situations get perceived differently" (II-I13). The increasing "culture of estrangement" (II-I13) provides a breeding ground for authoritarian divisions. The withdrawn elderly tenants are suspicious about the changing neighbourhood they feel alienated from, prone to accept racist (territorial) stigma and other hegemonic place frames that remain uncorrected by their experience. "You think you're abroad, we don't go through there, through Eisenbahnstraße, you hear too much, it's dangerous" (III-I5) or: "I don't go there at all, I only hear it. Unpleasant things you see on TV" (III-I8). Whereas immigrant tenants, having moved to the neighbourhood within the last ten years and contributed to its reconstruction, are constantly challenging the territorial stigma that harms their wellbeing, sense of place, businesses, and social mobility (IV-I4; IV-I7), long-term tenants whose social mobility has only been downwards concentrate on finding scapegoats for experienced shortcomings in the neighbourhood. Tied to perceptions of reconstruction versus deterioration of the area, these diverging relations *to* and *with* the neighbourhood space (Hall, 2018a), have a temporal dimension. The hopeful (however easily threatened) versus nostalgic temporalities of belonging, illustrated in depth in chapter 5, manifest relationally, with political consequences. Dissatisfied with the changing infrastructure since German reunification, Ms Meyer accuses "foreigners" of having "occupied them all [the shops]." (III-I1) Long-term tenants' restoratively nostalgic perception of the neighbourhood "it's not like it used to be […] it's not there anymore" (II-I18), is blamed on deteriorating morals brought through students and immigrants, or just the general presence of these newcomers, disturbing a previous sense of familiarity (III-I5; III-I7; IV-I13; AI-2.1; FN-III; FN-IV).

This does not uncover to which extent deep-seated racist stereotypes or authoritarian characters (Adorno, 1995) as opposed to experiences or fears of social decline (Nachtwey, 2016) *determine* authoritarian divisions. However, it sheds light on the way structural power-relations and hegemonic discourses are mediated by spatialized meso-relational fragmentations emerging from these but developing a path-shaping influence. Central to the spatialized perpetuation of fragmentations and authoritarian divisions is the place avoidance practiced by elderly tenants (III-I1; III-I5; III-I7; III-I8). Mirroring their interpretations of safe and unsafe places

during the pandemic, most of them draw individual barriers to demarcate their own place of residence from the stigmatized area, constituting a textbook example of boundary work: "here it's still nice and quiet, but there […] it's a bit… where the foreigners are" (III-I1).

These spatialized fragmentations are based on specific experiences that are divisive in nature (competition, anonymization, restructuring of communities) caused by structural upheaval on a national scale, intermingling with urban hegemonic narratives and place frames. Prohibiting emerging solidarities or collective identification, existing fragmentations provide a fertile breeding ground for ideological, authoritarian appropriation through stereotyping and scapegoating. They divide parts of a specific demographic in the neighbourhood from other residents, whose place attachment is present- and future oriented and marked by a spatialized sense of trust, appropriation through collective praxis and morphogenetic solidarity. These diverging ways of relating within and towards space are perpetuated through specific localities.

Spaces of encounter as relational nodes

Several gentrification scholars have emphasized the importance of public and community spaces for a holistic understanding of displacement (Fullilove, 2001; Cahill, 2007; Davidson, 2009; Shaw and Hagemans, 2015; Butcher and Dickens, 2016; Wynne and Rogers, 2021). Fleshing out the relational significance of these spaces, they are termed *relational nodes*. Both experiences of solidarity and the reproduction of stubborn divisions are dependent on and perpetuated through specific localities of encounter in the neighbourhood. Their disappearance, perceived lack or loss, both through political economic urban restructuring and through the pandemic re-organization of space, reinforces fragmentations and the susceptibility to divisive, authoritarian representations of the neighbourhood (III-I1; IV-I13; FN-I; FN-II; FN-III; FN-IV).

Institutionalized social spaces enable encounters and emerging relations among the specific groups they target (elderly tenants, international tenants, women), but also supportive relations between social workers and visitors. Shops with typical groceries from different regions of the world constitute a local infrastructure enabling social advancement for those profiting from it, create a sense of familiarity for immigrant tenants, and nourish close and casual relationships among those visiting them (IV-I1; IV-I2; IV-I3; IV-I3; IV-6; IV-I12). Subcultural spaces perpetuate homogenous "student-leftish-scene-bubbles" (III-I3), function as nodes of mutual help networks and contribute to a sense of local, communal appropriation among young tenants (II-I6; II-I7; III-I9; IV-I12), but also perpetuate a distinctive "*entre-soi*" (Pinçon-Charlot and Pinçon, 2018, p.116

emphasis in original). Among elderly men, bars remaining from a different time sustain nostalgic belonging but also defensively exclusive relationships (II-I10; FN-IV).

Additionally, a few spaces of encounter enable the emergence of relationships beyond parallel networks, like a central café where a young Iranian tenant once helped an acquaintance with his papers "and suddenly four [Arabic speaking] people came with forms they needed help filling out, even though we don't speak the same language." (FN-IV) The same café was where I sat during my encounter with Hussein, asking bypassers for a bike. Along with the central park in the neighbourhood, it is referred to by several interviewees as an important and very mixed space of encounter (I-I4; II-I7; III-I3; III-I9; IV-I4; IV-I6; IV-I7; IV-I8; IV-I12). Whereas the café is highlighted as a shared space that fuels a communal, yet pluralist sense of belonging, the park is praised as a space of encounter, enabling the emergence of relationships between people without shared networks thanks to its diverse sports and recreational opportunities. During fieldwork it was an important site of sampling and observation, visited by a range of different residents. However, it is also precisely this park which is avoided by most elderly tenants.

Their place avoidance, beyond the reproduction of territorial stigma theorized above, is based on strong nostalgic withdrawal associated with the double loss of concrete social spaces, after reunification and with gentrification. The shops in the neighbourhood are remembered as social spaces together with little bars and cheap cinemas. During the GDR, Eisenbahnstraße was (and this is said with pride) a lively shopping boulevard popular throughout the entire city. This is a continuous point of reference for their perception of the neighbourhood and its changes. With reunification and the following exodus, most small businesses closed. Their reopening by immigrants is observed suspiciously from a distance, whilst few remaining spaces are occupied defensively, like the bar where Dirk and his friends meet. Along with some other bars scattered throughout the neighbourhood, this bar is a homogenous space frequented almost exclusively by white, elderly German men. With many of them sharing not only experiences of anonymization and fragmentation, but also their authoritarian interpretation of these, these bars serve as spaces of political consolidation, reproducing authoritarian divisions (Reichle, 2021a).

Increasingly, also younger tenants experience the loss of social spaces, as these come under threat with the upgrading of the neighbourhood. However, facing a life of opportunities and potential futures elsewhere, the withdrawal and nostalgia of these educated, young tenants is much fainter than that of elderly residents looking back on 30 years marked by social decline.

Nevertheless, more recent experiences of loss also impact young tenants' relationship to the neighbourhood, inhibiting the emergence of new relationships within it (III-I3; IV-I8; IV-I12).

Image 12: March 2020 – pandemic reshuffling of public space 1, a popular hangout spot, closed off.

Image 13: March 2020 – pandemic reshuffling of public space 2, the central park, abandoned, playgrounds closed off.

For all tenants, the outbreak of COVID comes with a loss of relational nodes in the neighbourhood. The subsequent cessation of spontaneous encounters demonstrates a turning point for casual neighbourhood relations. The closure of social spaces that tenants described as central for their social lives, like the "projects" cited by Kim (III-I3); bars visited by elderly men (III-I10); a seniors' swimming club (III-I6); a girls' youth club (III-I4); or an immigrant women's social centre (IV-I2), along with the limited interactions in public space, hinder those forms of relational emergence and spatialized morphogenesis that do not stem from strong existing

bonds, but are contingent on spaces and times of encounter. Whereas proximate relations like friendships or close family ties are sustained via phone-calls by all interviewees, casual relations and especially the emergence of new relations is inhibited by the outbreak of COVID-19 and the respective social restrictions. This is one of the reasons behind the limited reach of solidarity initiatives. It underscores the relevance of spatiality in transformative pathways of social morphogenesis.

The commodifying house

Within the neighbourhood, the building is the most proximate site of potentially emerging relations but also of anonymization. A recurrent node in the empirical material, "house communities" are relevant not only for tenants' place attachment and local identification, but also for subsequent cycles of social morphogenesis. Enabling tenants to act in a "socially significant manner" (May, 2011, p.372), the (absent) sense of belonging generated at the level of the building is not only constituted by, but also the basis for fragmentations, encounters, mutual help or solidarity.

Image 14: January 2020 – shared groceries in the ground floor hallway of a house.

When house communities "are lived" (II-I7), they reproduce mutual help and collective identification. As illustrated in the section on solidarities, accounts of close-knit house communities are frequently composed of socio-structurally quite homogenous, young, and well-educated tenants. Besides the shared space of the house, their relations are forged through common experiences, fields of interests, networks.

However, also several immigrant tenants who have moved to the area within the last five to eight years laid remarkable emphasis on their good relationships with German neighbours, based on friendly encounters in the staircases, small gifts, and mutual support (IV-I1; IV-I2; IV-I3; IV-I5). These relationships enable potential future solidarities and are crucial for tenants' place attachment, as reflected in Hayet's consideration of moving: "maybe I have one bad [read: racist] neighbour now. But if I move, I might have five or six." (IV-I7)

Locus of the palpable intersection of daily life and housing commodification, yet less individualizing than the flat, the building as a potential space of encounter begs the opportunity for struggle and subsequent interventions into urban restructuring. Phillip describes how he and his flatmates reached out to not only the student tenants in their building, but "everyone in the house", including a family of eight from Syria. Their reflexive outreach was based on the activist knowledge that existing relations strengthen the potential for solidarity and successful struggle, as he observed in other houses owned by the same landlord that "acted completely as one" in their fight against displacement. Whereas their landlord's divide and conquer strategy, offering diverging compensations to tenants according to their perceived social status and power (none to the immigrant family and a lot to a middle-class white couple), would have been the basis for very different experiences of residential alienation, their collective appropriation successfully created bonds of solidarity, furthered their sense of belonging and enabled them to stay put. As illustrated in chapter 4, similar cases in Leipzig have been the foundation for nascent tenant movements like Stadt für Alle (SfA), now a central actor in housing politics. Transcending the legally individualizing nature of rent contracts, house communities are a crucial scale for collective, combative subjectivation and subsequent development of tenants' power within processes of urban restructuring.

During the pandemic, merely encounters at the scale of the building somewhat counter the tendency of relational polarization. Whereas in some buildings, security measures imposed by tenants inhibit previous neighbourly contact (II-I18; IV-I4; IV-I05), several interviewees also report about their own attempts at supporting elderly neighbours with shopping (IV-I05; IV-I08; IV-I11; FN-IV) or are positively surprised about the help offers by others (III-I1; III-I8; IV-I9). However, most elderly, long-term tenants choose not to accept help, not wanting to burden anyone.

Recalling their competitive subjectivation in a restructuring city within a reunited nation, this comes as no surprise and underscores the assertiveness of fragmenting alienation (Reichle,

2020a; Fiedlschuster and Reichle, 2021). At the level of the building this manifests in the *loss* of house communities. This experience has harsh implications for emerging fragmentations and a subjectivation of withdrawal, mistrust, and individualization. Nearly all East German long-term tenants interviewed have experienced growing anonymization within their house (II-I18; III-I1; III-I5; III-I6; III-I7; FN-IV; GD). A recurring phrase in the narratives of elderly tenants is "closing the door" (II-I5; II-I9) behind oneself, describing a retreat that stands in harsh contrast to the remembered neighbourly mutual aid before German reunification. Although contingent on other scales of subjectivation explored previously, the distinct temporality of long-term tenants' experience is perceived centrally at the level of the house. The fluctuation among neighbours bemoaned (II-I8; III-I1; GD) coincides with individual withdrawal and perpetuates fragmentation within house communities. The alienating lack of encounters inhibits tenants' present sense of belonging and fuels the scepticism towards their neighbours. This either results in the reproduction of anonymity or the emergence of hostile divisions.

The latter are palpable to immigrant tenants when German neighbours complain about them to their landlord because of issues like "waste separation" (IV-I4). Resulting in pressure for immigrant tenants' rent relations and sometimes leading to their displacement, these incidents lead to "both sides hating each other" (IV-I4). In such cases, landlords are in no need of divide and conquer strategies, as they find an already divided house community.

In other cases, landlord imposed divisions are facilitated through concrete diverging material interests (Wasteman, 2012), partly contingent on structural power relations, as demonstrated in several accounts of (attempted) evictions. "The personal interests were actually very different. Some […] wanted to move anyways", and then the house-community "just broke" (IV-I13). In another eviction procedure "a few [people] negotiated with them [landlords] on the side, without telling us, and then got a compensation and moved out." (III-I9) Parallel negotiations only being possible for educated, middle class tenants, the landlords did not offer so much as the costs of moving for immigrant families (III-I9; IV-I11).

Interests can clash according to the rhythms of specific life situations but also when positionalities and power-dynamics differ or change. Examples of such changes are occasions in which tenants who have access to the capital to do so, decide to buy the house or flat they live in. However, this is conditional once again on the dominant timing of urban restructuring, defining whether, when and for whom a house or flat is for sale, affordable or even profitable. Thereby, it is once again stratified by East/West relations (with West Germans structurally much

more likely to inherit money) and citizenship. Changing ownership structures lead to conflicts and disrupt existent house communities (II-I4; III-I3; IV-I13).

The building, being the object of (dis)investment and speculation in Leipzig's inner East, is simultaneously a relevant scale for the formation of solidarities and the reproduction of fragmentations, sometimes turning into hostile divisions. The emergence of relations and fragmentations within it is contingent on both the residents' previous relations to one another, their activist knowledge and cultural capital, but also their experiences of the *temporalities* of change, that interdepend with the previously introduced spatio-temporal scales and their (class) positions within them.

The (in)secure flat

Within the building, the flat constitutes the most intimate scale of subjectivation among those discussed. This site of daily life is marked by routines, foreseeable interactions in space and consequential ontological security, that grants tenants' a sense of control over their conditions of reproduction (Giddens, 1984; Shaw and Hagemans, 2015; Bradley, 2017; Madden, 2020). For those who experience insecure housing conditions through neglect, displacement pressure, overcrowding, or rent raises, the flat, as a site of dwelling and identification threatens to lose its function as a *home*. This has significant impact on tenants' sense of place and relations to their surroundings (hooks, 1990; Young, 2005; Duyvendak, 2011; Valli, 2015; Madden, 2020).

Tenants' experiences of their housing situation are contingent on the intersection of their positionality in a spatio-temporal matrix with the dominant time of all previously introduced scales. Long-term working-class tenants for example have witnessed the changing housing conditions (in the neighbourhood) much differently than immigrant tenants arriving in the nineties. Whereas long-term tenants were gradually displaced, some immigrants had a lucky window of opportunity of being able to buy property in a stigmatized neighbourhood. Illustrative of the competitive nature of urban restructuring's social impacts, their experience again dramatically differs from that of refugees arriving since 2015, experiencing exacerbated exclusion in a situation of politically created housing shortage (chapter 4), or students arriving at the same time but able to adapt much more flexibly.

Chapter 5 demonstrated the alienating impact that housing insecurity can have on tenants' entire life, as their basic need for decent housing is fundamental to function in daily life, but also to build relations with others. Housing insecurity reproduces macro-social vicious cycles of

marginalization, destitution, and exclusion, as the access to decent jobs is closely intertwined with tenants' housing situation. What is more, it reproduces social power-relations inter-generationally, as illustrated by the socialization of exclusion of refugee girls growing up in a crowded refugee shelter outside their school neighbourhood due to exclusionary displacement (II-I12; III-I4).

On a micro-scale however, the flat can also be a site of community, mutual support, and solidarity. This is exemplified especially by young tenants who have forged relationships through sharing space and time, started considering each other as "family" (IV-I12; IV-I14). The intimate home with its relationships can also be a precondition for resistance (hooks, 1990), as in Phillips case when flatmates are there for one another and encourage each other to keep up the struggle against displacement. Some young interviewees have emphasized how their communal living has politicized them and shaped their subjectivities in a combative, collective manner (III-I2; III-I3).

Furthermore, when not threatened, the flat can be a site of withdrawal in a turbulently changing neighbourhood. This is the case for several elderly tenants, who happen to live in quite secure and therewith exceptional tenancies on their own or with a partner (II-I18; III-I1; III-I5). As Marxist feminist activists have stated already in their "wages for housework" campaign, this homely withdrawal can be isolating and function as a barrier to collectivity and according combative subjectivation (Federici, 2012; Dalla Costa, 2019). Similarly, in the accounts of interviewed elderly tenants, the retreat into the own flat reproduces fragmentations on a micro and meso scale and perpetuates place avoidance especially among elderly women who tend to withdraw and lose their social connections (II-I9; II-I18; III-I5; III-I6). For some, the allotment functions as a private extension of the flat – "why should we go to the park if we have a garden?" (III-I5).

As the central locus of tenants' day-to-day physical, social, and mental reproduction, the flat is the most intimate base of emerging relations, granting tenants' a sense of security and self. It is, however, multiply contingent on the other scales of subjectivation. Materially, its (in)security is determined by the pace and direction of restructuring in the neighbourhood, the city, the area. Socially, whether it is a site of rest, solidarity, solitude, or withdrawal, depends on tenants' relations and sense of belonging within other scales.

Conclusion: how does multi-scalar subjectivation reproduce or transform urban restructuring?

The analysis undertaken in this chapter untangled the interrelation of urban restructuring, tenant relations and political subjectivation. It therewith brings forward the promised interdisciplinary analytical contribution to both the political economy of urban restructuring torn between macro-structural analyses of planetary urbanization and granular inquiries of alterity, and a growing body of work concerned with political subjectivation through a *nested, relational lens*. Therewith, the diagnosed research gap around the spatiality of political subjectivation is addressed (Ansell and McNamara, 2018; Miggelbrink, 2020; Mullis, 2021).

Methodically, these contributions were achieved through fleshing out the spatio-temporality of social reproduction in a restructuring context. With the social reproduction theory elaborated in chapter 2 (Federici, 2004; Bhattacharya, 2017b; Bhattacharya, 2017a; Fraser, 2017; Katz, 2017; Mezzadri, 2019; Dalla Costa, 2019), this means that the transformation and reproduction of both social relations and political-economic patterns – in this case Leipzig's trajectory of neoliberal urban development – was analysed. Chapter 6 revealed that the mobilizing, individualizing or divisive impact of neoliberal urban restructuring is not just contingent on experiences of residential alienation stratified through hierarchized class-divisions, but also on the meso-relations grounded in nested trajectories of spatio-temporal political subjectivation, which are, once again branded by current capitalist urbanization.

Proposing to understand political subjectivation as a fundamentally relational phenomenon, the emergence, disruption, reproduction and transformation of solidarities, fragmentations and divisions was analysed. Meso-relational processes, defined as group dynamics which can exist independently of concrete relationships between individuals, were studied regarding their relational and spatio-temporal context of emergence, as well as their implications for the political climate of Leipzig *and* the transformation or reproduction of trajectories of urban restructuring. Departing from the analysis of stratified residential alienation (chapter 5) and a largely absent tenant movement in Leipzig (chapter 4), the preconditions and barriers to both emergent tenant power and manifestations of authoritarianism were scrutinized. Tenants' specific positionalities, experiences and ensuing (dis)identification within different, nested spatio-temporal scales were shown to enable or inhibit different emergent meso-relations. These are the preconditions for collective intervention into urban restructuring from below in some instances, whilst leaving it unchallenged in most others. Contributing to the reproduction

of urban restructuring and co-constituting the polarized political climate of Leipzig, fragmentations were analysed as a central empirical contribution to the study of political subjectivation in neoliberal urbanisation. They were defined as a relational manifestation of (residential) alienation, that inhibits or limits solidarities, constitutes a breeding ground for authoritarian divisions and feeds into a collective yet stratified, lethargically depressive mood.

Within a context of neoliberal, alienating urbanization, emergent solidarities and mutual help networks in the neighbourhood generative of "reciprocal relations and affinity bonds" (Arampatzi, 2017, p.2161) that counteract alienation and build the fundament for collective power, showed to be mostly bent back on existing relations. This finding of social morphogenesis accounts for their tendential refinement to socio-structurally homogenous groups. However, they also emerged through a *spatialized* form of social morphogenesis. Socio-spatial morphogenesis generated a communal yet pluralist sense of belonging. Feeding into a common representation of space, tenants' trustful sense of belonging was shaped by previous positive experiences in a general area or specific places, like a shared building, or spaces of encounter in the neighbourhood. This reflexive emergence or morphogenic perpetuation of existing solidarities and interdependent place attachment had diverging impacts, contingent on tenants' previous, classed experiences and related prospects or aspirations in the area. Whereas for some it nourished ambivalent hopes for social mobility or racial uplift in support of competitive upgrading, in other cases it was a precondition for tenants' pessimistically hopeful contestation of urban restructuring. The specific shape that emergent solidarities took was therewith equally depended on tenants' temporalities of belonging within the neighbourhood, as illustrated below.

Processes of struggle and collective, combative socialization were triggered most frequently in the commodifying building. There, the contradiction of profit-oriented restructuring and dwelling was clearly palpable yet not confined to individualized struggles about a single flat. Contingent on tenants' experiences throughout other scales of subjectivation and the resulting communal identification or individualized disidentification, another important precondition for combative solidarity, as opposed to mere mutual aid, was the prevalence and awareness of shared concerns and interests. Marked by tenants' changing class position, cultural capital, and reflexivity of residential alienation's structural nature, this manifested in and was mediated by shared and diverging *temporalities of belonging*, as introduced in chapter 5. Whereas a positive experience of current neighbourhood changes and a present place attachment among

immigrant tenants furthered trust, the anger about recent changes and losses incentivized struggle for several young, mostly West German, academically educated tenants. In contrast, the perception of irrevocable loss among long-term tenants hindered emerging solidarities and encouraged authoritarian divisions. These temporalities of belonging were shown to be shaped by experiences in interrelated scales of subjectivation, centrally marked by tenants' experience of a reunited nation and its implications for class-divisions, social mobility, and the perception of a changing neighbourhood within a restructuring city.

The exclusion of immigrant tenants from the neighbourhood or decent housing based on their structural marginalization in Germany and Saxony perpetuated their social subalternity in some cases, inhibiting emergent relations. In other instances, through local communities, existing bridging relations, spaces of encounter in the neighbourhood or positive experiences with neighbours, housing insecurity was counteracted with mutual help, furthering tenants' place attachment, trust and belonging and paving the way for future solidarities. Whether these will combatively challenge urban restructuring in the face of its racialized, exclusionary character, or generate support for upgrading in the hope of chances of social ascent and racial uplift, is a matter of class-position and reflections of residential alienation's structural nature, intersecting with specific relational experiences on multiple scales of subjectivation.

In contrast, especially for long-term tenants socialized into a working-class East German society, also holding a subordinate and dependent (class) position within the German divided imagined community, the experience of a stigmatized neighbourhood in which urban shrinkage, deindustrialization and restructuring was exacerbated, had frustrating, depressing, fragmenting, and anonymizing effects. Following the disruption of neighbourliness, house communities and the loss of social spaces generated through the post-reunification restructuring of Leipzig, its inner East and all East Germany, these tenants tended to withdraw, lose their sense of trust, and maintain a defensive, restoratively nostalgic place-attachment. Marked by the lack of both emergent relations and a present-oriented place-attachment, fragmentation was highlighted as a central social manifestation of residential alienation among them. It rendered elderly tenants prone to accept territorial stigmatization and reproduce racialized scapegoating as a form of *ideological appropriation*. This has a twofold political impact: Furthering authoritarian, divisive, exclusive, and individualizing political subjectivation, it thereby also inhibits emergent solidarities. Thus, ideological appropriation increases tenants' vulnerability to divisive landlord

strategies, and facilitates neoliberal restructuring; social inequalities; class-divisions; and therewith, indirectly also exploitative relations of production.

Young, educated tenants have been the main drivers of housing struggles in the area and have sometimes reflexively initiated bridging relations with neighbours. Some simultaneously reproduced social distinctions in exclusive spaces, and several withdrew frustratedly facing the loss of social spaces and the continuous upgrading of the neighbourhood. With potential futures elsewhere, their role in a possible tenant movement depends crucially on their place attachment, and therewith on the interplay of their experiences throughout all spatio-temporal scales illustrated in the chapter.

Having illustrated the complexities of spatio-temporal, multi-scalar morphogenesis, this chapter intervened in current debates about planetary versus situated urban theory making through a relational understanding of urban political economy, by researching the interdependence of urban restructuring from above and below through a sociological lens of political subjectivation. Taking both multi-scalar, structurally restraining political economic contexts and tenants' role as political actors seriously, chapter 6 demonstrated that despite being bent back on previous relations, the emergence, challenging and reproduction of social relations does not necessarily remain *trapped* in top-down vicious cycles. Whereas the pandemic findings of inhibited solidary emergence, intensified reproduction of fragmentations and continuity of divisions in different guises demonstrated the assertiveness of neoliberal urbanism's fragmenting and divisive effects, they also pointed to the relevance of physical (differential) spaces of diverse encounter for its slow transformation. Holding the inaccessibility of shared plural spaces during the lockdown and physical distancing (along with previously existing fragmentations) accountable for the lack of transformative potential of emergent pandemic solidarities, equally sheds light on their potential in non-pandemic times. Hence, despite a strategically selective context of neoliberal urban restructuring that tends to fragment tenants, encourage authoritarian divisions, and inhibit solidarities, the interplay of social morphogenesis with different spatio-temporal factors, experiences, temporalities of belonging, and reflexive interventions, leaves leeway for the transformation of existing relations of power and according trajectories of urban restructuring. However, coming back to the collective yet stratified sentiments, these must be built on solidary (impersonal) relations that transcend a small, fragmented group of relatively privileged tenants, to challenge the overall tenant lethargy within the city.

7. Conclusion

Based on his visit in 1989, right before reunification, Marcuse referred to "the coffee break and the elbow" to describe different labour relations in the GDR and West Germany, with the latter soon after "taking over" in the East (Marcuse, 1991, p.54). Whereas the coffee break stands for an (East German) working environment that prioritizes communal sociability over productivity, with all its positive and negative implications, the "*Ellenbogengesellschaft*, the 'elbowing society'" of the West, is one "in which people relate to others by elbowing them aside" (ibid., p. 54, emphasis in original).

In many ways, this is a dissertation about similar phenomena, inquiring into social relations between competitive subjectivation, communal belonging and emergent solidarities. In many ways, it is also a thesis about East-West relations in Germany, their structural incorporation and reproduction in political economic processes of restructuring, but also their granular manifestations in daily life. However, these analyses are not grounded in the sphere of labour relations. Much of East Germany's (partly unproductive) workplaces have disappeared in the wake of forced deindustrialization. Simultaneously, the state-supported massive restructuring of the built environment has finally generated, at least in the successful boomtown of Leipzig, a remarkable sphere of revenue of West German and international interest. Through capital outflows (to the West), the commodification of an entire disappearing country's rental housing stock (and urban spaces more generally) plays a significant role in the ongoing inner German uneven development (Intelmann, 2020). This uneven development is mirrored not only in the (lack of) political attention and representation of East Germany in the most recent elections (Wenzl, 2021; Decker, 2021), but also inspires the controversial thesis on rising, 'frustrated' authoritarianism as an 'East German problem' (Quent, 2012; Köpping, 2018; Bangel, 2019). Simultaneously, the East German city of Leipzig is a historical locus of antifascist and urban struggles, that partly problematize the increasing housing financialization, and especially its social effects (Holm and Kuhn, 2016; Rokitte, 2020).

Within this context, this thesis thus explores political subjectivation from the angle of *housing* relations, hence relations tenants (do not) develop as tenants of commodifying rental housing. Furthermore, as was shown throughout the different chapters, these are always relations hous*ed* in, thus embedded in wider neoliberal urban reshuffling, in restructuring cities, neighbourhoods and (disappearing) social spaces – hence everyday relations of dwelling. The

research project arose from the curiosity about tenants' *rent relations*, considered increasingly central both in deindustrialized areas and in a global tendency of capital switching (Lefebvre, 2003; Gray, 2018c); their daily lives within shared spaces, neighbourhoods and cities shaped by this tendency (the social factory); and finally, the role of both for their political subjectivation and related participation in, reproduction or challenging of these macro-structural processes.

Whilst contributing to the specific inquiry of East German urban neoliberalisms and the development patterns of post-shrinkage cities; rental housing conditions marked by these; East German political polarization or the side-by-side of East German nostalgia, West German activist's frustration and immigrant aspirations, this thesis centrally set out to develop a theory of the interdependence of neoliberal urban restructuring and political subjectivation. Combining an ethnographic inquiry "on my doorstep" (Hall, 2018b) with rigorous theoretical debate, I sought a balance between doing justice to the nuanced realities of a gentrifying, working-class neighbourhood "of arrival" (Haase et al., 2020), and the specific, post-socialist boomtown it is embedded in, and developing abstract conceptualizations of these.

As a central result, a set of arguments was generated, that can be summarized into one, central finding:

Neoliberal urban restructuring generates a context of stratified, alienating subjectivation, which relationally manifests in fragmentations among and between tenants. Limiting the emergence of solidarities and providing a fertile breeding ground for authoritarian divisions in Leipzig, these fragmentations shape the city's polarized political climate and feed into a collective yet stratified, lethargic sentiment among the city's residents. This mood in turn interferes with the significant emergence of tenant power, that could challenge the urban trajectory of commodification and financialization.

This finding adds a meso-relational layer to urban scholarship on financialization and its governance, as well as to a body of research on social consequences of urban restructuring and gentrification. The affect-sensitive meso-relational mode of inqiry, that brought forward the concept of fragmentations, generates insights into the interdependence of urban restructuring and political phenomena (both solidarities and authoritarianism) in East Germany. From there it furthermore encourages questions on the spatialized, relational development of collective atmospheres elsewhere, and their role in the reproduction or contestation of urban trajectories.

This conclusion was generated through a set of central arguments, that are elaborated in the remainder of the final chapter. With these, the thesis offers not only a nuanced *empirical* analysis of Leipzig's post-socialist trajectory, but also a *methodical* framework for relational analyses of solidarities, authoritarian tendencies, and urban restructuring from above and below. Finally, it presents *conceptual and analytical* contributions to urban political economy and theories of political subjectivation, drawn together in the second subchapter.

Coming back once more to the research questions, aims and findings, the development of the central arguments is laid out in the following section. This is followed by a summary of the proposed contributions to existing bodies of scholarship in different fields, generated by these findings, and the research strategy employed. Subsequently, the limits of the research project are reflected, and potential future research questions are posed. Having practiced, more and less subtly, a partisan tone for housing justice, antifascism, and tenants' (class) solidarity throughout the thesis and having adopted a critical realist research agenda driven by the aim of producing critical, emancipatory knowledge, I will end the chapter and the thesis with some words on the political implications of my findings.

7.1 Questions, findings, arguments – stratified alienation and the reproduction of fragmented lethargy

To get to the bottom of the interrelation of neoliberal urban restructuring and political subjectivation, this thesis retroductively combined critical engagement with interdisciplinary theories with a one year qualitative and ethnographic case study. To level the analysis of urban restructuring and housing financialization with that of tenants' experiences, a conceptual framework was developed from the dialogue between urban political economic, geographic, sociological, and philosophical concepts. The constructed relational framework, elaborated in chapter 2, prepared the analysis of tenants' relations as relations of subjectivation and societal reproduction to be inquired in a context of structural residential alienation.

Having theoretically engaged with the complexly shifting, potentially contested nature of subjectivation, and having established alienation as a dialectic concept in a field of tension with appropriation, the guiding empirical question generated along with this framework became:

How do tenants' relations change in a restructuring city?

To guide the empirical research of this question, a set of five subsidiary aims was targeted at different moments and scales of the intended relational analysis: patterns of restructuring;

tenants' experiences; and their emergent, existing, or disrupted relations. The research based on these aims generated the central arguments that constitute the analytical contribution of the present thesis. The aims and the respective findings are summarized in the following sections.

Patterns of urban restructuring and their affective mediations

What is the 'neoliberal urban restructuring' at the base of this inquiry? How did it occur and what does it look like in Leipzig? Urban restructuring labels a power laden social process, deeply entrenched with economic and political relations and institutions. It designates changing macro political economic relations between political actors and (shifting) scales, and accompanying mechanisms of regulation, and de- and reinvestment on the real estate market. It drives and is characterized by the transformation of the built environment and the reorganization of social structures, considering both the social composition of inhabitants and dwellers and their social practices, perceptions, and behaviours. That said, as post-colonial and not last post-socialist scholars have illustrated, (neoliberal) urban restructuring follows variegated paths. Scrutinizing these variegated, ordinary paths, has central importance for the generation of theoretical abstractions (Roy, 2009; Haase, Rink and Grossmann, 2016b; Robinson, 2016). Accordingly, the first aim of this thesis was to develop a sense of the specific trajectory of the analysed case study, whilst informing urban theory production more generally, by *scrutinizing Leipzig's (post socialist) patterns of urban restructuring*.

Chapter 4 provided an insight into the ongoing commodification and financialization of rental housing since German reunification, identified as both a central marker of Leipzig's restructuring and a theme of specific interest for this thesis. Exploring the turnaround of state socialist to neoliberal housing provision along with the different national policies and programmes involved; the subsequent shrinkage and growth of the city; the ongoing urban austerity; and the federal obstacles to local regulation, the research nevertheless revealed that housing financialization was neither linear nor uncontested. Instead, Leipzig's restructuring was shown to be co-shaped by the contested interactions of political actors in the abovementioned, strategically selective contexts. This insight pointed to the central relevance of power of different actors within these contexts. On one hand, the East versus West-German background of political actors was found to be crucial for their transformative capacities in a context of harsh uneven development. According to the empirical evidence gathered, this however did not suffice to explain the whole story of the city's development. Beyond this finding, actors' positionalities and power dynamics turned out to be partially generative of, embedded in, and

sometimes in contradictive interplay with their collective affective mediations of the structural contexts. Through the concepts of post-shrinkage-depression and post-shrinkage-hope, generated inductively from the empirical material, chapter 4 illustrated how collective, yet stratified sentiments co-shaped the city's restructuring.

Depressive, lethargic sentiments hindered for example regulatory intervention due to their anxious, paranoid, and backward-looking temporal orientations. These frequently emerged from a position of (East German) political-economic powerlessness within Leipzig's specific context. However, it was shown that these spirits outdated their material contexts of emergence. Therewith, they maintained a continuous influence on the city's trajectory, partly despite and contrary to shifting power-dynamics (as in the case of housing associations) and partly by reinforcing previous power dynamics (as in parts of the city administration). On the other hand, hopeful, future-oriented, and self-confident collective mediations sometimes led to spectacular failures (of early investors) and in other instances were coupled with the realistic acceptance of actors' limited power (by activists). Through their interplay, these nuanced, differentiated forms of affective mediations developed path-shaping influence on Leipzig's patterns of restructuring. This led to the first argument put forward with the thesis, generated out of an affect sensitive approach to urban political economy:

With urban restructuring co-shaped by the contested interactions of political actors in strategically selective contexts, their transformative capacities vary according to their affective mediations of these contexts, regardless of their political agendas (pro-growth/neoliberalization vs housing justice). Therein, hopeful moments mutually reinforce the power to act as opposed to depressive moments hindering actions.

That ascertained, a central barrier to the, partially astonishingly successful, housing justice-oriented interventions of a few hopefully pessimistic activists within a restraining context of not only local, but multi-scalar, global neoliberalization of space, was determined to lie in the overall collective (depressive) lethargy of the city's tenants. Conceiving affective mediations not as psychologizing, individual phenomena, but as collective yet stratified, dialectical and nuanced, this hypothesis did not, however imply a diagnosis of mental health problems to most of the city's tenants. Instead, the endeavour was to understand how this depressive lethargy came into being as a collective, yet stratified sentiment. This meant inquiring the absence of any hopeful or even angry, or however else engaged, collective interpretation and affective mediation of the city's development, and resulting action.

Therewith, chapter 5 theorized tenants' experiences of urban restructuring as stratified psychosocial manifestations of residential alienation, impacting their (self)location in society. Through a perspective of social reproduction that inquires how classed subjectivities are reproduced at a micro-level, this indicated the reproduction of macro-relational, hierarchical class divisions. Therewith, it provided a background for the analysis of tenants' *political* subjectivation through meso-relations between solidarities and divisions.

The emergence and role of meso-relations in a multi-scalar, structurally fragmenting context

The three remaining subsidiary aims were all devoted to the study of these meso-relations and their political impact: *defining solidarities and divisions; analysing their context of emergence; and questioning their role for tenants' experiences of and reactions to urban restructuring*. Whereas individual reactions to urban restructuring were addressed already through the nuanced accounts of personal appropriation strategies, what remained subject to inquiry were the collective, political, relational implications of these.

Depicting empirical solidarities and divisions in dialogue with different relational philosophies, studies and debates on (urban) solidarities and authoritarian attitudes, these were defined as both social factors and connections, their absences, or severances. The intention of analysing solidarities and divisions not only simultaneously, but in their interdependence, was coupled with the conceptualization of their situatedness on a meso-relational spectrum. Throughout chapter 6, this holistic approach, hand in hand with the empirical accounts of tenants' experiences in their flats, buildings, and neighbourhoods, brought forward one of this dissertation's main relational concepts, crucial for the analysis of both political polarization and residential alienation. *Fragmentations* were introduced as a pivotal meso-relational moment of residential alienation, manifesting in anonymization, withdrawal, isolation or "parallel worlds". As a relational moment between solidarities and (authoritarian) divisions, fragmentations were shown to limit the previous whilst encouraging the emergence of the latter. This led to the first part of the final, relational argument:

Tendentially, neoliberal urban restructuring generates fragmentations which nurture authoritarian divisions and feed into a collective depressive lethargy that inhibits the hopeful, self-confident, mass contestation of increasing spatial commodification.

To understand *how* these fragmentations and respectively solidarities or divisions came into being in relation to Leipzig's patterns of neoliberal urban restructuring, Archer's concept of

social morphogenesis was applied to a meso-relational scale and studied for its spatio-temporal dimensions (Archer, 1995; Archer, 2010). Departing from the analysis of stratified residential alienation, this meant questioning how macro-social power relations and structural, historical processes of capitalist urbanization worked through space and time to impact tenants' relations and political subjectivation. Guided once more by the qualitative research with tenants, an analysis of nested spatio-temporal political subjectivation was developed. It illuminated how different, interdependent scales from the unevenly reunited nation to the (in)secure flat affected tenants' ways of relating to personal and impersonal others according to their classed, racialized, and generational experiences of these scales.

Besides affirming the tendential reproduction of existing relations, fragmentation, and divisions marked by macro-social differences (and hence coined by neoliberal restructuring), the analysis brought forward the concept of *socio-spatial morphogenesis*. This describes instances in which shared spaces were generative of an impersonal sense of trust and belonging, encouraging emergent solidarities. The omission of such spaces throughout the pandemic, and the resulting relational polarization – intensifying (and straining) close bonds whilst reinforcing fragmentations and divisions – underscored this finding. Within the attested context of structural fragmentation, this brought forward a limitation to the final argument:

Whilst neoliberal urban restructuring tendentially (re)produces fragmentations, empirical exceptions nevertheless prove the emergence of communal belonging and combative solidarities, contingent on socio-spatial morphogenesis (hence previous relations and shared spaces).

Finally, untangling *how the existing and emergent relations and divisions mediated tenants' experience of and supra-individual reactions to urban restructuring*, the different collective and fragmented strategies of appropriation were studied in relation to socio-spatial morphogenesis. In other words, the interdependence of different meso-relational moments with the (lacking) development of collective tenant power was scrutinized. As a result, forms of *practical communal, collectively combative, or ideological appropriation* were described. These were found to be contingent on the (absence of) existing relations in a structurally fragmenting context; shared spaces; and stratified experiences of residential alienation, along with their reflection. Thereby stratified experiences of residential alienation are shaped by and interdependent with tenants' previously assessed variegated access and aspiration to hopeful

futures, contingent on their stratified, classed past experiences – hence their temporalities of belonging.

Practical communal appropriation, for example through mutual help, had diverging political impacts. Whilst countering alienation at a level of immediate relationlessness, it either fed into emergent combative solidarities challenging exploitative housing relations and leading to strategies of collective appropriation; or into communal endeavours of social ascent, leaving neoliberal restructuring unchallenged or even supporting it. In contrast, ideological appropriations, designating interpretations of and reactions to residential alienation through scapegoating, generated or deepened authoritarian divisions. These divisions in turn exacerbated fragmentations among tenants, and prevented any form of collective, political intervention into urban development. Based on this analysis, the final, relational argument was developed. It can be rounded off as follows:

Tenants' political subjectivation occurs through nested spatio-temporal scales, generating fragmentations, divisions, and different types of solidarities. These define the political forms that tenants' relational strategies of appropriation take, amplifying or hindering their collective power. Feeding into collective depressed lethargy or hopeful atmospheres enveloping diverging political aims, they account for tenants' capacity to influence urban restructuring and co-constitute the political climate of Leipzig.

7.2 Contributions of the thesis

Besides the nuanced empirical analyses of Leipzig's post-socialist urban trajectory in its relation to political polarization in an inner-city neighbourhood, the approach undertaken offers both methodical and conceptual contributions to different disciplines. These are summarized in the following.

A relational lens for spatio-temporal inquiry

The focal methodological contribution proposed with this dissertation is the relational lens adapted. As an overall approach, it manifests in different moments of the research strategy; forms of questioning throughout the different parts of the thesis; and theoretical advancements made. Therewith, some of its components are inseparable from conceptual contributions, reflected in the subsequent section. By nature of its interdisciplinary genesis, the relational method is coupled with a spatio-temporally sensitive approach and, by definition, speaks to different fields.

Following the initial critique of urban political economic scholarship focussing tendentially either on analyses from above or below, on inquiries concerned with institutionalized political economic processes or their effects on tenants, the first manifestation of the relational approach of this thesis lies in its object of study – the inter*relation* of political subjectivation and urban restructuring. Seeking to transcend displacement scholarship's concentration on the violence produced by restructuring and structure heavy analyses of these processes, an interdisciplinary framework was developed to push existing analyses that aim to align perspectives on macro-institutional factors and daily life (Harvey, 1978; Peck, 2017; Katz, 2021; Davies, 2021; Angelo and Goh, 2021). This was done first, through retroductively theorizing residential alienation as not just an outcome, but simultaneously a driver of urban restructuring both in its structural and in its psychosocial workings, that always exists in a tension ridden relation with appropriation.

Informed by theories of social reproduction and political subjectivation, a relational mode of research was suggested to analytically rescale different, interdependent moments of urban restructuring. I argue that through coupling the perspective from above with that from below, this lens challenges assumptions about causality, for example of displacement as centrally an *outcome* of urban restructuring (for example Atkinson et al., 2011), which itself is mainly state or finance *driven* (for example Aalbers, 2019c). Instead, the developed perspective revives Harvey's historical call to analyse urban development as two sides of a coin, with accumulation on one and struggle on the other side (Harvey, 1978). However, it also centred the *absence* of struggle as an object of analysis. This was done through the affect-sensitive mode of analysis recapitulated below.

Second, a relational methodological contribution was put forward through the operationalization of *tenants' relations*. This analysis builds from scholarship on belonging and community relations in gentrifying areas, yet addresses its overall lack of theorizing the *political impact* of (disrupted) belonging. Thereby, the thesis furthermore speaks to literatures on political subjectivation, conceptualizing the latter as always relational. Focussing on the scale of meso-relations constituted by yet transcending individual, personal relations and always contingent on the macro-relations they are embedded in, this method of study suggests the joint analysis of solidarities and divisions. Conceiving these as part of the same relational spectrum allows for inter- and innerdisciplinary dialogue between existing studies on (urban) solidary struggles and aspects of far-right resurgence. This dialogue, I argue, can inspire the inquiries into both phenomena (solidarity/divisions), enhance our understanding of political

subjectivation and therewith inform and challenge academic and political strategizing, as reflected in the last section of this chapter.

Finally, aided by urbanist and geographic perspectives, a spatio-temporal perspective was adopted to better understand these meso-relations in their emergence. This strategy is very much a result of the interdisciplinary subject of study and perspective developed to research it. Taking into account the spatial and historical modes of operation of (political) subjectivation is no novelty, as a glance at Bourdieu's oeuvre signals (Bourdieu, 1987; Bourdieu, 1989; Bourdieu, 2018). However, through the empirically based theorization of *nested scales of subjectivation* and *temporalities of belonging*, a mode of operationalizing these was suggested, that informs existing research on political subjectivation, that yet falls short of multi-scalar and temporally sensitive analyses.

These relational and spatio-temporal modes of inquiry generated as set of conceptual contributions which are summarized in the following section.

Abstracting from Leipzig: affective mediations, alienation, fragmentations, and authoritarian divisions

Seeking to contribute to urban political economy and theories of political subjectivation, this thesis proposes four main conceptual contributions.

First, based on the engagement with a wide body of scholarship in the field of urban political economy, the thesis addressed an affective gap. Whereas a few recent studies on urban governance have incorporated differentiated readings of urban affect (Jakimow, 2020; Davies, 2021), these remain undertheorized as collective phenomena or atmospheres (Anderson, 2014) regarding both their genesis and their role in the reproduction of urban restructuring. In dialogue with cross-disciplinary theorizations of affect, an empirically grounded conceptualization of affective mediations was generated from a strategic locational case study. In an era of global housing financialization, uneven development and variegated trajectories of violent urban restructuring for profit; from an unevenly reunited and developing nation state; a region of accelerated neoliberalization in the last 30 years; an exceptional post-shrinking boomtown and a neighbourhood that currently represents one of the most drastic closures of a rent gap; the present study narrated the specific story of Leipzig and its inner East, whilst striving to abstract from the concrete.

Contributing to local analyses of Leipzig's housing development through careful empirical analysis, the political impact of different actors was questioned with regards to inner German power balances. Finding these not sufficiently explanatory for the complex interplay of growth-aspirations and regulatory interventions or pressure from below and the lack of both, a cultural political economy inspired attentiveness to affect served to sharpen the analysis. The inductively developed interpretation of Leipzig's history of housing financialization as one of affective post-shrinkage-dialectics informed the generated conceptualization of *affective mediations* of urban political-economic contexts and processes. This speaks to a shortcoming around the theorization of affect in urban political economic analyses concerned with the *driving mechanisms* of neoliberal urbanization. This affective lens strengthened the relational framework by illuminating an affective dimnesion of politics that is collectively (and in contested manner) shaped by structural processes, institutional actors and collective or fragmented city dwellers. Therewith it also generated an affect-sensitive conceptualization of *how* political actors, in different contexts and with different backgrounds (fail to) develop transformative power. Despite being grounded in a quite particular local setting, the developed theorization of affective mediations, interdepending with actors' positions of power in an unevenly developing context, can be informative of theory generation elsewhere.

Second, the abovementioned sophisticated theorization of residential alienation constitutes not just a methodological, but also a conceptual contribution to urban political economy. Through the theoretical and empirical engagement with residential alienation as proposed by Madden and Marcuse (2016; Marcuse, 1975), the concept was theoretically refined. By grounding it in a wider understanding of daily life; thereby challenging its limitation to the scale of housing; and highlighting the *limits* of alienation through appropriation, a conceptualization of the structural interdependence of neoliberal urbanization's property relations with the political potential of those marginalized in a process of spatial production was put forward. This was made possible through the spatio-temporal inquiry of (political) subjectivation through divergent temporalities of belonging and interdependent strategies of appropriation. The grounding of these both within rent relations and the wider neighbourhood underscored the relevance of studying residential alienation beyond (individual) housing conditions. Theoretically and practically, this is particularly interesting concerning the political implications of residential alienation and its variegated empirical forms.

Interrelated with and substantial to this reconceptualization of residential alienation was the theorization of fragmentations. Instead of attesting the post-socialist, neoliberalized city of Leipzig a successful transformation of coffee breaks to elbows, this thesis found it to be marked by fragmentations. Referring to a range of simultaneous and overlapping manifestations of alienated "relations of relationlessness" (Jaeggi, 2016), this concept hopes to provoke dialogue with both future studies on neoliberal urbanisms and urban politics. Informing the understanding of capitalist urban restructuring and the (contested) production of abstract space in Leipzig and potentially beyond, it also speaks to a growingly interdisciplinary body of work on political subjectivation. By means of the previously described operationalization of meso-relations, fragmentations were found to constitute a non-negligible explanatory factor in the genesis of solidarities and authoritarian divisions *and* an essential defining factor of residential alienation. Defined as micro-scale isolations, gaps between groups and a fluent (dis)relational process between tenants in general, fragmentations were identified as the missing link between neoliberal urban restructuring and political subjectivation.

It is to the body of scholarship concerned with latter (political subjectivation), and mainly the current urgent debate on far-right tendencies, yet also research on solidarities opposing these, that the last of the four main contributions speaks. Once more enabled through the relational, yet also spatio-temporal mode of theorizing, the established approach to authoritarianism as a way of relating (Adamczak, 2017) seeks to propose an alternative way of conceiving current regressive tendencies, both in (East) Germany, and on an international scale. Having critically engaged with sometimes circular debates about the primacy of the cultural versus the primacy of the economic in recent German scholarship in chapter 2, the developed concept of authoritarian divisions has both scholarly and political value.

In terms of a much needed and currently flourishing debates on *whether* and *how* to engage in (qualitative) research endeavours about the far-right (Ammicht Quinn, 2019; Feustel, 2019; Mullis, 2019), an understanding of authoritarian divisions enables methodological, research practical reflections as to why, how, who can conduct research on the far right when and where. I have elaborated these elsewhere (Reichle, 2021a). However, I want to argue here, that these reflections are, albeit with great care, to some extent translatable to both theory making and political strategizing. Conceiving authoritarianism neither from a psychologizing, culturally reifying or economically deductive angle (without neglecting the relevance of all these factors), but from a spatio-temporally sensitive, relational one, encourages new ways of studying it and,

specifically, understanding its interrelation with geo-historical conjunctures. Furthermore, in its interrelation with existing fragmentations and emergent solidarities, and their grounding in socio-spatial morphogenesis impacted by divergent temporalities of belonging, this relational conceptualization encourages political questions. These parallel the methodical reflections on *when* and *where* authoritarian divisions, but also potential solidarities can (be studied and thus) emerge. Thereby, building on the extension of the concept of residential alienation beyond the sphere of housing, the role of the neighbourhood and its social spaces must be considered as a central sphere of granular politics. This perspective opens up a nuanced outlook on potential interventions and ways of working towards them. I will come back to this with some open questions in the final section of this chapter.

7.3 Limitations of the research project

In line with the research philosophy elaborated in the methodology chapter, I do not consider it necessary to lengthily engage with the habitual gesture of qualitative researchers, highlighting the exploratory nature of their research projects and the consequential limited validity. Following a critical realist approach, this research project has aimed to generate critical knowledge through empirical analysis and theoretical abstraction. That complexities have been accounted for, should be obvious to any reader who has made it this far. Equally, that the specific case study comes with its particularities which need to be accounted for in theory making, was reflected adequately. Needless to say, any comparison would be interesting and help to question and strengthen the analysis.

That said, the hypotheses formulated in this thesis were generated to be challenged. There are two significant directions from which such challenges would be particularly welcome.

The first is scalar. Any political economist or just attentive reader having picked up the multiple references to global processes (housing question, capitalist urbanization, authoritarian successes, …) will have critically remarked the limitation of the present analysis to the German national context. This is much owed to the pragmatics of research, yet it generates two important weak spots to be reflected. The first concerns the analysis of urban restructuring and the second the concept of meso-relations.

Regarding the analysis of patterns of urban restructuring, although supranational funding has been mentioned in passing and global urban competitiveness has been nodded to, an analysis of Leipzig's *international role* would surely enhance the conceptualization of its development.

Whereas the role of international capital is simply hardly impossible to trace from a research practical perspective (as exemplified by Bernt, Colini and Förste, 2017), an analysis of the city's dependence on EU regulations; the mayor's involvement in transnational networks; Leipzig's international branding and extended attention to the migratory routes of its inhabitants might have been beneficial to the analysis of its restructuring.

Presumably the proposed relational method, combining perspectives from above and below, would have required even more brain gymnastics, if consistently extended to a global scale. However, regarding the study of political subjectivation and meso-relations, that was very much (reasonably) rooted in immediate, spatialized social life in the neighbourhood, this generates several open questions. How can meso-relations be theorized in a less spatially immediate manner? How, in the age of digitalization and fragmentations, do impersonal relations beyond physical space, affect political subjectivation? And relatedly, what does this imply for political strategizing?

The second limitation concerns the hypotheses made on political subjectivation. Given the research question of this dissertation, the initial focus was set on the interdependence of urban restructuring, hous*ing* relations, and political subjectivation. Although this focus was justified, no claim can be made that the processes defined as urban restructuring here are the sole or even *predominant* driver of fragmenting subjectivation and authoritarian divisions. Instead, other spheres of life beyond the different scales of home, are to be considered for a holistic theory of subjectivation. This was partially illustrated by continuous references to East Germany's history of deindustrialization, and by different empirical examples of the intersection of housing relations and experiences of urban daily life with relations of (gendered) labour. However, these spheres were not granted in-depth, analytical attention, pointing to an explanatory limit of this thesis. As my friend Dominik Intelmann would say, referring to Adorno, societal phenomena are to be inquired as *constellations* (Intelmann, 2019a).

These limitations invite thoughts about possible related research projects and questions, that are briefly spelled out in the next section.

7.4 Future research inspirations

Given the interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature of the research project, the conceptual contributions and concluding findings could serve as connection points to research projects in a range of directions. In this short section, three are proposed that I consider particularly

interesting. They depart from different conceptual contributions made with this thesis, inviting their refinement.

Related to the scalar limitations of the project, a research endeavour to once more rescale the concept of residential, or maybe better *urban alienation* would be interesting. Based on scholarship proving the structural impotence of the local/urban state in contexts of urban austerity (Peck, 2012; Bayırbağ, Davies and Münch, 2017; Davies et al., 2018; Davies, 2021), coupled with my extended conceptualization of the alienation-appropriation dialectic, a study of alienation at the level of institutionalized urban actors could inform theories on the governance of urban restructuring and once more refine a theory of alienation. In passing, chapter 4 has proposed to conceive the city administration as alienated from its purpose by structural contexts surpassing its control. However, developing this into a proper analysis would require scrutinizing these structural contexts beyond the nation state.

In the field of studies on political subjectivation, research beyond housing relations and urban daily life could foster the understanding of the relevance and interplay of different social spheres for processes of political subjectivation. Specifically in the East German context, out of which the conceptualization of fragmentations emerged, research on other arenas of subjectivation would not just be interesting, but relevant for political intervention into authoritarian, divisive relations. What comes to mind, are analyses of the changing labour relations in their relevance for class (de)composition, yet also include analyses of other spheres of social and societal reproduction, like education or (health) care.

Lastly, to test and elaborate the concept of affective mediations, especially in its interplay with political meso-relational moments, I would be curious to learn how these play out elsewhere. Besides learning about potential other collective yet stratified moods that feed into, or limit neoliberal urban restructuring in different contexts, the political implications of a wider range of affective mediations – beyond depression and hope – would be a fascinating subject of analysis. Thus, for example, besides depressive lethargy contingent on social fragmentations, what other supra-individual moods encourage authoritarian success?

7.5 What is to be done? Political implications

The undertaken research project clearly does not follow a solutionist agenda. Nevertheless, it grew from a research perspective concerned with apparent threats and limits to an equal, just society, to emancipation and good living conditions for all, both through the neoliberal

impairment of housing justice and through politically regressive currents. Contingent on the object of research, along with the theoretical angles adopted, no policy requirements to ameliorate these alarming conditions were generated from my findings. What then, is the impact of this research, besides critical critique?

If any direct strategical considerations can be drawn from the findings presented in this conclusion, they concern the importance and simultaneous difficulty of creating solidarities. The only meaningful interventions into Leipzig's housing financialization were realized thanks to the tireless push of few activists. Their push could have been stronger, if backed by a popular *mood*, as the very recent example of Berlin's referendum on the expropriation of large real estate firms demonstrates (Vasudevan, 2021). This *mood*, or collective, yet stratified *affective mediation*, as I have tried to untangle, is contingent not merely on a common interest in decent housing. Beyond that, it depends on processes of socio-spatial morphogenesis, hence the emergence of meso-relations in specific, shared spaces. For political praxis this means that potentially, housing struggles are not the primary, or at least not the singular locus of emergent contestations. Rather, coming back to an analysis form the 70s on the "social factory" (Dalla Costa, 2019), these must be embedded in relation building in other spaces of daily life and dwelling. This suggests not just an analysis of neighbourhood spaces, but also the practical encouragement of their inclusive appropriation.

The research has demonstrated however, that this is rendered difficult by completely divergent relations of tenants to these spaces (temporalities of belonging), different degrees of reflexivity (tied inter alia to divergent class interests) and stubborn, existing fragmentations. These once more account for the second problem addressed, that of authoritarian divisions.

Conceiving authoritarianism relationally, I hope, can invite reflections about antifascist strategizing. It means dedicating further energy to the question of how authoritarian divisions, and their fragmenting contexts of emergence are sustained, and can be disrupted. This leads to the question of the relational *scale* of intervention to authoritarian divisions – to what extent is the engagement in personal micro-relations sustainable to challenge authoritarian divisions; is a meso-relational sense of communal belonging and collective solidarity key or are structural changes the advisable path of choice? Although my findings have illustrated that the latter are crucial, as the neoliberal context structurally favours fragmentations feeding into divisions, the project has also demonstrated, that structural changes are hardly possible without intervention from below, which is contingent on meso-relations. Based on observations of tenant organizing,

I have reflected elsewhere on the difficulties of creating such intervention, through building a communal sense of belonging, emphasizing a collective interest and building meso-relational solidarity in a context of authoritarian divisions (Reichle and Bescherer, 2021). To what extent such interventions depend on micro-relations is an ambivalent question that I have no general answer to. However, I do not consider there to be a granular shortcut to bridging authoritarian divisions, by engaging in direct, personal micro-relations *alone*.

Concludingly, I want to argue that the fact that this research project is no solutionist one, is owed to the complexity of the social reality it studies. Hence my proposal for further political inquiry and action is to live up to this complexity and do it justice by neither assuming to ever find a perfect strategy, nor giving up on the search.

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Appendix I: List of graphs, maps and images

Appendix II: Interviews

II.1 List of Interviewees

The tenant interviews include information on where they were conducted. For reasons of anonymity, all names are pseudonyms and the job specifications of some experts are left vague or altered slightly.

Phase I: Expert interviews

I-I1 Activist – SFA and several other groups

I-I2 Housing researcher – also consultant for several policy decisions in the city

I-I3 Real estate lobbyist – works for a central publication, as a consultant for the main real estate companies, organizer of events, and participator in policy discussions

I-I4 City employee on neighbourhood level – coordinates associational and cultural life in the inner East

I-I5 City employee in the administrative planning department

I-I6 Neighbourhood centre activist – involved in cultural neighbourhood associations and participatory planning

I-I7 Local city council, green party

Phase II: Expert interviews & 2 tenant interviews

II-I1 2 long-term volunteers in neighbourhood association A, after the Wende paid out of state funds to do neighbourhood work

II-I2 City council from another neighbourhood, left party

II-I3 Board member of tenants' association, architect and activist

II-I4 Inhabitant of one of the first house projects of the neighbourhood, school social worker, part of local institutionalized cultural networks

II-I5 Social worker in a city funded project to reduce unemployment

II-I6 Former resident and founder of a small café and neighbourhood centre

II-I7 Torben (at home) – tenant in his early 30s, long term student, lives around Eisenbahnstraße since 7 years in a house owned by nice landlords, could not live there otherwise

II-I8 Activist from self organized tenants' councelling

II-I9 Social worker senior centre A

II-I10 Former cinema employee (in GDR), part of local cultural associations

II-I11 Long-term volunteer in neighbourhood association B, former bar owner and consultant of the Christian Democrat Party

II-I12 2 Social workers supporting refugees in their search for housing

II-I13 2 Social workers, senior centre B

II-I14 One social worker, one coordinator for the housing stock on a neighbourhood level, LWB

II-I15 Artist who made several audio walks about the neighbourhood

II-I16 Tenant lawyer

II-I17 Landlord couple owning 3 historical multi-family houses, all of them bought in the 90s

II-I18 Ms Uhlig (phone) – cleaner in her 60s, lives in neighbourhood since 16 years, born in Leipzig

Phase III: Group discussion & tenant interviews
Group discussion
GD (Senior centre B) – Focus group 3 old pensioners, two women and a man all in their 70s

Narrative interviews
III-I1 (at home) Ms Meyer – LWB house, pensioner and former cleaner in her late 60s, grew up around here, house still has oven heating (the best warmth)

III-I2 (phone) Lotta – West German student in her late 20s, moved here 8 years ago (and away again 2 ago), just finished studying

III-I3 (phone) Kim – non-binary West German student in their late 20s who has lived here since 8 years in a house full of students

III-I4 (online) group interview social workers from Iran/Brazil/Germany – both tenants in the area and working with international women and girls

III-I5 (phone) Ms & Mr Schütz – couple in their late 70s, have nice landlords, she works in a care home, he is a pensioner, he lives here since 1968

III-I6 (phone) Ms Hermann – pensioner in her 80s, lives in the neighbourhood since forever with her husband who had a car garage that is now closed

III-I7 (phone) Ms Schuricht – pensioner in her late 60s who workes at a publisher's to top up her pension

III-I8 (phone) Ms Seiler – pensioner in her 90s, lives here since forever, moved after Wende

III-I9 (phone) Phillip – white West German social worker living in the neighbourhood since 8 years

III-I10 (outside) Jan – White East German politics student, in his early 20s, lives in the neighbourhod since 4 years

Narrative interviews

IV-I1 (women's centre) Lydia – Syrian woman in her early 40s living in Schönefeld since recently, unemployed, mother of 3

IV-I2 (women's centre) Selma – Syrian woman in her late 30s living in Schönefeld since 3 years, unemployed, mother of 4

IV-I3 (women's centre) Alenya – Syrian woman in her early 30s living in Schönefeld for 3 years, unemployed, mother of 2

IV-I4 (women's centre) Marwa – Iraqi social worker in her late 40s, lives near Eisenbahnstraße since 2000, mother of 7, yet two have moved out already

IV-I5 (women's centre) Mira – woman from Syrian Kurdistan in her late 30s, lives in Schönefeld since 3 years, unemployed, mother of 3

IV-I6 (outside, café) Yusuf – restaurant owner and now landlord from Turkey in his 50s, moved to Leipzig around the 2000s, father of 2

IV-I7 (outside) Hayet – care worker living in LWB block flat, arrived 2013 from Tunisia, mother of 3

IV-I8 (outside) Marco – former art student in early 30s from Italy, lives around Eisenbahnstraße since 9 years, works as a part-time pedagogue

IV-I9 (outside) Mr Schlüppel – pensioner, former journalist in his 80s, lives in his house since 40 years

IV-I10 2017 (outside) Hussein – former student in his mid 30s from Syria, just moved to a flat after several years of shelter life and homelessness staying with friends, arrived in 2016

IV-I11 (outside) Claudia – East German woman in her early 40s, moved here from Berlin a couple of years ago, recently displaced, just started studying again, husband does well-earning home office job, mother of 1

IV-I12 (outside) Alina – Iranian activist in mid-30s, arrived in 2016 with her partner, just opened a café

IV-I13 (at his home) Björn – born in the neighbourhood, in his early 40s, former geography student and now works in a bookshop, became a landlord by buying a decayed house some years ago, father of 1

IV-I14 (outside) Tommi – former student from West Germany in his 20s, lives here since 2 years, unemployed and chronically ill

Activist Interivews

All activist interviews were conducted in the central park of the neighbourhood.

AI-1.1 – 30 year old West German academic, in the neighbourhood since 2 years

AI-1.2 – Young Arabic speaking man in his early 20s, in Germany since at least 5 years

AI-1.3 – West German student in her 20s, since 2015

AI-1.4 – Two white female students in their early 20s, in the neighbourhood since 3-4 years

AI-1.5 – Syrian mother in her early 40s and daughter of about 15

AI-1.6 – Syrian man in his 30s

AI-1.7 – Three young West German female students in their 20s, here since 2011/2015/2016

AI-2.1 – Young mothers in their early twenties, second and third generation immigrants from Turkey, unemployed

AI-2.2 – 3 generations of a white, majorly unemployed family + friends, live here since 13 years

AI-2.3 – Two Kurdish men in their 50s, here since 5 years

AI-2.4 – Janitor in his late 30s, has to take care of one house in the neighbourhood

AI-2.5 – German student in his early 20s, moved here a year ago

II.2 Interview Guidelines

The following interview guidelines are translated from German to English.

Expert interviews

This guideline is an example compiled out of several interviews. All interview guidelines were slightly different, as interviewees had different areas of expertise, roles, characteristics and relations to me.

1. **Your role in Leipzig's urban politics**
   a. How would you describe your position in the city's urban and housing poiltics / research? / ask about specific positions
   b. How do you combine these specific roles?

2. **Important actors of housing politics**
   a. In your perspective, who are the most important actors in Leipzig's housing politics? Economically/in the city government/extra parliamentary?
   b. What would you identify as central urban and housing-political conflicts?
   c. Who represents tenants' interests? (What is your perspective on the tenant association?)

3. **Rent development**
   a. What are the main reasons for the rising rents in Leipzig? Where are they rising most drastically?
   b. There was just a report about the rents from 2018. Could you say a few words on that and potential conflicts that accompanied this publication?

4. **State regulation**
   a. What is the role of the city government in Leipzig's urban development?
   b. How would you describe the current policy direction of the city council?
   c. What are the conflict lines in the city council?
   d. In which areas is the city dependent on communal, federal state, or national funding? In which areas is this given and what is it conditional on? Do you have specific examples?
   e. In what areas is the city juridically dependent on all the above levels? Can you elaborate the process?
   f. Are there specific tools to attract/support investors or corporations? Who has decided to implement such tools historically? (example tax exemptions for refurbishment?

g. How would you assess the city's capacity to influence who buys, renovates, builds? How are projects attracted, supported or limited?

h. Could you say a little bit about the coming into being of the housing political concept in 2015? / the social preservation statute? / other expertise areas

5. **Ownership structures & market actors**
    a. Can you assess the ownership structure of private landlords?
    b. What are the proportion of small landlords, listed landlords?
    c. How did it change in the last years?
    d. What are the most important real estate firms?
    e. What is known about these and their strategies?
    f. (depending on expertise) Can you say something about the role of the housing cooperations an their historical development?
    g. Which neighbourhoods are currently very interesting for investment?
    h. Which neighbourhoods are changing most at the moment? How?

6. **Social consequences**
    a. How would you describe the social consequences of the housing political development?
    b. Displacement is often considered an invisible process. Who knows about this in Leipzig? Is ther any data?
    c. Do you know of cases of displacement?

7. **Resistance/Conflict**
    a. Is there currently any resistance to these developmnents? How does it show? Can you say something about that?
    b. (depending on expertise) I've heard about xxx – what is the strategy behind this / can you tell me more about it?

Narrative interviews

Because of the style of narrative interviews, the questions function rather as a thematical guideline. Mostly, the central questions function as impulses for narration that covers the themes which the interviewee wants to cover, and which are hence of interest. If these narrations don't suffice, the questions in *italics* serve as impulses. Other questions emerge during the interview, thus the guideline below is just an example.

Introduction

I.   As an introduction, can you tell me what your relationship to Leipzig's inner East is? What does the neighbourhood mean to you and how would you describe it?

What are important places in the neighbourhood for your daily life?

Since when do you live here? Where do you live?

What is Leipzig's East for you, where is your neighbourhood (draw)?

Neighbourhood

II.   Who are you in contact with in daily life? What is a normal day like and who do you meet? Negative/positive encounters?

What places do you visit regularly in the neighbourhood? Stores/Cafés/… Do you talk to others there? Do you know people there?

Do you have friends outside of the house/family/acquaintances? How did you meet them? Where do you meet them?

Do you and others in the neighbourhood help each other out?

III.   Can you tell me how the neighbourhood has changed, since you live here? // How did it change in the last xx years?

What changes have you remarked specifically concerning houses, stores, people, …? What are positive and what negative changes?

IV.   Why is the neighbourhood changing?

V.   What bothers you in the neighbourhood and what would you change if you could?

VI.   Who is responsible for these changes?

Housing

      VII.   Could you please tell me a bit about your housing situation?

Since when do you live in your flat?

How do you live? With whom? In how many rooms? Do you have a balcony?

      VIII.   Does anything bother you about your housing situation?

Do you or did you ever have problems with your housing situation? Have you ever been dissatisfied with the landlord/flat? Could you tell me a story about that?

How did you deal with it?

      IX.   What do you think about the rising renst in the neighbourhood? Does it concern you or your environment?

      X.   Could you tell me a bit about the other people in your building? Are you in contact with your neighbours? How

Is there mutual aid in the house? Could you tell me of an example?

How has the population in the house changed? When? What did this mean for you?

**********************COVID********************

General feelings

      I.   How have you been during this pandemic time? How do you feel generally?

      II.   Can you tell me a bit about whether and how your daily life changed?

Do you have any limitations because of COVID?

Housing

      III.   Does your flat/housing situation feel any different since COVID? Could you tell me how?

Do you still go outside?

Do you have rent problems because of COVID?

What do you do about it? / How do you deal with it?

Social contacts

    IV.   How have your social contacts and encounters changed?

Support

    V.   Have you received or given any support offers? Can you tell me of an example? Do you except it/do others except it? Why (not)?

Activist interviews

1. Do you live in the neighbourhood? Since when? Why do you live here?
2. Are you happy with your housing? Why?

        How much do you pay?

        How was the search?

        Do you want to stay?

3. What does the neighbourhood mean to you?
4. What are the biggest problems in the neighbourhood? And what causes them?
5. How do you deal with these problems? Where do you get support?

II.3 Information sheet for interviewees

The following information sheet is a translation of my German information sheet. As there were different research phases, this is an example from the first two phases, including variations for the narrative research phases in brackets.

Leicester, 01.06.2019

Information sheet for interviewees

Title of the research project: Housing relations: the emergence and disruption of tenants' relations

Name of the researcher: Leon Rosa Reichle

You have been invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish to. Ask me for more information if anything is unclear to you. Take your time to decide whether you wish to take part or not. Thank you for reading.

What is the research about? My PhD is about the relationships between tenants in a growing city, especially Leipzig's inner East. I want to research the impact of urban change on the life and relations of tenants, but also their influence on urban change.

What does the study / participation involve? Your participation in the study involves an expert interview (/a narrative interview). In the interview we will discuss different questions concerning the housing market in Leipzig, especially its historical and currentd development. That includes ownership structures in different parts of the city, an attestation of central actors in the city development and perspectives on city politics and housing cooperatives.

(/The interview will be more like a conversation than a classical question-answer interrogation, so how much information you share, what we focus on especially and for how long we talk is up to you. The central topic will be your housing situation and housing-history in Leipzig. The conversation will take place in a location of your choice. If you are happy to do it at your home that would be beneficiary for my research, but any other place is good as well.)

Do I have to participate? The participation is based on consent. That means it is completely voluntary, you can chose to refrain at any time and also object my use of the data or parts of it after the conversation. It will be recorded and transcribed, but this will happen anonymously. The recording will be securely stored and I will personally transcribe and anonymize it. I might share the data with my supervisor, but only in transcribed and anonymized form.

Who is doing the research? Leon Rosa Reichle / PhD student at De Montfort University, Leicester

Who is funding the research? There is no external funding to my research.

Why have I been chosen? I have selected you as an expert for Leipzig's urban development. I hope for your support with my entrance into the field, advancing my understanding of economical, political, historical and geographical contexts of Leipzig's housing situation. Besides you I will interview about 5 other experts in this phase.

(/I have chosen you as an inhabitant of Leipzig's inner East. There will be about 20 other tenants interviewed.)

What happens next? We will schedule an interview date. If you wish to gain further information, I can send them to you in advance. The interview will be quite open and ist length depends on your capacities. Depending on your availability we can limit the time to 1-1,5 hours.

What will happen to the information I disclose? The results of the research study will be used for my PhD and conference papers and articles in relation to that. The audio file will be deleted from the recording device, as soon as it has been transferred to a password secured computer. Towards the end of the project I will provide a report on my PhD.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential? All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept on a password protected database and is strictly confidential. You will be given an pseudonym which will be used instead of your name. Any identifiable information you may give will be removed and anonymised. According to my Universities data policy, the data will be kept for 5 years after the study. My supervisor will have access to my translation of the anonymised transcripts, and so will the faculty human research ethics committee, who may require access to check that the study has been conducted in accordance with the approval.

You should also be aware that I may be duty bound to pass on information that you provide that reveals harm has occurred to a child or other vulnerable individual.

Will anyone know that I am taking part? I will tell no one that you are taking part. Yet if you tell me about a criminal offence, I have a duty to pass that information onto the police. Only in those circumstances would I have to reveal your identity.

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of taking part? Your participation in my study will help me, to conduct an analysis of Leipzig's neighbourhood and housing conditions, especially centring the perspectives of tenants. This perspective is lacking in many research projects on urban development, despite being central for social housing politics.

(/Taking part in my research will give you time and space to reflect and talk about your housing situation and housing history, the changing city and your opinions on it. If any part of these

topics includes upsetting topics, talking about them might upset you. In the case that you feel uncomfortable or sad, we can pause or stop the conversation. If necessary and possible, I can offer you a list of places with counselling in regards to your situation.)

What if something goes wrong? If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for a legal action but you may have to pay for it. Regardless of this, if you wish to complain, or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, the normal University complaints mechanisms should be available to you.

Who can I complain to? If you have a complaint regarding anything to do with this study, you can initially approach me. If you feel uncomfortable with that, or it achieves no satisfactory outcome, you can contact Helena Flam my former supervisor from Leipzig, so you do not have to phone the UK. She will pass on the complaints to my University, the Administrator for the Faculty Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation Office, Faculty of Business and Law, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH or BALResearchEthics@dmu.ac.uk

Who is organising and funding the research? The research is part of my PhD at the Centre for Urban Research on Austerity in the Department of People, Politics and Place at the faculty of Business and Law at De Montfort University. I am funded by a full PhD scholarship.

Who has reviewed the study? This study has been reviewed and approved by De Montfort University, Faculty of Business and Law Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for Further Information

If you need further information, you can contact me:

Leon Reichle
0049 15752022989
leon.reichle@dmu.ac.uk

Thank you very much for participating in this study.

II.4 Consent form for interviewees

The following consent form is a translation of my German consent form.

Consent form for research participants

Housing relations: the emergence and disruption of tenants' relations
Leon Rosa Reichle

1. I confirm that I have received the information sheet on the above study I had time to consider the information, ask questions and get an answer to these. ☐

2. I consent, that my data will be stored in anonymized form and potentially archived. ☐

3. I understand, that my participation is voluntarry. I also understand that I can end my participation to any given time, without bearing negative consequences. I can decide, not to answer any questions. ☐

4. I consent, that anonymized quotes will be used in articles, for presentations or academic purposes. ☐

5. I consent, that the interview will be recorded. ☐

6. I consent to participate in the research project. ☐

……………………………   .……………………   ……………………………

Surname, name   Date   Signature
participant

……………………………   …………………….   ……………………………

Surname, name   Date   Signature
researcher

Appendix III. Conceptual maps

The following are three examples of conceptual maps generated in different phases of filedwork analysis.

III.1 Affective corridors of Leipzig's historical restructuring

III.2 Experiences of urban restructuring in daily life – forms of residential alienation

Neighbourhood

- anonymity, everyone moved away
- dirt, graffiti, noise, ignorance
- insecuriy + racist prejudice
- shops all gone, instead international shops + kebab shops
- loss of infrastcutrue (bank)
- territorial stigma

House

- anonymity, fluctuation, soc insecurity
- neglect
- rented stuck
- lack of community
- lack of services
- fear of rent raises
- displ. through illegal harrassment
- shame & withdrawal

Long-term pensioner tenants

Neighbourhood

- racism (in many facets)
- police violence (men)
- conflicts in public space (men)
- drug-related problems
- insecurity for kids
- gendered exclusion from public space (girls & women)

House

- racialized exclusionary displacement (unable to find housing)
- overcrowding (families)
- displacement because of complainign, racist neighbours
- rent raises + displacement pressure
- isolation because of childcare (women)

Immigrant tenants

Neighbourhood

- territorial stigma
- racist prejudice against others
- drug-related crime
- displacement of social spaces
- imagined competition with "foreigners" for housing

House

- neglect (lack of heating)
- exclusionary displacement due to lack of jobcentre-compatible rents
- unpayable rent raises
- displacement pressure
- direct displacement to create student houses

Long-term working poor/unemployed tenants

Neighbourhood

- displacement of non-commercial social spaces
- lack of affordable space for social spaces
- increasing anonymity + "consumerism"
- street harrassment (women)
- drug-related discomfort

House

- landlords not agreeing to new tenants in shared housing
- direct displacement
- landlord harrassment/threatening
- neglect
- slowly incipient exclusionary displacement

students/academics

III.3 Solidarities and divisions / Relational goods and evils

Divisions

Relational goods + solidarities

COMMON STRUGGLE/ EXPERIENCE

*increasing anonymization

*Displacement danger

ladenprojekte

*reproduction of gendered divisions

Street life

Institutional neighbourliness

*ambiguous role in reproducing vs decreasing divisions

*Displacement danger

SPACES OF ENCOUNTER

*racism, exclusion

*"Wende losers"

*Displacement danger

Bar collectives

Immigrant associations

Collective outrage, struggle against "common enemy"

*racism

DIY-APPROPRIATION OF SPACE

Search for housing, bureaucratic support

NETWORKS OF SOLIDARITY

HOUSE COMMUNITIES

Co-constitution

STRUGGLE VS LANDLORD

Conditional on

friendship

family

*reproduction of gendered divisions

COVID-19 SUPPORT

*connection points to relational evils/divisions