

USE, EXCHANGE, AND SPECULATION:
THE POLITICS OF INHABITANCE AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN URBAN PERU

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Published April 2021 in *City and Society*.

Vol. 33. No 1.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ciso.12392>

Abstract:

The protagonist of Lefebvre's "Right to the City" is the *ciudadano*, a citizen-denizen whose rights are produced through residency and incumbent contributions to everyday urban life. Yet, in the shantytowns of Lima where people have long believed that residency generates rights, what it means to "do residency" (*hacer vivencia*) is itself contested. Drawing on twenty-one months of fieldwork in the Limeño shantytown of Pachacútec, Peru, I show that "inhabitation" is a multidimensional construct and that the relationship between inhabitation and rights to spatial appropriation and political participation is a primary source of conflict, generating questions about community belonging, democratic representation, and the moral status of property exchanges. Far from neatly resolving the inequalities generated by capitalist property relations, this case demonstrates that Lefebvre's "right to the city" entails many of its own questions: What actions constitute residency? Do people have differential rights based on differential contributions to community life? And can rights be earned, leading to tenure security, or must they always be actively performed? As Peruvians answer these questions in the course of building their cities and their lives, they illuminate the ambiguities and challenges inherent in realizing the "right to the city" in Latin America's urban peripheries.

Key Words: right to the city, informal sector, property, Peru

Introduction

On March 17th, 2010, thousands of Peruvians living in the decade-old shantytown of Pachacútec took to the streets, marching eight kilometers to the District Superior Court of Ventanilla, Callao, to demand an end to area evictions. They carried banners bearing the names of contested settlements and chanted as crowds gathered around the courthouse.

- “Si No Hay Solución, la Lucha Continua (If There Is No Solution, the Fight Will Continue)”
- “No al Desalojo (No More Evictions)”
- “Cooperativistas Coimeras, Fuera los Corruptos (Landowners Bribe Judges, Out with the Corrupt)”
- “El Pueblo, Unido, Jamás Sera Vencido (The People, United, Will Never Be Defeated)”¹

[FIGURE 1]

A week prior, police entered contested areas of Pachacútec to evict long-term residents in favor of absentee owners who, protesters claimed, had bribed judges to ignore pending expropriation legislation and rule in their favor. Although only a few evictions had occurred at the time of the demonstration, protesters feared that the practice set precedent that would facilitate the eviction of thousands of people in similar legal situations: building homes, raising children, and constructing lives, communities, and indeed an entire city on land that had been physically abandoned but was legally the property of others. As police fired tear gas into the crowds, a particularly vocal protest leader declared triumphantly, “Now it’s a fight!” [FIGURE 2]

At first blush, the March 17th protest appears to be a textbook enactment of Henri Lefebvre’s “Right to the City,” in which inhabitants rise up to preserve the use value of the city in

¹ These and all subsequent quotations were translated from the original Spanish by the author unless otherwise stated.

the face of forces of capital accumulation. Over the last two decades, Lefebvre's 1968 treatise has been revived by critical urban theorists who see in his framework a compelling description and potential response to the urban displacements wrought by neoliberal capitalism (Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer 2011; Harvey 2012). Concurrently, the phrase "right to the city" has been appropriated by myriad social movements who, perhaps with little knowledge or concern for Lefebvre, have used it to claim greater voice in the decisions that govern their cities (Sugranyes & Mathivet 2011; Harvey 2012). Discourse on the right to the city has thus gone global in two senses. It identifies and challenges political economic forces that transcend borders, and has been appropriated by translocal networks of activists sharing insights from their situated experiences in urban sites from New York to Johannesburg to Porto Alegre (ibid).

Latin America has been at the vanguard of this global right to the city movement with national and municipal governments in Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Brazil enshrining rights to the city in their constitutions and charters, providing a language through which various marginal populations—from informal street vendors to indigenous peasants—have claimed rights to life and livelihood in urban spaces (Rayner 2017; Cantero 2017). Far from appropriating ideas whole cloth from the Global North, I would argue that Latin Americans have been progressive in this respect because their cities and citizens have been forged in contexts where the rights of inhabitants and the use value of land have been taken seriously as organizing urban principles. Even in Peru, whose constitution never mentions a right to the city and whose citizens do not invoke this discourse in their battles for urban land, we can find evidence of a Lefebvrian "sensitivity" (Kofman & Lebas 1996, 8) informing urban growth decades before Lefebvre's treatise was published.² Peruvians have thus been grappling with the real-world challenges of enacting a home-grown version of this

² Collier (1976:27) traces the dramatic rise of settler-driven urbanization in Lima to the twenty-year period between 1940 and 1961.

Lefebvrian ethic since at least the mid-twentieth century. In this article, I argue that if we are willing to theorize about the right to the city from the geographic and legal “peripheries” of Lima rather than theory’s historical centers (Simone 2010; Roy & Crane-Shaw 2015), we might glean important insights about the everyday challenges of living through an ethic that privileges “inhabitants” and struggles to prioritize “use value” while demonizing exchange and apparent speculation.

The spectacular display of collective action evidenced in the March 17th protest both grew out of and obscured more quotidian conflicts about what it means to adequately inhabit Peru’s urban peripheries. Despite Pachacútec’s public image as a deeply impoverished and densely populated shantytown that, as of 2007, officially housed over 180,000 people, many of its precarious constructions bear signs indexing controversial absences: the words “No Vive” (No One Lives Here) are painted on wooden walls and black X’s mark underused market stalls. Conflicts over people who do not adequately “hacer vivencia” (do living; inhabit)³ frequently arise, leading to violent confrontations between neighbors, insecurity for people who make their lives in multiple locales, and doubts about the moral standing of community leaders and the legitimacy of local democratic institutions. These experiences suggest a need to clarify what it means “to inhabit” a place and to consider the implications of who makes these determinations. Additionally, they indicate a need scrutinize the relationship between the “use value” and “exchange value” of land in urban Latin America. Like Lefebvre, many of my Peruvian interlocutors posit rigid distinctions between these two dimensions of property. Yet in practice, these same individuals frequently find themselves navigating the ambiguous intersections of these forms of value.

In what follows, I draw on twenty-one months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2007 and 2011 to explore how the social dynamics surrounding appropriation and

³ In other articles, I translate *hacer vivencia* as “to do living” or “to perform residency”; however, here I use the alternative translation “inhabit” to highlight synergies between these dynamics and Lefebvre’s formulations in *The Right to the City* (1968) and *The Production of Space* (1991).

inhabitation in Pachacútec complicate some of the most accepted components of Lefebvre's right to the city: a focus on the rights of "inhabitants" and a privileging of use value over commodity exchange value. My goal here is not to suggest that the "Right to the City" provides the best or only lens for analyzing social dynamics in Pachacútec,⁴ but rather to show how this particular ethnographic case resonates with and thus can speak back to the "Right to the City" and related urban citizenship frameworks proliferating in anthropology, urban studies, and across activist networks. I begin this effort by demonstrating that the major tenets of Lefebvre's "Right to the City" are broadly consonant with Latin America's history of "peripheral urbanization"—in which residents force urban planners to negotiate with praxis and engage transversally with official logics of state and capital (Caldeira 2017)⁵. Situating Pachacútec within this history reveals inhabitation to be a multifaceted and contested ideal that Peruvians perform differently depending on their identities, needs, and livelihood strategies, and highlights the importance of *dirigentes* (community leaders) responsible for identifying inadequate inhabitation and transferring use rights to others. While these transfers are deemed necessary to avoid property speculation and promote community development, frequent accusations that *dirigentes* are "land traffickers" evidence anxieties about the moral status of these transfers as well as the heated cultural and political work required to ensure land remains embedded in the local moral economy.

Lefebvre and the Politics of the Inhabitant in Latin America

The protagonist of Lefebvre's "Right to the City" is the *citadin*, a combination citizen-denizen who has rights to determine the shape of the city because of the contributions he or she makes to the "body of urban lived experience" (Lefebvre 1991, in Purcell 2002, 102). Lefebvre

⁴ In other work, I have explored settlement dynamics in Pachacútec using other analytics including legibility, variegated geographies of citizenship, and the contingent life course.

⁵ Accepting this premise requires recognizing that, in practice, realizing Lefebvrian ideals requires that they be enacted by subjects who are necessarily produced by and operate within their societies.

(1996) argues that privileging the rights of the citizen, or the “rights of those who inhabit,” ultimately furthers the interests of the “whole society” by ensuring the “use value” of the city is not subordinated to capitalist, commodity “exchange value” (158). Lefebvre equates these citizens with the “working classes” of Marxist revolution but clarifies that this class is identified by its spatial segregation and immiserated experience of urban habitation (Lefebvre 1996, 178). By integrating the praxis and everyday appropriations of working-class citizens—who Lefebvre exoticizes as having a monopoly on play, spontaneity, and *La Fete*—into urban reform and planning processes, Lefebvre believes that humanity can reach toward “experimental utopia[s],” a “new humanism,” and a “new man” of urban society (150–156).

Although Lefebvre does not spend much time explicitly theorizing property, the distinction he makes between use value (appropriation) and exchange value (property) suggests he understands “property” as a consumer-capitalist commodity that can be individually possessed, used, and alienated, and from which others may be excluded (Blomley 2005). Lefebvre is particularly critical of the abstract and violently empty landed property that emerges from disembedded planning efforts and facilitates both capitalist exchange and political control. This form of property, he argues, negates spatial differences and demands “interchangeable fragments” (Lefebvre 2009, 189).

Anthropologists of statecraft like James Scott have similarly argued that a

“notable aspect of homogenous, geometrical, uniform property is its convenience as a standardized commodity for the market. . . . Precisely because [grids] are abstract units detached from any ecological or topographical reality, they resemble a kind of currency which is endlessly amenable to aggregation and fragmentation. This feature of the grid plan suits equally the surveyor, the planner and the real-estate speculator” (Scott 1998, 58; see also Appadurai 1996; Blomley 2003).

While liberal social theory contends that the appropriation of land produces private property, as when John Locke argues that man makes property by mixing it with his labor (Locke 1982 [1690]), Lefebvre emphasizes the difference between appropriation and property by juxtaposing his proposed right to the city with the right to nature and the right to housing, which were both popular rallying cries in 1960s Paris. Lefebvre's most oft-quoted phrase, the "right to the city . . . [is] like a cry and a demand" (Lefebvre 1996, 158), comes from a discussion opposing the right to the city to the right to nature, where nature had become the commodified "ghetto of leisure" (ibid). He similarly criticized the right to housing for reducing the creative act of "inhabiting" to a bureaucratically conceived "habitat," such that the house became an individual's only site for transformative appropriation. As Lefebvre explains, the "ideology of property does not exclude the concrete appropriation of time and space. . . . It indicates and sets its limits, enabling us to understand how those involved do not see . . . the narrow limits of their horizons" (2003, 134). He further critiqued that turning the impoverished working classes into property holders obscured the "bourgeoisie-proletariat contradiction," distracting citizens from the class politics required to disrupt capitalist spatial relations.

Despite his criticisms of how rights to nature and housing bolster capitalist property relations, Lefebvre believes space is a critical site of struggle because its intrinsic connection to livelihood allows it to resist reduction to capitalist-commodity logics (Lefebvre 2009, 191). Lefebvre's right to the city therefore did not simply imply rights to pre-existing urban spaces but rather a renewed right to urban life. It indexed "a superior form of rights; rights to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit . . . to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property)" (1996, 174).

As Lefebvre was theorizing about rights to the city in mid-twentieth century France, Latin America was experiencing a radical, populist remaking of its cities as large numbers of rural migrants

overwhelmed existing urban spaces and began building homes of their own in the urban peripheries. As a result of these dynamics, the praxis of Latin America's lower-class urban inhabitants has, to a degree, been integrated into the development of Latin American cities as legality and planning have struggled to keep up with urban growth (Collier 1976; Fischer, McCann, & Auyero 2014). While this phenomenon is broadly something to celebrate from a Lefebvrian perspective, Latin Americanist scholars have debated whether this represents a grassroots remaking of the city or the spatial entrenchment of capitalist inequalities.

Taking a regional view, political sociologists tend to emphasize how informal urbanization results from and perpetuates capitalist systems. In these frameworks, migrants were pushed from the countryside and pulled into cities by an industrial capitalist system that relegated much of this reserve labor army to the informal economy (Portes & Roberts 2005). Manuel Castells (1983) argued that the spatial and economic informality represented by Latin America's peripheries were an important feature of global capitalism. Pointing to research on how Latin American politicians encouraged illegal squatting to build populist constituencies, Castells argued that squatters' dependence on political largesse for their existence made them "guest citizens of Latin American metropolises" whose "territorial exceptionality" reduced the cost of reproducing labor power and helped generate the "dependent city, the dependent state, [and] the dependent economy" of the capitalist world system (212).

By contrast, anthropologists and others examining informal settlements at close range were more likely to emphasize the agency and creativity of squatters as they built the city from the ground up (see, among others, Mangin & Turner 1968; Lobo 1982; Stokes 1995). Situating Peruvian rural-urban migration within national histories of colonial exploitation and indigenous disenfranchisement, renowned scholars in Peru like Jürgen Golte and José Matos Mar framed the establishment of peripheral neighborhoods as a "reconquest of Lima" by indigenous masses who

would change the face of the historically white, creole city to produce a more “authentic” Peru (Golte & Adams 1990; Matos Mar 1984). Similarly, Douglas Uzzell (1974) argued that migrants’ creation of “cholo” institutions—like informal housing settlements and savings cooperatives—forced Lima’s “creole” officials to “deal with cholos at the institutional level” (143), prompting changes in official rules. Thus, the indigenous poor went from being oppressed by law to bending it to suit their realities.

Other scholars have argued that Latin America’s illegal land appropriations evidence both the hegemony of colonial, clientelist, and capitalist systems and the creation of political-legal subjectivities capable of challenging them (Holston 1991; Caldeira 2017). Writing of property law and land usurpation in Brazil, James Holston (1991; 2008) argues that the historical function of land law in Brazil is to perpetuate irresolution and force extra-legal solutions that benefit elites capable of manipulating formal and informal systems. Contemporary land appropriations by the lower classes, however, show how the poor can also adopt these techniques, deploying law and legal irresolution to their advantage.

Although there are regressive elements in the popular quest for housing—which reaffirm legal property regimes that have historically disenfranchised the lower classes—like Uzzell (1974), Holston suggests there is revolutionary potential in the activities of the poor both shaping the city and being inscribed in law. Moreover, contrary to Lefebvre’s assertion that property rights delimit the poor’s opportunities for creative appropriation, Holston contends that the quest for housing rights can catalyze broader demands for a right to the city and the development of an “urban citizenship” based on the “principle of residence” (2013, 259). He further argues that Brazilians develop a sense of their urban citizenship—that is, a sense of their rights to inclusion, participation, and belonging in the city—through acts of “city-making,” which include building their own homes, organizing campaigns to procure infrastructure, raising a family, planting a garden, and myriad other

acts that they perceive as “growing the city productively” (262–263). In this framework, rights to the city are grounded in “productive residence” and are experienced most acutely when people are confronted with “the threat of eviction, [and] of losing what they have built” (267).

Despite their differences, these various scholarly interpretations of informal urbanization in Latin America are broadly consonant with Lefebvre’s ideals of a city made by and for its inhabitants. The protagonists can be understood as a variant of Marx’s working class, simultaneously integrated into and marginalized by a capitalist system. Their claims to space—while couched in the potentially constraining language of property and housing (see Murphy 2015; Marcuse 2014)—become a site from which to make broader demands for inclusion in the city.

Nonetheless, the conflicts and contradictions that arise as Latin Americans enact this form of urban citizenship suggest a need to further clarify the meaning of “inhabitation.” As Purcell (2002) suggests, Lefebvre’s framework, while valuable, leaves us with questions about the scale of the urban community to which people belong, the issue of trans-urban inhabitants who may contribute to urban experience in multiple places but in different ways, and how differential contributions to place should relate to rights to the city (i.e. rights to appropriate space and participate in decisions that shape the city). Relatedly, Latin Americans confront the issue of how the contributor’s right to the city relates to reified property. Can use and contributions to city-making accumulate to produce property as a thing that can be held in reserve, rented, or exchanged? Or must rights to space be constantly enacted?

While use and exchange value are diametrically opposed in Lefebvrian frameworks, anthropologists have integrated both into a broad understanding of property as the “network of social relations that governs the conduct of people with respect to the use and disposition of things” (Hoebel 1966, 424; in Hann 1998, 4). In Peruvian shantytowns, intense cultural and political work goes into ensuring that landed property—even in its objectified, speculative mode—remains

embedded in a local moral economy.⁶ This work of embedding is accomplished through the phrase “hacer vivencia,” which may be translated as either “to do residency” or “to produce lived experience.” It is typically heard only in Peru’s shantytowns where retaining rights to space requires repeatedly asserting one’s status as an active and worthy inhabitant. In Pachacútec, people may do this by: demonstrating that they “need” land, contributing to community and infrastructural development projects, participating in political demonstrations, and making themselves visible in the registries of various governing bodies to ensure the community as a whole receives development assistance, and that they, as individuals, are officially recognized as inhabitants. Understanding the emergence of a multifaceted concept of vivencia and its relation to use and exchange value in Lima’s shantytowns requires examining Peru’s history of “self-help” housing and clientelist titling policies.

Urbanizing Lima: Between Appropriation and Property

While Lima’s shantytowns have long been demonized as icons of urban disorder, they have also been institutionalized in Peru as a reasonable route to low-cost housing for the poor and acclaimed internationally as models of settler-driven urbanization. Filtered through the scholarship of public intellectuals like John Turner and Hernando de Soto, Peru’s shantytowns inspired the two major international housing policies of the twentieth century: sites and services upgrading (1970s), and market enabling strategies of property formalization (1990s)⁷. These two policy paradigms highlight consistent and concurrent tensions in Peru’s self-help housing policies, including the focus on community contributions as producing rights to property, and the fixation on official documents to certify and secure this right.

⁶ Karl Polanyi (1944) developed the concept of “embeddedness” to describe the difference between pre-industrial and market capitalist economies, in which the latter had become unmoored from their social constraints.

⁷ Scholars argue the international community embraced these theories because they aligned with liberal and neoliberal capitalist ideologies dominant in those historical moments (Calderón 2002; Harris 2003).

As rural migrants flooded into Lima—first in pursuit of jobs and education, and later fleeing the violence of Peru’s dirty war against the Maoist insurgency Shining Path—governors and legislators sought ways to win over this growing political constituency while moderating the rapid expansion of the city. Their pioneering solution in 1961 was Law 13517 on Marginal Settlements. This was the first of many similar laws in Latin America⁸ that, rather than remove illegal settlements, sought to officially recognize and “regularize” these occupations through a process of *saneamiento físico legal* (physical and legal cleansing) (Calderón 2013; Ramirez & Riofrio 2006). While officially prohibiting the formation of new invasions, Law 13517 promised to help organized communities transform their precarious settlements into dignified, fully serviced urbanizations, and to legally recognize the property rights of inhabitants; however, the provision prohibiting new invasions was selectively enforced. Moreover, while legalization under Law 13517 was initially dependent on complying with urbanization norms, Peru’s congress decoupled physical and legal land regularization when it could not meet its obligations to finance urban infrastructure. This generated a pattern in which squatters seized land, legalized their settlements and individual property holdings, and installed infrastructure after the fact at a pace dependent on settler initiative and their ability to garner public sympathy while proving themselves a political force to be reckoned with (Calderón 2002; Fernández Maldonado 2010; Dietz 1998; Stokes 1995).

From 1968–1975, Peru’s left-wing dictator, General Juan Velasco, enhanced this process legally, discursively, and politically. He passed expropriation laws⁹ that facilitated the remodeling of *barriadas* illegally settled on private land for the purpose of providing modest but dignified housing for settlers (Calderón 2013). He gave speeches that stated land should serve a “social function in a new system of justice” and rightly belonged to “those who work it” and not those who “charge rent

⁸ See Calderón (2013) and Clichevsky (2006) for dates and details of these policies.

⁹ Decreto de Ley 17803 -1969; Decreto de Ley 19955 - 1972.

without tilling” (Velasco 2005 [1969], 282). And he set highly publicized political precedent for relocating squatters from private lands to vacant, public land where the state could more easily support settlers’ housing initiatives. Following a massive and violent land invasion in 1971, Velasco heeded the wisdom of bishops who described the “injustice suffered by landless Peruvians” and the moral imperative to “give dignity and opportunity to the poor” (Blondet 2005, 291), and relocated squatters to vacant lands to the south of Lima. With the support of the government agency SINAMOS (National System of Social Mobilization), settlers organized themselves into representative bodies authorized to engage with state programs on the community’s behalf, and converted this land into the self-managed urban community of Villa el Salvador (Comunidad Urbana Autogestionaria de Villa el Salvador) (Collier 1976).

Architect John Turner was conducting research in Peru’s shantytowns when these regularization laws were first debated and implemented, and wrote eloquently of squatters who, rather than waiting for costly government housing that reduced the full meaning of urban habitation to an ascetic, bureaucratically conceived “habitat” (Lefebvre 1996), built their homes and neighborhoods progressively as their needs demanded and means permitted (Mangin & Turner 1968). Arguing that the poor should be applauded for their initiative rather than demonized for the illegality of their actions, Turner’s work inspired international sites and service programs, and legitimated Peru’s regularization efforts. While these programs were arguably conservative compared to Turner’s more anarchist ideals (Harris 2003), they nonetheless institutionalized a negotiation between planning ideals and resident praxis, and, more so than cities of the North Atlantic, approach Lefebvre’s ideals of a dialectic relation between “science and political power” (Lefebvre 1996, 156).

Peru’s history of land appropriations created a situation in which poverty, active use, and community contributions gave squatters moral claims to property. Nonetheless, shantytown

inhabitants also wanted official recognition of these claims materialized through national land titles and *constancias de posesion* (paper certificates of possession distributed by local governing bodies) (Skrabut 2018a). Though documents have historically been used by the powerful in Latin America as tools of dispossession and abuse (Gordillo 2006; Arguedas 1985), Peruvian squatters hoped that documents could be repurposed to defend their land claims against the abuses of governors, elites and other land usurpers, particularly if they had to be absent due to the shifting demands of life and labor (Mangin & Turner 1968; Field 2007). They also valued land titles as symbols of their improved social standing as respectable property owners (Calderón 2013; also Holston 2008; Murphy 2015). Like liberal political theorists, squatters asserted a mutually reinforcing relationship between documents and use rights, arguing that titles certified and strengthened ties to land, and encouraged investment and participation in their communities (Lloyd 1980; Calderón 2013). In practice, however, documents also allow land rights to be detached from physical occupancy, facilitating the use of urban land as a savings and security strategy, and creating possibilities for popular speculation (Appadurai 1996; Skrabut 2018a).

It was precisely this feature of documents that made land titles the focus of neoliberal housing policies concerned with formalizing and financializing property. In the late 1980s, Peruvian economist and neoliberal ideologue Hernando de Soto gained worldwide attention for his assertion that poverty had a legal solution in land titles. He likened the poor's informal land claims to “dead capital,” and argued that formalizing these claims—by distributing titles and inscribing them in a public registry—would give them life in an expanded formal market where they could serve as collateral for loans that the poor could use to lift themselves out of poverty (de Soto 2001).

In a policy context of structural adjustment and neoliberal “shock therapy,” Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori embraced de Soto's ideas. With a loan from the World Bank, Fujimori established the Commission to Formalize Informal Property (COFOPRI), which distributed over

500,000 titles in Lima from 1996–2000. Although the pace of titling slowed following Fujimori’s resignation in November 2000, COFOPRI has continued its work, distributing almost as many titles from 2000–2011 as were distributed from 1961–1996 (Calderón 2013).

Though it is tempting to see these two policy paradigms, represented in the figures of Turner and de Soto, as indexing major shifts in the ideologies and practices of property in Peru, detailed accounts of Peru’s informal settlements suggest more continuity than divergence between these two eras. Titling has long been highly politicized in Peru, with governors jockeying for the authority to distribute land titles and other official certifications of property possession since at least 1961. The clientelist use of titles continued under Fujimori’s neo-populist regime, and, while titling authority now officially rests with regional governments, the national government retains this authority in states of emergency that, conveniently, persisted in Peru from 2006–2016. Moreover, while there is some indication that issues of inadequate inhabitation and absentee ownership (identified in the introduction of this article) increased in the era of massive titling (Calderón 2013; Skrabut 2018), careful readings of texts about Lima’s largest *barriadas*, and the frequent allusions to property speculation in Peruvian legislation, indicate that these issues plagued Peru’s *barriadas* long before these policies came into effect (see Smith 1994; Irigoyen 1988). It would seem the citizens of Lima have thus long embraced both use and exchange value to the extent they supported their diverse “strategies of living.” As I demonstrate in the next two sections, efforts to navigate between these dimensions of value, and to ensure that even commodified property remains embedded in the local moral economy, dramatically shapes social dynamics in Pachacútec, a site founded at the height of this neoliberal titling fervor.

Origin Stories and Dramatis Personae

Pachacútec took its place in Peru’s history of property and land appropriation in February 2000 when, mimicking General Velasco, President Fujimori relocated thousands of squatters from

illegal invasions on private lands to a barren desert in the northernmost area of Callao [FIGURE 3]. During my fieldwork, I encountered several versions of Pachacútec's origin story. The driest variant is typed on strips of paper and tucked into the wallets of local police officers. It helps them interpret the conflicts that arise in their patrol area and respond uniformly to requests for information about Pachacútec's evolution.

According to this two-paragraph account, in 1988 President Alan García began a housing project known as "The Special Project City Pachacútec" (*El Proyecto Especial Ciudad Pachacútec*) and sold the land to impoverished citizens of Metropolitan Lima for a nominal fee. These citizens, in collaboration with the government, formed twenty-three cooperative housing associations to collectively build the new settlement. However, due to its peripheral location, lack of infrastructure, limited transportation to Lima's center, and minimal government support, few owners chose to actively inhabit. Thus, the sole function of these cooperatives was to protect the lots against the constant threats from invasions and land traffickers. The land remained relatively uninhabited until February 3, 2000, when President Fujimori relocated thousands of squatters to the area and promised to develop it into a "model city" called the Pilot Project New Pachacútec (*Proyecto Piloto Nuevo Pachacútec*). Invasions of surrounding land soon followed, including areas officially owned by the Special Project cooperatives. [FIGURE 4]

Settler accounts add texture to this official picture, emphasizing how electoral politics intersect with individual life projects to shape the periphery. In interviews, many Pachacutanos reported that President Fujimori orchestrated an invasion on private lands to incite a conflict he could heroically resolve just prior to the 2000 presidential elections. Despite the potential for political conflict, settlers took advantage of the opportunity to claim land in order to: facilitate their transitions to adulthood, resolve family conflicts by creating spatial distance between quarrelling

relatives, flee abusive partners, own rather than rent, or move from an un-urbanized shantytown into an imminently developing Pilot Project.

However, one of the most compelling versions of Pachacútec's origin story I encountered took the form of a play entitled *The Song of the Crickets: A Drama in Three Acts*. It was written by the first elected representatives of the Pilot Project, known as the Central Executive Committee (CEC), and was given to me by the Secretary of that committee who believed it would help me understand Pachacútec's "cultural reality." According to the inscription on the play's inside cover, its purpose was to reveal the "characters typical of the early formation of a city . . . [and their] quotidian, reflexive, hopeful and dramatic experiences."¹⁰ Put another way, the play is a paradigmatic articulation of the stories Pachacutanos "tell themselves about themselves" (Geertz 1973, 448).

In Act One, we meet the archetypal figures involved in founding Pachacútec: a female settler concerned about the stigma of living in apparent poverty; a virtuous but impoverished single mother who makes the best of this residence of last resort by organizing a "Mother's Club"; her child with a persistent cough, caused by Pachacútec's notoriously cold and damp climate; and an enterprising male neighbor and self-nominated dirigente (community leader) who organizes settlers into Residential Groups and establishes a representational democratic structure for the settlement so communities can engage with authorities. We later meet two "bad dirigentes" who facilitate the distribution of land and government food rations and strive to profit from this mediating role. These bad dirigentes plot to evict "a *turista* (tourist). A woman from the jungle who only arrives on weekends," so they can sell her parcel to one of the "many individuals asking for them." They publicly accuse the *turista* of having another house and planning to sell this one. The *turista* protests that she needs the land because, although she works as a live-in domestic in Lima during the week, she is a single mother with no other place to call her own. Nonetheless, the bad dirigentes convince

¹⁰ I translate the play directly in this text, but do not provide the citation to protect the writers' identities.

neighbors to evict her. Legally, shantytown homes must be used for immediate housing. “The law is the law” and they need people who will “*haga vivencia permanente*” (inhabit constantly). Eventually neighbors discover the bad dirigentes seek to profit from reselling the parcel and the turista is restored to her land. The play ends abruptly when the child dies of pneumonia and her mother pleads “When will the water and electricity come?!” reminding the audience of the life and death stakes of infrastructural delays caused by the everyday dramas of good neighbors, bad dirigentes, and complicated turista cases.

This plot provides numerous insights into Pachacútec’s social dynamics. The mother represents the ideal inhabitant of Pachacútec: someone who, out of necessity, resides there full time, organizes community development activities, and aligns with ideals of gendered virtue. We also learn that these attributes can appear independently in different individuals, like the turista who appears poor and virtuous but does not contribute to community development, or the dirigentes who organize community initiatives but may be driven by profit motives. Relatedly, we discover that what it means to *hacer vivencia*, or inhabit, Pachacútec is a complicated and sensitive issue, and that efforts to determine who adequately inhabits can generate conflict, injustice, and profiteering. This dynamic relates to the play’s central lesson: the law is not socially just in itself but requires community interpretation and irregular application to ensure justice. Without such adjudications, the turista’s well-meaning strategy of living can be mistaken for speculation, and a dirigente’s unscrupulous speculation can be disguised as an effort to preserve use value. Finally, we learn that dirigentes play important mediating roles, negotiating between official ideals and lived realities of inhabitation. In popular discourse, there is little room for a morally neutral dirigente; dirigentes are either fair and just, helping the community to progress, or profit from the poor, impeding both social justice and urban development with grave consequences for inhabitants.

The *Song of the Crickets* highlights how moral essentialism can intersect with the everyday ambiguities of residency to shape social conflict in Pachacútec. However, fully appreciating the complexity of residency and political representation requires scrutinizing the diverse forms of inhabitation occurring in the everyday.

Inhabiting by Degrees

Among the most celebrated components of Lefebvre's "Right to the City" is the idea that this right belongs first to "those who inhabit"; however, a framework in which rights are "earned by living out the routines of everyday life in spaces of the city" raises questions about how we delimit "the city" to which inhabitants contribute (Purcell 2002, 102), whether differential contributions lead to differential rights, and whether rights are earned or must be constantly enacted.

The salience of urban scale and the continuum of contributions to urban experience first emerged as I was formulating my research project in Pachacútec. A senior anthropology professor at a public university in Lima warned that, having no industry of its own, Pachacútec might be a *ciudad dormitorio*—a bedroom city for people who carried out most of their social and laboral existence in more industrial or commercially vibrant districts of Lima. In this framing, Pachacutanos belong to the urban community of Lima but had been "rejected from the centers toward the peripheries, dispossessed of the city and . . . the best outcomes of its activity" (Lefebvre 1996, 179). They spent their lives commuting between distant districts and limited their "inhabiting"—their moments of spontaneity and encounter—to holiday and weekend excursions in the urban core.

Yet ethnographic research in Pachacútec, a place that many people *do* inhabit and are working to build and govern, suggests it may be worth re-centering urban activity, or at least recognizing the existence of multiple centers. If we see Pachacútec as the center to which people seek rights, then inhabitants of Lima who use Pachacútec as a "bedroom"—primarily men who work in other areas of Lima—might be said to inhabit Pachacútec less completely than women and

children whose lives are more tied to their residential communities. The gendered divisions of labor that make women responsible for childrearing also make them more likely to contribute to home and community building activities, participate in spontaneous play and encounter, and privilege local opportunities for employment. If the right to the city is based on inhabitation then *citadinship* would skew female, giving women greater ownership and appropriation rights than men.

Similarly, some Pachacutanos suggested a *citadinry* that skewed toward youth—individuals who are products of, and largely bound to, their local neighborhoods. At the time of my fieldwork, the district government in charge of Pachacútec had implemented a “children’s participatory budgeting” initiative based on this theory. As one adult facilitator explained, “children think better than adults. They are more attuned to their reality. Adults work far away so they are not so in touch [with what happens here]. Their vision is in other sites, on other issues. Children are the ones who live the reality of their locale, so they have a better understanding of the necessities” (Interview, September 2009).

Nonetheless, it was broadly understood that even the contributions of women and children who actively inhabited could be attenuated in a number of ways. The least controversial form of qualified inhabitation occurred when mothers of young children left Pachacútec to live with relatives in other districts during winter months, when the cold and damp climate was most likely to cause respiratory disease. Although such seasonal inhabitation was widely accepted as legitimate, it nonetheless disrupted women and children’s contributions to the production of lived urban space. It was only by maintaining social ties in Pachacútec and appealing to the sympathies of neighbors and *dirigentes* that seasonal inhabitants retained rights to Pachacútec. Thus, social networks, facilitated in part by moral standing and reputation, provide a means of retaining rights to Pachacútec, while those without such ties are not treated so generously (Skrabut 2018a).

At the other end of the vivencia spectrum are people who are so active in the community that they appropriate multiple lots. Many of Pachacútec's most active community members retained control over multiple lots or had built especially large houses by squatting on adjacent plots of land. This common but infrequently discussed practice was evident when Maritza, a community breakfast coordinator, complained that her neighborhood was virtually deserted. "Everyone has abandoned their houses to live in Bahía Blanca¹¹ [an adjacent neighborhood]. . . . Because they don't have land titles yet, the dirigentes there are demanding vivencia." (Interview, July 2007).

A week later, I accompanied volunteers for a local women's rights organization as they went house by house in Bahía Blanca to inform residents about upcoming anti-domestic violence workshops. During one interaction, a resident explained that what she and her neighbors needed from the state wasn't domestic violence education but land titles. The absence and possibility of obtaining a land title tied her to this community in terms of physical presence and participation obligations. With these titles in hand, she hoped she and her neighbors would no longer have to perform property so vigilantly and would be free to obtain formal employment or claim additional land elsewhere. This woman's response also suggests that, for women in precarious family situations, property was a more valuable form of state assistance than violence awareness and self-esteem workshops; it gave them assets and options should they need to exit abusive relationships (Moser 2016; Skrabut 2018b).

Pachacutanos' general desire to move away from participatory organizations positions ideals of productive residency against broader ideologies of social mobility. This tension is perhaps inherent to "peripheral urbanization" processes that presume a transformation from illegality to modern, formal urbanism (Caldeira 2017). In Lima, due to the historical and ideological divide between formal and informal neighborhoods, improving yourself as an individual involved moving

¹¹ I have changed the name of this and other specific neighborhoods within Pachacútec.

away from participatory, grassroots institutions that revolved around satisfying basic needs like housing and nutrition, and into private jobs. Gaby, for instance, had been a coordinator for Pachacútec's community breakfast program from 2000–2005. Although she loved this work, she gave it up for formal employment as a security guard. When I inquired about this switch, she responded, “In life we pass through certain stages, and I have already passed that stage” (Interview, July 2007).

While Pachacutanos recognize that a particularly intense form of inhabitation is required to be deserving of rights to the city in Pachacútec, in most cases the eventual goal was to cease this form of inhabitation; to earn rights to the space and set their sights elsewhere—either to additional property accumulation, or to a different horizon of participation and engagement in the wider city.

Property and Political Participation

Different forms of inhabitation and use, combined with the ideals of transformation that govern shantytown life, raise further questions about who has rights to participate in local politics. In 2007, block level representatives of Pachacútec's Pilot Project were actively debating these issues in their efforts to reform their electoral statute. Since their inception, Peru's shantytowns have been models of popular democratic organizing, as community members work together to physically build their settlements and negotiate with government entities for legal status, infrastructure, and state services. While the overarching democratic structure of these communities has remained constant since at least 1961—consistently involving a neighborhood General Assembly that meets regularly and elects a Board of Directors to coordinate neighborhood work parties, collect dues, and negotiate with government entities—their precise organization has varied in accordance with shifting administrative requirements for recognizing neighborhoods as juridical entities.¹² In the first seven

¹² For examples of changing legal requirements for these organizations, see Law 13517-1961; Ordenanza Municipal 038-2005/MDV-ALC; Ordenanza Municipal 04-2017/MDV; Nuevo Pachacútec Oasis de Esperanza: Plan de Desarrollo Estratégico al 2010.

years of Pachacútec's existence, residents went through several iterations of representative bodies and electoral statutes as the number and location of residents changed and the government organization responsible for supporting their development shifted. The issue prompting these latest reform efforts was how to deal with title-holding dirigentes who no longer lived full-time in Pachacútec, had overstayed their terms, and lost community support, yet continued to present themselves to outsiders as legitimate representatives of the Pilot Project. According to their critics, the members of the Central Executive Committee [CEC] used the name of Pachacútec to attract outside funding for projects of their choosing (including producing the *Song of the Crickets*), and promoted a millenarian indigenous identity for Pachacútec by appearing in parades and cultural events in other districts dressed as Inca elite—without the approval of their constituents and, it seemed, without actively inhabiting Pachacútec.¹³ [FIGURE 5]

While CEC members had been active inhabitants and leaders in Pachacútec when they were elected in 2002 and worked diligently to obtain legal land titles in the area, they now lived almost full time in homes in central Lima. Daniel, the leader of the opposition movement, opened one statute reform meeting by describing this state of affairs as “an insult to our intelligence. We are a participatory, democratic community. Many of us are professionals” (Meeting, August 12, 2007). Another community member described the CEC as a group of delinquents who exploited Pachacútec's image for personal gain, unlike other dirigentes who “worked their fingers to the bone to help their community progress.” In addition to ousting these current representatives, meeting participants were concerned with creating a statute that would ensure future leaders were true citizens of Pachacútec, embedded in and committed to the community. The relationship between land titles and community commitment loomed large in these discussions.

¹³ Several dirigentes who proudly traced their recent family histories to the Andes and spoke Quechua with their parents described the CEC performances as absurd.

Political and academic discussions of land titles tend to fall into two camps: those who believe titles tie people to land, encouraging greater investment and participation (see Mangin & Turner 1968; Lloyd 1980); and those who believe titles free titleholders from community obligations and, relatedly, encourage commodification and speculation (see Field 2007; Appadurai 1996). Law 13517 aligned with the first framing, stating “once land titles had been granted only those who possess these titles can be members of Settlers Associations or Housing Cooperatives” (Law 13517-1961, Title VII, Article 66). Pachacútec’s electoral statute followed this precedent and required that political representatives be titleholders. Despite current challenges, many residents believed they should retain this requirement to ensure commitment to the community and out of respect for Pachacútec’s new, more dignified reality. As one participant asserted, while occupants of Pachacútec had once been “invaders,” today they “had a different reality”:

Now we are property holders and many of us have property inscribed in the public registry. . . . I think if a person wants to lead our organization, they have to be clear property holders. . . . None of this other nonsense where they have power of attorney or they are the spouse of the titleholder. . . . I don’t mean that non-titleholders who want to participate can’t make their voices heard. But they can’t be representatives of our organization. . . . We have to respect the new reality that we have all fought for. (Statute Reform Meeting, Aug. 12, 2007)

Others disagreed, pointing to a more complex relationship between property and political participation. As one young and well-spoken participant argued:

To those of you who say elected leaders need to be titleholders, I would respond that not 100 percent of active dirigentes have them. Are you going to prevent them running for office? Many people don’t have titles because they had to be radical [in the fight for land

rights¹⁴]. . . . That's why I don't have a title today, and many of you also don't have one. Are you saying my rights shouldn't be respected in the statute? *YO VIVO* (I LIVE HERE; INHABIT)! Since 2000! I am legally married to my wife. My kids study in [the local school]. . . . When you lay legal foundations you have to think holistically. I am a member of the local Parents' Association because my kids study here. They don't ask me for a property title. . . . The statute should say titleholders and people registered as being in the process of titling.” (Statute Reform Meeting, Aug. 12, 2007; emphasis in original speech).

In this framework, what mattered was not the title itself but a *documented will to title*, and engagement in the process of transforming the settlement from illegal to legal and from marginal to modern.

One of the few female meeting participants clarified that the issue was not titles, per se, but ensuring community representatives were true *ciudadinos* practicing productive residence in Pachacútec. She described this distinction between worthy and unworthy representatives with reference to “*vivencia*” (inhabitation):

There is a section in our statute that says representatives need to be titleholders. Why is this? Because we are tired of outsiders coming in, taking on an official responsibility and disappearing. But we could instead have an addendum in our statute that says the representative must be a *morador permanente* (permanent dweller), a status affirmed by their neighbors and block-level *dirigentes*. Maybe they don't have a title, but yes, they *hace vivencia permanente* (inhabit constantly). . . . Many of our companions here don't have titles, but they are working solely for Pachacútec . . . they *hace vivencia* (do living, inhabit) even when the cold comes. . . . And there are many people who have titles and don't do anything for Pachacútec. . . . We need to adapt to this reality.

¹⁴ The speaker may be referring to how arrest records, acquired through battles with police or landowners, can be used to deny legal title to settlers, or to retribution by authorities who refuse settlers the documentary proof of residency required for title.

Surveying Vivencia

What it meant to “hacer vivencia” in Pachacútec and how much of Pachacútec could be considered inhabited were political questions with important stakes for everyone involved. Recognizing the relation between statistical knowledge and political control, local dirigentes and politicians at different levels of government kept their own resident counts, rendering the multivalent and contested concept of vivencia legible by privileging whatever aspect of it they most cared about (Scott 1998; Appadurai 2012). When I asked one dirigente if he thought the 2007 national census would benefit Pachacútec with its promise to accurately count all Peruvians where they lived, he explained that local leaders already had this information. They kept their own population counts to portray a cohesive picture of “community” in their negotiations with external authorities, and to secure the relationship between inhabitation and political participation internally.

As a dirigente, I know I have three hundred dwellers in my neighborhood. Then when it is time to vote [on a development project or new representatives] I have 301. . . . People who don't inhabit arrive just to vote, and the people who don't inhabit do not have that right. . . . That's why dirigentes keep their own registries. How many parcels there are, how many people inhabit and how many people don't, and who has to vote and who should not.
(Interview, August 21, 2007)

Similarly, in 2008, district government employees worked diligently to produce their own resident counts so they would know how many people to expect at public gatherings and political rallies. [FIGURE 6]

For each Residential Group, a district employee constructed a chart that included the parcel number and whether the supposed resident actively inhabited the space. When I asked how the surveyors had determined which houses were inhabited, a functionary explained:

First, the surveyors live here [are residents of Pachacútec], so they know how to recognize if someone inhabits or not. But we also had a *charla informativa* (informational talk). . . . If there is a garden you know someone lives there. You look to see if the house is neglected: if the lock is rusted, if there is dust on the walls, if the sand inside the house is dry. If you see this, you know the person does not live there. Now, it could be that the person only comes by once in a while, but on the day you arrive they happen to be at home. That's why you also have to ask the neighbors or the clerk at the bodega if the person arrives once a month, only on weekends, or if they inhabit constantly." (Interview, Aug. 11, 2008)

In other words, physical signs of inhabitation were to be corroborated socially. Neighborly sympathies, combined with the authorization of elected dirigentes, were the most important factors in determining *vivencia*, often outweighing material metrics.

The complexity of determining *vivencia* in Pachacútec, and the role of neighbors and dirigentes in mediating these determinations, were revealed in the "observations" inscribed on the back of survey forms. One observation stated that settlers had "certificates of inhabitation recognized by the District government and given to the people who required them [because they did not have land titles]." This indicated the importance of documents in signaling inhabitation as well as the willingness of local leaders to provide their own official certifications, potentially undermining the authorizations of more distant governors. Another observation stated, "Neighbors and the dirigente declare that the empty lots have occupants who only arrive at night due to their jobs," indicating that even if these inhabitants might not be useful for the purposes of midday political rallies, neighbors endorsed their rights to these spaces. Most telling, however, was one survey form that did not have a resident count but merely a top sheet with the name of an influential dirigente, the number of lots, and a statement that "100% hacen *vivencia*." Unlike other settlements where surveyors were both empowered and required to verify occupancy themselves, in this case the

dirigente's broad community support and relationship with district functionaries meant his word was sufficient and not to be questioned. This attested to the capacity of some local leaders to retain control over determinations of inhabitation, and thus the distribution of land within their settlements.

All told, in a survey of twenty-four settlements in the Pilot Project, totaling 9,080 lots, 59 percent were inhabited and 41 percent were labeled “no vive.” While these now long out of date numbers might have provided the district functionary with a useful indicator of how many people to expect at daytime political rallies—an important development activity in a “self-help” housing settlement—it greatly undercounts the number of people who would claim residency in Pachacútec, particularly if their land claims were threatened. It also reveals dirigentes' roles in mediating between ideals of community belonging and participation in shantytowns and the more complex realities of inhabitation. As I show in the next section, many dirigentes were rumored to be unjustly profiting from this mediating role and finding ways to extract exchange value from adjudicating inhabitation.

Trafficking and Mediating Use Value

One of the most common topics of discussion in statute reform meetings was the difference between “good dirigentes,” selflessly promoting Pachacútec's development, and “bad dirigentes,” operating as “land traffickers” and profiting from selling land that did not legally belong to them. Trafficking accusations were never issued directly but described obliquely as open secrets. Speakers suggested that everyone *knew* which dirigentes were “walking the wrong path.” In a questionnaire I distributed to forty local dirigentes, 40 percent described some version of “leadership problems” as the primary impediment to Pachacútec's development, with 20 percent specifically citing land trafficking and other forms of self-interested profiteering.

Yet the line between well-meaning development efforts and illicit land trafficking was blurry in practice. The ambiguity between dirigentes and traffickers begins with the initial invasion.

Invasion organizers who help settlers resist eviction are described as “good dirigentes,” while organizers who are absent or unable to defend the settlement are labeled traffickers (see Lloyd 1980). This ambiguity persists as the settlement develops, as both initial invasion organizers and subsequent elected leaders are quickly perceived to be exploiting their neighbors’ neediness for personal gain. As the head of a local soup kitchen suggested, “the dirigentes are only out for themselves . . . they see their work as a business for themselves.” Linking the leadership of mostly male dirigentes to the lack of local employment opportunities, she reasoned that “the dirigentes always come in and, if they don’t work, what are they living off of? How are their families going to live? It’s logical right?” (Interview, July 2007).

The most common way dirigentes are accused of wrongfully profiting from their positions is by selling lots that are inadequately inhabited. Early research on invasions showed that founding settlers frequently charge admission fees to latecomers (see Lloyd 1980). Given that dirigentes are responsible for ensuring communities progress and align with ideals of progressive, “self-help” housing communities, practices of either charging admission fees or protecting the claims of not-fully inhabiting residents become morally charged, as people disagree about how to apply idealized understandings of *vivencia* to real-world cases.

As discussed in the previous section, dirigentes inserted themselves between government surveyors and the populations they represented to ensure surveyors left with the appropriate image of the community and its inhabitants. They explained when houses were inhabited despite appearances and provided surveyors with the documents of these presumptive inhabitants. Through this mediating role, dirigentes sought to have the final say in who actively inhabited the area and thus who district, regional, and national governors should recognize as having rights to Pachacútec.

Some people felt dirigentes went too far in protecting the claims of people who did not effectively inhabit. Hoping for a check on dirigentes’ power, neighbors asked various surveyors to

enter houses to see for themselves just how inhabited they were. Others believed dirigentes were too quick to evict people and sell lots to others who were equally unlikely to inhabit. They named this practice “trafficking.” As a local police chief claimed, “Dirigentes are traffickers of lots and never demand vivencia. . . . They are using the demand for vivencia as a pretext for trafficking” (Interview, July 2007). Beatriz, a long-term resident of Pachacútec, suggested dirigentes used government surveys as opportunities to redistribute housing, leading to official confusion about occupancy that precipitated more surveys.

Every time surveyors come, there is someone new in the house. Each house has three owners . . . it is never the same information. [The occupant] never matches who was on the paper [before] so they have to do it again. . . . Each time, the dirigente puts someone new in the house.” (Interview, October 2007)

Beatriz believed profit motives were behind this, since dirigentes could re-sell houses of absentee owners (or charge “admission fees” to newcomers) with the promise that new claimants would be formalized by the impending survey. Nonetheless, the multifaceted and contested nature of inhabitation blurred the line between sincere community development efforts and self-interested profit-seeking.

Using the Lefebvrian language of use value versus exchange value, we find a situation where the moral demand to preserve the use value of space, operating at various levels of government, facilitates exchange value. The ambivalent figure of the dirigente-trafficker emerges as money intervenes in fraught efforts to preserve use value, and anxieties about the moral status of these land transfers are projected onto the bodies of local leaders. As one dirigente candidly explained, you can’t distinguish a dirigente and a trafficker based on their actions. You can only do it “based on their attitude.”

Conclusion

During the March 2010 protest, it seemed that conflicts over adequate inhabitation and the moral standing of dirigentes were set aside as people banded together against the injustices of bourgeois property ownership. Yet even here, during a popular protest that was itself a prime example of spontaneous appropriation and encounter, there was evidence of deeper disagreements. One of my friends and key interlocutors introduced me to an older male dirigente. When I reminded him that we had met at a festival for his settlement's anniversary, he stated pointedly that coming to a few events didn't make me part of the pueblo, alluding to the conflict between owners and inhabitants that had prompted this protest and, perhaps, to all the people who had shown up today but weren't contributing to everyday experience in his neighborhood.

Another man approached my friend to ask if she would join an invasion he was organizing on land adjacent to her settlement. "The Regional Government hasn't done anything with it. Plus, we have other authorities on our side who said they would support us." She humored him and asked him to keep her informed as plans progressed. Then she humored me, explaining that he was a trafficker and she would have nothing to do with him.

Yet these issues faded into the background when protest leaders announced to the crowd that they had gotten what they came for: an agreement to halt evictions pending a hearing with appellate judges. "Today, we have sent a powerful message to the judges. When it comes to choosing between law and social justice, the judges need to side with social justice!" At this, the crowd cheered, as though it were obvious what social justice was.

In this article, I have shown that enacting rights to the city and preserving the use value of space has been an important force in Lima's urban politics of development. However, I have also shown that in this context, collectively realizing rights to the city, which include the right to appropriate space and participate in decisions related to its development, requires some agreement

about what it means to “inhabit” and demands that we think more critically about the relationship between the use value and exchange value of property and how both might be implicated in multifaceted strategies of living. While Lefebvre is highly critical of abstract property, which he frequently conflates with exchange value, Kofman and Lebas (1996, 21) suggest Lefebvre’s project does not imply the “denial of exchange against use.” Rather, Lefebvre wants to ensure that space retains its social embeddedness and recognizes that this effort often entails conflict. For Lefebvre (2009), overcoming the “separation and dissociations in space between a work (unique) and a commodity (repeated)” requires the “possession and collective management of space by a permanent intervention of “interested parties,” even with their multiple and sometimes contradictory interests” (195). From an academic and political theoretical perspective, this suggests reason to celebrate Pachacútec and similar settlements—where conflicts over adequate inhabitation and worthwhile use are the stuff of life and politics—as exemplars of the right to the city. Though, before we celebrate, it may be worth asking Pachacutanos how they feel about the insecurities, accusations, violent evictions, and unequal applications involved in realizing this ideal.

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