

DETERRITORIAL BODIES

Body-Territory and Migrant Women's Anti-Eviction Activism in Barcelona, Spain



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Credits to a friend, colleague, and photographer Levon Schuller.

ABSTRACT

Cities have become sites of everyday border violence. The convergence of two significant events has intensified this reality: a global housing crisis and rising migration. With global cities as sites of capital accumulation and dispossession, these dynamics often leave new migrants struggling for shelter, while established migrants face increased risks of eviction and discrimination. Displacement in cities has largely been studied within gentrification debates, nonetheless, emerging critical and decolonial literature calls for moving beyond universalized conceptualizations to account for the historical specificity of displacements—particularly those affecting racialized populations from the Global South in cities of the Global North.

This research examines the colonial and feminist implications of de-territorialization processes such as evictions, focusing on the body as the first site of survival and resistance. It studies the embodied implications of multiterritoriality, involving de- and re-territorialization processes, among populations characterized by continuous forced mobility. Focusing on the activist collective PAH (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca) and the Region of Barcelona, the thesis applies *cuerpo-territorio* as both framework and methodology to analyze current struggles over housing and territory, moving from the body to the multiple territories that shape migrant women's lives.

The analysis highlights the affective spatiality, agency, and intersectional politics of evictions, revealing the colonial, racist, and patriarchal underpinnings of these processes. It shows that the insecurity produced by unstable housing extends to women's own bodies, leaving them more vulnerable to gender-based violence and undermining their capacity to care for themselves and their families. Evictions are experienced not only as geographical displacement but also as embodied dispossession across the current territory and that of origin, producing illness, vulnerability, and violence, while simultaneously giving rise to practices of care, solidarity, and resistance. Migrant women respond to dispossession by joining activist groups, reshaping notions of private/public boundaries and expanding female urban citizenship.

ABSTRACT (GERMAN)

Städte sind zu Orten alltäglicher Grenzgewalt geworden. Zwei bedeutende Ereignisse haben diese Realität verschärft: eine globale Wohnungskrise und die zunehmende Migration. Angesichts der Tatsache, dass globale Städte Orte der Kapitalakkumulation und Enteignung sind, führt diese Dynamik dazu, dass neue Migranten oft um eine Unterkunft kämpfen müssen, während etablierte Migranten einem erhöhten Risiko von Vertreibung und Diskriminierung ausgesetzt sind. Während Verdrängung in Städten weitgehend im Rahmen von Gentrifizierungsdebatten untersucht wurde, fordert die aufkommende kritische und dekoloniale Literatur, über universalisierte Konzeptualisierungen hinauszugehen und die historische Besonderheit von Verdrängungen zu berücksichtigen - insbesondere jene, die rassifizierte Bevölkerungsgruppen aus dem globalen Süden in Städten des globalen Nordens betreffen.

Diese Forschungsarbeit untersucht die kolonialen und feministischen Implikationen von Entterritialisierungsprozessen wie Vertreibungen und konzentriert sich dabei auf den Körper als ersten Ort des Überlebens und des Widerstands. Sie untersucht die verkörperten Implikationen von Multiterritorialität, die De- und Reterritorialisierungsprozesse in Bevölkerungsgruppen einschließt, die durch ständige erzwungene Mobilität gekennzeichnet sind. Die Arbeit konzentriert sich auf das Aktivistenkollektiv PAH (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca) und die Region Barcelona und wendet *cuerpo-territorio* sowohl als Rahmen als auch als Methode an, um aktuelle Kämpfe um Wohnraum und Territorium zu analysieren, indem sie vom Körper zu den vielfältigen Territorien übergeht, die das Leben von Migrantinnen prägen.

Die Analyse hebt die affektive Räumlichkeit, die Handlungsfähigkeit und die intersektionale Politik von Zwangsräumungen hervor und enthüllt die kolonialen, rassistischen und patriarchalen Grundlagen dieser Prozesse. Sie zeigt, dass die Unsicherheit, die durch unsichere Wohnverhältnisse entsteht, sich auch auf den Körper der Frauen auswirkt, sie anfälliger für geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt macht und ihre Fähigkeit untergräbt, für sich und ihre Familien zu sorgen. Zwangsräumungen werden nicht nur als geografische Vertreibung erlebt, sondern auch als körperliche Enteignung im aktuellen und im Herkunftsgebiet, die zu Krankheit, Verletzlichkeit und Gewalt führt, während sie gleichzeitig Praktiken der Fürsorge, Solidarität und des Widerstands hervorbringt. Migrantinnen reagieren auf die Enteignung, indem sie sich Aktivistengruppen anschließen, die Vorstellungen von privaten und öffentlichen Grenzen umgestalten und die weibliche Stadtbürgerschaft erweitern. Zudem fordert diese Forschungsarbeit, dass transversale Ansätze für Wohnrechte berücksichtigt werden müssen, bei denen regulierte Wege für Migration und Fürsorgepolitik von zentraler Bedeutung sind und Migrantinnen die Autonomie über ihre Körper und Territorien sichern.

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To my parents and my sisters, who have taught me absolutely everything I know about caring and home, while being always the first to believe in me and making love cross oceans.

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To all the migrants in this research and beyond, thank you. I will always see you on the street, until a world without borders is real.

To Adrià, for being the most incredible supporter in this chaotic journey.

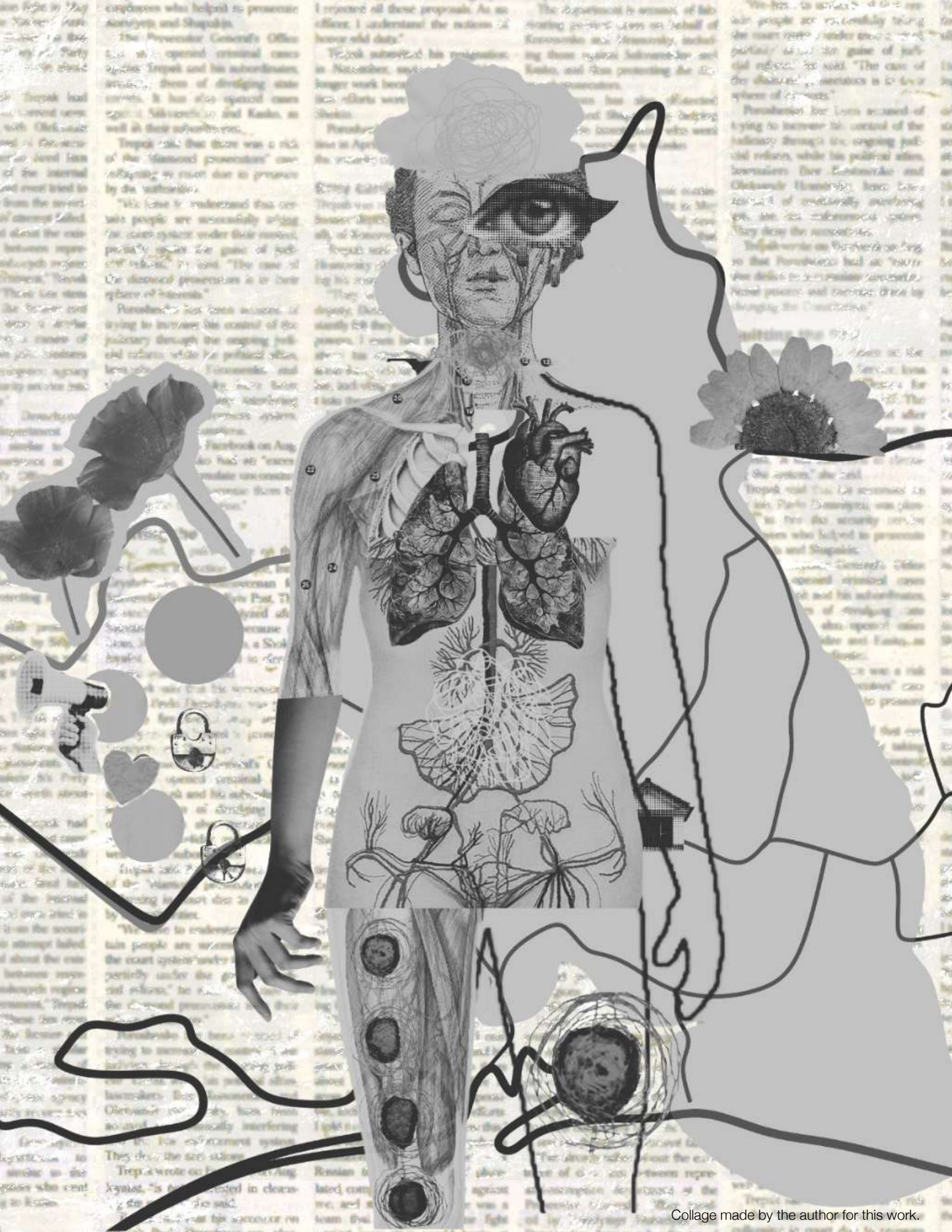
Y a mis abuelos, siempre.

* This master thesis has been written in the context of the ongoing genocide in Palestine. Through this an all mediums we must demand our institutions and governments to stop the complicity. Free Palestine.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"We have scarified so much, so much. We left our countries, our families, even our children. All our work, all our money, everything went into our houses, for what?"

This is what Sol said to me, while we were sitting on a bank, resting from the walk to get to Caixa Bank in Barcelona, during the first of many *acompañamientos*, meetings where activists accompany people affected by eviction to negotiations with banks or governmental offices. Like Sol, many of the migrant activists from PAH (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca), an organization that supports people confronted with displacement and eviction, relate their current struggles to their migration experience, and their homes as spaces that are testament to their struggles. Similar to Sol, thousands of affected individuals purchased a home right before the explosion of the real estate bubble in 2008 in Spain, which has caused a massive wave of evictions and people losing their homes due to mortgage defaults and rising unemployment, disproportionately affecting migrant populations (Suárez, 2014). Keeping their houses is a struggle that has endured twenty years later. While formally mortgage was the highest reason for eviction, today mortgage debtors are a minority of the population facing eviction cases, and rent debtor surpass with more than 75% of the evictions (CGPJ, 2025). The creative transformation and adaptation of financial capital into multiple property relations of dispossession, needs to be analyzed with colonial-linked hierarchies of race in which it has found ways of keeping "losers and winners" throughout history until the present (Fields and Raymond, 2021). Today, renting becomes the main property relation allowing access to a roof, but also, leading to squatting as one of the few paths towards accessing the city for undocumented migrants and migrant mothers.

The stories and struggles presented in this thesis emerge from the intersection of two ongoing processes characteristic of *global cities* such as Barcelona: increasing migration and the housing "crisis." As Sassen (2001) argues, in capitalist globalization, *global cities* of the Global North rely on a large and growing low-wage service labor force from the Global South to sustain the lifestyle and infrastructure of their transnational operations and professional sectors. In Barcelona, this reliance has taken a highly gendered form: women migrants entered the care sector while men entered the construction sector, which declined sharply after the 2008 financial crisis. Coinciding with political and economic crises across Latin America, this dynamic produced a highly feminized migration, in which Latin American women—often overqualified and working informally—took up care jobs, a reality that remains prevalent today. The so-called housing "crisis"—a term contested by activists who frame it instead as a political crisis in which tourist apartments and empty buildings are prioritized over livable housing—stems from decades of neoliberal urban policy and the consolidation of the "Barcelona Model." This strategic model of entrepreneurial urbanism, oriented toward European city competitiveness, has strengthened the financialization of housing (Charnock et al., 2019).

The financialization of housing in cities is not unique to late capitalism but exemplifies its adaptability to shifting social and political-economic conditions (Fields & Raymond, 2021). In Barcelona, this adaptability is evident in the dramatic transformation of property relations from

mortgage-based ownership to rental, a shift particularly marked among migrant communities, who today form the largest renting population in Spain (Provivienda, 2025). However, due to their often precarious legal status, everyday racism and increasing anti-migration sentiments, they are specifically affected by housing insecurity. Their access to housing is constrained at multiple stages: from discriminatory practices by real estate offices (Provivienda, 2025) to heightened risks of eviction (Gutierrez & Delclós, 2016; Parreño-Castellano, 2021), which are compounded when intersecting with race, gender, and documentation status (Crenshaw, 2013).

While many housing struggles and processes of displacement have been studied through broad conceptualizations such as “gentrification” (Wyly, 2015), recent research on housing and migration in cities has instead emphasized migrant settlement patterns and integration (Van Gent and Musterd, 2016; Matejskova and Leitner, 2011), alongside a growing body of work on agency and urban activism (Pradel-Miquel, 2016). At the same time, scholarship on eviction has begun to conceptualize it as a bordering practice that produces exclusion and displacement (Van Baar, 2017). Yet, there remains limited research on the embodied and territorial dimensions of eviction beyond large-scale urban redevelopment projects—particularly in relation to how the financialization of housing is entrenched within racial capitalism, and how these processes are actively contested through reterritorialization and grassroots activism (Roy, 2017; Fields and Raymond, 2021).

Responding to this gap, this research draws on the work of Wyly, Roy, Fields, and Raymond to argue that the current conjuncture of foreclosures and evictions must be understood through the historically specific intersections of predatory financialization and racial capitalism. Focusing on migrant women from the Global South facing insecure housing and the threat of eviction in the Region of Barcelona—as defined by the ETHOS typology (8.1–9.2)—this thesis adopts activist methodologies, including a Feminist Social Cartography workshop, ethnography as an active member of the anti-eviction platform PAH, and in-depth interviews. Through this lens, the research investigates how housing evictions shape the territorialization of migrant women in ways deeply connected to their bodies, while also illuminating how these struggles contribute to the emergence of new forms of urban citizenship grounded in multiterritorialities and anti-colonial practices.

Doing so, this study centers on the implications of eviction for the bodies and territories in order to understand how global circuits of dispossession precarize lives while simultaneously generating practices of resistance. To do so, I draw on two key concepts: multiterritoriality and citizenship. Building on Global South scholars such as Haesbaert, Roy, and Bhan, I analyze eviction as a central dimension in the continuity of migrants’ dispossession, examining how these moving bodies gain—or are denied—access to resources to enact multiterritorialities, to reterritorialize after dispossession. The concept of multiterritoriality, as developed in Latin America, derives from a long-standing conception of *territorio* rooted in political struggles for land and resistance to capitalist extractivism (Torres, 2023). Instead of looking at evictions as mere acts of economic and productive loss or displacement, I approach eviction to study the effect of displacement in the territorialization process of an already mobile population. This effect is studied ranging from the intimacy of the body to the commons of the earth while emphasizing the “invisible” agencies

(Haesbaert, 2013). Furthering the framework of *cuerpo-territorio*, I conceptualize women's bodies as continuations of land with struggles historically rooted in colonial expropriation and persisting under contemporary capitalist dispossession (Cabnal, 2010; Sweet & Ortiz, 2017). *Cuerpo-territorio* takes the body as a distinctive scale through which to map struggles, centering feelings, thoughts, and emotions as part of political analysis. In the European urban context, it allows us to delink from Eurocentric framings while re-centering territory as both material and symbolic as well as relational to power and key to understanding citizenship formations of those most affected by global inequalities embedded in racialized urban practices.

To bridge these conceptual tools, I employ the notion of “gendered racial capitalism” to describe the hierarchical and historically racialized and patriarchal structures through which territories are organized and financialized, affecting how people live and perceive the world and themselves (Haley, 2018; Robinson, 2000). I read processes of deterritorialization through migrants' capability to care and through social relations with property, which produce embodied consequences of conflict, displacement, and distancing, while I approach reterritorialization through the lens of citizenship. From this perspective, migrant women's activism contests the dynamics of racial capitalism by resisting continuous cycles of loss, defending their homes, and enacting new forms of urban citizenship. This citizenship is distinctly migrant and female, reshaping boundaries at both the national scale and within the public/private divide. Contributing to debates on the financialization of housing in relation to race (Fields & Raymond, 2021) and to re-centering knowledge from the Global South (Dos Ventos, 2021), this thesis pushes for a critical reframing of urban conflicts that challenges Western, capitalist, and patriarchal frameworks and opens space for more inclusive understandings of housing justice through grounding the analysis of women's bodies and practices of citizenship within territorial struggles.

This work takes the greater Barcelona region as a case study, in which I look into two cities, Barcelona and L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. Both are neighboring cities and are where most evictions cases arrived at the PAH, reflecting the increasing understanding that the struggle for housing is not a city but a regional one, continuously challenging notions of administrative borders. Barcelona is a well-industrialized city in Spain that prides itself on longstanding cultural and economic connections to Europe and worldwide and represents an excellent case study due to its position as a *global city* with increasing migration and housing prices for the last decade. Only during 2013 and 2018 house prices went up by 38.1% in the new-build market and by 50.3% in the second-hand market, with the result of “a systematic expulsion of local residents from Barcelona's centre and their removal to its outskirts” such as L'Hospitalet (Rolnik, 2019: 8 in Valente, et al. 2023). Simultaneously, migration peaked in 2023 with the highest historical number of migrants entering the city, the highest migration net since 1977, and the highest percentage of migrants, 25,4%, living in the city (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2024).

Building on these conceptual foundations, this thesis is guided by the following research question:

How are the struggles and resistances for housing embodied and territorialized by migrant women in the Region of Barcelona?

This question draws from Roy's (2017) reformulation of Blomley's work asking "who can count as the subject who can claim home and land?" To unpack this overarching question, I ask: (1) What are the implications of territory and power in their housing struggles and resistances? (2) How do migrant women contest territorial power dynamics? Inspired by Butler and Athanasiou's (2013) engagement with dispossession and personhood, these questions attend to how those positioned as necessarily dispossessed enact resistance and rework claims to property, belonging, and subjectivity. Together, these questions allow me to explore the embodied dimensions of eviction, situating them within broader processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, while also accounting for the structural hierarchies of gendered racial capitalism. By focusing on migrant women's practices of resistance and care, I aim to illuminate how urban citizenship is redefined through housing struggles, and how these struggles, in turn, reshape the territorial and political landscape of Barcelona.

This thesis builds in four main parts. The first one will provide with the literature review and theoretical framework, introducing work on migration and housing, female and migrant urban activism, and eviction as bordering. The theoretical framework will provide the conceptualization of "territory" and the concepts such as de and re-territorialization, the introduction to the framework of body-territory and of urban citizenship, and the necessary considerations for its transnational application. Secondly, I introduce the methodology grounded in body-territory and activist research, followed by a chapter presenting the case study and relevant historical difference. Lastly, I will introduce three chapters combining the findings and analysis, following thematic areas: (1) travelling cuerpo-territorios, accounting for the multiple territories migrants account for, since their migration journeys, to the early arrivals and its struggles, to current relations with their neighborhood and city, (2) embodied border violence, discussing the implication of the body both as perceived and as felt within displacement, housing struggles, and attempts to territorialize and (3) citizenship in which I discuss how migrant women contest power from visible actions to the everyday private sphere.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review delves into various perspectives on the phenomena of urban migration, housing, and activism. It introduces a broad range of scholarship with different geographical and theoretical interpretations, from studies on stratification and integration, to the role of women in activists spaces. Actively, it includes research from the Global South and North, about migrant population from the South in Northern cities, and decolonial methodologies. Doing so, I aim to better contextualize the transnationalization of theories from Latin America into Europe and provide an analytical overview of the topics relevant for my research. Consequently, the following sections—Centering the Home, Migrant and Female Urban Activism, and Eviction as Bordering—present bodies of literature that situate my research within marxist, feminist and migrant-center approaches relevant for the study of evictions and territorialization processes.

2.1. Centering the home

Housing and Migration

As stated by Arbaci, “Housing represents the most critical and controversial of urban conditions for the settlement and inclusion of immigrants” (2008, p. 609). Historically, migration and housing have been studied through diverse lenses: increases in migration have often been linked to decreases in housing availability (Birrell & Healy, 2003), or, as cited by Roy, viewed negatively in terms of informal housing and labor, with claims that “cities of the developed world are invaded by the developing world rendering them ungovernable” (Hall and Pfeiffer, 2000, in Roy, 2005). In response, critical and decolonial theories challenge these arguments, which often blame migration from the Global South for urban problems. Instead, these scholars portray migration as a consequence of the inequalities of *global cities*, leading to rapid urban growth to sustain precarious working conditions. This, contributes to the expansion of poor and informal urban settlements, and requires a critical examination of the concepts of informality and accounting for the agency of migrants (Roy et al., 2004; Sassen, 2005; García et al., 2021).

Recent research on the topic of migration and housing focuses on the settlement patterns and integration of migrants in cities (Costa, and De Valk, 2018; Van Gent and Musterd, 2016; Matejskova and Leitner, 2011), on migrants’ housing paths and choices (Ribera-Almandoz, Delclós & Garcés-Mascreñas, 2024; Arifina and Dale, 2013), and on the impacts of financial capital in housing pathways for migrants affecting disproportionately migrants (Declós, 2022). These research works to analyze the broader economic implications on migrant populations, creating cities that are hostile and less resilient to demographic changes, but some can fall into the risk of portraying migrants only as subjects and not actors of change and urban solutions and creativity.

Relevant literature on migration and housing explores migrant home-making in both sending and recipient countries—a topic that reached growing interest in academic debates since 2011. Blunt and Varley (2004), for example, analyse home from the perspective of its dominant dimensions: home and its relationships with place, identity and belonging. Ralph and Staeheli (2011) add a layer of complexity to this analysis by arguing that it must also be understood as embedding the tension

between home as mobile and home as stable. Home-making situates an interesting comparison with literature from the global south on territorialization, as Haesbaert (2013, p.148) argues, the territory is for “Latin-Geographies” quite close to what “place” is for Anglo-Saxon geography. Hence the clear crosses with concepts such as “territorialization” and “belonging” or “place making”. Hence, this relationship can be expanded further, to see the similarities between processes that undergo home-making processes of territorialization.

The work of Barañano (2021) exemplifies these similarities by exploring diverse literature attending to home in migrants' lives within social sciences. The author explores the home as a space of *arraigo* (rooting) for transmigrants, aiming to determine whether the singularity of place is losing relevance in the face of hypermobility and globalized deterritorialization (Barañano, 2021). By situating home and *arraigo* as both material and symbolic, Barañano helps framing the home as a process that transcends the physical dwelling or the present moment, incorporating imaginaries, memories, melancholies, and symbolic meanings into territorialization processes (2021). This resonates with Gilroy's (1993) and Romero (2005) articulation of the tensions between “roots” and “routes”, but embodied feelings of desires for a new home or melancholy, while accounting for Brah's work (1996) on the importance of the experiences lived locally (in Barañano, 2021). Similarly, Fortier (2000) highlight the relational and multi-scalar nature of belonging, showing that home is constantly reconfigured by mobility, displacement, and social ties. These perspectives help connect symbolic dimensions of belonging to the structural conditions—such as eviction threats and housing exclusion—that reshape migrants' territorialities in urban contexts.

Some of the literature mentioned above also showcase empirical studies of housing and migration within populations of the Global South in the Global North. Bilecen (2017) explores the symbolic and material expressions with transnational implications of Turkish migrants in Germany while Boccagni (2013) explores everyday conditions of home-making and house-building practices of Ecuadorian migrants in Milan, Italy. Scholarship like this analyzes how making a home, both physically and emotionally, is one of the main priorities of this migrant population attached to a desire for belonging. The authors argue for a transnational materiality perspective, in which migrants keep material attachments with their sending country, for example through a second home, projects, etc. while also creating increasingly stronger ties with the recipient country as time passes. As Ralph and Staeheli argue, this highlights the “tension” between home “as a location and as a set of relationships that shape identities and feelings of belonging (2011, P.518)”.

Gonick's book (2021) “Dispossession and Dissent” focuses on homeownership by the same collective and migrant population here centered, the PAH, but in Madrid. Through her research, she showcases that home-ownership has been for many scholars proof of integration of the migration community, of stability, however, she also demonstrates that homeownership fuels urban inequality and “the end point of an immigrant's settlement process”. Nevertheless, as the Gonick argues (2021), homeownership by the migrant Andean community in Madrid, reflect multiple forms of dispossession against promises of inclusion, advancement, and economic growth, effects that can also rupture historical attachments to the ownership model, transforming it into a target of social and political protest (also in Pareja-Eastaway, 2009).

In the context of Barcelona, Delclós' (2022) quantitative research using the Spanish Living Conditions Survey reveals that households headed by non-European Union citizens are significantly more likely than those headed by Spanish citizens to experience housing precariousness, displacement pressure, and rent overburden, as well as to pay higher rents for comparable dwellings. Similarly, Caroz, et al., (2023) shows that housing for female migrants is more often an overburden (meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing) and that they were more likely to live in dwellings with decay, damp, or inadequate temperature between 2017 and 2020. Non-EU citizens were almost twice as likely as Spanish natives to experience housing overburden, overcrowding, decay, and inadequate temperature. Further research by Pérez and Palomera (2025) supports these findings, showing that while only 14% of Spanish households rent their homes, this number rises to 70% for migrant households, with rents averaging 200 euros more for similar apartments. High residential mobility is also a key characteristic: one in four migrants had to move more than three times in the last five years, and 35% experienced a forced change of residence in their most recent move (Pérez and Palomera, 2025).

Research on migrants' agency in relation to housing has largely focused on undocumented activism (Kronman & Jönsson, 2020; Swerts, 2021), squatting (Dadusc, 2017), and informal or survival techniques in housing struggles (Suárez, 2018; Pradel-Miquel, 2016). Fewer studies have examined the embodiment of housing struggles by migrant women (Feldman & Stall, 2004; Jupp, 2017). Existing work also highlights migration-led mortgage anti-eviction activism within the PAH in Barcelona and Madrid following the 2008 crisis (Suárez, 2018, 2020; Gonick, 2020). These researchers note that past experiences of political activism or awareness affected how likely migrant from the Andean region were to take action, and in some cases even inspired or led Spanish nationals facing similar situations.

Women and Housing

In regard to the intersecting characteristics of gender and housing, feminist scholars have extensively analyzed the ways in which care work is sustained within the private sphere of the home for the benefit of capitalist systems and the colonial order, focusing on the unequal distribution of domestic labor and how care shapes experiences of home (Kern, 2021; Gutiérrez, 2010; Fraser, 2016). From this research, scholars have recognized housing systems as key infrastructures that “organize how people give and receive care in most places across the world” (Fields, Power, & Card, 2023, p. 744). Similarly, inequitable access to housing shapes capacities for care. As Power (2019) argues, these capacities are directly impacted by the materiality of housing and by the “histories of care,” which encompass the broader impacts of housing policies and state legislation, but also the decisions of landlords that shape possibilities for future care.

On a related note, feminist scholars have studied the political and economic implications of housing within capitalism. A relevant body of work defines a feminist reading of debt against homes and the gender aspect of housing financialization (Cavallero & Gago, 2024). As Cavallero and Gago argue, gender difference shapes debt through five key factors: the moralization of women and feminized bodies, differential exploitation linked to subordination, the connection between debt and

reproductive labor, the impact of sexist violence, and variations in future financial opportunities for feminized bodies. This feminist reading of indebtedness is particularly as it provides a useful political economic perspective of indebtedness in everyday life and violence against feminized bodies. As authors expressed, it is debt that makes women accept more precarious living and working conditions, to maintain broken relationships, and to obey (Cavallero & Gago, 2024). This is specifically relevant in the context of migration because migrants often received more precarious and higher taxed debts (Suarez, 2022).

As Desmond argues (2014), women—particularly single migrant mothers—are often positioned not simply as tenants, but as potential “risks” to property; their surnames, pregnancy, or motherhood become read as indicators of future non-payment, dependency, or permanence. Cavallero and Gago (2024) examining the everyday financialization of homes and the precarization of women through debt argue that neoliberalism has developed an “economy of violence.” While its most visible manifestations are femicides and travesticides, this violence is multilayered and complex, encompassing debt-driven dispossession rooted in heterosexual norms that affect both bodies and territories (Cavallero & Gago, 2024). In the case of Barcelona, Suárez (2022) explores women’s agency within financialization and debt through the study of communal micro-credit initiatives. Along similar lines, Caroz, et al., (2023) show that female-headed households are more likely than male-headed ones to experience high levels of housing precariousness. Single-parent households are also more likely than adults without dependent children to face severe housing insecurity (Caroz, et al., 2023).

There has been extensive research on the role of the home as a space of women’s oppression in urbanism, calling on planners and researchers to rethink how cities can move away from patriarchal and normative designs, starting from the home and extending to the city (Kern, 2021; Watson, 2000). Building on this foundation, feminist scholars have, for years, explored the notion of the home not only as a space of oppression but also as a catalyst for activism that shapes female urban citizenships. A clear example is Hayden’s work. While aspects of her propositions appear strikingly outdated (Jupp, 2017), her call for the establishment of small organizations called HOMES—‘Homemakers Organizations for a More Egalitarian Society’—remains highly relevant 45 years later (Hayden, 1980). The following sections explore more in-depth the relevant aspect of female activism bridging the private/public realm.

Centering intersectionality and care theory (Crenshaw, 2013; Chatzidakis, et al., 2020; Tronto, 2013), feminist scholars have emphasized the need for research that centers the often-invisibilized lived experiences of migrant women who are struggling to secure housing, the invisible work that goes behind sustaining homes specially in times of crisis, and care within housing movements (Jupp, 2017; i Guilarte & Marañillo-Castillo, 2022). From this literature it becomes clear that there is a lack of research on the effects of housing financialization on the intersection of gender, race, and migration status and in relation to the inextricable relationship with capitalism (Fields & Lee, 2021). In the following section, we discuss more in depth the literature that focuses on female and migrant activism to have a clearer picture of the literature that centers migrants’ agency.

2.2. Migrant and Female Urban Activism

Often, studies of financialization, housing struggles, and migration or racialized bodies, has positioned these communities as reduced to the violence and terror practiced by white people, real estate, and public policy (Taylor, 2020). Hence, as Fields and Raymonds claim (2021), studies of financialization need to account for dialectics of dispossession and resistance, that is how collective resistance and emancipatory social change is carried out by embodied and emplaced people with a shared consciousness shaped by ‘historical struggles for liberation’ (Robinson, 2000:171). Regarding the urban lived experiences of migrant women activism, these struggles for liberation happened simultaneously in the private and public spheres.

Migrant activism has been examined in relation to citizenship formation (Balibar, 1988) and through the political roles enacted via motherhood and family survival mechanisms (Sassen, 2003). Building on this scholarship, Gil & Rosas (2019) analyze migrant women’s activism and the creation of citizenship in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. Their study highlights how labor, housing, and neighborhood formations are shaped by the activism of Peruvian migrant women, transforming the territory and mobilizing them into “microenvironments with global reach” (p. 16). From this initial approach, the authors call for research that understands migrant women’s activism as a practice of citizenship capable of challenging the order often present in collective action—particularly with regard to race, gender, class, and national or international dynamics.

As Jupp (2017) notes, research on female urban activism and local organizing has been limited and is facing increasing invisibility. This invisibility, particularly regarding women’s activism, stems from several factors. Much of the existing scholarship focuses on the United States, where identity politics are strongly shaped by severe racial disparities. Topics include public housing (Howard, 2014), sex work (Mgbako, 2016), domestic work (Duque, 2023), and what has been called “affective activism,” involving everyday practices of care and community, such as neighborhood-shared childcare (Martin et al., 2007). An even starker lack of research emerges when examining migrant women’s activism. The available literature found in the selected databases has been published only in the past eight years and has focused on migrants’ psychological wellbeing through activist health services (MacDonnell et al., 2024), migrant community leaders (Taurini et al., 2017), Forum Theatre practice as a migrant and female form of activism (Kaptani et al., 2024), or specific cases such as the absence of activism among older immigrants from the former Soviet Union (Ulitsa & Ayalon, 2024). In Spain, particular attention has been paid to the activism of migrant domestic workers (Aceros et al., 2021; Sandu & Fernández, 2021).

An important concept to highlight is the relationship between the private and the public in relation to activism (Jupp, 2017; Aceros et al., 2021). Jupp explores how austerity policies create new forms of citizenship in low-income homes in “disadvantaged” neighborhoods of London. Working with two groups—one a migrant, female-led integration group at a school, and the other an English group—the author argues for the centrality of the home in understanding both the impacts of austerity in the UK and potential activist responses. Most of the activities enacted by the migrant women were conducted or organized within their private homes and relied on a mix of emotional

and affective labor and practical, domestic-based tasks—for example, something as mundane as “talking with a neighbor.” These practices were also shaped by experiences of trauma linked to migration histories and border control.

In a similar vein, Cabezas & Santamarina (2019) explore migrant activism during austerity in Madrid by mapping neighborhood-based organizing. They analyze how activism was reshaped through the framework of everyday bordering and the intersection of race, gender, and class, claiming that anti-racist activism transformed neighborhood movements toward migrant empowerment. As the authors argue, these movements, in a context of crisis and austerity, denounced the coloniality of political power and the persistence of certain forms of “white political solidarity” that positioned migrants as “objects in need of help” Cabezas & Santamarina (2019). Their research highlights how race becomes central to distinguishing migrant activism from, for example, Spanish feminist and liberal movements, which they argue have often failed to incorporate the concerns of racialized women.

According to these scholars, there is a need to pay closer attention to citizenship and collective agency without portraying female or migrant activists solely as victims or heroines. This requires focusing on home-making, the private/public sphere, and the deconstruction of whiteness in political spaces (Jupp, 2017; Cabezas & Santamarina, 2019). Jupp (2017) further calls for more sustained consideration of these often-hidden forms of activism that shape the private/public dynamic, urging researchers to account for them when analyzing—and intervening in—the dynamics of contemporary social policy and governance.

Migrant women’s activism has also become the focus of a growing body of literature that explores the internal relations of solidarity within activist spaces. Adami (2023) draws on the concept of the “chosen political family,” first elaborated by LGBTQ+ scholars, to analyze how racialized migrant women engaged in activism in Rome. She shows how they built networks of care and solidarity that extend beyond formal political engagement, providing emotional, material, and symbolic forms of belonging in the aftermath of migration. These affective relationships emerge from shared struggles against legal precarity, housing exclusion, and labor exploitation, and they constitute crucial infrastructures for survival, particularly in times of crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the intersection of migration and activism, squatting has been a central theme in the literature on social movements, often analyzed in relation to capitalism and political influence (Hetland & Goodwin, 2013; Martínez, 2020; Tarrow, 2012). In exploring migrant political activism, Swertz & Nicholls (2020) argue for a balance between optimistic theories that see radical transgressive potential in everyday acts and pessimistic theories that consider all political acts as reproducing systemic structures. Following this discussion, I position activist practices such as squatting, protesting in banks, and stopping evictions as both expressions of everyday informal solidarity and acts of civil disobedience capable of challenging existing paradigms that confine them to illegality (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2020). Following Swyngedouw’s analysis, these activist actions can be understood as the creation of a public “scene” that functions as an anchor point with the potential to inspire and mobilize others (cited in Swertz & Nicholls, 2020).

Responding to the need to understand how the financialization of housing is territorialized (Palomera, 2014), this work examines the home facing eviction as a catalyst of female urban citizenship and disruption, while interrogating the coloniality of political power that shapes housing rights and their urban performativity in Barcelona. Although scholars have examined bordering (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019; Amoore, 2006) and housing precarity (Delclós, 2023; Ribera-Almandoz et al., 2024), the intersection of these issues with female and migrant activism remains underexplored. Feminist studies (Feldman & Stall, 2004; Hayden, 1980) address women's activism but rarely at the nexus of migration and housing struggles. Likewise, research on migrant activism against bordering violence (Cabezas & Santamarina, 2019) calls for a feminist reading that accounts for the violence directed at female and racialized bodies.

2.3. Eviction as bordering

Borders only start existing once they are crossed (Karakayali & Rigo, 2010). They are activated primarily through the movement of migrants, whose identities often differ from those of those inside. In this sense, border control is frequently understood by scholars as the first act of racism or discrimination against migrant populations (Hernandez, 2019). Yet border control extends far beyond the physical demarcation of territory: it operates through visa regimes in countries of origin, consular procedures, and, after arrival, through everyday bordering practices and violence enacted against migrants. This section examines evictions as a form of bordering—mechanisms that displace and “other” bodies—by drawing on literature that frames both border violence and eviction as infrastructures of displacement. These infrastructures work in conjunction to remove racialized individuals and to reproduce colonial hierarchies of race and ethnicity.

Yuval-Davis et al. (2019) have identified bordering in their work as “the everyday construction of borders through ideology, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and everyday forms of transnationalism.” By looking to the interplay of bordering in the everyday life and politics of belonging in the context of London, the authors analyze how immigration legislation in the UK has moved from the external, territorial border to the internal border, embedding technologies of everyday bordering into many social institutions of British life. In their work the “borderings” are conceptualized as practices “situated and constituted in the specificity of political negotiations as well as the everyday life performance of them” (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019).

Borders are, as stated by Haesbaert (2013), more political-territorially definable than the delimitations indicated in the conceptualization of territory. Nevertheless, even in those territories apparently better marked, of who is “out” or “in”, ambiguous situations proliferate (Haesbaert, 2013). As stated by Naples & Bickham (2014), there is a paradoxical permanency of borders, viewed as an extension of the state as well as a social construction. Understanding borders as a contingent reality despite their spatial permanency allows us to understand its two-folded impact, first on the territoriality of those in border regions, and secondly—and most important to this work—on the flexible spatiality of the social construction of borders, affecting migrants during their everyday life and the intimacy of their home (Naples & Bickham, 2014).

Understanding borders' contingent reality also means that it can take diverse forms in the life of migrants, evolving through technology and adapting to the positionality of the individual. As stated by Dos Ventos (2021), for migrant women in the UK, gender-based violence took the form of border-violence in the private realm, when violence was enhanced due to their lack of documentation depending on their partner to live in the UK. On the other hand, Amoore (2006) argues that, through the deployment of biometric technologies, migrant bodies have become "the carrier of the border as it is inscribed with multiple encoded boundaries of access." Amoore (2006: p.347) highlights the parallelism between increasingly securitized practices at external borders, characterized by techniques of racial and risk-profiling, and how biometric bordering is present in the everyday bordering practices found in local housing markets (Delclós, 2023).

Evictions emerge within this expanded notion of bordering as infrastructural acts that regulate who belongs in urban space. As Baker (2020) argues, eviction is not simply an outcome but a governing infrastructure that constructs a "disposition towards displacement" through law, bureaucracy, and force, producing differential capacities to act and resist. Building on this, Palomera (2014) shows how immigration laws tie legal residence to precarious labor contracts, positioning homeownership as a fragile form of rootedness used to delay or avoid deportation even if within the imaginary. Bordering accesses the realm of the house through the tethering of home, work, and legal status that deepens housing insecurity (Palomera, 2014), but also through gender-based violence (Dos Ventos, 2021), or the lack of access to the renting market in a context of profiling and predictive identity-based assumptions (Amoore, 2006; Delclós, 2023).

The work of Fields & Raymond explores evictions as one of the practices that constitute financial capitalism as fundamentally a project of racial domination (Dawson, 2020). Evictions in their study were largely situated in neighborhoods with racialized people, mostly showcasing new financial practices but with the same financial actors—investment bankers and networks—against impoverished and racialized populations. Citing Roy's (2017) term "foundational dispossession," wherein tenuous claims to personhood make home "a lived experience of loss" (A9), or in Chakravartty & da Silva's (2014) words, "a death trap" (p. 367), financial violence is racial violence.

From this literature, we begin to understand eviction as a form of bordering violence. Rather than being seen as violent exceptions, evictions are often framed, as Bahn (2016) notes, as corrections to urban disorder—acts of "good governance" that reinforce planning norms and territorial control. Following this, Delclós (2023) illustrates how evictions, housing policies, and precarious citizenship multiply urban borders in Spain, facilitating housing practices that serve speculative capital while enhancing housing precarity on Non-European households. These dynamics reveal a mode of urban governance that privileges real estate interests while enabling the hierarchies and differentiations rooted in bordering—such as European vs. Non-European—that frame the subjects of urban displacement.

Van Baar's essay (2017) argues that contemporary bordering, produces exclusion not only at external frontiers but also through intra-urban and administrative practices that render people removable from places of shelter. He identifies two overlapping dynamics in Europe: first, the securitization and illegalization of non-EU migrants; second, the transformation of certain legally

national populations into internal “dangers” whose full citizenship is curtailed (Van Baar, 2017). Building on De Genova’s notion of deportability, he proposes the concept of “evictability” to denote the possibility of being removed from a sheltering place regardless of formal citizenship. Evictability therefore de-nationalizes migration studies analytically, foregrounding how securitization, racialization and neoliberal logics of profit (paraphrasing Sassen) produce centrifugal and centripetal effects of exclusion. The author argues, that external border regimes and market-driven urban policies work together to make entire groups experientially and legally removable—not only from nation-states but from everyday urban life (2017).

Wyly and Ponder (2011) argue that evictions can function not only as big act of dispossession but also as mundane, bureaucratic mechanisms of racial banishment through what they call “subprime urbanism”, targeted exploitation of racialized subjects under the guise of financial inclusion (Roy, 2017). This racial banishment can persist even in the absence of profitable redevelopment or urban renewal. Roy’s (2017) concept of *city’s end*, was adapted from Tania Li’s *land’s end*, this perspective foregrounds the forms of quiet exclusion that occur when housing struggles are rendered structurally irresolvable for racialized and migrant populations (2014). While *land’s end* describes the end of land as a collectively managed good and the failure of privatization to deliver development within an indigenous community in Sulawesi, Indonesia, *city’s end* refers to spaces and populations that are no longer considered worthy of investment or belonging. In Roy’s case study, despite attempts to regularize their housing status, pay debts, or repurchase homes, residents in these areas are routinely met with institutional indifference or punitive responses that reflect the racialized logics of housing policy that enhance bordering (2017).

Since the 2000, relevant literature has examined how working-class and racialized populations in Europe are denied full access to citizenship within raising racism (Stolcke, 1995; Holmes, 2000) and the contested coexistence within multiethnic urban neighborhoods (Agustoni & Alietti, 2007). While these contributions are essential, many of them focus primarily on policy, discourse, or identity without engaging with the everyday, material, and territorial dimensions of exclusion and resistance (Palomera, 2014). As Palomera (2014) has argued in the context of housing struggles in Spain, class dynamics must be understood not only through identity or economic precarization but also through how the relationship with property regimes shape the everyday lives and political subjectivities of those affected.

The literature reviewed lays the ground for a complex understanding of the struggles for housing, activism, and migration, while showcasing important gaps: first, studies on *migration and housing* have shown how precarious access to housing shapes migrant lives but often fall short of addressing the embodied effects of property regimes on racialized and gendered populations (Palomera, 2014; Delclós, 2023; Ribera-Almandoz et al., 2024). Second, research on *migrant female activism* has long examined women’s organizing practices mostly in the USA (Feldman & Stall, 2004; Hayden, 1980), yet further research calls for more sustained considerations of the hidden forms of activism that shape public/private dynamics and female citizenship (Jupp, 2017; Miraftab, 2020). Third, the scholarship on *eviction as bordering* has analyzed how eviction are a practice of bordering and institutional and bureaucratic violence, mostly in relation to displacement

due to urban renewal (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019; Amoore, 2006; van Baar, 2017; Cabezas & Santamarina, 2019). However, less attention is given to the everyday *detrterritorialization processes* produced by eviction itself, and the ways these unsettle the material and embodied relations migrants build with their homes and neighborhoods. Taken together, these literatures reveal a persistent gap in understanding how the financialization of housing interacts with race, gender, and migration status from a postcolonial lens that is historically influenced (Fields & Lee, 2021; Roy, 2017), and the need to center feminist understandings of care within housing movements (Fields, Power, and Card, 2023). My research addresses this gap by asking: *How are the struggles and resistances of eviction embodied and territorialized by the migrant and female population?* In doing so, it brings together insights from urban studies, feminist scholarship, and critical border research to foreground the embodied territorialities through which migrant women contest dispossession.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This theoretical framework centers on territorialization amidst the urban displaced, emphasizing new forms of citizenship amid escalating housing struggles (Lefebvre 1974; Balibar, 2004; Gil and Rosas, 2019). Positioned from a "Southern" perspective (Bahn, 2019), this work aims to generate knowledge that builds on foundational discussions of territory and power by Lefebvre (1974) and Raffestin (1983) while foregrounding the experiences of women and the concept of *cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory) as theorized by Indigenous activists and scholars of the Global South (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo; Cabnal, 2010). Employing a decolonial approach, this framework explores the construction of citizenship and the operation of border regimes beyond national borders, extending from the intimate scale of the body to the expansive scope of multi- and transnational territories, a perspective particularly valuable for examining migrant territorialization in urban environments (Haesbaert, 2013).

3.1. Territory

Throughout this thesis, territory carries significant theoretical weight, departing from two main interrelated foundations. The first one rooted in Marxism, is that profit accumulation occurs through the appropriation of territories via dispossession, enabled by state violence (Lefebvre, 1978). Owning space constitutes a form of passive economic gain, since it can be mercantized in diverse portions of the territory depending on proximity to attractions or experiences, such as visiting sites or natural areas (Hiernaux, 1989;2006). This is the foundation that allows for “rent” to be understood as a social relation, therefore complementing the notion of accumulation by dispossession, with its analytical potential to untangle the property relations that pit asset owners against non-owners (Andreucci, et al., 2017). Secondly, there is the political and theoretical mobilizing tool of the territories in Latin America, which relate territory with its multidimensional conceptualizations of power (Haesbaert, 2021; Torres, 2023; Lopes de Souza, 1998). Drawing from this use, we understand and conceptualize territory from its use and its affective and symbolic worth; it involves social relations and movements, identity, history, and struggles that are specific in relation to extractive capitalist economies (Haesbaert, 2021).

The work of Lefebvre (1974) and Raffestin (1993) on territory and power was foundational in shifting from purely objective, measurable notions of territory toward more complex understandings of its social construction and meaning. They argued for conceiving territory as socially produced by actors embedded in it through everyday material and symbolic practices (Lombard, 2021; Schwarz & Streule, 2016; Silva, 2016). Building on this, Haesbaert conceptualizes territory as a continuum within processes of domination and/or appropriation, expressed in multiple forms and incorporating a multiplicity of powers (2010). These powers are enacted by both those who dominate and those who are dominated, within hegemonic struggles as well as acts of resistance. Territories can thus be distinguished according to the actors that construct them, whether individuals, social or cultural groups, the state, corporations, religious institutions, or others. As Sack (1986) notes, control over a geographic area—its transformation into “territory”—is exercised

to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships. Territoriality, therefore, is not only a means to create and maintain order but also a strategy for shaping the geographical context through which we experience and give meaning to the world.

This understanding informs the political lens through which spatiality is examined, particularly in relation to the processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization (t-d-r) employed in this study (Torres, 2023). Introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (1980), these processes constitute a dynamic understanding of territory: territorialization refers to the organization or stabilization of space, while deterritorialization and reterritorialization operate in constant interplay. As they write, “Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996:10). Deterritorialization occurs when subjects are forcibly displaced from their territory, culture, memory, and communities, while reterritorialization follows both through the adaptation of displaced subjects to new territories and the transformation of the original territory by the arrival or departure of particular groups.

As Haesbaert argues, geographically speaking, deterritorialization is inseparable from reterritorialization, since any social formation will produce a new form or process of territory after deterritorialization. This creates “a complex movement of territorialization, which includes the concomitant experience of various territories—configuring a multiterritoriality, or even the construction of a territorialization in and through the movement” (Haesbaert, 2004a). However, in this thesis, the emphasis is placed less on the territorial aspect and more on the social dimension of deterritorialization, which Haesbaert suggests is where the term finds its most meaningful application. This perspective centers on those subjects who lose “control” or “security” over their territories—the most deprived, the most “deterritorialized,” or, in stricter terms, those most precariously territorialized. This stands in contrast to more privileged forms of mobility, in which movement is voluntary and benefits from globalized transportation and lifestyles. It is in the former case that deterritorialization can only happen, because it can only be understood in relation to power, which is intrinsic to the very concept of territory.

To understand how the process of deterritorialization unfolds, Haesbaert (2011) identifies three interrelated dimensions that must be addressed: economic, political, and symbolic or cultural. These dimensions are explicitly or implicitly linked to different concepts of territory (González & Ceballos, 2018). In the economic dimension, the core issue is the high mobility of capital, labor, and enterprises; in the political dimension, it is the growing permeability of national borders; and in the symbolic or cultural dimension, it is the dissemination of cultural hybridization, which dissolves the ties between a given territory and its corresponding cultural identity (Haesbaert, 2011). This process, he argues, directly affects both territory and territoriality. Building on this framework, this thesis applies these three dimensions when examine the impact of financialization of housing and eviction on migrant women, engaging with the body–territory dialectic to analyze the social dimension of de and reterritorialization.

This continuous and ongoing process of de and re territorialization leads to what Haesbaert coined as multiterritoriality, the construction of territorialization in and through the movement (2004). Haesbaert's notion of multiterritoriality deepens our understanding of deterritorialization by emphasizing multiplicity rather than simple loss: contemporary territorialization often occurs as an overlapping, networked experience of many territories at once (Haesbaert, 2004a, 2010). As the author claims, this concept is useful to describe the living experiences of migrants, whose land they inhabit is not longer one, but simultaneously articulating through multiple processes of de and reterritorialization (2004; 2009). Crucially, multiterritoriality has both a material and a symbolic dimension. The material side appears in concrete forms of tele-action and networked territories—territory-zones connected through wider territorial networks—while the symbolic side shows up as hybridized identity-territories and multi-identitary attachments that recreate place through cultural mixing. Attention to the multiple geometries of power embedded in different compressions of space-time matters: multiterritoriality is unevenly produced over time, accumulating differential territorial advantages. Politically, Haesbaert warns that the capacity to activate or live multiple territories is itself a resource: a global elite can effectively choose and inhabit multiple territories, while those at the base of the social pyramid often lack even a single secure territory as shelter. Hence often leaving in a multiterritoriality shaped by the lack of security.

To understand the complexity and broad range of power dynamics in territories and multiterritorialities, we can draw on Fanon's (in Maldonado-Torres, 2007) concept of the *zone of being* and *zone of non-being* in dialogue with Sousa Santos' notion of the *abyssal line* (2007). Both frameworks illuminate how there exists a socially constructed threshold of human value, beneath which violence, appropriation, and dispossession are normalized and legitimized. Building from this, I employ the concept of *racial capitalism*, and more specifically its adaptation by black feminist scholars of "*gendered racial capitalism*" (Haley, 2018; Sweeney 2020; Ralph & Singhal, 2019). Coined by Robinson (2000), racial capitalism asserts that racialized exploitation and capital accumulation are mutually reinforcing, operating through processes of social differentiation, the hierarchization of race, disposability, and the unequal valuation of human life (Kreichauf, 2023). Fortner applies this framework to demonstrate how urban development and policymaking are rooted in constructions of race, racialization, and differentiation, showing that "*urban processes produce and maintain race-based pursuits of profit*" (2023; Kreichauf, 2023). Gendered racial capitalism, aims to provide a intersection framework to theorize capital, deriving from the work of domestic labor sustaining slave work (Ralph & Singhal, 2019). In urban contexts, racial capitalism operates by extracting value or displacing those situated below the abyssal line, or in the zone of non-being—the *subaltern*—who are systematically deprived of control over the securitization and stability of their territories.

Hence, the framework of territory in Latin America, goes beyond an understanding of territory as a scale or administrative boundary, but is deeply interlinked within what is decoloniality. As stated by Quijano, it is the "coloniality of power", marked by a deep legacy of slavery and patriarchy, where class, race and gender violence still proliferate today ([1992] 2010). It is historically linked to a heritage of colonial extractivism and modern capitalism, that continuously leads to a defense for the life of the "subaltern" (Haesbaert, 2021). Therefore, another crucial characteristic of decolonial

epistemology utilized in this work, is that of giving voice to the invisibilized, the “subaltern”, and their practices of resistance and knowledge (Haesbaert, 2021). This is specifically important when working with racialized migrant women facing evictions, which involves a more precarious reterritorialization, in which agency is limited to secure one's place.

As Roy (2017) explains, gentrification and related theories of displacement have often sought universal application without acknowledging historical differences. Her development of the concept of banishment—and more specifically, racial banishment—emerged from the need to connect displacement to colonial relations with land, property, and racial hierarchies. In a similar vein, this research uses the framework of territorialization to move beyond universalized theories of gentrification and to explain the displacement of poor, racialized, and migrant communities from territories in Barcelona. By incorporating concepts such as multiterritoriality and racial banishment, it highlights the historical and intersectional specificities that determine who and what make the conditions for land security and contentment possible—or impossible.

Positioning the concepts of de- and reterritorialization helps illuminate how capitalist extractivism continues to reshape urban life and space, particularly for migrant populations from the Global South. This is especially evident in the housing sector, where colonial hierarchies of race, class, and legal status are rearticulated through property regimes, legal frameworks, and systems of urban land governance designed for profit accumulation. As Kreichauf (2024) argues, racial capitalism entwines migration control with housing systems, producing precarious and segregated urban landscapes. These processes of urban restructuring are not only material but also deeply symbolic and affective, shaping how migrant populations inhabit, experience, and imagine territory and their own selves and others within them.

3.2. Body-territory

In the last decade, feminist and indigenous scholars and activists in Latin America have centered the concept of the body-territory in their work, shedding light on the importance of this framework for underscoring how the body, like territory, is subject to governance, discipline, and resistance, often reflecting broader dynamics of power and control (Hernández and Tania 2016; Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo 2017a; Colectivo de Geografía Crítica 2018; Colectivo Tierra Libre, 2014; Zaragocin and Caretta 2020). It is indigenous people and women who have protagonized this work, exactly because it is this population who have been largely affected through colonial histories in relation to their body and territories (Haesbaert, 2004). The notion of *cuerpo-territorio* has emerged as a political slogan by Indigenous Maya-Xinka women in Guatemala, and today it is central to the communitarian feminist political project throughout Latin America and linked to their conception of *senti-pensar* (feel-think), aiming to center feelings and emotions as a way of knowledge (Cabnal 2010). Gender is central to this framework, as Segato (2010) reminds us, many Indigenous and Afro-descendant societies were historically organized through what she terms a “low-intensity patriarchy,” a form distinct from the Western model. With colonialism and capitalist dispossession, however, these relations were profoundly aggravated, as external domination reinforced and deepened gendered hierarchies, leaving Indigenous women to

navigate a double struggle: resisting colonial and capitalist dispossession while also confronting patriarchal oppression within their own communities (Segato, 2010).

De Campos and Silvia, explore the body as a geographical site by citing a poem by Rich, that situates the important centralization of their body in its geographical location. The authors claim that the body is geopolitically located, for which the same characteristic of the body can gain a different meaning depending on this location, and hence of its related power relations and connections with the dimensions of territory introduced before. In this line, Rich develops the expression of 'Geography closest in - the body' when writing:

...a place on the map is also a place in history within which, as a woman, a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist, I am created and I am trying to create. But start not with a continent or a country or a house, but with the closest geography - the body. Bodies are crossed by powers from other scales such as the politics of motherhood, abortion, compulsory heterosexuality, the politics of rape, forced sterilization, the politics of racism and so on. Claiming the right to the body makes it a space for social struggle. The body is a spatial scale actively produced 'in' and 'through' relations of spatial interaction (Rich, 1984, in Campos & Silvia, 2020).

Taking the body as a geographical space and scale has taken various forms, for Smith the body is the scale that separates the one from the other but is constructed socially by wider spatial interactions. It argues that caring for the body, physical access 'to' and 'through' the body, and 'control' over the body are the central ways in which the body scale is contested (Smith, 1992, p.67). Similarly, Quijano states that embodiment is "the decisive level of power relations". The relationship between body and territory, and power has been explored across various disciplines and scholars across time, from Foucault and Lefebvre's spatial theories to Lepeki's analysis of dance as cuerpo-territorio (2011). Indigenous women have further developed this concept as a tool of resistance, emphasizing the body as a distinct site of struggle against extractivism (Cruz-Hernández, 2017). This perspective is crucial in contemporary housing movements, where territorial factors shape and are shaped by both space and the body. As a Brazilian activist argues, the articulation between body and territory places the communal at the center of life, enabling a multi-scalar understanding of territory. This includes the most intimate scale—the body—recognized as the "first territory of struggle" (Cruz-Hernández, 2017). By framing oppression and resistance as interconnected across scales, from the body to the community, this approach helps analyze housing struggles through a decolonial and feminist lens.

As stated by Dos Ventos, Cuerpo-Territorio has become a central ontological base for Latin American knowledge production committed to a decolonial praxis (2021). Working alongside Indigenous and peasant communities, various Latin American geographic collectives have operationalized this as a mapping method. Cuerpo-territorio also answered to a central question posed by feminist geographers concerning the relationship between context and methodology. Taking cuerpo-territorio as part of the framework but also a method is useful when working with the living experiences of invisibilized communities and their embodied experiences and feelings within political action. For example, Zaragocin and Angela Caretta, utilize Cuerpo-Territorio as a concept and as a geographical method that carries a significant decolonial feminist potential: grounded in the ontological continuum between bodies and territories, it enables the co-

production of knowledge in embodied and more accessible ways (2020). Cuerpo-territorio as a method, is not a set toolbox imposed on others but rather is generated through flexible, place-specific, and popular education techniques (Colectiva Miradas Criticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo 2017). This differs from Northern counter-mapping techniques, often employed as tools for story telling and not with its political weight (Dos Ventos, 2022; Gastaldo, et al. 2012).

Body-territory, allows for an understanding of the power relations at place in territories and bodies simultaneously, centering feelings and emotions while helping situate embodied senses of self and identity in front of patriarchal and extractivist practices. Understanding the territory as constantly contested by power relations, in which processes of territorialization often imply ways of seeing and understanding the world. Hence, it is critical that we also ask how this territorialization is embodied in a sense of self and identity that is in constant negotiation with aspects of race, gender, class, and property relations. Far from trying to situate indigenous struggles for land in comparison with urban displacement, I aim to highlight the broader active dispossession at work against racialized bodies from the global south, that allows for a cautious transnationalization of concepts with moving bodies (Porter, 2014). Continuing Porter's work (2014), this framework allows me to answer to her question of: *"For what is to become of those who cannot prove their worth across the thresholds of recognition?"* thereby returning us to the subject who is always less than human, the displaced whose personhood, not just property is always in a process of loss. Doing so, we are able to move away from the criticized historical blindness towards colonialism in migration research (Dos Ventos, 2021; Mayblin and Turner, 2020).

3.3.Citizenship

Citizenship, Balibar argues, is a concept "as old as politics itself." It has always been marked by nation-states and an acknowledged individual capacity to participate in political decisions (Balibar 1988; Bahn 2016). Citizenship is so broad, that its conceptualization remains contested (Vanderberg, 2000). Hence it is important to understand its application, moving beyond the often normalized act of using 'citizenship' interchangeably with 'nationality'.

As stated by Yuval-Davis et al. (2019) bordering, hence migration, has direct implications in citizenship formation, since there is a different criteria for participation and entitlement for those in or outside established borders. In specific, legislation and policies extend equal rights to specific categories of people' on the basis of how citizenship and immigration intersect with racialized and gendered identities (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019; Delclós, 2023). T.H. Marshall's 1950 essay Citizenship and Social Class introduced a framework for understanding social, political, and economic participation in society in a historically grounded and differentiated way. In recent contributions to the debate, citizenship is understood as "a social process" defined by the political and social struggles through which recognition, rights and access to resources can be won in the first place (Isin and Turner, 2002: 4).

The concept of citizenship was then developed further within the urban context. Belonging and exclusion of migrants in cities are everyday experiences that make the immediate territory

(including their social and cultural aspects) the first place migrants seek help or find solutions to everyday problems. As stated by various scholars, everyday life spaces are critical sites for the constitution of different forms of citizenship, and a medium through which citizenship negotiations take place (Davis and Raman, 2012; Holston and Appadurai, 1999; Isin, 2000). Helping us situate housing struggles and citizen formation as urban issue. As expressed by Swyngedouw, *"The whirlpool of modernity through which the dialectics of capital unfolds constantly revolutionizes both the urban experience and urban life (2018)."* Cities and their plazas and buildings are the center of class struggles and rebellious acts such as squatting, protesting, or occupying (Davis and Raman, 2012). The concept of urban citizenship then, is broader than the general understanding of a "national citizenship" often defined through blood lines and the right to reside, vote, etc., instead it is understood as performative. How meaning of citizenship are discursively constructed through practice and deliberation. This emic approach speaks to a concern of scholars who argue that there is a theoretical and empirical gap in understanding citizenship beyond the state (Piper and Von Lieres, 2015 in Verloo, 2017).

Building on this, the concept of urban citizenship emphasizes the local dynamics of urban processes. It highlights regional or urban forms of citizenship that involve implementing local policy tools to expand social participation, ensuring inclusion not only for formal citizens but for all city residents. Additionally, this perspective focuses on the political and social struggles for recognition, rights, and equitable access to resources (see Marshall 1950; García 2006).

Within the broad definition of citizenship, one can understand that citizenship in a democracy is relatively stabilizing, *"whereas citizenship marshalled in the call for revolutionary transformation is a more de-stabilizing form of political insurgency (Davis & Raman, 2012.)"* The concept of Insurgent Citizenship by James Holston encapsulates this, showcasing how through more violent acts, residents of favelas in Brazil were able to act against land titles that erased their agency within their territory (2007). Hence, going back to the territory, is relevant to think of the in-placement of citizenship, as Davis and Raman stated, to consider the socio-spatial dynamics of different aspects of the urban built environment, and to contrast the forms, meaning, and strategies of protest that are deployed in different types of urban spaces (2012). Hence, to analyze insurgent citizenship in the public square in contrast to that happening in-doors of a home. I utilize this framework to study how migrant women pursue citizenship protesting in the street but way more through the claiming of space in the intimate of a home.

Following this differentiation of citizenship practices as stabilizing or revolutionary, Miraftab feminist praxis of citizenship, and the notion of invited and invented spaces is useful understanding the practices that form citizenship and how government and institutions welcome or reject as "revel" certain types of informal civic actions that form urban citizenship and why (2004). Firstly, she explores what citizenship is for political female activism, by arguing that is feminism that has shed light on how the exclusionary conceptualization of political arenas of citizenship, has effectively ignored the political activities and agency of women in grassroots neighborhood and community-based groups, those most readily available to them and where they are most effective. Secondly, she coined the difference of "invited and invented spaces", where "invited" spaces are actions and

events accepted by governing institutions, while “invented” spaces are collective arenas created by the poor that directly confront authorities in order to challenge and destabilize the status quo (2020). By researching these multiplicity of citizenship and its relation with the institution as representative of the state, Miraftab calls for a refinement of feminists’ extended notion of politics, recognizing the oppositional practices of the poor in order to construct an inclusive citizenship. It argues that doing so better reflects the practices of the grassroots and furthers a progressive feminist praxis (2004; 2020).

These discussions on Citizenship reflect an increasing and ongoing relevance to break-up the complexity of what citizenship is within movement politics, everyday life, and nation-states. As Vanderberg claims, citizenship is an ‘essentially contested concept’ in the sense that it contains a variety of disputed meanings, with no agreed-upon ways of settling these disagreements (2000; Stokke, 2017). For this reason, Stokke claims that a broad conceptualisation of citizenship may provide an integral framework for studying political contentions over cultural, legal, social and political exclusion and inclusion (2017). Moving forward an analytical framework of citizenship he proposed a conception that revolves around four core dimensions: membership, legal status, rights and participation (Stokke, 2017). Political citizenship is also central to understanding group formation and attachment, as it highlights how categorical identities are both tools and targets within citizenship politics (Stokke, 2017). This perspective is useful for studying movements formed around shared experiences of social injustice, such as evictions, yet composed of diverse identities and driven by the need to challenge and ultimately dismantle social differentiations and group constructions.

Is this broad understanding of citizenship that allows to expand its use beyond national-borders, but similar practices of displacement based on historical hierarchies of identity. Hence, building on the notion of citizenship formation and eviction as bordering violence, I apply the notion of evictability (Van Baar, 2017), to situate evictions as border control, and property regimes, not only in land titles but also in a social dimension, together with race, gender ethnicity, documentation, as key aspect shaping citizenship formation.

3.4. Bridging Literature, Theory, and Practice

Drawing on concepts and contexts from both the Global South and North, the literature and theoretical framework highlight the broader calculus of dispossession at work and allow for what Porter (2014) calls a cautious transnationalization of concepts with moving bodies. This is particularly relevant when working with migrant women in Barcelona, who are affected by continuous processes of de- and reterritorialization shaped by the power dynamics of racial capitalism and border violence. My aim is to understand the role and effects of evictions in their bodies and territorialization processes by building on decolonial, feminist, and critical scholarship that has laid the groundwork for understanding how race and gender operate in the face of border control, debt, and care practices when defending one’s home.

Latin American notions of *territory* help us understand the power relations shaping the diverse territories migrant women inhabit, as well as the processes of *de- and reterritorialization*, which

depend on who has the ability to control the territory. To better account for the ongoing dynamics of dispossession within the housing market, I employ the expanded concept of *gendered racial capitalism* (Robinson, 2000), which understands the capitalist economy within historical hierarchies of colonialism, gender, and race. This lens frames how eviction acts as a racialized and gendered mechanism of accumulation by dispossession and as a form of bordering violence for migrant populations, utilizing the concept of *evictability* (van Baar, 2017). Lastly, I apply and expand the understanding of rent as a social relation (Andreucci et al., 2017), enabling a critical examination of the social dimension of property regimes, and how they are lived in migrants' everyday lives.

The concept of *body-territory* (Haesbaert, 2020; de Campos & Silvia, 2020) provides a framework to study the power contestations of territories while centering the relation with bodies. This approach illuminates how housing markets and eviction processes become embedded in migrants' everyday lives and identities, making visible the entanglement between embodiment, dispossession, and territorial control. The complementary notion of *multiterritoriality* (Haesbaert, 2004, 2010) is useful to analyze how migrant women inhabit overlapping material, legal, and affective territories, yet with great unequal access to the "*multiterritorial resources*" that enable mobility and choice. It is within this triangulation, of an expanded meaning of eviction as a practice of colonial and capitalist dispossession that acts upon racialized and migrant female bodies what I call a *deteritorialization of care*, across multiple territories.

To conceptualize the contestation of power and continuity of territories, I introduce citizenship. Miraftab's (2004) feminist praxis accounting for the private/public and the distinction between invited and invented spaces, allows me to analyze the agency of migrant activists who resist evictions. These disruptions of the dominant order enact reterritorialization, producing insurgent urban citizenship that challenges bordering practices and asserts the right to remain.

In Summary, to fully capture how eviction processes are embodied and territorialized in the lives of migrant women (Figure 1), I employ the concepts of -gendered- Racial Capitalism, Citizenship, and Multiterritoriality (de and re-territorialization). Doing so, (1) I follow their journey into being racialized female migrants welcomed for gendered labour into Barcelona subject to hierarchies of the housing market, to (2) becoming evicted with embodied and territorial repercussions, to (3) highlighting the levels of struggle and activism that shapes a new reterritorialization that challenges domination order and continuous loss.

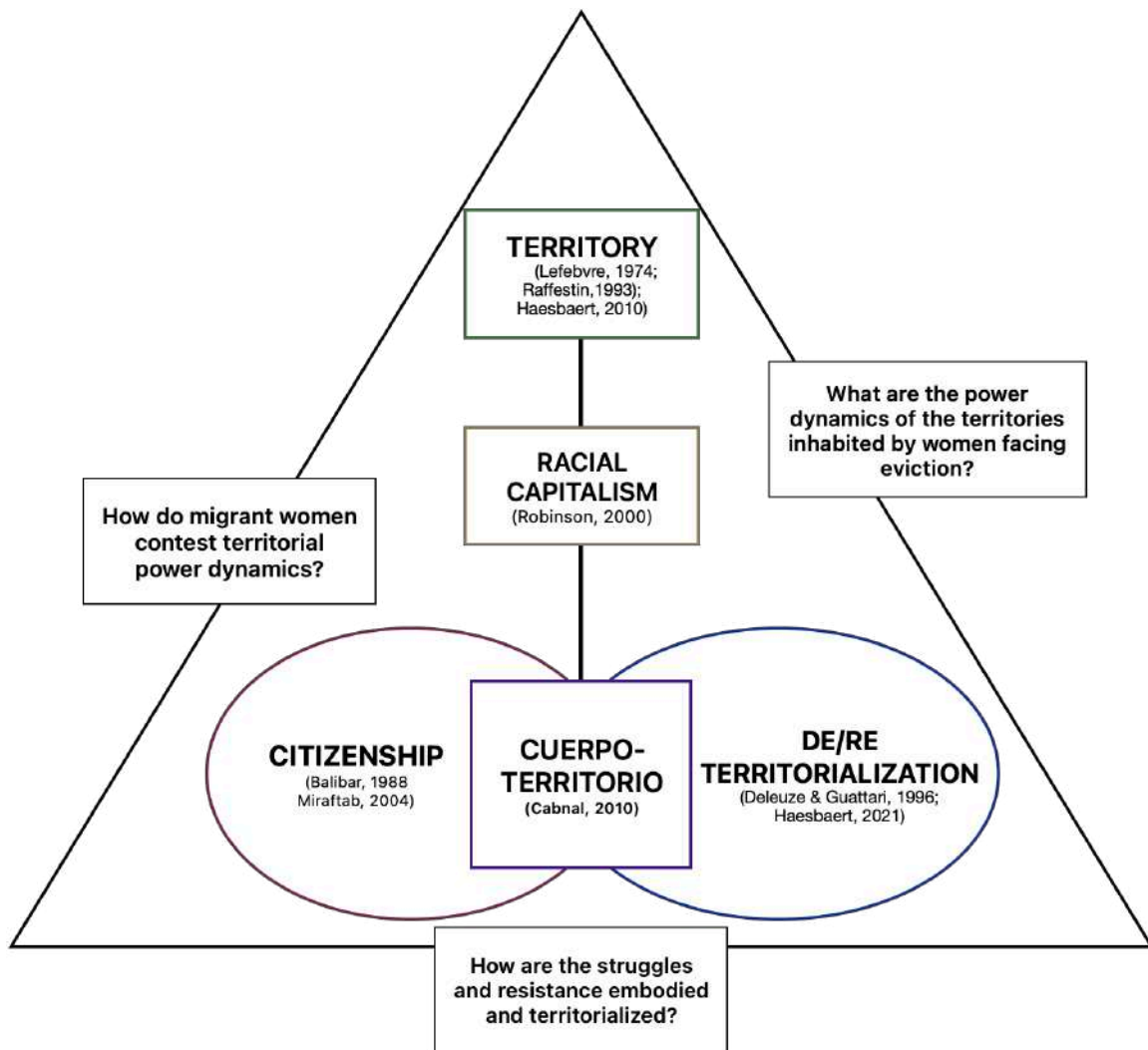


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

4. METHODOLOGY

Bringing together an indigenous and a transformative paradigm, I designed the methodology for this research in close alignment with this framework, combining *cartografía social feminista*—derived from the body-territory approach—with ethnography to capture everyday actions and conflicts. As an activist researcher, this methodology bridges the personal with the public, driving on the notion that both are political, hence shading light into the more hidden aspects of activism, pain, remorse, guilt, and connecting, through follow-up interviews to the multiple territories that exist within each participant.

4.1. Research paradigm

Following the increasing work of scholars (Martens & Cram, 2016), this research brings together an indigenous paradigm and a transformative paradigm. Indigenous and allies in a search for a research ethic that is feminist, caring, communitarian, holistic, respectful, mutua, sacred, and ecologically sound (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 569), have developed this multiparadigmatic space that combines elements of the transformative and of an Indigenous paradigm. Doing so, these can be used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers alike. Although far from a comfortable fit, working from these two paradigms allows the research to unite a number of approaches such as a feminist and decolonial approach that are brought together by the paradigms' explicit engagement with issues of power and justice while privileging Indigenous knowledge, experiences, and voices rooted in the land and the local (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Hancock, 2007; Rigney, 1999). Grounded in ontological relativism, where realities are multiple and historically and socially constructed and realism while also mutual reality based on multitude of relationships (Hart, 2010; Held, 2019). These paradigms invite participatory and liberatory methodologies that are relational and transformative (Chilisa, 2012).

To decolonize methodologies, non-Indigenous scholars try to incorporate Indigenous methodologies, epistemologies, or axiologies into their Western research approaches (e.g. Mertens, 2012; Mertens & Cram, 2016). Following this line, this research adapts an indigenous and activist-led framework such as *Cuerpo-Territorio*, to a Western context intrinsically rooted in colonial histories; that of migrants from the Global South in a global European city like Barcelona. Far from trying to situate indigenous struggles for land in comparison with urban displacement, by applying methods from the global south to the global north methods I aim to highlight the broader calculus of dispossession at work against the subject who is always less than human (Porter, 2014). This methodology allows to focus on the territory and the local -that of their original countries and that of today-, as well as centering the voices of migrant and racialized people, central characteristics of an indigenous paradigm. It also applies the participatory method of *Cartografía Social Feminista* to co-create knowledge and try to break power structure in research (Cabnal, 2010). Lastly, to apply decoloniality as a methodology, I follow a transnational interrogation employed by decolonial geography scholars, in which one uses one context to ask questions of another, used extensively regarding informality in the Global North (Roy, et al. 2004). Some of these questions involved in drafting this methodology include; how is gender being constructed in this

context? what are the power relations involved in eviction processes? Who are the invisibilized subjects and actions? (Quijano, 2000).

4.2. Justification

In line with this paradigm, this research employs mostly qualitative and participatory methods, aiming to center the Latin American conception of territory, both as a framework and as a methodology. As expressed by Smith (2012), decolonizing traditional Western research methodologies means indigenizing them by inserting Indigenous principles into research methodology so that research practices can play a role in the assertion of Indigenous peoples' rights and sovereignty. Centering land, locality, and body-territory, principles advanced by indigenous communities and feminist in Latin America, help us understand the multiplicity of roles that body-territory has today in the lives of migrants facing evictions (Cabnal, 2010). Feminist Social Cartography was chosen then, for its roots in a context of localized indigenous activism in front of capitalist extractivism and forced displacement (Haesbaert, 2020). It allows the researcher to center localized actions led by often invisibilized actors, while focusing on power dynamics that go from global to local. It has the strength of spatializing these conflicts in the body and the territory simultaneously, while linking them with global issues of extractive capitalism and colonialism through border violence.

As a Latin American migrant woman who has lived for two years in Spain, I adopt an embodied relational accountability in a six-month ethnography work that includes participant observation, 22 in-depth interviews, and active involvement in the housing activist centers of Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca and the dispersed housing cooperative Les Juntas. A first data collection including surveying and participant observation was conducted to arrive at the research topic during 15 of July to 15 of September 2024. A second data collection, which informed the current master thesis, was conducted from mid-february to mid-august 2025. By the end of this research, I have been involved at the PAH for more than a year. These prolonged research methods along a one-year-process, allowed for the involvement with community members at various levels, that included organizing, coordinating, and participating at meetings, assemblies, protests, eviction, social media communications, and the PAH International Housing Assembly in November 2024.

This methodology was chosen carefully to capture citizenship formations from the everyday-life to the community and international organizing, paying particular attention to historical and environmental effects of housing activism in the lives of migrants. Working with a population facing an eviction required several ethical considerations, mostly in relation to their juridical condition and the personal information. Consent was always asked for previously to conducting interviews or including information in the fieldwork, I tried to inform participants of the research in several occasions, before interviews and during assemblies. I try to balance the information included in these research through out participants, to do not fall into exposing the details of someone's experience. To protect their identities, anonymization and the use of pseudonyms were also implemented unless otherwise stated by the participant.

4.3. Participants' Profile

To understand the effects of today's housing struggles on migrant populations, I chose not to focus on a particular ethnicity, group, or generation, but rather on migrants facing evictions (Mazzucato, 2025). This presented challenges both in the recruitment of participants and in the analysis of data. In the first stage, it quickly became clear that different migrant communities participated in different collectives. At the PAH, there was a strong presence of Latin American women, largely due to the historical link between Ecuadorian communities and the organization (Suárez, 2020). In contrast, at other platforms such as *Les Juntas* or the AMM (Asociación por un Mundo Mejor) in L'Hospitalet, groups were more diverse in terms of migration background, with a higher number of men from Morocco. I decided to include them in the research, as their experiences of eviction also contribute to understanding the broader realities narrated and shaped by migrant women. In this research I name "migrant women" when reflecting on the female population specifically, and "migrants people/activist/affected" also to include the experiences of the male participants.

Beyond country of origin, other factors reflect the diversity of this population. The most important one, which I place at the center of this research, is their relation to property. While I initially hypothesized that this was related to the time of arrival, the list of participants shows otherwise. Participants struggling to pay mortgages had generally been in Spain for at least twenty years, as they became indebted during the 2008 financial crisis, such as Marina, Sol, Lorena, and Silvana. Yet, there are also many long-term migrants who continue to squat or are unable to afford rent, such as Manuela, Abdul, Sofia, and Julia. In table 1 there is further information on the participants.

PSEUDONYMS	COLECTIVE	ARRIVAL YEAR	COUNTRY	DOCUMENTATION	EVICTION FOR	PRIOR TO ARRIVAL HOUSING	ARRIVAL HOUSING
Sol	AMM/Sindicat	2003	Ecuador	No	Mortgage	Family home	Room with a friend
Marina	PAH bcn	1987	Argelia	No/fast obtained	Mortgage / Squatting	Family home	Room with a friend
Lucia	PAH bcn	2022	Perú	No	Squatting	Extended family home	Room with a friend
Sofia	PAH bcn	2003	Ecuador	No	Squatting	Extended family home	Shared room family member
Pamela	PAH bcn	2017	Honduras	No	Unpaid rent	Family home	friend did not host/ rented room / street
Florencia	PAH BCN	2013	Perú	Si	Unpaid rent	Own home	Room with a friend
Luciana	NA	2001	Ecuador	No/fast obtained	Mortgage		
Ines	Les Juntas	1998	Perú (1988) - Ecuador	No	Forced out of her social rent apartment	Company home	Park / homeless
Natalia	PAH bcn	2000	Colombia	No	Squatting	Family home	rented room
Julia	PAH BCN	2006	Venezuela	No/short-termed	Squatting	Extended family home	Shared room family member
Lorena	PAH BCN	2001	Perú	Si	Mortgage	Extended family home	Room with a friend
Manuela	PAH BCN	1993	Perú	No	Unpaid social rent	Family home	Rented room
Silvana	PAH BCN	2002	Perú	No	Unpaid social rent	Family room	Rented room
Manuel	PAH BCN	2000	Ecuador	No	Mortgage	Own home	Shared room
Mohammed	Les Juntas	2015	Marroco	No	Squatting	Family home	Underage shelter home
Abdul	Les Juntas	1998	Marroco	No	Squatting	Extended family home	Shared room family member
Ali	Les Juntas	2021	Marroco	No	Squatting	Family home	Underage shelter home

Table 1. List of participants affected with evictions, out of the seventeen six participated in the cuerpo-territorio workshop.

A final factor worth highlighting is legal documentation. Arriving with papers often afforded participants significant privileges and was frequently connected to higher levels of education, as was the case with Lorena and Florencia. Their struggles and access to housing alternatives differ from those of the majority of the group, yet they illustrate the magnitude of the housing crisis and the multiplicity of its effects and experiences.

Lastly, I conducted five interviews with long-standing activists at La PAH, some of whom are also researchers (see Suárez, San Martín). This perspective allowed me to grasp the temporality and spatiality of housing struggles, which often unfold over decades. Their names are maintained intact in order to reference their work further.

4.4.Explanation of Methods

At the beginning of this fieldwork, I understood that working with a migrant, female population with active eviction cases meant that there was a need to center global conflicts deriving in local implications from an intersectional and decolonial perspective. This was because the actors were global (vulture funds, international investment, increasing tourism) with clear local implication; rising housing prices, loans, and displacement. Is for this reason that multiple qualitative research methods such as ethnography, interviewing, and social feminist cartography were chosen, to better analyze and describe the way that everyday actions against the localized implications of financialization of housing are performing new acts of citizenship in cities by a migrant and racialized population.

Topic	Method	Guiding Questions	Description
Introduction & Context Setting	Personal storytelling	- What is your migration journey? - What are your current housing conditions?	Participants shared their migration experiences and current housing situations to establish context and build trust within the group.
Territorial Mapping	Participatory mapping using photos and stories (picture 1)	- What ongoing conflicts affect this territory? - Where do you experience violence? - - What spaces of resistance exist?	Initial mapping activity with pictures and identifying conflicts and forms of violence affecting migrant women. Also documented spaces of resistance, self-managed initiatives, and women-led practices.
Embodied Experience Mapping	Body mapping and collective reflection (picture 1)	- What does it mean to be a woman in this territory? - - What are your physical and emotional pains? - - How do these relate to the struggles of your community?	Participant volunteered to have her silhouette drawn, with the group collectively marking areas of pain, illness, or stress. Participants created individual drawings and written reflections about how eviction processes affected their bodies and well-being.
Synthesis & Connection-Making	Collective discussion and analysis	- How do your individual experiences connect to broader territorial conflicts? - What are the links between personal and community experiences?	Final discussion round using both maps (territorial and body) to reflect on connections between bodies and territories, linking personal and community experiences to larger socio-political structures.

Table 2: Scheme of the topics addressed and descriptions of steps followed.

Once it became clear that I would focus on the effects of eviction on the majority of those affected at the PAH—migrant, female, and racialized individuals—it was impossible to ignore the historical and relational dimensions of coloniality that continue to shape migration and racial housing dynamics today. As such, Social Feminist Cartography emerged as a natural choice to explore the embodied and territorialized effects of evictions on the migrant population in Barcelona, given its inherently liberatory and participatory nature. I argue that ethnography and Participatory Action Research (PAR) complemented each other so well in this study. Actively participating in these spaces before conducting the workshop allowed me to access the field, identify participants, and build the trust needed to conduct the workshop. Adding to this, these methods proved especially relevant in contexts of activism and advocacy, as participatory approaches aim to challenge traditional hierarchies of knowledge production and data collection, and participants were often empowered to make political statement, use their own name, and utilize this research as a platform to move their message.

Feminist Social Cartography

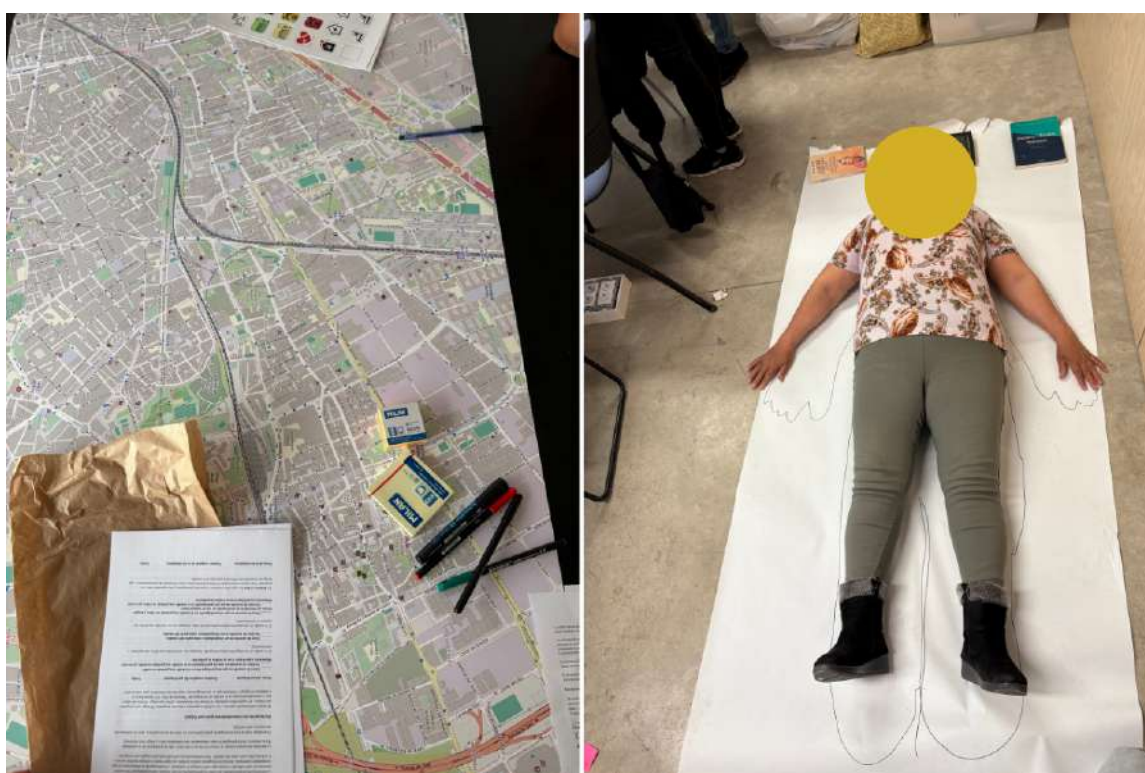
Feminist Social Cartography (Cartografía Social Feminista) emerged as a research method through collaborations between academic groups and social movements in Brazil. As Aragão (2022) explains, the methodology was developed in partnership with workers and activists from the cacao plantations in the community of Ludovico, Maranhão, Brazil. It aimed to map socio-environmental issues, territorial conflicts, and violences from a situated feminist perspective. Grounded in the principles of popular education, at the center of this method is a liberatory practice in which participants do not passively receive knowledge but co-create it (Freire, 2020).

Building on previous cartographic studies on socio-environmental and territorial conflicts in Brazilian communities (Almeida, 2013), Aragão and the research group MIQCB employed feminist social cartography to examine the impact of agribusiness on women's lives and territories. In the European context, the concept of *cuerpo-territorio* has been taken up by Latin American migrants through the work of Dos-Ventos, who developed the methodology "Traveling Cuerpo-Territorios" (2022). Using *Cartografía Social Feminista*, Dos-Ventos mapped the migratory experiences of women, emphasizing *cuerpo-territorio* as a crossroads—a conceptual and methodological space that allows migrant women from the Global South in Europe to live *sin fronteras*, as she paraphrases Anzaldúa. According to Dos-Ventos, the process does not require rigid steps, but it must consistently center community knowledge. Building on this approach, I designed and conducted a workshop grounded in the work of Aragão and Dos-Ventos', while also incorporating practical tools I learned through a training with *Iconoclasistas*—a collective from Argentina and Colombia that has become a global reference in participatory mapping for collective knowledge.

The workshop consisted of various steps, such as planning, outreach and facilitating the workshop that lasted three hours (Table 2). I recruited most participants through La PAH but some of these participants were now also in other collectives, such as the tenant union. I was the only facilitator, but a fellow activist and photographer joined, hoping to also gather stories for his exhibition.

PSEUDONYMS	COLECTIVE	ARRIVAL YEAR	COUNTRY	DOCUMENTATION	EVICTED FOR	PRIOR TO ARRIVAL HOUSING	ARRIVAL HOUSING
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Pamela	PAH bcn	2017	Honduras	No	Unpaid rent	Family home	friend did not host/ rented room / street
Luciana	NA	2001	Ecuador	No/fast obtained	Mortgage		
Natalia	PAH bcn	200	Colombia	No	Squatting	Family home	rented room
Manuel	PAH BCN	2000	Ecuador	No	Mortgage	Own home	Shared room family member

Table 3. Participants of the Workshop Cuerpo-Territorio



Picture 1: Base map on the left, and body map on the right.

A total of six participants assisted to the workshop. Five of them were migrant women, mostly from Latin American Countries but one from Algeria. There was one migrant man with disabilities, who I decided to invite because he was very interested and was very close and confident with the rest of participants, who he has known for years (table 3). After gathering the interested participants, I created a WhatsApp group to explain the workshop and ask for one simple task prior to the meeting; take pictures of the area of your home, and of what you will think that reflects a housing crisis. Three participants sent pictures or told me places to photograph for this activity. Methodologies such as Feminist Social Cartography is often compared or related to counter-mapping in the Global North, in which body-mapping has been used as a methodology for

research with undocumented migrants and survivors of violence (Gastaldo et al. 2012; Lykes and Crosby 2014). Still, less attention has been paid to the decolonial feminist potential *Cuerpo-Territorio* offers, nor to how it can be fruitfully combined with feminist geopolitics and critical border studies (Dos-Ventos, 2022). As Dos-Ventos expresses, Global North researchers' use of body-mapping as storytelling (Gastaldo et al. 2012; 2022), here we attempt to move further by creating collaborative knowledge on the territorial implications of global issues. Using this method for this research, enable an embodied mapping of the effects of evictions, connecting individual experiences to broader territorial scales such as the home, community, city, region, earth (Tierra).

Ethnography

For over a year (14 months), I participated in the *Plataforma de Afectadas por la Hipoteca* (PAH) in Barcelona, both as a researcher and as an activist. During six of those months, I conducted sustained ethnographic data collection, immersing myself in the everyday dynamics of the movement. My participation included attending and later facilitating two central weekly assemblies: the welcome assemblies, where newly affected individuals seek advice and community support, and the coordination assemblies, where long-term members debate and make decisions about the movement's internal functioning and external actions (Picture 4). These meetings, typically lasting 2.5 hours, offered valuable insights into the emotional labor, political learning, and organizational strategies involved in anti-eviction activism. Simultaneously, I was doing my internship at *Les Junes*, a dispersed housing cooperative in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. Even though stopping evictions is not in its objectives and main actions, due to urgencies and the reality of the territory very often we also needed to stop evictions and unite with other platforms (including PAH BCN) to stop evictions of neighbors and members of the cooperative.

Throughout my time at PAH and *Les Junes*, I accompanied 32 evictions. These actions involved activists physically standing in front of the door blocking police from entering to the house and carrying out the eviction (picture 5 and 11). These direct actions, rooted in civil disobedience, have been theorized as practices that contest state and financial power (Martinez, 2018). My involvement extended to negotiating with banks, municipal and regional housing institutions (picture 6), and social services, as well as protests (pictures 7 and 10), fundraising events (picture 8), celebrations and social gatherings (picture 9) and co-managing the PAH's communication efforts. By doing ethnography, I learned that this method is particularly suitable for exploring the intimate dimensions of eviction and resistance, shedding light on how migrant women from the Global South experience and contest violence on and through their bodies and territories.



Picture 4: Welcome assembly at La PAH.
Picture shared by a fellow activist.



Picture 5: Photo of around 30 people standing in front of a house where an eviction was stopped, in green we can see the member of La PAH. My own photo.



Picture 6: Acompañamiento at the office of social services.



Picture 7: Making banners for a protest.



Picture 8: Fundraising event, selling books and flowers during Saint Jordi.



Picture 9: Celebrating the 16th birthday of La Pah. Picture by Levon Schuller.



Picture 10: Housing Protest 25th of April. Picture of the author.



Picture 11: Executed eviction. Picture of the author.

In-depth Interviews

The research involved conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews in Spanish with activists and affected individuals who arrived at the PAH or Les Juntres (Annex 1), or who had been members for years. While most members of La PAH are female and migrant, in Les Juntres the group is more mixed and localized in L'Hospitalet, hence I decided to interview and include some of their members, even though three of them were men, they informed other processes of eviction, organizing and of struggle. I conducted most interviews in person. Participants remained anonymous unless otherwise stated, and all gave consent for audio recordings. Interviews lasted in average an hour and twenty minutes. I designed the interviews after conducting the workshop, to deepen the issues that emerged during it. I conducted follow-up interviews with all but one workshop participant (due to illness), and 16 new interviews—13 with affected migrant women, three with migrant men, and five with long-term activists. I also held additional follow-up sessions when needed. Table 1 includes more detailed information on the interviews.

The interviews consisted of three blocks: (1) migration trajectories, (2) housing, and (3) citizenship. I prepared 20 main questions and 12 possible follow-up questions. I carried out the interviews in a semi-formal and casual environment, giving participants flexibility to expand on areas they found important. For some, this meant talking about documentation; for others, it was about relationships. This approach allowed participants to freely share their experiences and how they related to the topics. I adjusted some of the questions depending on whether the person had attended a workshop and if there were specific themes to cover. In terms of timeline, I first conducted the follow-up interviews after the workshop. Then I carried out 12 interviews with new participants. Toward the end of the data collection in July 2024, I interviewed five long-term activists at the PAH, two of whom also worked in academia. Most interviews took place in person, except for two with the activists and scholars that I did over online platforms like Zoom.

4.5. Secondary data sources

I drew upon secondary source material such as academic articles, NGO and activist reports, state policies, and newspaper articles. I gathered and analyzed materials produced within the PAH, including more than six books and reports. I paid particular attention to those that explored the links between housing precarity and health. Some key examples include the book *Voces y Miradas* (2018), the three reports titled *Radiografies de la situació del dret a l'habitatge, la pobresa energètica i el seu impacte en la salut a Barcelona. Informe I, II i III* (2018), and *Inseguretat residencial al món local* (2024). These texts helped me understand the broader structural and institutional context of housing insecurity, as well as its effects on physical and mental health—particularly in relation to migrant women.

4.6. Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative data from interviews and recordings from the workshops were transcribed and interpreted through content analysis. Following a coding process involved identifying themes and

patterns using the software NVIVO . The codification of data went through diverse codification processes and editing as the analysis moved forward and new themes were recognized. Evictions was the umbrella topic for the interviews, hence it is not included as a category itself. The final list of codes can be found in Table 4. In the case of Insurgent Citizenship, for example, this involved coding references of actions (protests, negotiations or actions at banks, squatting, falsifying documentation, stopping evictions, etc), in the case of Julia, I included the following phrase: “out of desperation, my brother helped me open the apartment I am in (squatting) today”.

To analyze the data, I followed the framework of Body-Territory (Paredes, 2008; Zaragozin & Caretta, 2021) and Political Citizenship (Stokke, 2017) throughout the same block system that the coding (1) Territory (2) Body (3) Citizenship. I first grouped the data from interviews, fieldwork notes, and pictures and notes from the workshop, and in a second section my interpretation of each section.

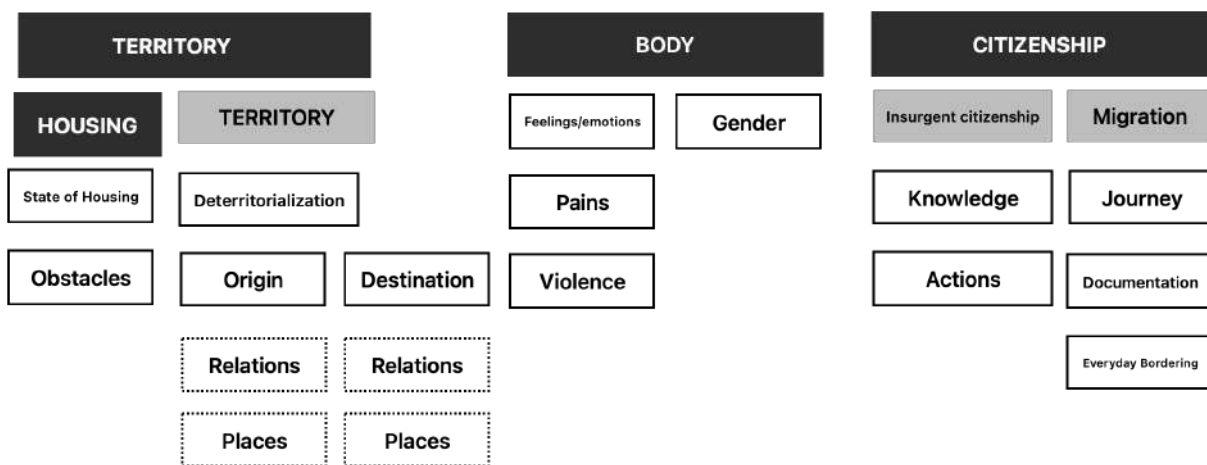


Table 4: Data Analysis Coding Diagram

4.7. Research Positionality

As a migrant, I find myself in a very privileged position. I am white-passing, I have Italian citizenship, and I communicate fluently in English and Spanish. The concept of the “Global Hierarchy of Mobility” by Bauman, situates migrants along a spectrum whose poles are those forced and those free to leave (Ong 2003). Academic students with scholarships, like me, are situated with the global elite. We can mobilize more easily and freely than those who migrate under the circumstances shown in this paper (Bauman 1998). Nevertheless, due to my context of mobility and a family history of forced displacement, I can, to a limit, relate and connect to people through my own experience and our geographical origin, but not facing undocumentedness, housing precariousness or eviction. Nevertheless, conducting activist research also allowed me to connect through a shared utopia of commons and universal housing rights.

I entered to PAH before starting fieldwork, for a research curiosity and my own personal political alignments. When I came back to PAH after a semester abroad to conduct fieldwork, I was already

familiar to some members. I participated in all spaces of the movement, created friendships, and started projects with other members. After a couple of months I was invited to be part of the coordination team. Simultaneously, I was conducting part of my internship at Les Juntas, a dispersed housing cooperative for the working class in L'Hospitalet. In these spaces, I got to know other activists and researchers working on housing, which helped me build relationships of trust with most of my informants. This research involved witnessing and engaging with pain and guilt; crying became a frequent presence in the interviews and workshop, made possible by the spaces of honesty and solidarity created together. Most people saw me not as a researcher or a student, but as an activist and a *compañera* (a common word used playing with the word *compañera* (comrade) and PAH). This activist approach allowed me to access the most personal and intimate dimensions of eviction struggles—perspectives and insights I would not have reached otherwise.

This deep engagement aligns with what Juris and Khasnabish (2013) describe as the unique potential of ethnography in politically active contexts. Ethnography, they argue, should not be limited to “thick description” (Geertz, 1989), but rather be understood as a mode of writing and analysis capable of capturing mood, affect, and the lived experiences of those involved in social movements. When practiced from within movements for social change—rather than as an external observer—ethnography reveals forms of knowledge, emotion, and political meaning-making that remain invisible to traditional objectivist methods. In this sense, participant observation becomes not only a methodological choice but an epistemological commitment to generate knowledge with, rather than about, those engaged in everyday struggles.

Being the youngest activist and having a university degree was also very visible. I was warmly welcomed, and several members would often tell me, “*necesitamos más gente joven como tú*” -we need more young people like you-. When accompanying affected individuals to negotiations with banks, they would sometimes ask me to be the *portavoz*, to speak on their behalf. At first, I accepted, perhaps out of inexperience, but I quickly realized this request often came from the assumption that, because I had “studies,” I could defend their case better. As a new member of the PAH, this was far from true. In fact, the person facing the eviction was usually the best advocate for their case, something we are reminded of constantly in the assemblies.

When acknowledging the extractivist historical context of ethnographic work, it is important to emphasize that this activist research, grounded in decolonial frameworks and methodologies aims to disrupt traditional hierarchies in knowledge production. This took shape in several ways. First, I prioritized interviewing participants I knew well and trusted to feel comfortable saying no—some indeed declined. Second, many participants saw their involvement in my research as part of the broader chain of solidarity that defines PAH. As one *compañera* told me when I thanked her before an interview, “*How could I not help you, after you’ve helped us at every eviction?*” Their willingness to share stemmed from a reciprocal relationship built on care and political commitment. This care continued over time, expressed through ongoing interest in my work, asking how it was going, offering further support, or wondering when it would be published.

5. HOUSING STRUGGLES OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION IN THE REGION OF BARCELONA

The Region of Barcelona, a well-industrialized region in Spain that prides itself on longstanding cultural and economic connections to Europe, is an excellent case study due to the position of Barcelona City as a *global city* with increasing migration and housing prices for the last decade. Only during 2013 and 2018 house prices went up by 38.1% in the new-build market and by 50.3% in the second-hand market, with the result of “a systematic expulsion of local residents from Barcelona's centre and their removal to its outskirts” (Rolnik, 2019: 8 in Valente, et al. 2023). Simultaneously, migration has peaked in 2023 with the highest migration net since 1977, and the highest percentage of migrant living in the city, 24,54% (idescat, 2024).

While the PAH is based in the City of Barcelona, when conducting fieldwork, most of the members with active eviction cases were coming from L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. L'Hospitalet is the neighboring city to Barcelona, only a few minutes of distance from Barcelona Center. It holds a history of being a place of residence for the working class and migrants, often facing various processes of stigmatization and racism (Nofre, 2021). It is the densest city in Europe and with an underestimated high population of migrants many of which are undocumented (Nofre, 2021). While there are administrative boundaries, these two cities exemplify how the housing struggle is not city-level but regional, with affected people from one municipality moving to another one for network and support. In the following map (Figure 2), we observe the studied area with cities of L'Hospitalet and Barcelona highlighted. In colors we can see the two collectives included in this research and the approximate area of residence of the people interviewed and their property regime.

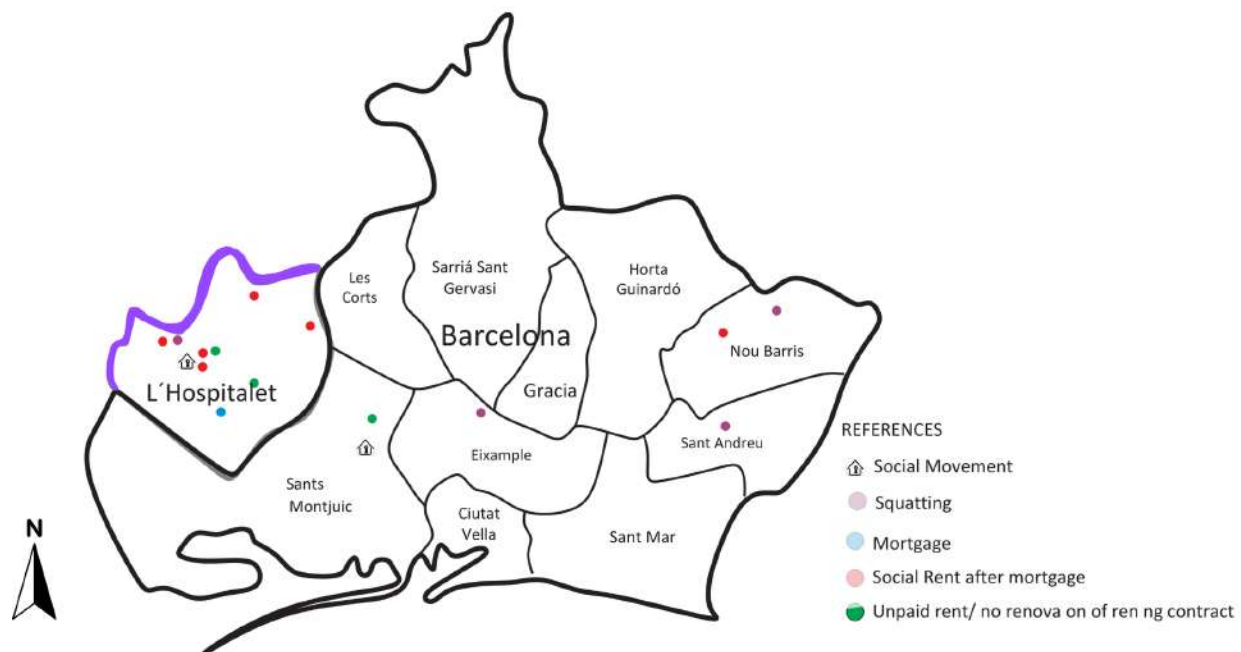


Figure 2: Map of the studied area, consisting of the cities of L'Hospitalet and Barcelona with its districts. Creation of the author

5.1. Housing struggles: The Spanish context

The Spanish Housing Model

As expressed by D'Adda, the pre-making of the current state of housing precarity can be situated back to a housing model fundamented in ownership since Franco's dictatorship and to the famous "Barcelona Model" which for decades, through deep urban transformations, reshaped the city and brought about state-led gentrification (2021).

During Franco's regime homeownership was the main path towards accessing a home. By the end of the dictatorship, in 1973, Spain underwent a shift towards capitalist urbanization characterized by the privatization and commodification of housing, coupled with a reduction in state-level intervention (Martinez, 2022; Cattaneo and Engel-Di Mauro, 2015). Mortgages were provided incredibly easily, and for migrants these loans had higher upfront and continuing costs, a number of fees, numerous insurance policies, varying interest rates, and high default charges, of course mostly hided (Suarez, 2014). When the housing bubble burst in 2008, hundreds of thousands of people were indebted and lost their jobs, hence started struggling to make their mortgage payments. Failing to pay the mortgages, often led to facing the risk of losing their homes through repossession, which meant that not only would they be evicted, but that they would often still have a huge debt burden (D'Adda, 2021; Suarez, 2020).

As a response, the state prioritized national economic stability and debt repayment, "leaving those evicted, many of whom were unemployed, migrants and/or working class, shaken by the economic downturn and feeling abandoned" (Casellas and Sala, 2017 in D'Adda, 2021). Austerity policies increased, while nationalizing eight banks for a total of 115 billion euros, and spending 76,410 million Euros to rescue the financial sector and to support its recovery. Up to 2018, only 5.4% of the total had been repaid by the rescued banks (Martinez, 2020; Royo, 2020; D'Adda, 2021). The government increased the privatization of public assets and housing, there was a precarization of the labor market, a mortgage crisis, and the financialization of the economic base (Martinez, 2020). The fetishism over private property during the increase of neoliberalism led to the assetization of land and rent according to Ward and Swyngedouw (2022).

Since the end of the Franco Regime, neoliberal policies increased with the ongoing process of modernization shaped by a new city branding in Barcelona (Dura-Guimera, 2003). Scholars have compared the successful organization of the 1992 Olympics and the renewal of the nineteenth-century manufacturing center of Poble Nou by 2000 (See Project 22@ Barcelona) with Hausmann in Paris or the Green Belt in London (Monclús, 2003). These urban reforms are part of the known "Barcelona Model" aimed to lead strategic planning toward European City models prioritizing neoliberal entrepreneurship (Charnock et al, 2019; Casellas & Pallares-Barbera 2009). Nevertheless, this model created a monopoly of rents that affected migrants directly through the displacement of Romani and migrant irregular settlements and indirectly through gentrification (Roset, 2014; Charnock et al, 2019).

Multiple actors played a role during the pre-making of the current state of housing precarity, public-private investments, the rise of tourism and tourist platforms such as Airbnb (Blanco-Romero, et al., 2018), within others. The consequent rise in housing prices and the reduction of affordable rents in turn fostered the expulsion of part of the population from the city centre (Delgado 2007; Blanco-Romero, et al., 2018).

Property regimes and activism—the case of La PAH

The *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH) was created in 2009, in the aftermath of the housing bubble's collapse and the surge in foreclosures and indebtedness. PAH estimates indicate that more than 216,000 evictions due to foreclosures took place between 2007 and 2012 (Gutiérrez & Domènech, 2018; Colau & Alemany, 2013). The organization was also one of the major driving forces behind what later became the 15M movement. Scholars widely recognize the 15M mobilizations in 2011 as a turning point for housing activism and its relationship to politics (Martínez, 2022; Tutor Anton, 2020). These protests emerged in response to the austerity measures and neoliberal reforms implemented by the Spanish government between 2008 and 2011. In reaction to the crisis, thousands of people occupied public spaces, participating in strikes, camping, and other forms of mass protest. Although these actions dissipated by 2014, many 15M activists—particularly members of PAH and similar organizations—remained active through electoral platforms.

The rise in housing precarity, combined with the entry of former PAH activists into local councils in cities such as Barcelona, most notably through the municipalist party *Barcelona en Comú* (Achtenberg, 2015), led to a greater prioritization of housing policies by local authorities. This shift was driven by sustained grassroots pressure from PAH in 2015. A key example was the People's Legislative Initiative (ILP), developed by PAH and allied grassroots movements that same year. The ILP proposed measures such as allocating social housing in empty buildings owned by large corporations or banks, imposing fines on financial institutions or large-scale landlords who evict mortgage debtors without offering alternative social housing, and creating mechanisms to provide second opportunities to over-indebted people and good-faith debtors (PAH, 2015). Another significant win for housing movements came in mid-2023, with the approval of the national Law for the Right to Housing (Law 12/2023). This law introduced mechanisms to expand social housing, regulated evictions of squatters in situations of vulnerability (limited to cases involving children or recent unemployment), and imposed an annual cap on rent increases, among other measures (Ley 12/2023). However, important gaps remained, particularly regarding temporary housing provision.

It remains unclear how much these policies have reduced housing struggles (Alonso, 2022; PAH, 2023). According to the 2021 census, 14.41% of buildings in Spain and 9.3% in Barcelona were empty. The country still offers only 1.5% of its housing stock as social housing, and, as housing expert Nasarre argues, stopping evictions is merely a temporary measure to mask the lack of housing alternatives for vulnerable populations (INE, 2021; PAH, 2023; Cadenas, 2023). In the first third of 2025, evictions increased by 10.6% compared to the same period in 2024, with the majority (75%) due to non-payment of rent and a smaller share related to mortgages (CGPJ, 2025).

The cases of eviction due to unpaid mortgages are often framed as the “typical” or foundational cases of the PAH’s activism, marked by important victories such as the 2015 ILP. This period has been extensively documented in scholarly work on the movement (Suárez, 2017; Gonick, 2020; San Martín, 2019). Nevertheless, housing struggles have changed rapidly, and mortgage-related evictions are now a minority at the PAH. In the interview with San Martín, we explored this transformation. San Martín noted that squatting has always been present in the movement, although not always in the same form. San Martín explained that from its inception, the PAH drew on activists who had previously collaborated with the squatting movement, which led to the creation of the *Obra Social* project—an initiative that involved occupying abandoned buildings for evicted families to live in. However, as Mas de Xaxàs Faus recalled, in the early years there were no cases of squatting driven purely by necessity.

Today, this reality has shifted. Riaño, a long-term activist at the PAH, observed in her interview that the majority of current squatting cases involve recently arrived migrants. This points to the increasing complexity of housing struggles, shaped by the evolving stages of migrant vulnerability. In this research the difference in property relations and their relations with migration status and length of residency is showcased throughout the cases included. Most current mortgage-related eviction cases ultimately stem from the non-renewal of social rent contracts such as Manuela and Silvana. Pamela and Florencia faced evictions due to non-payment of rent. Lucía, Sofía, and Julia were evicted after squatting, having been unable to access the rental market. Natalia and Ines’s situations were even more precarious, involving forced and unlawful evictions from rented rooms or subdivided apartments.

This diversity of experiences illustrates not only the dynamic and shifting nature of the housing market but also the deepening impoverishment of the working-class migrant population. As both Riaño and Ramón emphasized in their interviews (2025), having a stable job and regular income no longer guarantees housing security.

5.2. Migration in Barcelona

While writing this thesis, at a town in Murcia at the South of Spain, coordinated fascist groups ran after and hit migrants working at the agricultural fields, mostly from north African countries, calling to “clean” Spain. In a time shaped by rising migration, contemporary discourses in Europe and Spain have increased the understanding of migration as a crisis to be managed, they have politicized mobility, nourishing racist and ethnocentric discourses. Barcelona, in particular, is marked by a complex and dynamic history of migration and urban political transformation, shaped by rapid demographic changes deeply rooted in colonial legacies. Understanding this history helps situate the local dynamics of evictions with its roots in legacies of colonialism and racial capitalism.

In the 1950 international migration in Spain was none existent. Quite the opposite, people were moving from Spain, and other Southern countries, to the North-Western countries (Czaika and de Haas, 2015). Concurrent, there was an increase in colonial-linked International migration, exemplified by migration flows from Kenya, India, and Malaysia to the UK or from Northern Africa to France and Italy, but not Spain (Bade, 2003). During the oil crisis in the 1970s, migration control

increased accordingly with international migration in Europe (specifically from North Africa), but Spain did not follow suit. Decreasing fertility rate and a history of net-emigration led Spain to welcome migrants into the country and shifted migration routes from the North to the South (Arango and Finotelli, 2009; Van Mol and De Valk, 2016). The first immigration related policy in Spain (indirectly required as a buy-in ticket into the EU) was the Asylum and Refugee Law in 1984. Hence, Spain became a destination country due to less restrictive migration policies and the high demand for low-paid workers (Cachón 2002, Czaika and de Haas, 2015). This growth was slow until the 21st century when immigration drastically increased, due to financial and political crisis in Latin American countries. By 2005, Spain was the European country hosting the highest amount of migrants (15.0 per 1,000) after Cyprus (Arango and Finotelli, 2009).

Since the late 20th century, a series of policies in Spain targeted migrants' regularization and work, which showcased the need for labour in the care and construction sector. For example, they provided working quotas and visa sponsorship for migrants, and kept the absence of visas for some Latin American countries (Cebolla and Gonzalez, 2008; López-Sala and Ferrero-Turrión, 2009; Arango and Finotelli, 2009). Other policies also reflected the role of the country as peripheral border of the European Union acting according to European regulations. Examples include the construction of walls at the border of Ceuta and Melilla and creation of cooperation organizations, such as The Union for the Mediterranean in 2008 (Duvell, 2014; Saddiki, 2017).

In the last twenty years, there were two peaks on migration entrance. The first can be pinpointed from 2005 to 2010 and the second one is recognized to have lasted from 2014 to 2019 (Damoun, Bayona-i-Carrasco & Domingo, 2022). There is a difference on the population that migrated in each of these two phases. Noticeably ages, education levels, sex and countries of origin have changed significantly. For example, earlier waves of migration from Peru constituted the "better off" migrants, with higher educational attainments and often receiving better jobs than counterparts from Africa or the Middle East due to language and cultural ties (Hierro, 2013). Figure 3 portrays the characteristics of the population migrating into Barcelona, characterized by the strong presence of South Americans from 2005 to 2010, and more recently also joined by Asian and European migration. The data is in agreement with Bayona-i-Carrasco's demographic analysis in 2008, stating that most South Americans were from Ecuador, Argentina (many with an Italian citizenship), Bolivia, and Peru. The more recent wave of migration saw an increase again in South American migration, mostly from Argentina and Peru, as well as a significant increase among Europeans (Domingo, 2021). This data portrays that migrants tend to be between 25 and 39 years old, and there is a majority of male migrants from Asian and African continents. At the same time, there are more female migrants from South America and North America.

The historical relevance of Spain as a destination country for migrant people from Latin America and Morocco cannot be ignored, since every participant came from these origins, with the exception of Marina from Argelia. While is beyond the scope of this research to explain the colonial implications of Spain in Latin America, several historical events can be highlighted as a result of this colonial relations that affected directly the histories and stories of participants in this interview and specifically the feminization of the Latin American migration.

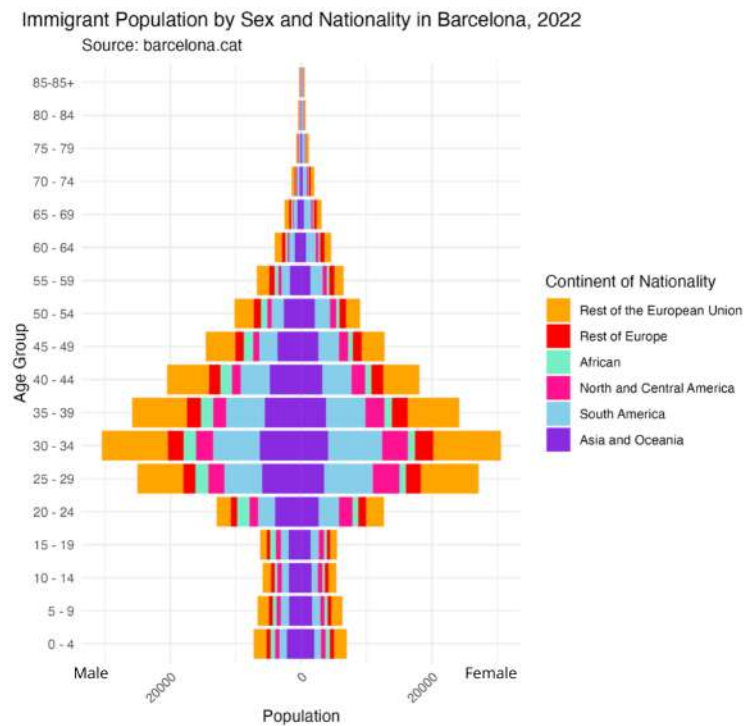


Figure 3. Barcelona's Immigrant Population by Nationality and Sex in the Year 2022 (Data Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona; own illustration).

Due to cultural and colonial ties, Latin America was a primary destination for Spanish and Italian migration throughout the 20th century (Palazón, 1993). Several migration waves took place from Spain to South America as a result of wars and economic crises, with the two largest occurring during the so-called “massive migration” between 1880 and 1930, and later during Franco’s dictatorship between 1946 and 1958 (Palazón, 1992). These historical connections partially explain why the first migration movements from Latin America to Europe in the 1990s were directed mainly toward Spain and Italy. Many of the children and grandchildren of earlier European migrants sought to “return” to Europe, as in the case of Florencia in this work. To the motivating factor of cultural ties inherited from colonization, another decisive factor was added: the possibility of maintaining or acquiring European citizenship through family lineage (Hierro, 2016; Herrera, 2011).

As Herrera argues, it was the coincidence of a social reproduction crisis in Latin American countries with a care crisis in destination countries such as Spain, that allowed for pathways towards documentation specifically for migrant women (2011). As regards Ecuador, a severe economic recession emerged in 1999 involving high inflation, of 60.7 per cent, and an extremely high percentage of the population living below the poverty threshold, of 62 per cent in 1999 (Hierro, 2016). In Colombia this was tight to the political context that pushed thousands of Colombians out of the country. A mix of both political and economic circumstances also pushed Venezuelans and Bolivians towards emigration in later years (Herrera, 2011). It is this aspect of care that presents an important factor increasing a feminization of migration from Latin America into Spain. The care sector was the highest first occupation of most Latin American migrants, with most women able to

access documentation when was specifically to work in the care sector, even with high educational levels (Herrera, 2011; Wagner, 2008; Hierro 2016).

5.3. The territory: Migrants' settlement patterns within housing financialization

In Barcelona, urban land has become a critical for rent extraction, transforming physical spaces into highly prized financial assets. Under a system of rentier capitalism, ownership yields profit without productive labor, becoming engines of capital accumulation rather than public goods (Bobek, 1974). Hiernaux's concept of territorial rent resonates here: benefits are often derived not from one's labor but from legal control over land itself (1989). Locational advantages—central neighborhoods, scenic views—are monetized, generating significant income without added social production, while also being able to profit from free time through tourism (Hiernaux, 1989).

In Barcelona, the financialization of housing has turned living spaces into speculative assets, especially in the wake of the mortgage crisis or increasing touristification (Garcia-Lamarca, 2021). Large investment groups, including REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts), have acquired domestic portfolios, leveraging tax benefits to fuel speculation (Garcia-Lamarca, 2021). Simultaneously, urban redevelopment projects like 22@Barcelona have been criticized as exercises in capturing *monopoly rents*, optimizing land value through state and capital collaboration (Charnock, et al., 2014). This has great effects in how accessible the territory of Barcelona is for the population, often pushing those with lower-economic advantage out of the city's center.

This condition of the territory is not new, but entrenched to historical relations between migration waves and property. When stating that I was studying migration and housing in Barcelona, several times, I was recommended to watch the movie *El 47*, premiered around the time of my thesis. This movie about Barroquismo -informal settlements- in the peripheries of Barcelona in 1980s, showcased the lack of access to basic services such as public transportation in these areas, inhabited by migrants from within Spain. During the interview to San Martín, an activist at the PAH since 2012, he expressed that for him the geographical map of housing struggles has not changed much since;

“Between the 1970s and 1980s, Barcelona was the scene of many neighborhood struggles. And where did these struggles occur? Well, they happened in Horta Guinardó, for example, in the Carmel neighborhood, in Sants. There's a beautiful film out now called *El 47*.... And in this sense, we can see how there's a reproduction that isn't identical, but that does bear many similarities to that moment, because where do we go to stop evictions today? To Horta-Guinardó, to Nou Barris, to Sants, to Raval, to the Gothic Quarter...”

There is a historical relevance in the patterns of housing struggles of the migrant population in Barcelona. The struggles have not been dispersed randomly across the city, but concentrated in specific neighborhoods and areas where migrant and working-class populations have historically settled, producing continuities between past and present geographies of exclusion. In the figure 4, we can see the location of the evictions uploaded by social movements (right) from 2016 to 2022, and the neighborhoods with barracas in 1980s (left). These two share multiple similarities with most

evictions and barracas located in the peripheries of the city, specifically in the area of Monjuïc/Poble Sec at the South West and Horta/Nou Barris at the North East (Barceló, 2024). Even though evictions at L'Hospitalet have not been equally mapped and archived, during my research period, most of the evictions were coming from L'Hospitalet. This municipality has historically being characterized as working-class and since the 2000s, by an increasing migrant population (Nofre, 2021). As Nofre argues, due to its demographic composition of rural migrants, industrial workers, and more recently international migrants, L'Hospitalet and in specific La Florida, neighborhood where Les Junes is located, has faced multiple processes of marginalization and criminalization with its peak during the appearance of “bandas Latinas” Latin-American gangs such as Black Panthers or Latin Kings since the early two thousands and less in the present.

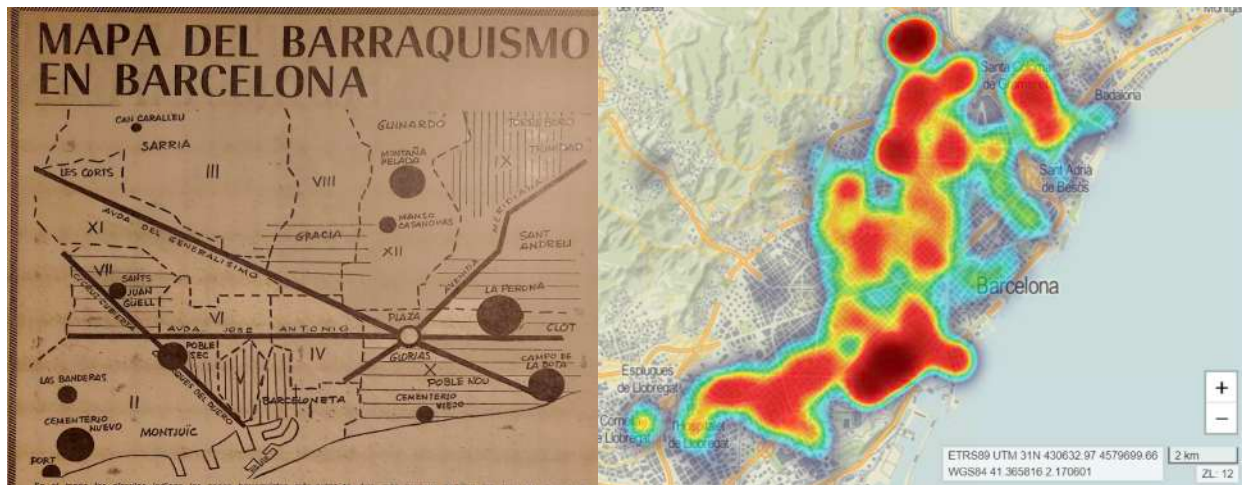


Figure 4. Barcelona's Map of Informal Settlements from the Arxiu Fotogràfic de Barcelona (left); Barcelona's map of evictions called up by collectives 2016-2022 by CMMM maps (right).

While the housing conflicts share a similar territorial distribution, researchers have claimed that a key aspect of the spatiality of Barcelona's migrant population is a reduced segregation (Bayona-i-Carrasco, 2007; Centro Estadística, 2023). This aligns with another key aspect, summarized as “the suburbanization of migration” by Bayona-i-Carrasco and Gil-Alonso (2011). Between 1998 and 2009, the metropolitan region of Barcelona (RMB), saw an increase in their foreign nationality residents of 13.1% of the total population. Similarly, in their data-based analysis of post-migration settlement, López-Gay, et al. (2020), concluded that most migrants “choose” the outskirts of Barcelona or near metropolitan areas, with El Raval being the only exception of a center neighborhood with a high concentration of migrants.

Due to the high migrant population from affluent countries and backgrounds, studies reflect on the importance of a third variable such as education and class shaping migration settlements (Lopez-Gay, 2018). This is relevant for El Raval since it is the only central neighborhood housing a significant population of low-income migrants with low education attainments. The rest of the central neighborhoods host a large migrant population with higher education attainments and income (Lopez-Gay, 2016). The distribution of the cases of evictions here studied, and the background of the participants, confirm this claim, locating most of them in the outskirts of the city and nearby municipalities, while originally choosing Barcelona as a destination.

6. TRAVELING CUERPO-TERRITORIOS: EVICTION CASES FOR THE MIGRANT POPULATION

Women facing evictions have a complex relationship with territories shaped by their stories of mobility, their lack of stability, their feelings of belonging, and multiple violences. Following the framework of body-territory, this chapter centers the multiple territories inhabited by the participants, the conditions for security and contentment, the territorialized dynamics of housing struggles, and the relation of mobility and eviction with everyday bordering violence. I first describe their migration stories from their countries of origin. Second, I discuss the importance of documentation, shaping their precarious beginnings in Spain. Third, I compare their housing journeys to analyze their relationships with their neighborhoods and city.

6.1. Towards the Imagined territory

This subchapter explores the migration motivations and journeys of migrant women facing evictions before arriving in Barcelona. While most of the women interviewed expressed that they liked, miss, and felt very connected with their territories of origin, there was a need to move. Lack of resources, violence, and uncertainty are characteristics of both their countries of origin and their journeys. Often, when migrating, they found themselves requesting debts or relying on a network of migrants for the possibility of migrating, which condition their situation once in Spain. The stories of their migration experience shed light on the contrast between the imagined future and the actual migrant's mobility, which showcases that current housing dispossession is part of a story of a multiterritorial process of de and re-territorialization.

Violence is present at diverse stages of migratory journeys and housing precariousness. This has shaped the perceptions of territories of residence and the imagined territories of destination. This violence, in the case of Lucía or Ines was very explicit, and with clear detonating events; "I came here because extortion was very bad in my country. They put a gun to my head and wanted to take my cell phone. I just said, 'God, what are you going to do with my children?' He did that twice, and the gun didn't fire." Said Ines.

As for Sofia, she felt that she was living in constant fear, *"there was a general feeling that something will happen in any second"* she expressed. Living in a conflicting neighborhood of Durán Cantón in Ecuador with high rates of delinquency and violence made her feel with limited freedom to move and enjoy her youth, while also filling her with uncertainty about her future and her ability to imagine a life beyond that violence; *"Well, I didn't see a future there. I really didn't see a future there because of the gang member issue. I saw myself as ending up with a gang member. So I said, no. I don't want that for myself."*

Nevertheless, family and pregnancy were also expressed as economic motives for migrating. Silvana, for example, is a single mother and stated that most of her life decisions were always made with her children's future in mind. Moving to Barcelona was part of that thinking, even if it

was initially meant to be temporary. Lorena shared a similar experience and specifically mentioned that getting pregnant was the trigger for her migration; *“I finished college and nothing. I got pregnant and came here. Things got complicated for me financially.”* This economic motivation is often framed in the image of being able to own their own home. Sofia, for example, explains how her mother migrated to Spain and was able to save enough money to buy a home in Ecuador, and she was her main motivation to follow the same path. For Pamela and Manuela, being able to purchase a home was also a motivation, which already showcases not only an imaginary of the country, but also of the role of private property and ownership as an imaginary of stability and social mobility.

Ten of the thirteen women interviewed came to Barcelona from Latin America in the late 90s and early 2000s, when political and economic crisis led to an increase in poverty and violence in many Latin American countries (Herrera, 2011). The economic and violent contexts in which these women were often living added to their hopes and imagined futures in the territories they expected to inhabit after migrating. Network migration was the main characteristic of choosing Spain, and Barcelona as a destination. Everyone interviewed stated that they knew others who had migrated to Spain. For example for Manuela, Ines, and Marina, it was a friend who inspired them by telling them about good salaries and job opportunities in Spain. For Julia, Lorena and Sol, there were family members. As Julia states, she flew when she was a sixteen to follow her family, leaving her with little options and opportunities to decide where to live:

“I would have preferred to stay home. Always. I would have always preferred to stay there. But well, since I didn't have one either -a house-... I couldn't decide or anything.” Expressed Julia, accompanying her statements with clear anger and frustration in her tone and body.

This process of deterritorialization is even clearer when reflecting on their feelings and emotions over their original countries, cities, and neighborhoods. Like Julia, most of the interviewees responded with care and melancholy when I asked about their home countries and neighborhoods. Participants highlighted their family, their friends, “everyone knows me,” as Lucia said. Similarly, many expressed a dire desire to move back; *“Even now, I always want to go back,”* said Florencia, who expressed that she missed the proximity of everyone, the noises, the rhythm of life.

Following Haesbaert's understanding of the social dimensions of deterritorialization, we can see that those who lose control or security over their territories are the most deprived, or in stricter terms, more precariously territorialized. Before departing, many of the women interviewed expressed their motivation to move as an economic necessity, or as a response to neighborhood violence. These realities speak to the first aspects of deterritorialization, affecting migrant women's economic and political territorialization. Yet deterritorialization is always accompanied by reterritorialization. At the end, these women were all looking for safety—economic, physical, or both—and their departure was marked not only by a lack of security over the territories they left

behind, but also by the possibility of imagining and enacting new territorial attachments elsewhere while keeping connections, remittances, and memories as a way of living through this multiterritoriality. This movement towards Barcelona therefore represents not a simple loss, but the beginning of a reconfiguration of multiterritorial lives, where memories, responsibilities, and future projections intertwine to shape imagined territories.

Nevertheless, as expressed by Florencia and Ines, the reasons to stay, are beyond their control, and related with economic possibilities and remittances. In the case of Florencia, her migration context was -out of all the participants-, the only one who expressed that it was an active choice, that since she had documentation she wanted to experience something different once her children were emancipated. Nevertheless, an year into her time in Spain, the crisis started and she developed a rare illness that prevents her from work, called biliarys cholangitis. As she expressed, *“In South America, health treatments are super expensive”*, while also expressing the advancements of health procedures and investment put into knowing more and solving her illness.

Similarly, Ines also claimed to want to move back, but that her only reason to still be here is that she needs the money to send to her mom. Remittances were described by two other participants, and most of them claim to have sent money at some point of their migration journey.

The way remittances affect migrant women's processes of territorialization is twofold. On one hand, many participants expressed that helping their families back home was both a motive to migrate and to remain, providing them with a sense of purpose and vitality despite facing multiple obstacles and exploitative labor conditions. On the other hand, during the workshop most women noted that they had to stop sending remittances once they began to face severe housing struggles. This highlights the precarity of the material dimension of multiterritoriality: not only bodies but also money circulate across borders, shaping complex territorial relations. Yet this circulation is highly fragile, as the “subaltern” lack of security over territories is amplified by economic precarity in multiple locations simultaneously (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). In Lucía's case, she was never able to send remittances as she had initially hoped. When confronted with an eviction notice, the family even considered returning: “But where would we go? I rented the house where we used to live, so that my mom can have a stipend, it is not much but until we get a job.” Her story illustrates how remittances, or the inability to send them, are entangled with housing precarity and with the uneven capacities to sustain multiterritorial belonging, leaving her with little options over returning.

6.2. Documentation and the Struggles of Arrival

While most respondents migrated looking for safety and economic stability, not all those hopes were achieved, and documentation came across in all interviews as the defining factor across their struggles. To understand the territorialization of migrants with housing struggles, this subsection describes the conditions most of the participants and interviewees faced at the time of arrival, specifically regarding border control, labor, and economic stability. While housing is central, it is explored in more detailed in the section thereafter.

Arriving in Spain, is remember by most interviewees -male and female- with fear and uncertainty. Of the 18 people interviewed 15 arrived either with tourist visa and remained in the country past its expedite date or crossing the border. In the case of Latin Americans, everyone entered with a tourist visa, making border control the first challenge. During the workshop, we briefly talked about this experience and how it is remembered by the embodiment of fearness; sweat, shaking, heavy breathing. Manuel screamed at the back, “cuanto más moreno más difícil” [the browner one looks the harder it gets] which followed by the stories of him and one other participant, both brown Latinxs, who experienced discrimination and even deportation. In the case of Manuel, he aimed to enter Spain first by stopping in Frankfurt, Germany. When arriving in Frankfurt and after a session that lasted almost three hours, he was sent back from Germany to Peru in two days. After arriving in Peru, he asked for a loan and was able to enter again, now directly through Madrid. Pamela remembered the relief after passing that stage “They asked me everything, everything. I came as a tourist. They asked me, well, even to show them the money, the luggage I had, I mean, they asked me everything. But thank God I got in.”

Borders and migratory policies are built on structures of meaning that sustain discriminatory practices (Hernández, 2019). They are not neutral checkpoints, but are activated primarily through the movement of migrants, whose identities often differ from those inside. Their objective, often naturalized, is to differ between one person’s possibility to move with ease and that who is subjected to suspicion, delay, or denial. This is why passing the border is often one of the first embodied experiences of racism for migrants: the encounter is mediated by assumptions about nationality, race, or class that mark some bodies as less legitimate or less deserving of mobility. As Hernández argues, borders solidify the binary distinctions between developed/underdeveloped and rights/duties, which underpin dominant representations of otherness (2019). Yet crossing borders also opened spaces for insurgent practices and solidarities. Some of the women, such as Lorena and Julia, were able to enter through labor contracts thanks to family members or family invitations, while others, like Silvana, secured contracts only after arrival, which then allowed her to bring her siblings. These uneven entry routes illustrate how border regimes structure not only the moment of passage but also migrants’ differentiated possibilities of reterritorialization in Spain.

Nevertheless, border crossing was not experienced only at the moment of arrival or at migration checkpoints. In the case of Manuela, this occurred four months after arriving in Spain, when a fight between her roommate and his partner brought the police to the apartment. The police checked everyone inside, handcuffed her and her friend, and kept her restrained to an unknown man for hours, before releasing her with an expulsion order she did not follow. *“That made it even harder for us to get our papers, I was only able to get it after three years... we tried and tried and tried again.”* This illustrates how bordering is not confined to the territorial edges of the nation-state but becomes part of the everyday life of undocumented migrants (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, & Cassidy, 2018). For Manuela, this encounter shaped many of her subsequent decisions regarding the housing and work she could access. In the interview, she described her life in terms of “before documentation,” when, as she said, “everything, everything, everything is harder,” and “after documentation.” The border in its flexible understanding, is where immigration laws and regulations become material, and where the decision to admit/restrict or stay/deport is translated into legal

categories that shape future life chances. Entering and living without documentation produces a condition of precarity that affects later access to jobs, housing, and social rights.

Documentation, hence, is central to the arriving struggles of the participants. Two of the participants arrived with documentation, and showcased the difference in the access to jobs. For example, in the case of Florencia, she always had a Spanish passport because her parents migrated from Spain to Peru during the 1960s, a period when more than one million Spanish people migrated to Latin America (Ferrando, 1963). She expressed that the ability to have a passport motivated her to come and allowed her to find a job “relatively easily”, as was the case with Lorena. But for those without documents, they faced precarious and short-term employment, as Pamela, Lucia and Ines explained during the years of undocumentedness, they only accessed work for weeks, months or during the weekends, often underpaid and without social security.

Ines expressed this directly when saying, *“a girl said it was good, that there was work. But they didn't tell me that you have to register here. Here you have to have papers to work. If I had known all that, I wouldn't have suffered here, because I have suffered so much.”*

The contradiction between the imagined future and the reality of undocumented migrants appeared repeatedly in the interviews. Ines's work experience reflects that of at least five other women: confined to care-taking jobs, underpaid, working only a few days a week, commuting to another city, and without a contract, while enduring mistreatment from colleagues. While these conditions were far from ideal, some participants expressed a simultaneous sense of relief, even gratitude, for the opportunity to “at least make something,” as Lucia said.

In the case of Silvana, when she obtained documentation her visa was linked to the service sector, and limited the possible jobs she was able to take. Even though she was an engineer, she maintained two and by moments three roles of caretaking for more than ten years. This globalization of care has maintained hierarchies of gender, ethnicity, and race, with women not being able to step up in their professions while redefining naturalized conceptions of family (Herrera, 2011).

These experiences reveal how migrant women are positioned within a feminized and colonial-linked global care market, where precarious jobs undertaken by women from the Global South sustain essential reproductive labor in European societies (Suárez, 2020; Robinson & Santos, 2014). As Gutiérrez, drawing on Quijano, argues, the legacy of the colonial order—reactivated through racial and gender segregation in labor markets and dehumanizing migration policies—manifests in the “coloniality of labor (2010).” In Spain, this history is particularly evident: as Spanish women entered the labor force in the late 19th century, reproductive work became increasingly internationalized, mapped onto hierarchies of race, language, and religion rooted in colonial relations.

Yet, despite clear precarization through underpayment, irregular status, and limited protections, four women also described their work in affective terms that showcase care not only as labor but as an aspect of territorialization. For them, care was an embodied practice of love and attachment, as Sol explained: *“We contribute, we Latinos contribute a lot of love, a lot of patience for the elderly... Because we left our family in our countries, our children and we became attached to*

them and on top of that we received, gave and received affection from them." Care thus emerges as central at different stages of the migration journey affecting various aspects of deterritorialization such as economic, political and also symbolic: motivating departure due to available jobs (supporting families through remittances), shaping labor conditions due to the possibility of accessing visas connected with the care sector, and a multi-territoriality of affection, shaped by inability to be with the family back at home and made up for caring for families here.

Many interviewees also expressed a similar experience for men, who had to enter the construction even though they had a background in more specialized and even professionalized areas. Lucia expressed that his partner suffered severe health consequences, which led to his inability to work for days due to back pain. Sol, on the other hand, expressed this gender-specific labour differentiation and how it added to an already precarious living condition shaped by debt:

"I worked from Sunday to Sunday because we had debt. When I came, I had a debt of 1,200 euros, which was the fare ticket. He came with a debt of 1,300 euros, which was his fare and a loan. Since he was a man, there was very little work for men, so he couldn't find work; he worked in construction.... He couldn't find steady work, so he couldn't pay the debt. If he did some jobs, sometimes he would get paid, sometimes he wouldn't. And he accumulated a debt of 8,000 euros. I paid him that debt of 8,000 euros. The one who assumed all the expenses of the loan was me."

Sol's testimony already connects labour precariousness and debt to housing struggles and territorialization processes. For undocumented women, the precarious beginnings were especially marked by border-violence, precarious labor conditions, over-qualification, and over working. These conditions not only limited their insertion into the labour market but also conditioned their possibilities of accessing and sustaining their housing. These struggles, in turn, influenced their capacity to decide over their territories and the ways in which they inhabited them, which are explored further in the coming section.

6.3.Territorializing amidst housing struggles

As a core part of this thesis, this subsection explores the implications of territorialization on migrant women facing housing struggles. The subchapter explores and discusses housing prices as obstacles accessing neighborhoods of preference and displacement, and the main characteristics of reterritorialization amidst housing struggles; the affective connections mostly created through housing struggles, a low relevance on the neighborhood in front of the high priority to keep one's home amidst lack of choices and material resources.

The city for who?

It was 13:30, and we were twelve people sitting at the Social Service office at L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. It has been more than four hours since we met at Pamela's door to stop her eviction, unfortunately unsuccessfully. We were tired, sad, angry. Mundane conversations were going on around, it felt a silly attempt towards forgetting momentarily what was happening. This was until the social worker called Pamela, to tell her that she had nothing to offer, no alternative after the eviction. The screams and chants started almost instantly. Together with Lorena we moved to the

front to try to convince the social worker to fight for something “she has two small kids”, “she cannot miss work”, “she has nowhere to go”, “you have an obligation to give an alternative”. After another hour and violently expelling us from the office, they gave her three days at a shelter. Three days. Afterwards, it was the street.

Pamela has been going to the PAH for almost two months at the time, she had a case of eviction due to not paying rent for three months amidst her pregnancy and her partner losing his documentation and his job. Her first eviction was stopped at the beginning of April and rescheduled three weeks after. During those two months, I witness how she tried tirelessly to find another apartment. Missed assemblies, missed work, and often expressed to me the struggles of working, mothering, and finding a housing alternative. *“I don’t have time.” “No one would rent us” [notes from fieldwork]*. In another conversation, she explained to me how she even went to Torrasa, another city near Barcelona, she did not want to rent that far, but there was nothing.

The case of Pamela illustrates how the absence of a home is not confined to the moment of arrival but can persist even after more than a decade in Barcelona. Her story reveals the often invisibilized forms of homelessness experienced by migrant women and their children after eviction, particularly when they lack access to legitimate rental contracts (Villa-Rodríguez, 2023). This invisibility stems from not ending up on the street but from relying on temporary shelter with family or friends (Villa-Rodríguez, 2023). Pamela explained that her short-term work contract and the widespread refusal to accept children in rental housing were the main barriers she faced. Similar situations surfaced in assemblies, where I witnessed three families turn to the PAH after eviction, having found no alternatives and unable to secure a rental. One of these was a single migrant mother with three children who explained that it was the CUESB (Barcelona’s Social Urgencies and Emergencies Office) that advised her to seek help at the PAH. As long-term activists remarked during the assembly, this was not an isolated case: municipal institutions often refer families to the PAH, implicitly recognizing that squatting is one of the few immediate solutions available.

The impossibility to rent is always present when at the PAH, most women facing eviction sooner or later looked for alternatives, to avoid going through the traumatizing event of facing an eviction. Nevertheless, most women expressed the lack of options and alternatives. Participants often described the places where they lived not as chosen, but as imposed by the unaffordable rents, discriminatory housing markets, and decisions made by partners or family members. To be and feel territorialized is examined in light of who and what made the conditions of security and contentment possible and who and what are the obstacles, both to access and to keep one’s home. Multiple intersectional struggles accessing housing were brought up in the interviews that reflect on migrant women’s territorialization through ability to secure and control how and where to live. As Manuela explains, documentation and access to a job becomes a clear and main obstacle to access stable housing:

“We couldn’t rent anything because we didn’t have any documentation. So, what we did was rent a room, one room at a time... Later, you get a job and everything, but when you already have your

documentation, your NIE, or whatever. But at first, it's harder to find someone to do the documentation for you.”

The increasing housing struggle, led to migrants facing issues accessing renting contracts even after having documents, as was the case with Pamela. Due to the increase in prices and requirements, migrant women who have been in Barcelona for longer, have seen and experienced how their access to certain areas of the city has become more and more restricted for them. In the case of Marina, she was living in Poblenou, Barcelona during the Olympic Games that gave a substantial investment in 1992 (Charnock, et al. 2014). She saw the rent prices increase until purchasing a home with a mortgage was even more financially reasonable, but only in L'Hospitalet. Similarly for Manuela, she explains how the areas she could afford shrunk significantly:

“At that time (*almost twenty years ago*), I rented in good areas of Barcelona, because we could afford it. I lived in San Pau Hospital, I lived in Virrey Amat, I lived in areas that would be impossible, unthinkable to rent now... I lived in good areas, but then he -her expartner- said the apartments here are much more expensive, we have to go to a working-class neighborhood, to Hospitalet”

Even before facing eviction, participants had already experienced processes of deterritorialization within Barcelona, from neighborhoods they liked and hoped to remain in. In Figure 5, we can see the areas where Manuela and Marina used to live but, as they stated, are no longer accessible to them. Both of them, together with Sol, expressed that rising prices and the need to move to more affordable areas—often based on their partner's decision—pushed them to relocate to L'Hospitalet.

“I didn't want to leave Poblenou. I'd rather live here in a hut, that in a spectacular palace somewhere else.... But one day he -his ex-husband- came with the surprise that he bought the apartment -in L'Hospitalet-.”

Cuerpo-Territorio: Displacement and reterritorializing

These three stories share important aspects beyond the context of displacement: the three of them have been living in Barcelona for more than 20 years, they accessed a mortgage with a partner from whom they separated, and today they are in risk of eviction or have already faced it due to unpayment of mortgage or the social rent¹. The three of them also shared similar emotions when I asked how they felt in the neighborhoods:

“I don't love it. But if I have to stay for the sake of the house, then I'll stay. I have no choice, as my colleague says, I have no other choice. The point is to have a home to live in and a place to spring from, at least a roof over your head. One way or another, we'll get it. Yes, we've lost our homes. The bank hasn't lost it; the bank has taken all the possibilities we've had for strength, work, life, well-being, and on top of that, our homes. What can we do now?” Sol said.

This statement summarized very well multiple dynamics that were discussed during the cuerpo-territorio workshop that characterized how migrant women facing eviction relate and feel with their

1. As mentioned earlier, social rent was introduced for households affected by mortgage foreclosures during the collapse of the real estate bubble thanks to La PAH. The scheme allowed families to return their property to the banks while remaining in the home under a social rent contract set at 30% of the household income or less. In some cases, individuals successfully negotiated the cancellation of their debt, while others continue to carry part of it to this day.

territories; first, that their neighborhood was not highly relevant in terms of their displacement, that of the acknowledgment of a group conflict or struggle that created a new “we”, and that the home was portrayed as the main material but also an emotional resource to maintain.

Regarding the first point, participants described their relationship with the neighborhood in more detail during the workshop and follow-up interviews. Many expressed difficulties in feeling part of their neighborhood. As Julia put it, “I can’t be part of a place if they want to kick me out.” Others described their neighborhoods as unsafe and rapidly changing, and most of the stickers used represented evictions executed or to be executed (Figure 5), claiming that many neighbors have already been displaced, and spoke of a constant fear of facing an *illegal desalojo*: violent extrajudicial evictions carried out by groups of men who enter a home by force without judicial order. Such practices were reported as increasingly common in L’Hospitalet, and one participant, Natalia, had personally experienced it.

As picture 12 and 13 shows, this participant describes her housing mobility in terms of property, where she was able to rent or purchase. While also mostly showcasing negative aspects of the neighborhood, public spaces in bad state, evictions, and empty buildings. Despite this, some participants mentioned that they had grown “used to living in L’Hospitalet,” underlining a certain familiarity with their neighborhoods and its transformations. Yet, territory was often conceived in a less strictly geographical sense. When mapping networks and spaces of care or comfort, many of them asked to locate them outside their municipality. Similarly, when asked collectively about the places they inhabit in L’Hospitalet—their likes, dislikes, and attachments—participants often highlighted spaces of community and support within housing rights groups. These were consistently described as places “not to be alone” or even as “family.” As Silvana explained regarding a fellow compah, “If I had another life, I do not think it would be enough time to thank X, for the help, understanding, patience. I am enormously thankful.” Similarly, Ines, speaking of the Pomezia space where *Les Juntas* meet, described it as her “second home,” adding that “even when I did not have a place to wash my clothes, I would go there.”

This leads to the second point addressed by Sol, the creation of a new “we” that is that of affected communities by housing struggles. A conversation I had with a fellow activist after an assembly captured this. While sharing a meal, he told me: “*This is my family*,” referring to other activists at the table. “*I have a brother from Ecuador here, but I barely see him. That’s why this is my family.*”

This casual remark echoes that main actors in their processes of territorialization are not -mainly- neighborhoods or even real family as such, but networks of solidarity built through housing struggles. Housing struggles enable an opportunity to reterritorialize through the networking, relationships that are family-like, and solidarity. While feelings regarding the territory were often even conflicted, the one shared feeling beyond protecting one home, is not feeling alone in this struggle, gaining strength and feeling powerful, as it was repeated multiple times in assemblies at *Les Juntas* “together we can, alone we cannot”.

Through these chosen families, migrant women reclaim a sense of security in hostile urban contexts, leading to both a symbolic and political *territorialization* that is above all, affective, and



Picture 12: One participant shows where she lives and the struggles and feelings around the neighborhood. Showing dislike for public spaces (yellow sticker), the displacement of a friend (red sticker), and abandoned buildings (the house sticker)



Picture 13: reads "I came to Florida because it did not work out in the center of Barcelona. I rented in La Florida, then to Torrasa for the Mortgage, and lastly San Josep for my Social Rent."

challenges the exclusionary spatial and legal logics of municipalities and of states. When facing invisible and strong forces that are taking their “strength and lives” they find in this unity and community the strength to feel that they do can stay and belong. Because the label “migrant” is experienced as overly broad within very diverse groups, activists often choose more intimate and relational terms such as “family,” “home,” or even “piña” (pineapple, meaning tightly bound together) to articulate their unity (Adami, 2025). These formations illustrate how migrant women generate alternative geographies of belonging—grounded in collective care, political identification, and the reterritorialization of life through shared struggle.

This notion of “we” and the unity of this community is strengthened by standing against a shared “enemy”: the banks and vulture funds responsible not only for the loss of homes purchased through mortgages but also for precarious rents and squatting. During a very violent eviction, where the affected individual—a migrant with severe disabilities—was dragged by his feet while crying and screaming, Sol and I stood across the narrow street, filming the eviction to have proof in case of police abuse. With watery eyes, she said to me: “a whole life, a whole life working to pay our homes, only to be dragged out like animals by the police. The banks, the funds, they have taken everything from us.”

This moment showcases eviction not only as an instrument of financial dispossession but also as a bordering practice. As Baker (2020) argues, evictions are not exceptional ruptures but infrastructural acts of governance that instill a “disposition towards displacement,” disciplining those deemed less deserving of urban space. These dynamics illustrate how borders enter the

realm of the home: through policing, financial foreclosure, and market exclusion shaped by racialized profiling (Amoore, 2006).

From this perspective, eviction embodies what Fields and Raymond (in Dawson, 2020) describe as the racial project of financial capitalism, in which investment actors profit from dispossession in racialized neighborhoods. Roy's concept of "foundational dispossession"—in which home is experienced as "a lived experience of loss"—highlights how financial violence is inseparable from racial violence. Evictions thus materialize the hierarchies of capital accumulation through the debasement of racialized, working-class, and disabled populations, transforming them into disposable subjects of urban restructuring.

This aligns with Van Baar's (2017) notion of *evictability*, which extends De Genova's concept of deportability to urban housing. Evictability denotes how racialized migrants—and increasingly other precarious residents—are rendered legally and physically removable from spaces of shelter regardless of citizenship. In this sense, my fieldwork across 32 eviction processes revealed eviction as both material violence and symbolic bordering. Putting our bodies against police lines was not only an act of solidarity but also a confrontation with the hierarchies of finance and state violence that regulate who is allowed to remain. Eviction becomes a frontier where speculative capital and racialized dispossession meet, reproducing uneven territorial belonging in the city.

Protecting and maintaining housing emerged as the shared priority. While the lack of viable alternatives in the housing market limited both their capacity and desire to relocate, Sol's quote also highlights the emotional implications of the home as a resource for migrants and for their territorialization. This resonates with Barañano's (2021) framing of *espacio de arraigo* as both material and symbolic: home-making is not only about securing a physical dwelling but also about anchoring imaginaries, affective ties, and symbolic meanings that sustain migrants amidst mobility and displacement. In this sense, the women's attachment to their homes reflects what Brah (1996) describes as *diaspora space*, where home is shaped at the intersection of local everyday struggles—such as eviction threats or informal renting—and broader transnational connections. While structural exclusion restricts their ability to choose where to live, their affective investment in maintaining a home underscores how territorialization extends beyond material shelter into the symbolic realm of belonging or emplacement (Roy, 2017).

These stories reveal a complex process of territorialization, in which the ability to settle, claim space, and feel rooted was constantly challenged. For migrant women, access to the territory is limited due to increasing housing prices, conditions that often already displaced them. Hence, the conditions of security and contentment possible are highly shaped by their documentation, access to jobs, to rent, family, and partners' support. The struggles to access or settle in one neighborhood, lead to a territorialization that centers the home as a space of *arraigo*, while finding key social and everyday networks and chosen families outside their neighborhoods, and often through their same housing struggles. These intersectional struggles to access and remain in their houses thus illuminate how migrant women's relationships to territory are forged through both structural constraint and everyday resistance.

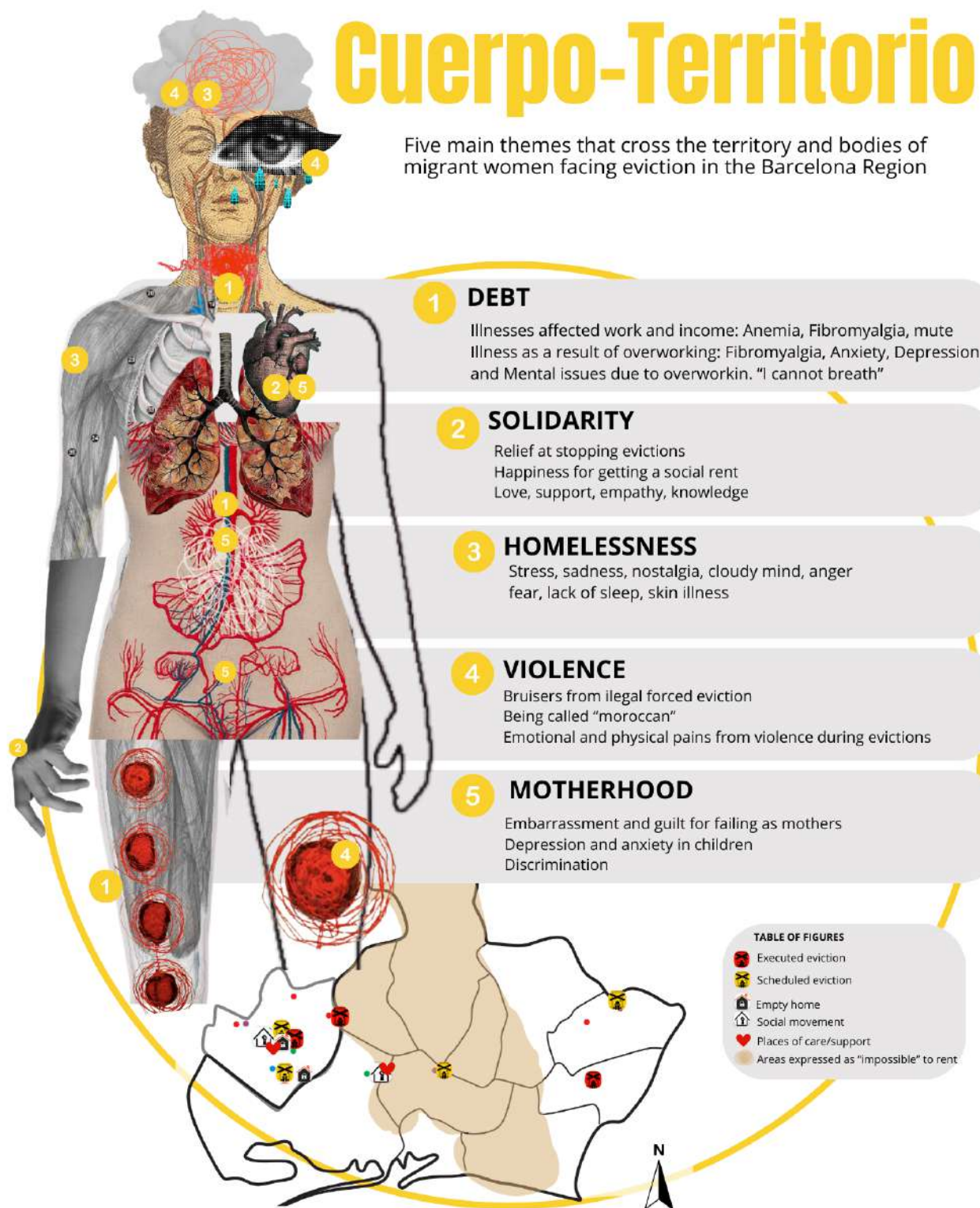


Figure 5: Summary of findings from the Feminist Social Cartography. Creation of the author

7. EMBODIED VIOLENCE: MIGRANT WOMEN, EVICTIONS, AND THE TERRITORIALIZATION OF HOUSING VIOLENCE

Following the findings from the social feminist cartography (figure 5), this chapter explores how evictions affect migrant women in Barcelona at the level of the body and in continuous conversation with the territory. That includes physical, emotional, and psychological violence and disruption. Building on feminist geopolitics and decolonial feminist theory, I examine how housing injustice is not only experienced at the urban or structural level but also at the most intimate scale of the body. As diverse authors working with body-territory expressed, the body cannot be treated as neutral and universal, since it presents markers of race, sexuality, gender, age, and class (Haesbaert, 2020; Silva y Ornat 2016). For many migrant women, the struggle to access or retain housing is shaped by a colonial-formed system of oppression that situates them in a position of vulnerability due to a combination of gendered, racialized, and legal aspects. These struggles are not incidental but are part of broader processes of bordering and exclusion that treat their bodies as sites of control, stress, and endurance.

7.1. Property Regimes and Racial Capitalism

To understand the embodied effects of housing financialization, it is critical to position race within its inextricable relationship to capitalism, recognizing contemporary financialization as containing and reproducing racial logics and violence (Fields & Lee, 2021). This requires examining the property relations of migrant and racialized communities, and how migrant bodies are perceived, targeted, and rendered vulnerable by the housing market due to race. In this subchapter, I discuss how colonial hierarchies of migration and racism are maintained within the housing market to produce structural inequalities that result in processes of dispossession and thus deterritorialization, grounded in ethnocentric and racialized logics. By exploring the different relations to property -mortgage, renting, and squatting- I reflect on how financialization and the housing market evolved itself to produce and maintain the same “winners and losers”.

Property Regimes Working upon Bodies

Migration often entails limited access to information, legal protections, and social networks. These conditions place migrants in a structurally disadvantaged position when confronted with real estate speculation and the violence of financialized housing. Such position of vulnerability is further intensified for racialized migrants. Being racialized—or perceived as such—is a particularly complex issue in the case of Latin Americans in Spain. Based on participants’ descriptions of discrimination and their own perceptions of whiteness, I identify as racialized all but one Latin American participant, whose parents were Spanish, arrived with documentation, and also identified as white. The rest of participants reported situations of direct discrimination linked to their ethnicity, accent, documentation status, appearance, or even their name (Safuta, 2018).

What these participants today share in common, besides differences in property regimes and ethnicities, is their eviction by banks and vulture funds. As stated by Baker, “*the process of eviction*

is one in which constant and continual work is being done to produce dispositions in the bodies of those facing eviction, and to manage the movement of people from space. Bureaucrats, officials and enforcement workers all work upon the bodies of the evicted to both justify and create a disposition towards displacement (Baker, 2020; 3).” These dynamics reveal a mode of urban governance that privileges real estate interests while enabling a system of racial capitalism that profits from the displacement and exploitation of migrant populations. Simultaneously, these are passed down within migrant and affected populations to define and justify one's own positionality in respect to broader housing struggles within this hierarchy of racism. In an interview Ramón, an activist at the PAH for thirteen years, said:

“Migration is enormous, as is the number of migrants, which are the three main factors that characterize it -the affected collective at the PAH-. Economic precariousness, gender issues, and the issues of migrants or racialized people... Over the years, what has perhaps changed the most is the migratory profile, where at first there was a high number of people, especially from Ecuador, and that profile continues to play a significant role. There has also been an increase in profiles in the assembly, especially those coming from Morocco.”

Ramón noted—like many of his compañeros—that while the presence of migrant populations in housing struggles is not new, it has evolved significantly over time. This change in demography is also accompanied by a change in the reasons for eviction, going from mostly mortgages at the beginning of the PAH, to more complex situations of vulnerability that involve squatting and nonpayment of rents [interview with Mas de Xaxàs Faus and Riaño, June 2025]. As several researchers have pointed out (Delclós, Suarez, 2014; Gonick, 2021; DESC, 2025), migrant communities are disproportionately affected by evictions due to a combination of discriminatory lending practices, institutional neglect, and discriminatory practices.

For those paying mortgage, Suarez details that banks often bypassed bureaucratic and legal safeguards to issue subprime mortgages, including to undocumented migrants (2012; 2014). As Manuel recalled, in 2007, securing a mortgage was easy, despite being laden with hidden abuses. Like many other migrants, he struggled to find the two guarantors required for the loan. Faced with this obstacle, he explained to the banker his difficulty, who then left the room and entered the waiting area offering €1,000 to the first two people willing to sign as guarantors. Similar stories emerged from other participants, who described chains of informal agreements in which individuals became guarantors for one another's loans, often without fully understanding the risks involved.

The story of Manuel resembles that of Sol, Marina, Luciana, and Manuela, who all signed abusive mortgages just before the economic crisis and the explosion of the real estate bubble, and often faced an increase that doubled the initial payments in the case of Sol, her initial mortgage of 600 euros increased to 1800 euros. None of the participants who had mortgages still own their homes today: they are either squatting or living under a social rent. Two of them have already been evicted, the rest remain at risk of eviction due to banks or vulture funds refusing to renew their social rent contracts.

Witnessing Pamela's eviction process from beginning to end further revealed how individuals who had previously rented turned to squatting when faced with the prospect of homelessness. After two months searching unsuccessfully for an apartment, and already on the street with her children due to the lack of alternatives offered by social services, Pamela saw squatting as the only way to avoid sleeping outside. These experiences underscore how the rental market itself is systematically closing off viable options for migrant families, pushing them into increasingly precarious forms of housing. As Sofia stated:

"It's horrible, the desperation, anxiety, even stress, helplessness, when I go to visit the apartments you say, okay, I'll send you the documentation. When you receive the response, it's negative, they say that they have already chosen another person and I say, what son of a bitch? You know? I mean, if I've already told you that I'm a mother and that I have children, why are you making me send my information? If you already know what my profile is like and that the owner won't like it, because before showing an apartment, they already know the profile they are looking for, so put it there say, look, you know what? The owner is looking for a single couple or the owner is looking for civil servants or the owner is looking for, well, that the payroll shows that you earn this much."

Sofia's quote illustrates the emotionally exhausting and frustrating process of searching for housing, marked by repeated rejections, scams, and false promises. Her current squatting apartment was rented through what seemed a formal arrangement, but the day she wanted to register at the municipality with her new address, she found out it was a local with no license for residency and currently squatted. Therefore she also expressed the fear of similar experiences repeating themselves. During the six months of ethnographic fieldwork, she has tirelessly sought an apartment to rent, unsuccessfully. Her testimony sheds light on the kinds of "ideal tenants" often sought by landlords and real estate agents—typically young couples, preferably civil servants, which often serves as a coded reference for Spanish nationals without children or those perceived as culturally closer to them. The struggle to secure housing, therefore, is not only about having the financial means to pay rent but becomes entangled with personal identity and racial profiling. Is here when race becomes a central discussion, as expressed by Florencia:

"The way they treat a Bolivian with a typical appearance isn't the same as the way they treat a white Uruguayan -said while referring to me-. There's a lot of racism in that regard here, yes. Is racial. The way you look, the way they treat you." Said Florencia

Similar experiences were shared by racialized participants, particularly those from Morocco or who arrived without documentation. As Ali explained in his interview, only his name was a burden: *"When I called to look for a flat, they would say 'yes, yes, we'll call you back,' but they never did. And then when you call again, they say it's already rented. But if you call and say your name"—referring to mine—"and you're fine, they say 'yes, we'll rent it to you.'"* These narratives reveal the operation of racialized filtering practices within the housing market, where names, accents, and perceived origins function as mechanisms of exclusion—what Yuval-Davis et al. conceptualize as *everyday bordering* (2019). For both Ali and Abdul, this exclusion eventually led to squatting: in Ali's case, after having to leave a state-supported housing facility following his time in a center for unaccompanied minors; in Abdul's case, after getting a stomach hernia and surgery his landlord increased their rent from 380 to almost 800 euros. Their trajectories exemplify how structural

racism and racialized market logics converge to produce housing dispossession (Roy, 2017) and spatial banishment (Kern, 2020), reinforcing a system in which certain bodies are continuously loosing and are rendered permanently displaceable and outside of the “legitimate” housing order.

The eviction cases of Lucía, Sofía, and Julia were also due to squatting, and strength this more recent trajectory of housing precarity among migrants who either arrived in the last five years or came earlier with their families and became emancipated in the last six years. In all these cases, squatting emerged as the last, and sometimes only, option. As Lucía explained, *“We never thought it was where we were going to stay permanently, but since we couldn't find anything, that was the only option.”*

Because the stories of affected individuals reflect different property relations, they can at first seem disconnected—a tension that long-term activists at the PAH often identified when navigating diverse legal frameworks. Yet a clear common thread emerges that goes beyond the immediate experience of eviction: the logic of profit accumulation in favor of banks and vulture funds, structured through racial and ethnic hierarchies, which displaces migrant populations into increasingly precarious housing in peripheral areas. The financialization of housing creatively adapts to changing environments, shifting from mortgages to renting as the main property relations through which value is extracted from the working class, keeping winners and losers in the same place (Fields & Raymond, 2021). Is through racial capitalism that financialization develops new mechanisms of urban governance over migrants—ranging from the proliferation of precarious mortgages issued just before the financial crisis, to abusive rental contracts, and, today, the near impossibility of accessing formal housing (Kreichauf, 2024). These dynamics ultimately push many into informal arrangements such as squatting.

Property Regimes as Social Relations

Understanding racial capitalism in relation to financialization is key to analyzing the processes of de- and re-territorialization experienced by migrant women in Barcelona. As Haesbaert (2010) emphasizes, de- and re-territorialization occur in a continuum shaped by power relations, where those with the authority to transform territories simultaneously reshape the perceptions, practices, and lives of their inhabitants. Hence, this exercise of control over territories, is not only a means to create and maintain order, but also a strategy for shaping the spatial and social contexts through which people experience and give meaning to the world (Sack, 1986). From this perspective, territory is never singular but always plural and contested, constituted through domination and appropriation, and enacted by multiple actors—including the state, financial institutions, corporations, and social movements. Hence, racial capitalism does not only execute violence over bodies, but also shifts their the symbolic meaning of them and the way inhabitants give meaning to the world.

Property relations are central not only to differentiating struggles but also to shaping the interrelations among affected communities. While it is true that what unites this collective is the shared experience of facing eviction, the relationships between someone who once had a

mortgage and someone who is squatting are far from simple, and they often become highly racialized. As Marina, who is from Algeria, expressed:

My street is beautiful, but it's also deteriorating. There are squatters, there are Arab people, there weren't any Arabs before, there are some Arabs there now. They live together. There are Romani people, there are gypsies. There are squatters, the street is small, but it's not the same as it was 20 years ago. Things are changing. Sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse.

This quote encapsulates the role of property within complex negotiations of identity and legitimacy, that emerge in eviction cases. Marina was facing an open eviction for squatting—not because she had unlawfully entered a property, but because she had remained in the home where she previously held a mortgage, staying beyond the period tolerated by the bank and legal system. During the eviction process, at her doorstep, the court representative bluntly asked, “¿Eres tú la ocupante?”—a term that, in Spanish, is used both to denote that one occupies -uses- a place and a social synonym for *okupa* (squatter). Marina reacted immediately and with anger: “I am not a squatter—I bought this home.” Almost instantly, a neighbor intervened, condemning the injustice of the eviction to the court representative: “You should be ashamed! There are two -sudamericanos- squatters who just squatted a building three houses away, and here you are evicting a neighbor from her own home!”.

Marina’s case also illustrates how legitimacy and the right to stay are often constructed relationally, through processes of comparison shaped by racial, ethnic, and property hierarchies. In moments of crisis, such as evictions, residents mobilize these categories to position themselves more or less favorably within dominant moral and legal frameworks. Racialized and nationalized identities become tools through which people contest or defend their belonging in relation to their property. As expressed in Marina’s case, some of these clashes are generational, between longer standing neighbors and those who just arrived in more precarious conditions. As expressed by Palomera, migrant neighbors often resort to similar mechanisms of ‘lateral distancing’ (Bourdieu, 1999), “through which they can transfer the stigma to other people in the vicinity, either the next-door neighbor or the youngsters in the nearest square (2014)”. In Marina’s case, this involved distancing herself from the figure of the “squatter” by emphasizing her status as a homeowner and asserting her Algerian identity in contrast to Moroccan neighbors, who she claimed were widely associated with squatting in the area.

This is not a unique case but constantly brought up with people from different ethnicities. One day, before interviewing one Moroccan participant, I was sitting on a couch, when one Spanish Romani neighbor was talking to me, stating that he is against all evictions, “but sometimes Moroccans just do not want to pay”. Similarly, one participant affected by mortgage -who I prefer to preserve the identity- expressed that once, there was a couple who squatted an apartment in her building, and she immediately called the police. This hierarchization of relationships can go even further, with racialized neighbors reproducing the same violence of eviction. The case of Natalia, from Colombia, exemplifies this through an unlawful eviction. She was able to get a social rent from squatting, which is incredible hard, but after almost fifteen years living there, without missing one rent payment, her bank sold the property and the new owner neglected to renovate her contract.

Following months of harassment, four neighbors, waited for her son to not be in Barcelona and evicted her illegally, also stealing her belongings. She expressed the responsible were “negros” and “moros”, that knew her for years.

Racial capitalism, through the complexity of property relations, has led to an hierarchization of social relationships between racialized neighbors that lead to distancing one another to justify their position in terms of what is more “moral” or “legitimate” within hierarchies of race and property. In contexts of scarcity, migrants often reproduce the very logics of violence they endure, turning against each other through the same practices of exclusion embedded in the housing market (Palomera; 2014). These dynamics exemplify how processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization unfold: eviction and displacement lead to deterritorialization processes, but new precarious territorialities are forged through contestation, negotiation, and insurgency practices. In this sense, the territorialization of migrant life in Barcelona is highly shaped by the power relations of racial capitalism, that shape property regimes and everyday practices of survival and resistance often leading to a distancing and even reproducing hierarchies of racial power within migrant communities.

7.2. Gender Implications of Evictions

To better account for the ongoing dynamics of dispossession within the housing market, gender must be situated within the structures of racial capitalism (Haley, 2018; Sweeney, 2020). Historically, women have enabled capitalism to thrive through the invisibilized labor of care work—a reality reflected in the lives of evicted migrant women, many of whom are care workers and caregivers (Fraser, 2016). But also, through the power employed over their bodies, both to enhance reproductivity or minimize it (Sweeney, 2020). Hence this subchapter examines the gendered implications of evictions, focusing on how women’s experiences within the housing market reshape their relationship to territorialization and to embodied processes of dispossession. It pays particular attention to how the female body is perceived, regulated, and affected by dispossessive economies, and how these impacts are lived and embodied daily. Drawing on participants’ narratives during the cuerpo-territorio workshop, the analysis explores motherhood and care through the following key themes that emerged; feelings of guilt, responsibility, and embarrassment; solidarity; the burden of debt; and experiences of gender-based violence. These themes illuminate the ways in which gender -rooted in the patriarchal notions of racial capitalism- plays a specific role in in shaping territorialization processes while also women’s possibilities to be safe, and have power over their bodies.

The “Risks” to Property

Being a mother is constantly shaping the relationship of women to property and the home. For many, it was a reason to migrate, to indebt, to try to purchase a home and bring their children. It is the reason why most express they cannot find a home to rent today, or specific embodiments of evictions that relate to the guilt of failing and passing down struggles to her children.

As I explained previously in chapter 6, being a mother is for many of my respondents one of the motivations to migrate. Similarly, I discussed how many migrant women felt that through care-related work they could provide the care they were not providing to their children left back home. Motherhood also shapes their relation to property, as with the decision to purchase a home. Sol expressed that she got a mortgage because she wanted to bring her children with her, and for reunification owning a home was an advantage and it also seemed economically beneficial. The work of Suarez, expresses this relation with property through mortgage more in depth, and states how financial institutions capitalized these feelings of caregiving and motherhood for profit, and later, failed to deliver on their promise of upward social mobility and stability (2020).

Regardless of their property relation, all the women share in common an ongoing or already executed eviction. It is due to evictions, that many of the participants access the renting market as the only path towards securing a roof, just to face the barriers of it. A conversation I had with a Catalan landlord, a friend of a friend, revealed how bodies are perceived and evaluated within the rental system. He was renting a three-bedroom apartment in Tarragona, a nearby city, and explained how most applications were coming from migrant families and single mothers. As he put it: *“I need to tell them, I am very sorry, but I will not rent to you. If later you cannot pay rent, you are vulnerable and can stay in my home for years without paying.”* While this is not accurate in legal terms, it draws on a distorted reading of the housing law 24/2015 and 12/2023, which grants certain protections to families in situations of vulnerability. In principle, the law allows eligible households to receive rental assistance and, if their economic hardship stems from the COVID-19 pandemic, to pay a “social rent” equivalent to 30% of their income or less. In practice, however, approval rates are extremely low, and during the six months of data collection I only saw one approval of this law. Yet the fear of a tenant—often imagined as a vulnerable single mother—remaining in the property for years without paying sustains this exclusionary narrative.

The quantitative report of Delgado and Campuzano showcases that there is a profile of women that squatts regardless of nationality, and when looking at this population in particular 56.2% are over 45 years of age and the same percentage are single-parent mothers with children, while 12.5% are couples with children (2024). It comes then with no surprise that for Sofia, is being a mother and living alone with her children the one reason for not finding an apartment anywhere;

The obstacle is telling them you're a mother with children. It's not necessary to say you have three children because they'll have a fit. When you say you earn so much money, that there's only one salary, which of course doesn't reach a thousand, not even with a salary borrowed from a family acquaintance, and has six years of working there.”

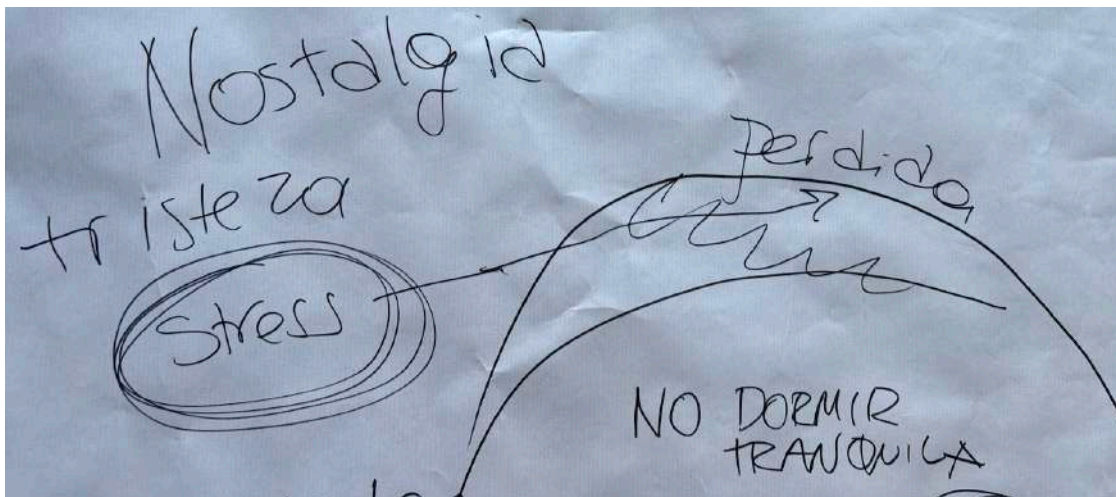
Her experience reflects how gendered and racialized perceptions of vulnerability operate as a form of bordering within the housing market (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019; Palomera, 2014), shaping her access to live in the city. As Desmond argues, racialized single migrant mothers are often positioned not simply as tenants, but as potential “risks” to property; their surnames, pregnancy, or motherhood become read as indicators of future non-payment, dependency, or permanence (2014). This form of symbolic bordering operates alongside economic exclusion, restricting access to territory and shaping the embodied experience of dispossession. For Pamela, as many other at

the PAH, the desperation of her homelessness with children led her to hide the fact that she had children to access a renting contract, but were also asked to pay almost two thousand euros by the real state officers who was “helping” them through that process.

In Sofia’s case, motherhood is not a neutral fact but a marker mobilized by landlords and real estate agents to justify displacement, profoundly affecting her processes of territorialization. Since arriving in Barcelona, she has moved at least twelve times and faced three evictions. Similar trajectories appear in the experiences of Julia, evicted with a two-month-old baby, and Pamela, evicted with two four-year-old daughters—none of them provided with an alternative housing solution. During my fieldwork, all families evicted in L’Hospitalet de Llobregat were generally denied access to housing alternatives; at best, they were offered a temporary shelter for just a few nights. Even when municipalities do provide alternatives, as in the case of Barcelona, migration status becomes a decisive factor: undocumented families are excluded from public housing provisions and other forms of assistance. These practices illustrate how bordering processes affect not only women but also their children, generating cases of child poverty and, in some instances, homelessness.

Embodied Evictions

The continuous struggles to access and maintain the home do not only imply a territorial dimension of mobility, but also an embodiment of evictions through pains, feelings, and emotions. For Pamela, the weeks she was without a home felt like ages. She described the burden of being homeless while also being a mother and having to continue working during the workshop. She shared the fear of losing her job on top of everything else she was experiencing, as her capacity to keep working felt increasingly threatened. In picture 14, we see her reflection on her body, where she focused on an overwhelming sensation of dizziness, disorientation, and feeling lost. While sharing this in the group round, she also recounted an experience from the previous day:

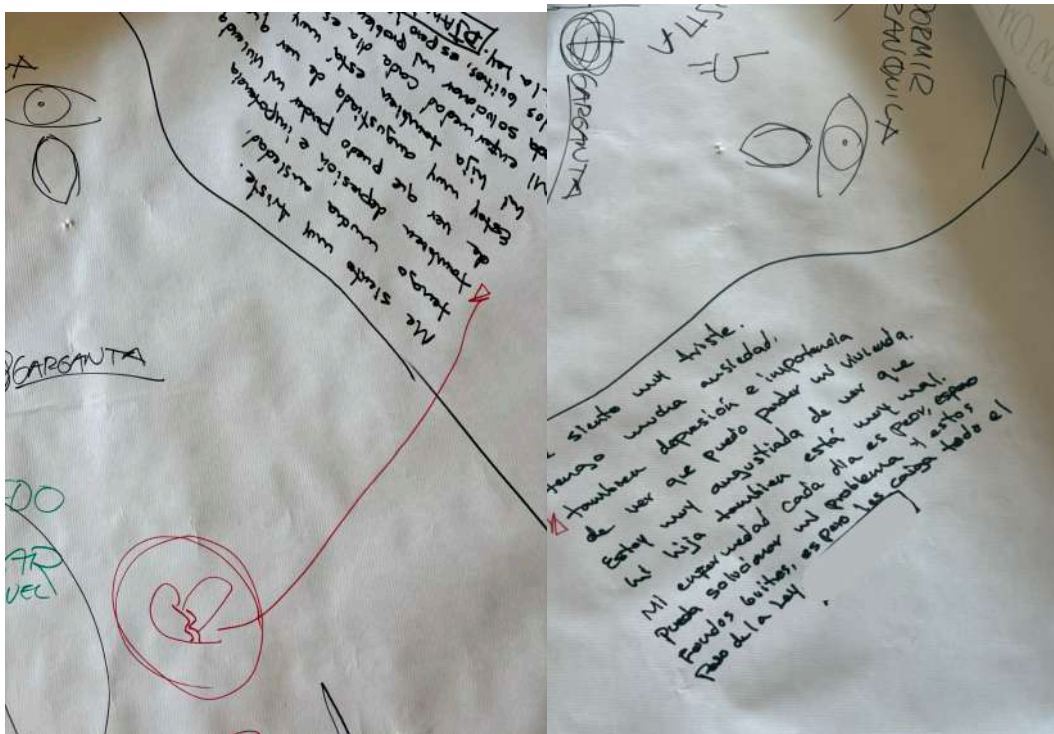


Picture 14. At the top of the head Pamela drew a doodle and wrote “Lost”, “Stressed”, “Nostalgia”

“Full of nostalgia, sadness... I’m stressed. Yesterday I didn’t know where I was, I had to go to the social worker’s office and I didn’t know how to get there. Sometimes I don’t know where I am. Yeah,

like, maybe, like in the mind, right? Yeah, mind blank. I was advised by the social worker to ask for a leave, because I'm in normal work. And of course, I'm afraid of losing my job."

Pamela faced homelessness before, when arriving to Barcelona, and claimed multiple times, that "now is different, because of the girls", there was a painful feeling related with making them go through this. Motherhood is not only seen and acted upon from the outside but is also lived and embodied throughout feelings of fear and anxiety through the entire eviction process. During the *cuerpo-territorio* workshops, many participants reflected that the emotions, pains, and stresses they carried were inseparable from those of their children. They spoke of "passing down" anxiety, depression, and uncertainty, and of witnessing the impacts on their children's schooling, social relationships, and overall well-being. As seen in pictures 15 and 16, Marina expressed her worries about her children state due to her housing condition.



Picture 15 and 16: Marina drew from the broken heart a script that reads "I feel very sad, and have anxiety, depression and impotence to see that I can lose my home. I am anguished to see how my daughter is also doing bad. My illness is worse everyday, I hope I can solve my problem and that vulture funds are legally responsible."

Similarly, this was reflected on the territory, participants emphasized that decisions about where to move—or whether to move at all—were shaped by their children's needs and attachments. While many stated they would, in principle, relocate anywhere, even to small towns outside Barcelona, it was often their children's process of territorialization—their rootedness in schools, friendships, and familiar spaces—that anchored them in the city or neighborhood. As Manuela, single mother, put it;

"I would go outside too, to live outside, in a town or whatever, you know, quieter, but my daughter does not like it, because my daughter is next door to the university, and they are kids who want to party, they want to have everything close by, besides my daughter, she does not know any other

house but this one, because she was born here, she is 18 years old, I have been here, imagine, 21 years, she does not know any other house, she does not know any other neighborhood than this one in the sense of living, right? She has all her friends, because she studied from P3 to high school in the same school and has the same friendships since P3, that is, this is her home.

In front of a market that is not open to families and even less, to mothers, women often result to sticking longer with their partners. Four out of fourteen participants shared that they had or are still living with ex-partners. Sofia, as it happens with Marina or Florencia, often stay in couple and even look for a rent with their ex-partners to try to secure one for their children. This experiences must be read through a feminist lens to understand the multiple violences that are in action. The one of not securing a house, a territory, and living or depending on your partner to be able to access one. The experiences of living with their partner during and post-eviction varies, while one participant saw it as an opportunity to find housing due to a good relation, all the rest expressed the daily conflicts that even continued post eviction. Marina, expressed the violence that is enacted and continued through this time, “my daughter always tells me to not let him treat me like that, but I prefer to ignore him”. Similarly, Florencia shares that “*Those months, that season, was horrible. ... I even recorded conversations and showed them to the social worker. I told her, look, listen. I needed to separate, and the social worker helped me a lot. When she found me a hotel, it was a room with separate rooms.*” Housing precarity for women becomes a clear threat to gender-base violence.

The relationship between housing insecurity and gender-based violence emerges not only during evictions but also as a catalyst for squatting. During my time at the PAH, I encountered at least three cases in which the path to eviction was rooted in experiences of gender-based violence. Julia’s story illustrates this entanglement. She fled her ex-partner after repeated episodes of abuse, eventually seeking help from his brother, who gave her access to the apartment where she was living with her baby. Julia’s housing trajectory had been marked by instability since adolescence, when she was abandoned by both parents. From that moment, she entered a cycle of renting and squatting that repeated itself through periods of job loss, irregular migration status, fleeing violence, and pregnancy. After her eviction, and without a salary, a social worker offered her a small stipend to rent a room in a shared apartment. For a single mother without stable employment and with a two-month-old child, this was almost impossible. Months of unsuccessful searching for alternatives ended with her decision to move back to Italy, where she had relatives from Venezuela.

Being a migrant woman in Barcelona entails a distinct set of challenges in navigating the housing market—challenges often intensified by motherhood and experiences of gender-based violence, which mark their bodies as either “wanted” or “unwanted” in the city. Motherhood becomes both exploited and penalized: used by banks and landlords to justify indebteding women through mortgages or doubling rental prices for only one room, and later mobilized as a reason to deny them rental alternatives. This capitalization on motherhood, reproduced even by small-scale real estate agents, often leaves squatting as the only viable option. At the same time, the housing market heightens exposure to intimate partner violence, while fleeing such violence deepens housing instability, hence creating a process of deterritorialization that is shaped by the symbolic

and embodied expectations of motherhood and the lack of security not only over their territories but also over their bodies.

My interviews with scholars such as Suárez and San Martín, who carried out fieldwork with the PAH between 2012 and 2015, they reflected that, demographically, the movement has changed little. While there is now greater diversity in migrants' backgrounds, it remains predominantly composed of migrant women. In both her research and our conversation, Suárez noted that feelings of embarrassment, guilt, and responsibility were common among participants. Conducting this research six years later—with women facing not only mortgage-related evictions but also displacement due to squatting processes and non-payment of rent—I find that these emotions persist. Many continue to describe a profound sense of having “failed” as mothers, a pain deeply entwined with the expectations placed on them through motherhood. As Silvana expresses:

I felt guilty because they were going to take my house away. Do you understand me? Because it was an effort I had made. And it wasn't only because I had worked so hard, no. But it was also about having screwed over my children. I have never been able to take my children to the movies. I have never been able to buy them, I don't know, a toy or something for Christmas because we had to get by. I gave my children very little. I made them food for a whole week and I had to take them out of the freezer because I had to work hard. And I had to leave the food ready for them, written for them to eat. Because I brought my children with me. My little daughter came when she was 13 to be 14 years old and my little boy when he was 9 years old. Of course.

From a *cuerpo-territorio* perspective (Haesbaert, 2020; de Campos & Silvia, 2020), these feelings, contextualized within a history of displacement and territorial exclusion, are not only psychological but also spatially and politically situated: their bodies—maternal, migrant, and racialized—become the “closest geography” where power relations are inscribed. Silvana, for example, decided to migrate in search of a better life as a single mother, later decided to take on a mortgage in the hope of securing a home for her children, to now face multiple illnesses for overworking. In this sense, both, care-work and the expectations of motherhood are co-produced through multiple processes of loss that involved an economic migration, a housing exclusion, and an eviction. This precarious multiterritoriality is rooted in hierarchies of race and gender that place migrant women in states of continuous loss—through indebtedness, lack of housing access, and socioeconomic precarity (Roy, 2013). Similarly, this intertwining of embodiment and dispossession demonstrates how gendered expectations operate as a form of territorial control, blurring the boundaries between bodies and territories, and shaping not only where women can live, but also how they inhabit, experience, and feel their own bodies.

Caring for oneself

As with the case of Silvana and Marina, an important dimension of how evictions manifest in the body is through their health consequences and the onset or worsening of disabilities. The relationship between health, housing precarity, and eviction has been extensively documented. Here, I highlight some of these realities to better understand another facet of the connection between the body and the territorialization processes experienced by migrant women in Barcelona.

Eight of the fourteen participants in this research reported having a mental health condition, a chronic illness, or a disability that they directly associated with their housing situation. The *Report on Residential Security* published by the Observatori DESC in 2023 shows that 82.7% of the women who sought support from the PAH that year were affected by mental health issues—sometimes at rates three or four times higher than those of the general population (Delgado & Campuzano, 2024). As Mas de Xaxàs Faus noted in an interview, the PAH identified and addressed this issue early on:

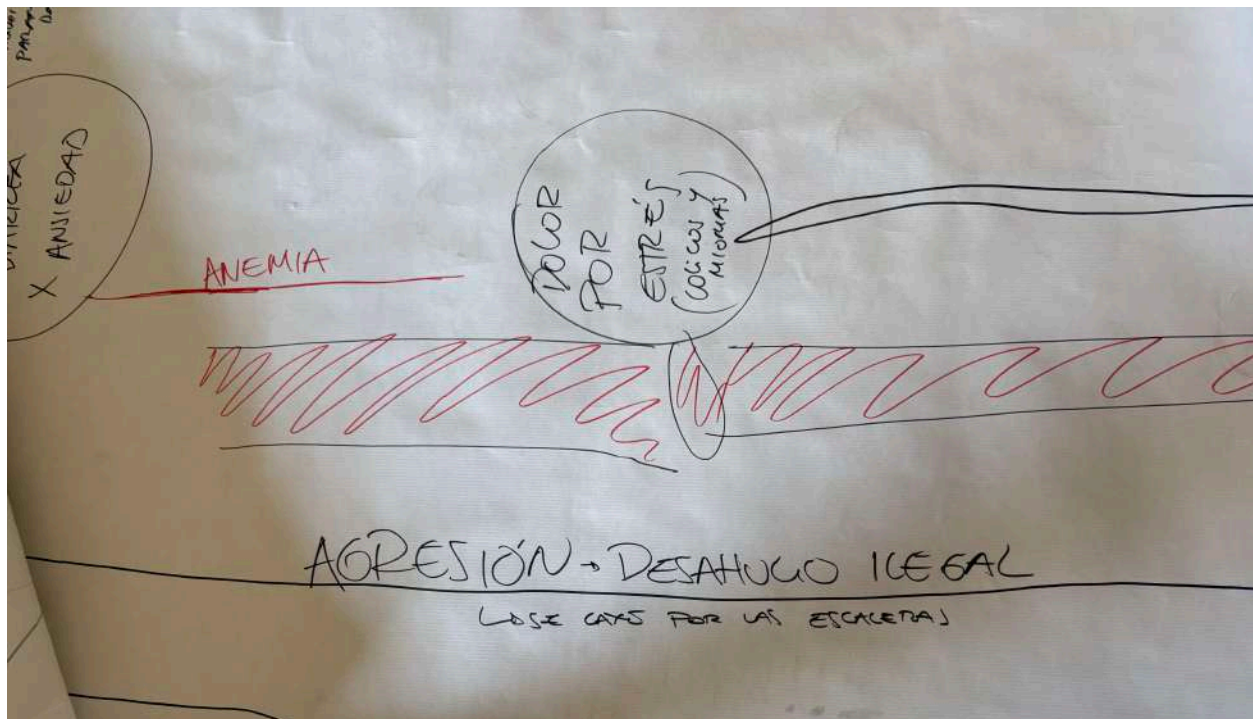
“We already had a mutual support space from the beginning, but in the first few years, we clearly saw that the whole mental health issue was closely related to the whole housing issue. And health issues, you've always had people whose health has caused them to lose their homes, and vice versa.”

Several cases illustrate the bidirectional link between housing and mental health. Julia, for example, had struggled with mental health issues since adolescence. At 17, she was abandoned first by her father and then by her mother. Soon after receiving an eviction notice for remaining in the apartment without paying rent, she attempted suicide. *“I saw myself in the street, it was hopeless”*. In her interview, she reflected on the constant fluctuations in her mental state, which worsened after experiencing gender-based violence and being forced to flee; *“I fell apart. I don't know, my life has kind of been since then like.... Semi-depression. I went back on medication for depression, until my son was born, he now gives me all my strength.”*

Other participants, including Sol, Marina, Florencia, and Silvana, suffered from fibromyalgia, which they connected to the experience of losing their homes, either because the illness limited their ability to work or because the stress and overworking to pay debts acted as a trigger. Picture 2 and 3 showcases the brief text written by Marina, that reflects on both a physical and a mental illness worsening due to the eviction. Meanwhile pictures 17 showcase some of the illnesses that the participants at the workshop had, that included throat surgeries, lost of voice, colic and fibroids, anemia, and fibromyalgia, showcased in the area of the bones of the legs, because it was were Sol, felt it stronger. This figures are also represented in Figure 5.

Silvana's case reflects the complexity of the interplay between mental and physical health due to their housing situation. After falling into mortgage debt, she worked up to three jobs and developed fibromyalgia, anxiety, and depression due to overwork and sustained distress: *“My illnesses not only influenced my home, but were born from there. In my helplessness of not being able to cope with our housing issue, it changed my life. It changed me. I became very sad, isolated. Very neglected, but yes, distant. I withdrew into myself.”* Similarly, Manuela described how the stress and depression she experienced led her to avoid leaving her home for two years: *“I was so bad. I would go to work, or to an eviction with the PAH, and I would come back immediately, I did not want to be anywhere else but at home”*.

The embodiment of evictions explains why most participants, when reflecting on territory, prioritized housing above neighborhood relations in Chapter Six. The mental and physical toll of eviction often confines them to the home, with strength to inhabit public and social spaces arising mainly when defending that home. If housing systems structure how people give and receive care (Fields,



Picture 17: At the upper section of the legs, participants draw their bones in red. Wrote in the puvial sector “Pain due to stress colic and fibroids”, and anemia

Power, & Card, 2023), then evictions represent a deterritorialization of care, disrupting the conditions that enable women to care for themselves, their homes, and their children. This deterritorialization of care is experienced territorially—through restricted access to places and resources—but also embodied through feelings and illnesses including guilt, anxiety, sadness, depression, and anemia. In this sense, eviction reconfigures relations not only with children and neighborhoods, but also with the self. Campos and Silva (2020) remind us that the body is the closest geography, and in the workshop it became clear that the politics of housing intersect with power across multiple scales: motherhood, race, sexuality, and, above all, care.

The body-territory framework thus allows us to see how evictions simultaneously act upon women's bodies and their territories. Insecurity and lack of stability in their places of residence mirror an ongoing process of insecurity inscribed upon their bodies. Evictions and the absence of real alternatives produce (1) overworked and sick bodies, strained by the need to repay debts and prevent displacement; (2) heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence, as women sometimes remain in harmful relationships to avoid homelessness; and (3) an emotional and physical burden generated by the inability to care adequately for themselves, their children, and their families back home. Historically, care, sexuality, and motherhood have been used to control the bodies of racialized women, while obscuring the ways they sustain systems of slavery, colonialism, and capitalism (Haley, 2018; Sweeney, 2020). In this light, understanding how eviction is embodied through the expectations and possibilities of care and motherhood is essential for analyzing dispossession within the context of gendered racial capitalism.

This deterritorialization of care operates across material, political, and symbolic dimensions. Materially, it entails the loss of the home as refuge and the financial strain of indebtedness and precarious work (Cavallero & Gago, 2024). Politically, it intensifies vulnerability to gender-based violence, constrains mobility across borders, and hinders activism due to fear of detention, deportation, or child removal. Symbolically, it undermines the capacity to enact care and fulfill patriarchal expectations of motherhood, further fracturing women's sense of self (Power, 2019). Evictions, then, are not only moments of geographical displacement but also processes that reshape how women inhabit their own bodies, producing a deterritorialization inseparable from colonial, gendered, and racist forms of dispossession and control. Drawing from indigenous scholarship (Da Silva, 2014), we can claim, that is autonomy over the territories that women inhabit, that can also lead to the autonomy over their bodies. As activists emphasize, dispossession does not exist without resistance. The following section turns to how migrant women enact reterritorialization through practices of citizenship and collective struggle, illuminating the continuum of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

8. CITIZENSHIP: CONTESTING POWER

Eviction—or even the threat of it—was the event most participants described as the catalyst for their involvement at PAH. While they did not always frame this participation as *political*, but rather as an act of survival, eviction marked the turning point that pushed them into collective struggle. Housing violence, in its broad sense, forces women to confront insecurity in their homes and their bodies, often redirecting them towards insurgent processes of citizenship and shared practices of knowledge-making. Through activism and everyday practices, women reclaim forms of control over their housing and territories, turning eviction into a process of reterritorialization characterized by the acquisition of knowledge—what in La PAH is called *empoderamiento*—and by acts of disobedience. In this way, migrant women act against the bordering practices that restrict their lives and, in the process, create spaces of solidarity and resistance.

8.1. Caring is political

We have described how evictions are not only a material loss. The feelings it generates—responsibility, guilt, failure—also mobilize women towards collective action. These affective burdens become transformed into political agency when women engage in assemblies, actions, and negotiations to defend their homes. In all the interviews conducted with long-term activists at La PAH, it was evident that women overwhelmingly outnumber men in assemblies and actions. This cannot be explained only by cases that affect women specifically, such as gender-based violence or single motherhood. Even among participants with partners, women were the ones who consistently came to La PAH, organized documents, followed procedures, and showed up at actions. Men, when present, often participated sporadically or appeared at evictions. When asked about the presence of their partners, most reflected on division of care tasks. As Lucía explained, *"he leaves work earlier so he can take care of the children and I can come to La PAH."* Marina, in contrast, dismissed the question: *"he has his own lawyer and says he is fine like that."*

As Suárez observed, this does not mean men were absent altogether, but rather that women assumed the leadership: "They felt very welcome in the space, and they were the ones who carried all the papers, all the documents, who took notes, who were very up to date with what had to be done." This dynamic resonates with Saskia Sassen's (2003) notion of the "feminization of survival." For Sassen, women frequently emerge as political actors during crises precisely through the roles imposed on them as caregivers and providers of well-being. It is in this capacity as caregivers that they are propelled into the public sphere, transforming survival into a form of political engagement.

To confront the ongoing deterritorialization of care, social housing movements mobilize care as a connective tissue across households and property relations. Mas de Xaxàs emphasized that it was always a deliberate decision to have women as leaders and spokespersons, to provide childcare during assemblies, and to care for one another's cases and well-being. In this sense, care circulates not only within families but also across activist networks, becoming central to the reterritorialization process. As Fields, Power, and Card (2024) argue, the politics and ethics of care directly contest the racial capitalist and settler-colonial logics that structure dominant

understandings of who deserves housing, who can make claims to it, and who is recognized as a political subject. Hence, within the movement we already see care as a critical characteristic of this citizenship formation.

8.2. Knowledge as power and resistance

"My problem started when they raised my mortgage from 450 to 800 or something, during the boom. And the bank manager asked me, "What's going on?"

And he said... Silvana, since you're a good customer, you've helped yourself, you've never stolen anything, ever... Well, the nonsense they tell us. Out of ignorance. I didn't know what a grace period was. Not even a remortgage.

And he said, "I'm going to forgive you for three years." ...Instead of 800, you going to pay like you used to, 400 euros? And in those three years, we know things are going to work out for you. And after those three years, we'll talk.

And I said, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes." Desperate, "Where do I sign? Thank you very much". Look, I didn't kiss his feet because, you know?

But I didn't even know what I was getting into.

And on top of that, we gave him a piece of mind and good wine. Pata negra ham and all that"

Interview of Silvana, 2025

The story of Silvana illustrates what happened to most of the participants who have signed a mortgage contract before the 2008 financial crisis. As she expressed, the memory of those times is fueled with frustration over feeling abused because of a lack of knowledge when signing the contract, or years later, defending themselves against high mortgages and eviction. She expressed many times during the interview that the problem of being a migrant "is knowing nothing". Even before getting a mortgage or a faking a rent contract, participants expressed several processes in which their lack of knowledge lead to abuse of their situation of vulnerability. For example, Manuela expressed that she was paying per week to share a living room with a friend what she could have been paying for a room for herself. Or while being undocumented, three participants shared that their absence of knowledge resulted in underpayment or lack of stability at jobs.

As Bhan (2016) has theorized, abusing ignorance is not a mistake but a deliberate act that enables profit accumulation. Evictions operate through knowledge and its denial: the knowing or not knowing that diminishes the ability of the evicted to resist. In this way, evictions discriminate by design. Similar to the case presented by Bhan, the ambiguous legal wording around concepts of public interest in legal proceedings creates forms of discrimination that facilitate the eviction of minority groups and render millions of people in a state of suspended displacement (Datta, 2016; Bhan, 2016). At the PAH, this bureaucratic violence was palpable on a daily basis. I witnessed how the vocabulary and wording of eviction notices and negotiations were so obscure that without a lawyer they were nearly impossible to interpret. In L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, for example, it was common to see affected people arrive with eviction notices scheduled to be executed within days —sometimes without having understood the letter, and other times without ever having received one at all. This reveals how bureaucratic opacity works as a mechanism of dispossession: while

legal procedures theoretically offer possibilities to prevent or delay evictions, these rights remain inaccessible precisely because they are difficult to know, understand, and claim.

For this reason, one of the key pillars at the PAH is the collective assembly and the sharing of knowledge, a model that *Les Juntas* also adopts today. These assemblies are not passive encounters or conventional “advising hours.” I still remember my first assembly at the PAH: a large circle in a room with two lines of chairs. There was a facilitator and from a box people would draw the names of affected individuals, who would then share their stories. Everyone participated, exchanging experiences and knowledge in what is known as *asesoramiento colectivo*. I remember feeling intimidated by how much I did not know. In *the PAH, Manual de Uso*, França (2021) describes the central methods and outcomes of these assemblies: the parallel work of sharing knowledge both by professionals (including lawyers present in the room) and by people who have gone through the same experiences, as well as the collective creation and accompaniment of actions planned by the affected individual to fight for their rights. This form of horizontal assembly works not only to inform but to empower, and as San Martín states (2019), to create a framework of collective struggle against a shared enemy, in this case banks and vulture funds.

Silvana, as well as Marina, Sofia, Lucía, Lorena, and Julia, emphasized that attending the assemblies at the PAH marked a clear “before and after” in how much they knew and how effectively they could claim their rights. As Florencia put it: *“Due to the eviction, I realized many things weren't being done, that weren't being implemented, and that were missing here. I learned how to fight for rights. That's why I decided to stay. Because it didn't seem fair to me. They helped me without even knowing me.”* These spaces exemplify what Miraftab calls *invented spaces*: and those born to destabilize the status quo. In these assemblies, strategies are developed against real estate businesses, banks, and the state—making them the heart of the PAH, but also of informal politics and grassroots citizenship formation. Through these invented spaces, activists rerespond and prevent bureaucratic discrimination and violence, while confronting the structural prejudices tied to not having paid a mortgage, rent, or squatting, transforming stigma into collective agency.

When thinking of the importance of assemblies and collective spaces at the PAH as “invented” spaces of informal politics, we can understand that this collective and the activist and seasonal members, form part of the feminists’ expanded notion of politics. This expanded notion of politics understands how citizenship expands the public sphere so that struggles and resistances happen in diverse aspects of the private, public, and the personal level, such as with knowledge. This notion also argues for a critical examination of the patriarchal dimensions of society within social organizations, which often replicate them. In the case of the PAH we see a collective that is mostly based and led by migrant women, enhancing also the understanding of what is feminist politics.

8.3. Reclaiming the territory

This subchapter explores how acts of citizenship and disobedience become strategies through which migrant women reclaim territory in the face of housing precarity. From navigating informal and formal pathways to accessing shelter, to visible and collective actions such as physically stopping evictions at the door, and more intimate, everyday practices like decorating a room, these

acts constitute modes of territorialization. Amid fear, legal uncertainty, and constant harassment by banks and real estate agents, migrant women engage in what can be understood as insurgent practices of emplacement, claiming space, asserting belonging, and contesting dispossession.

Insurgent acts to claim spaces in the city, where otherwise would be restricted to migrant population, often look like acts of solidarity. As expressed by Manuela, when she did not have documents, they would use someone else's documents *"to rent us an apartment in that person's name..."*. Networks and informal practices, such as relying on a friend or relative to rent is common and was repeated by other interviewees. Other participants such as Sofia stated to have done or feel like they will end up faking pay checks or adding someone else to the contract for an extra salary. *"I've even thought about falsifying my paychecks. Because I say, maybe mine is less, that's why they don't want to rent to me. I'm going to have to falsify it. I've also told the social worker. I've made it clear. They don't give you any other option."*

When reflecting on the obstacles to access housing, documentation and job contracts are the most frequently expressed obstacle. This disproportionately affects migrants who often face administrative exclusion and higher rates of precarious employment (Opazo-Valenzuela & Pérez-Rincón, 2023). But the interviews with long-time activists Ramón and Riaño, emphasized that in contrast to earlier years at the PAH many of the people currently facing eviction and homelessness now hold full-time and stable jobs. Job security is no longer sufficient to guarantee access to housing. Renting has become an almost impossible task, shaped less by income than by the "desired profile" of the tenant—particularly in terms of race, ethnicity, and family composition, as discussed in Chapter 7. In this context, access to housing is often achieved through insurgent practices. Migrants may resort to their networks, the use of edited documentation or, as in the case of four of the fourteen participants in this study, to squatting.

Squatting is the main material and territorial act of insurgent citizenship presented in the interviews. As stated by Delgado and Campuzano, at the PAH 100% of undocumented migrants in 2023, were squatting (2024) such as the case of Lucia. Often there are family members, friends, or members of communities and housing groups who enact the action for the other, such as the case of Julia, who had two evictions for unpayment of rent until she entered an apartment by force:

"Well, my brother, desperate because of the pressure I put on him, helped me open the apartment I'm currently in. We opened it ourselves...we broke in through the window and... And we opened the apartment."

Squatting allows migrants to reside in places that would otherwise be inaccessible, and most of the active evictions currently addressed by the PAH in the city of Barcelona are linked to squatted homes. However, gaining access to a territory—being able to physically live in it—does not necessarily mean becoming territorialized. In an assembly, Lucía shared how changing her perspective on squatting allowed her to live in and get to know her neighborhood better: *"I was ashamed of squatting, I thought everyone knew it, and I would never say hi to neighbors or share what was going on."* Similarly, Julia explained that she could never feel part of any neighborhood because she was constantly on the edge of eviction. Migrants who squat often experience a

particular form of territorialization that prevents them from “getting too comfortable.” This sentiment was echoed by those facing eviction due to mortgage debt who avoided making repairs, (sometimes resulting in extremely precarious living conditions) or the lack of decorating their homes, because they never knew when they would have to leave. Still, in what can be perceived as small acts of resistance, Lucía shared:

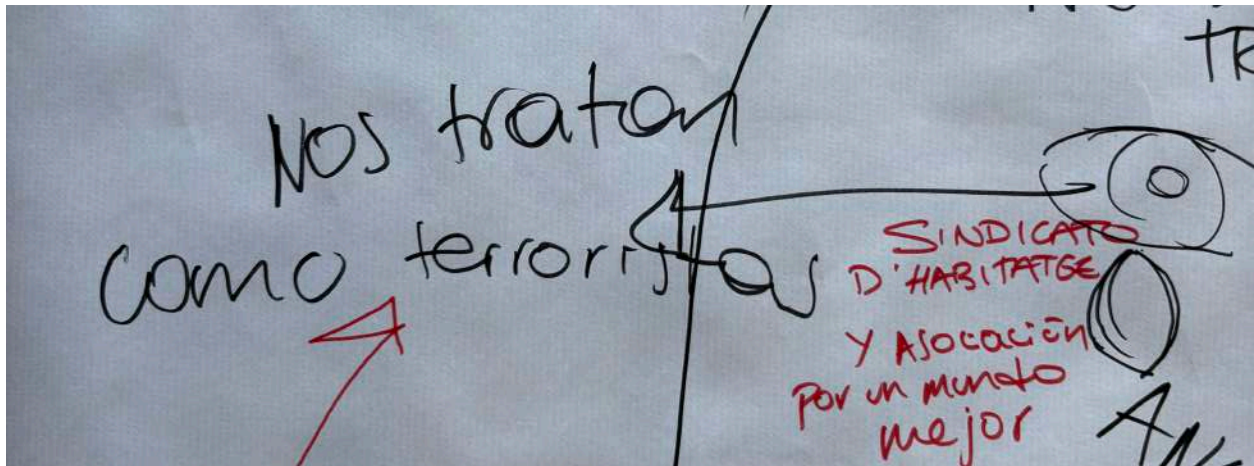
When I had the eviction notice, which arrived around December, I knew I'd have it in February. That whole Christmas was horrible. We were saying, 'Shall we put up the Christmas tree?' Especially for the baby. And I was like, 'No, we're not going to put it up because we have to leave.' The kids were like, 'But why are we going to leave? We're already here, and the presents!' And then my husband said, 'Let's put up the tree, and if we leave, we'll leave with everything set up.'

The story of Lucía showcases an effort to stay and make a home. The intimacy of decorating seems to situate well within understanding of property, and the well-known ritual of tree-making during Christmas. But within the nature of this case, decorating challenges understandings of property and showcases the efforts to stay, to defend a home, or to resist displacement. What can be a normalized act became an act of claiming territory, even under the precarious conditions of squatting. In many cases, families squatting would find ways of home-making that were low-cost in case of an eviction. Through this action individuals aimed to reterritorialize, a key characteristic of this reterritorialization is what Roy's claims as emplacement (2017). The concept of emplacement helps define the particular reterritorialization of migrant women in Barcelona. As Roy argues emplacement has at least two meanings: “the process or state of setting something in place or being set in place,” and “a platform or defended position where a gun is placed for firing (2017).” The first meaning is clear, the second one reflects on the moral rightness of squatting as a front line of human right defense, the right to a roof vs the conception of property.

The case of Lucía also exemplifies the process of citizenship creation at the PAH. She explained that recognizing her right to housing helped her decriminalize squatting in her own eyes, allowing her to relate to her neighborhood differently. Erasing guilt and embarrassment is one of the central forms of work carried out at the PAH, transforming passive, affected individuals into activists and catalysts for change. In every case observed, participants expressed that it was the recognition of what initially seemed like individual pain and suffering as a collective experience that enabled them to understand their situation within the broader structures of accumulation by dispossession, which seek to keep them in a constant process of loss, from one home to the other.

The continuous blend of limits of public and private become clearest with actions to stop evictions. The PAH has been known internationally to have developed the insurgent practice of stopping evictions at the door, which is also the practice that makes anti-eviction become most visible in the city (Colau, 2013). When an affected household faces eviction, a public call is made and activists and neighbors gather at the house. By placing their bodies in front of the door, they form a physical barrier that prevents entry and forces the judicial apparatus to stop the ongoing eviction and escalate toward a ruling of forced eviction. This collective tactic does not prevent eviction indefinitely, because the household will face another attempt, often within three weeks to three

months—but it buys crucial time. That time may allow the affected household to negotiate a social rent, to restructure debt, or simply to avoid immediate homelessness.



Picture 18: A crying eye and an arrow that describes “they treat us like terrorists”

Yet, when courts order forced eviction, confrontation can quickly turn violent. For those who step in front of doors—many of whom are racialized, over 50, and living with disability—the risk is both physical and emotional. The embodied consequences of this clash were vividly illustrated by Sol. Unable to block the door due to leg pain, she described nights of sleeplessness after witnessing police dragging bodies away. In one of her workshop drawings, she wrote “they treat us like terrorists” next to a crying eye, surrounding it with the names of her housing and neighborhood associations. Her testimony reminds us that the violence of eviction does not end with the act itself but reverberates through the bodies of those who resist and those who witness.

Earlier in this thesis, I described an eviction I was together with Sol, where she was crying when looking at bodies being pushed, dragged, and removed, thinking of her own experience. Building on earlier reflections on evictions as bordering practices, these moments can be understood as a direct collision between financialized logics of dispossession and collective practices of citizenship. What emerges at the doorstep is not a mere protest but an insurgent practice of citizenship that embodies an *invented space* (Miraftab, 2004; 2020): collective arenas created by those excluded from formal politics, where marginalized residents confront authorities and destabilize the status quo. As Davis and Raman stated, to consider the socio-spatial dynamics of different aspects of the urban built environment, and to contrast the forms, meaning, and strategies of protest that are deployed in different types of urban spaces. The doorstep, where stopping evictions take place, is a particularly charged threshold: it marks the border between public and private, between exposure and intimacy, between dispossession and belonging. Standing in front of this door transforms it into a site of confrontation, where the state’s authority protecting the status quo and financial capital collides with collective claims to safety and home. In these moments, the private home becomes politicized as a space of insurgent action, where belonging is defended not only symbolically but also materially through embodied presence. The political, symbolic, and economic aspects that constitute territorialization are then disputed.

The act of standing in front of a home reterritorializes both those directly affected and their allies, directly confronting the institutional hierarchies that normalize the displacement of migrant and racialized communities. For Lucía, who lacked documentation, these actions provided a space to claim agency and defend her rights, even as the risk of deportation prevented her from directly confronting the police. Van Baar (2017) draws a parallel between the “border spectacle,” which naturalizes migrants’ illegality, and the spectacle of eviction, which renders certain populations inherently displaceable. He conceptualizes this condition as *evictability*: the permanent vulnerability to removal, where continued presence is contingent upon readiness to be displaced. Creating what Baker calls “a disposition towards displacement” (2020). Eviction blockades thus make visible and contest evictability, disrupting naturalized conceptions of property while exposing how rights, participation, and belonging are continuously renegotiated in contexts of exclusion (Vanderberg, 2000; Stokke, 2017). At the same time, they challenge the racialized, gendered, and legal hierarchies that underpin housing regimes, while creating spaces of solidarity between those who can confront the law and those who cannot.

Housing movements like PAH, through diverse actions that blend the public/private, enact an urban citizenship that contests the gendered racial capitalist and settler-colonial logics that structure dominant understandings of who deserves housing, who can make claims to it, and who is recognized as a political subject. Care becomes a political practice that draws women into activism and sustains housing platforms as spaces of solidarity. Knowledge-sharing in assemblies empowers participants to contest bureaucratic violence, fostering political subjects who resist forms of discrimination that render them more evictable. Through acts such as squatting and defending homes during evictions affected individuals reclaim territory both symbolically and materially. These practices exemplify expanded feminist praxis of citizenship that, as Miraftab argues, blur the boundaries of private and public, personal and political, creating invented spaces where migrant women, including those undocumented, unsettle the normalization of private property and articulate new modes of belonging in the city.

9. CONCLUSION

Initially, the purpose of my research was to study the implications of evictions in the lives of migrants. Yet once I entered the field, I realized the complexity of their experiences, and how deeply these were shaped both by their migration journeys and by a racist housing market. Supported by previous literature on housing financialization and race (Roy, 2017; Fields and Raymond, 2021), I understood the urgency of approaching these struggles from a decolonial framework that accounts for the historical differences and hierarchies structuring this population's presence in Barcelona.

This thesis therefore takes as its entry point the Latin American critical geography conception of territory, emphasizing two aspects in particular (Haesbaert, 2020). First, territory is conceived as a continuum with the body. The framework of *cuerpo-territorio* makes visible the impacts of eviction beyond material and economic loss, extending to the embodied and symbolic dimensions of displacement. Second, territory is inseparable from relations of power. Evictions are shaped by racial and gender hierarchies, which I approach through the lens of gendered racial capitalism. Within this framework, I analyze how eviction affects an already mobile population, focusing on the processes of de- and reterritorialization in their economic, political, and cultural dimensions. Rather than understanding eviction as a unidirectional process of loss, this framework highlights the ongoing tension between de- and reterritorialization, and the struggles to resist the financialization of housing that—through extractivist property relations—keep migrant women in precarious conditions.

Examining the embodied implications of evictions for migrant women in the region of Barcelona has important global implication. This research situates Barcelona within the dynamics of *global cities* (Sassen, 2001), marked by intensified migration and deepening housing precarity. As an urban core of unequal globalization, Barcelona relies on racialized and gendered labor from the Global South while simultaneously consolidating neoliberal urban policies through the “Barcelona Model” (Charnock et al., 2019). These intertwined processes have entrenched the financialization of housing, producing the current crisis of inaffordability and displacement. These struggles demonstrate how broader dynamics of globalization, capital mobilization, and financialization “hit the ground”—and also bodies—while revealing how practices of capital extraction and financing adapt to new contexts.

Summary of Findings

This research explored the complexity of migrants' multiterritorialization under conditions of displacement, beginning with their migration journeys. Most participants arrived in Barcelona from precarious living conditions, and many indebted themselves to migrate, seeking to improve their economic situation or escape violence. Their trajectories were shaped both by the political and economic conditions in their countries of origin and by the demand for care and service work in Spain. Migration was marked from the outset by bordering practices: deportations, exhaustive questioning, and other forms of control that did not end at the border but extended into Barcelona

through police interventions and the everyday precarity of undocumented life. For undocumented women in particular, border violence, exploitative labor, and overwork severely constrained their access to stable housing. Most participants worked in the care sector, often stressing the significance of housing arrangements or supportive employers as critical in their early territorialization, before reuniting with family or children in Barcelona.

Once in the city, their experiences of territorialization were non-linear. The ability to settle, claim space, and feel rooted was constantly challenged. Access to territory was limited by rising housing costs and recurrent displacement, with the conditions of security and belonging heavily shaped by documentation status, labor opportunities, and the support of family or partners. These structural constraints made the home a crucial space of *arraigo* (rootedness), even as women forged broader networks of everyday support and chosen political family—often through shared housing struggles—outside their neighborhoods. These intersectional struggles to access and remain in their homes reveal how migrant women’s relationships to territory are shaped not only by structures of exclusion, but also by practices of resistance and solidarity that reconfigure the meaning of home and belonging.

Centering the body as a site of housing and territorial struggles sheds light on how racialized migrant bodies are perceived by the housing market while also embody the hierarchies of racial capitalism. Data has shown that racialized migrants have restricted access to certain areas of Barcelona. Rising housing prices and the lack of rental options available to them have pushed many participants to live in Hospitalet or peripheral neighborhoods. As some women explained, years ago they were able to access areas of the city that are unimaginable to them today. Male migrants, particularly those of Arab origin, also showed how they are directly affected by discrimination in the rental market. Similarly, the profile of the “unwanted tenant” is clearly exemplified in the case of single migrant mothers such as Silvana, Manuela, Julia, and Sofia. While their evictions stemmed from different property regimes, all of them were affected by financialization by banks or vulture funds, through debt, high rents, or the absence of stable contracts. This research also shows how these hierarchies of racial capitalism are entrenched in the everyday lives of migrants, who often legitimize their right to housing in comparison to other migrants involved in less legitimate property relations, such as squatting—portraying them as those who disrupt property norms by not paying rent or mortgages.

While racism and discrimination were present among both male and female participants, there are clear gendered implications of evictions. In the current housing market, single migrant women often cannot rent alone, leading many to remain with ex-partners, which sustains situations of violence and discomfort. Motherhood and care emerged as the center of their embodiment within territories: most participants defended their homes not necessarily because of a direct attachment to the neighborhood, but because of their children. Children grew up identifying with their neighborhoods and also suffered the threat of eviction, which reinforced mothers’ efforts to defend their homes. This responsibility also produced feelings of guilt, embarrassment, and failure, along with physical pains and illnesses linked to housing struggles and overwork—or in other cases, triggered by the stress of being unable to keep up with rent or mortgage payments.

This research has shown that territorialization within displacement is not solely one of loss, but also of struggle and resistance. Migrant women deploy diverse strategies to counter the structures that aim to situate them in continuous precarity. Squatting emerges as a key practice, often enacted through networks of solidarity and family. These networks not only provide access to housing but also foster belonging and mutual care in the absence of state protection. Stopping evictions represents another central form of resistance, highly visible in the activism of the PAH. Here, collective mobilization challenges property regimes while simultaneously enacting forms of citizenship, particularly for undocumented migrants, who contest both border violence and the divide between the private and the public by defending their homes.

Beyond these visible struggles, everyday acts of resistance also play a significant role. The circulation of knowledge, the sharing of legal strategies, and the emphasis on “empowerment” within migrant communities strengthen collective resilience. At the same time, practices of emplacement—such as decorating or personalizing a squatted home—demonstrate how even small, mundane acts contribute to territorializing and contesting property regimes. Together, these findings highlight how migrant women transform eviction and displacement into resistance through solidarity and alternative forms of belonging.

Summary of Analysis

Examining the implications of *cuerpo-territorio* for migrant women facing evictions in the region of Barcelona through the lens of multiterritoriality, citizenship, and racial capitalism yields three distinctive conceptual contributions. First, the experiences of eviction are characterized by an embodied deterritorialization of care. This means that both in their bodies and in their territories, migrant women’s capacities to care are constrained and reshaped by housing conditions. Second, the need to position oneself above a threshold of recognition in order to deserve basic rights such as housing reveals how financialization permeates the everyday lives of migrants. Property relations thereby define territorialization not only in legal or economic terms but also socially, through complex dynamics of solidarity and distancing within migrant communities themselves. Finally, evictions function as an institutionalized infrastructure of bordering and racism, regulating the presence of migrants and racialized individuals in the city and enacting a multiterritoriality shaped by displacement and insurgent citizenship. In this process, migrants blur the boundaries between the private and the public to reclaim territories and sustain networks of care and affection within their housing struggles. These findings advance the conceptualization of an embodied deterritorialization while enhancing the understanding of the concepts employed in a new case study, bridging critical geography from the Global South and North with migration studies.

Building on Haesbaert’s (2011) framework, I have approached eviction as a way to study the embodied effects of deterritorialization on an already mobile population, examining how these processes of displacement unfold across economic, political, and symbolic dimensions. Findings highlighted care in the narratives of migrant women, revealing how their territories are mobilized in multiple ways: caring for children and relatives across borders, sustaining families through remittances, working in feminized and racialized care sectors to obtain income and documentation, overworking to maintain access to housing, and attending to their own health. These practices are

continually shaped by patriarchal-capitalist expectations of invisibilized female care (Fraser, 2016). Materially, deterritorialization of care manifests in the loss of home as refuge and in the financial strain of indebtedness, leading women to accept more precarious labor conditions (Cavallero & Gago, 2024). Politically, it exacerbates vulnerability to gender-based violence due to the lack of possibilities to rent individually, restricts mobility across borders, and limits activism due to the constant threat of detention, deportation, or the removal of children. Symbolically, it undermines women's capacity to enact socially expected forms of care that maintain capitalism, producing guilt and embodied suffering that often materialize as mental and physical illness (Power, 2019). Hence, if housing systems are key infrastructures that "organize how people give and receive care in most places across the world" (Fields, Power, & Card, 2023, p. 744), evictions then entail the infrastructure of its deterritorialization, constituting more than a moment of geographical displacement: it is a process that unsettles women's capacity to control and have security over both their homes and their own bodies. As Indigenous scholarship reminds us (da Silva, 2014), autonomy over the territories women inhabit is inseparable from the possibility of autonomy over their bodies.

Porter invited us to ask: "For what is to become of those who cannot prove their worth across the thresholds of recognition?" This question guided my inquiry into the methods of legitimizing a right to housing and security for a population normalized as being in continuous loss. Property relations emerge in this equation as twofold, on one hand is through property that migrants women are portrayed as potential "risks" (Desmond, 2017) while is also property relations which provides with a framework through which to claim legitimacy while distancing themselves from other migrants. For example, through distancing their eviction from others due to their duration of stay in Barcelona or through having a mortgage or rent rather than squatting. Centering property relations (Palomera, 2014) allow us to analyze its role not only as a legal or economic regime, but also a social relation, creating a symbolic bordering that operates alongside economic and symbolic exclusion while structuring solidarities and divisions among migrants themselves. Extending Andreucci et al.'s understanding of rent (2017), I show how property hierarchies—owner/non-owner expand in housing movements and neighborhoods, for example to that of the squatter/mortgage debtor, creating new forms of racialized differentiation within communities. In this sense, racial capitalism shapes territoriality creating and maintaining order through understandings of property while also shaping the geographical context through which we experience and give meaning to the world and to ourselves (Sack, 1986).

When subject to loss and displacement within the power structures and geographical context of their territory, migrant women often turn to housing movements that challenge and redefine territory under racial capitalism. Hence, I argue that evictions shape the multiterritoriality of migrant women through both deterritorialization and immediate reterritorialization, marked simultaneously by displacement and insurgent citizenship. On the one hand, evictions produce what Baker (2020) calls a "disposition towards displacement," in which the spectacle of an eviction—evictability—leads to the normalization and justification of the displacement of certain bodies (Van Baar, 2017). They thus operate as forms of internal bordering (Van Baar, 2017), determining who is capable of accessing urban areas while dispossessing women of their homes and fracturing the symbolic,

material, and affective ties that constitute territory, from motherhood to neighborhood belonging (Blunt & Varley, 2004).

On the other hand, within this deterritorialization, new reterritorializations emerge through housing struggles that resist racial capitalism and border regimes. Migrant women enact insurgent forms of citizenship by defending their homes, delaying evictions, making home while squatting, protesting banks, or pressuring institutions, while forging solidarity networks often described as “chosen political families” (Adami, 2023). These practices reconstitute belonging across symbolic, material, and political dimensions, embodying an expanded feminist politics that blurs boundaries of public and private, personal and collective (Miraftab, 2020). Multiterritoriality is thus lived as both dispossession and insurgency, where eviction displaces and fragments care, but activism reclaims urban space through practices of solidarity that challenge the racial capitalist hierarchies designed to keep migrant women in a condition of continuous dispossession (Roy, 2017).

Final Remarks

This thesis has shown that the struggles and resistances against evictions by migrant women in Barcelona reveal much more than local experiences of dispossession or displacement—they illuminate how global dynamics of capital, migration, and racial hierarchies are grounded in the everyday and embodied to reproduce race, gender and space. By situating Barcelona as a *global city*, shaped by both the attraction of transnational capital and the labor of migrant populations, this research underscores how housing struggles are not peripheral but central to understanding contemporary urban transformations and conflicts. The findings demonstrate that evictions are infrastructure of racial and gendered hierarchies, that limit capacities to care, enhance a precarious multiterritoriality, and enact bordering practices that regulate urban presence, while at the same time fostering insurgent forms of citizenship rooted in solidarity, care, and feminist praxis. In this way, migrant women’s housing struggles become a critical lens to examine how racial capitalism and financialization are lived and contested in global urban contexts. The case of Barcelona thus resonates beyond its own geography, offering insights into how we can study housing precarity, bordering, and resistance within historical differentiation, entangling the historical rooted dynamics that undergo in cities across the world where migration, financialization, and inequality converge.

Empirically and methodologically, this thesis underscores the importance of adopting decolonial and postcolonial lenses in urban research. Engaging with decoloniality means allowing this perspective to guide the entire research process, from the literature review and formulation of research questions to methodological choices and analysis. Only in this way can findings be both historically situated and actively resist the epistemic hierarchies of academia. Through this lens, I have chosen to center the voices and embodied experiences of migrant women, seeking not only to analyze but also to co-produce knowledge attentive to the lived realities of displacement and resistance. While the results also speak to broader dynamics that extend beyond the specificity of female bodies, centering this community—often positioned at the intersection of multiple situations of vulnerabilities—enables a deeper understanding of the implications for those who accompany and share their struggles.

As a migrant and activist researcher that today calls Barcelona a home, I cannot end this work without a call to rethink housing rights both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this requires rethinking property, land, and processes of rent extraction as colonial inheritances that continue to structure urban life and cause forced displacement to those already affected by the conditions of precarious mobility. It also demands reimagining citizenship beyond the nation-state and patriarchy, recognizing how belonging and rights are claimed in insurgent and intimate ways. Practically, it calls for a more transactional activism, in which housing struggles are addressed first and foremost as racial and patriarchal issues. To fight for the capacity to inhabit our city as a way to be able to control our bodies, to prevent gender based violence, and enact critical practices of care. In this way, claim for policies and forms of urban governance that place housing at the center of feminist and care politic. By this, I do not mean temporary shelters for evicted mothers, as has recently been implemented, but rather securing the permanence of the homes that communities themselves create, in a process that rethinks property from the inside out but also that fights for regularized pathways of migration as a housing strategy. Private property has failed in its promise of security and social mobility, and within the late phases of capitalism, we need instead to fight for a renewed vision of housing as communal, caring, accessible, and free.

Limitations and Future Research

This study focuses on the Region *-comarca-* of Barcelona, specifically the cities of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat and Barcelona. While these two cases provide preliminary insights into the regional dynamics of the housing crisis, they cannot account for the full realities of the area, which also includes three other cities. Broader research could encompass these additional cities to better capture the regional dimensions of housing struggles, also accounting for the political differences between them. Likewise, comparative cross-country studies examining how racialized migrant populations experience eviction could shed light on how property regimes, demographic structures, and labor markets shape processes of migrant territorialization and belonging. For example, accounting for linguistic difference or documentation status.

This research sought to include participants regardless of nationality, based on their shared condition of being migrants facing eviction. This approach enabled a more nuanced understanding of mobility and displacement across hierarchies of race and gender. However, the study's scope did not allow for an in-depth analysis of distinctions among participants considered more privileged, whether through documentation status, Spanish heritage, or educational attainment. Future studies could further explore these differences, particularly in how territorialization and embodied experiences of eviction diverge between locals and migrants, or across distinct migrant communities.

Finally, this study employed a methodological framework grounded in *cuerpo-territorio* through *cartografías sociales feministas*. From this experience, I learned that more time is needed for participants to feel comfortable connecting personal struggles to their bodies. During interviews, I often invited participants to reflect on their bodies by sketching on a piece of paper; these moments frequently opened space for sharing more intimate experiences of violence and sexuality. For future research, I recommend organizing longer workshops or multiple sessions. Alternatively,

providing individual body sketches for participants to complete on their own could foster deeper reflection, as has been done in previous studies (see Dos Santos).



ANNEX

A.1 Interview questions

This interview is semi-structured and is based on four blocks of questions. One about your migratory, one about your residential trajectory, one about the acts of citizenship, and the last one about embodiment.

BLOCK 1

Where did you live before you left your country?

What was your relationship with the community there? Were you part of any social, neighborhood or community movement?

Did you like it? Why yes or not?

Had you moved within your country? Why?

Why did you decide to leave?

What was your first destination?

What was your journey until you arrived in Barcelona?

What territories did you pass through? How did you feel in them?

Are there some that were more difficult to leave than others?

Do you send or have you sent remittance back home?

Do you maintain connections with people back home? How?

BLOCK 2: Housing

For each of the territories marked: How was your housing condition? Was it a house, apartment, in what condition? Who did you live with?

How and when did you get to the neighborhood and house where you are now? What is it like? How do you feel there? What would you change?

Have you been evicted? How long ago? Why? What have you been doing since you found out about this eviction?

What were the main obstacles accessing housing since you arrived in Barcelona?

BLOCK 3

Have you participated before in social or community movements? public or religious services?

Do you come from a politicized family?

What are the limitations of the social movements you live in in terms of housing?

What do you gain or have you gained from being in this movement? What would you like to improve?

Do you have or not political experience prior to ____?

Has your participation in politics changed because of your eviction? In what way?

Have you had to limit yourself in certain political actions or actions because of not having papers?

What are the actions that you consider political in which you have taken part?

What obstacles have you encountered to access to housing?

Have you resorted to institutions? Could you?

Have you had access to any institutional resource or law that has helped you with your housing? If not, why not?

Do you know what your rights are according to the law of the country?

Block 4:

How does it feel in the body, to have an eviction? What are the health consequences, pains, emotions?

Can you draw them here?

How do these relate to the specific processes you are going through in relation with the home? Eviction, debt, lack of housing?

How do you access health care facilities?

And care in its broader sense? (Do you need someone who cares for you?)

Do you care for anyone right now?

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Figures

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework. Creation of the author

Figure 2. Map of the studied area, consisting of the cities of L'Hospitalet and Barcelona with its districts. Creation of the author

Figure 3. Barcelona's Immigrant Population by Nationality and Sex in the Year 2022 (Data Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona; own illustration).

Figure 4. Barcelona's Map of Informal Settlements from the Arxiu Fotogràfic de Barcelona (left); Barcelona's map of evictions called up by collectives 2016

Figure 5. Summary of findings from the Feminist Social Cartography. Creation of the author.

Table 1. List of participants affected with evictions, out of the seventeen six participated in the cuerpo-territorio workshop.

Table 2. Scheme of the topics addressed and descriptions of steps followed.

Table 3. Participants of the Workshop Cuerpo-Territorio.

Table 4. Data Analysis Coding Diagram.