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# The **politics** of embodied urban precarity

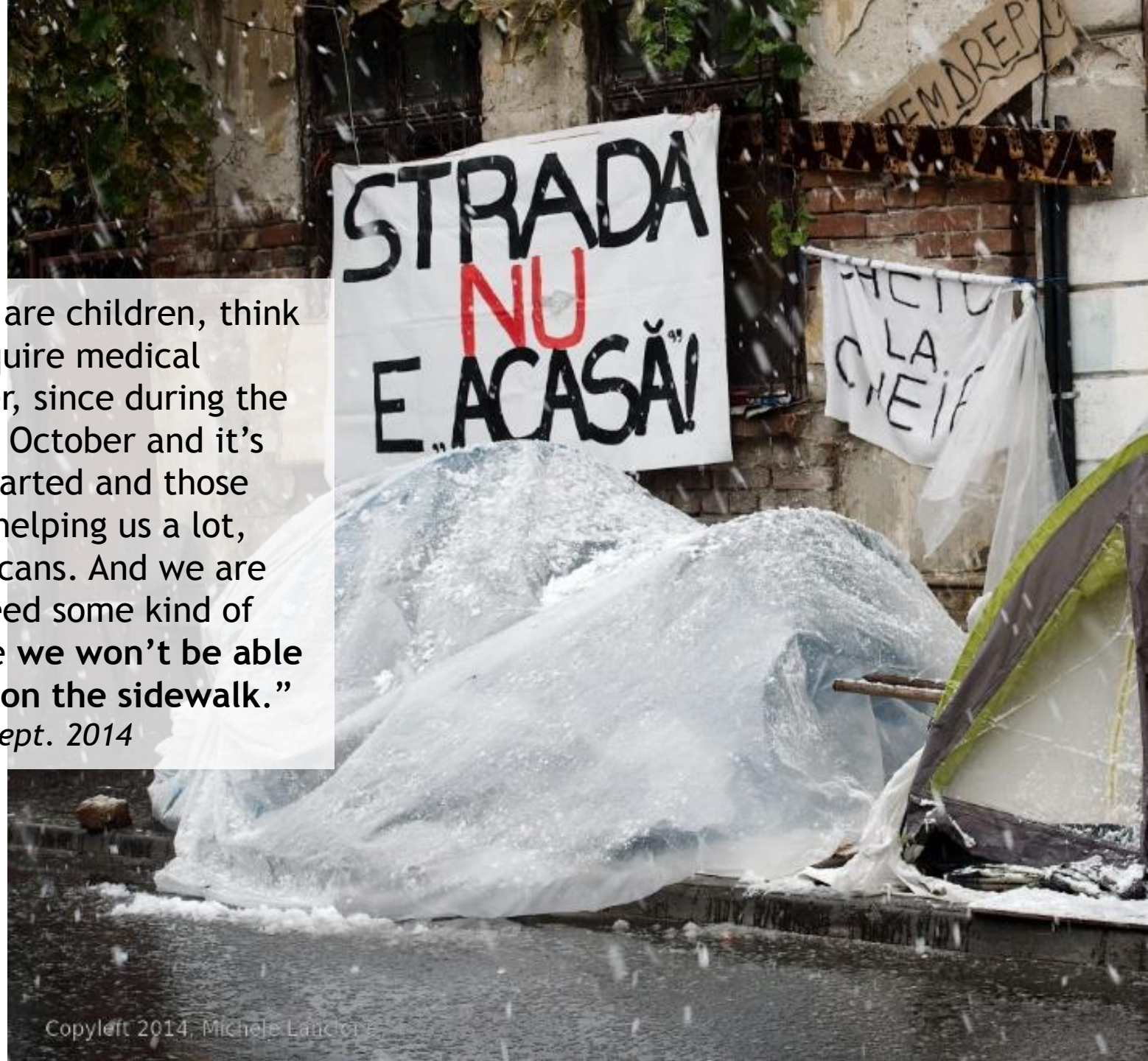
@michelelancione

m.lancione@sheffield.ac.uk

## An **entire** life

“[I]t’s very difficult. Think that there are children, think that there are elderly people who require medical assistance because of the bad weather, since during the night it’s very cold. We are already in October and it’s getting chillier. Raining has already started and those from an organisation, an NGO who is helping us a lot, have brought us tents and some food cans. And we are very thankful to them. But we also need some kind of house, a roof over our heads. Because **we won’t be able to remain our entire life, endlessly, on the sidewalk.**”

*Adi, bricklayer, evicted man. Bucharest, Sept. 2014*







## What is the **politics** of embodied urban precarity?

Precarity as a product and producer of the urban political. On the one hand, the absences underpinning precarious forms of home-less life are not simple 'voids' waiting to be filled by this or that intervention. On the other hand, what arises from the assemblage of those absences, is itself a producer of urban matters, forms, and affections.

**What is, in the lived experience of expulsion, that makes for an 'affair of the city'?**

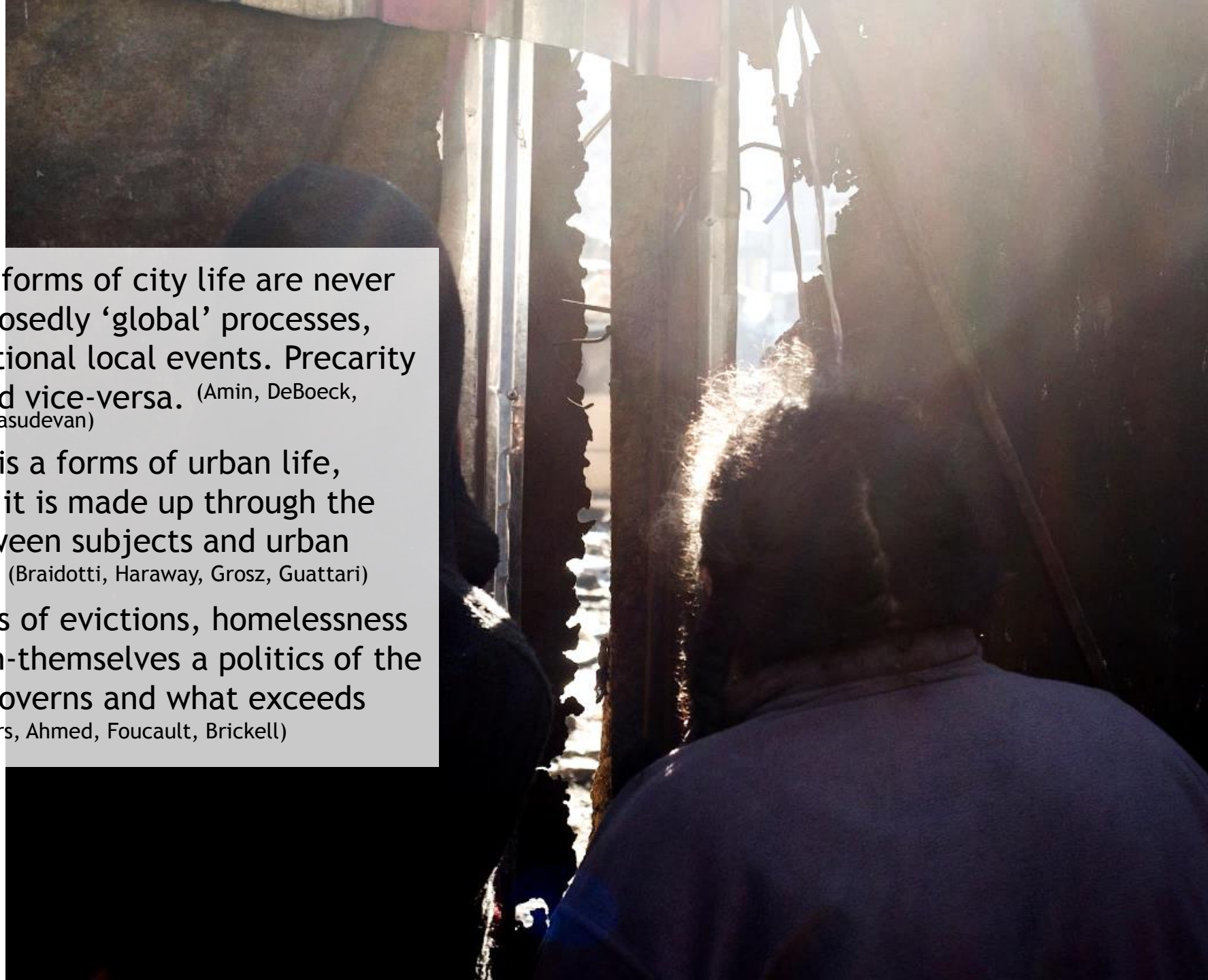


## Always in the **makings**

(I) **On urbanity** - Precarious forms of city life are never only a transposition of supposedly 'global' processes, nor simply effects of exceptional local events. Precarity is made through the city and vice-versa. (Amin, DeBoeck, McFarlane, Robinson, Pieterse, Simone, Vasudevan)

(II) **On the body** - Precarity is a forms of urban life, which is embodied because it is made up through the ongoing displacements between subjects and urban matters. It is performative. (Braidotti, Haraway, Grosz, Guattari)

(III) **On the politics** - Matters of evictions, homelessness and everyday life contain-in-themselves a politics of the city. It is both about what governs and what exceeds governmentality. (Butler, Stengers, Ahmed, Foucault, Brickell)



## How to?

Epistemology	Methodology	Orientation	Process analysed in the paper
City as machine, beyond localism and globalism through a post-colonial attitude; subjects as post-human (Amin, Latour - Braidotti, Haraway)	Attention to flows and processes; Focus on local histories and economies	How does the context intersect with the present?	<i>Pre-makings of precarity</i>
Homelessness as matter of continuous form of displacement; eviction as part of processes of home making and un-making (Brickell, Gowan, Lancione, Robinson)	Trace effect of displacement on the body; Understand subjectification	How is the subject affected?	<i>In-makings of precarity</i>
Politics as matter of bodily performances; when it comes to the city, the body is the surfaces that allows for the articulation of new ways of being in the city and new urban political to arise (Butler, McFarlane, Vasudevan, Simone)	Attention at the ways through which politics is assembled rather than given	What can the body do?	<i>Un-makings of precarity</i>
	Focus on governmentalities of the body and bio-political outcomes	How is governance re-asserted?	<i>Re-makings of precarity</i>



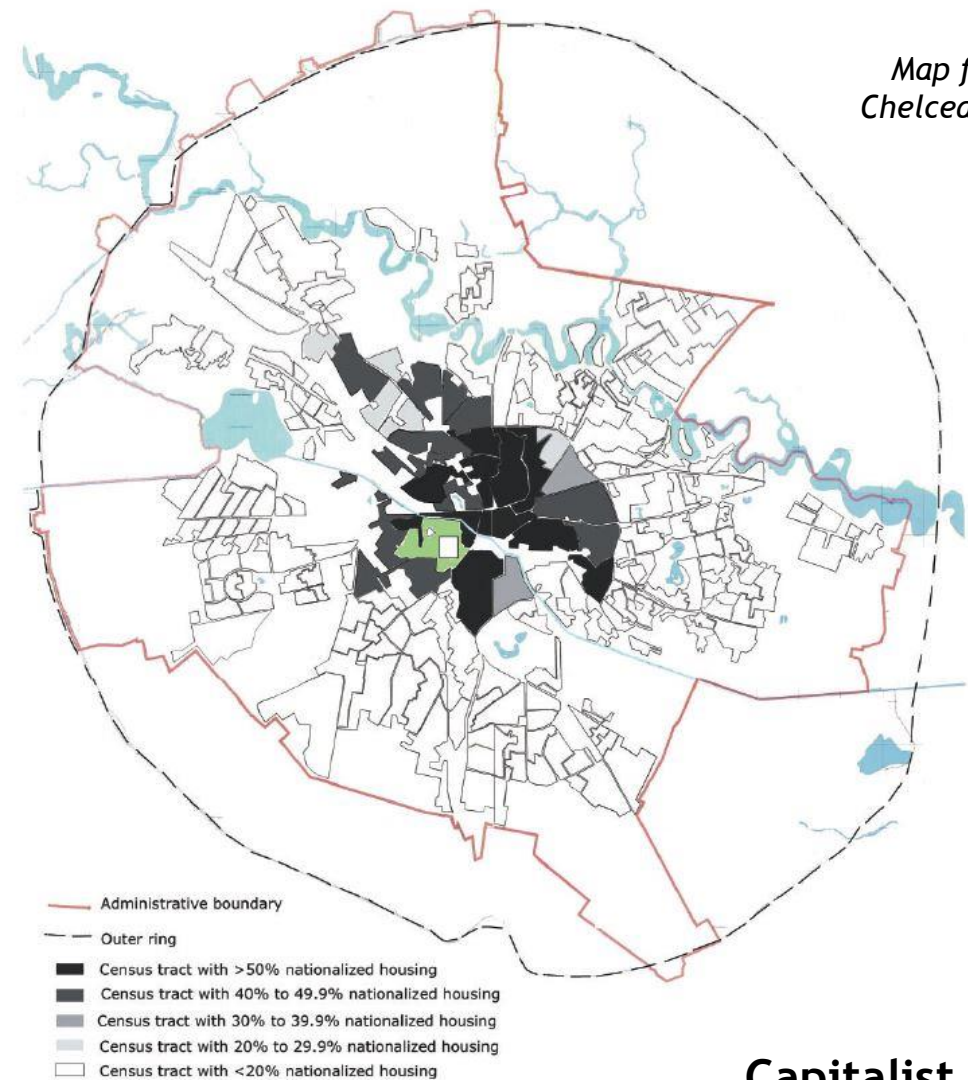
## Premakings

### Racialised makings

“Prisoners of war were Gypsies. Gypsies were slaves. Slaves were degenerate or flawed. Once the notion that Gypsies were less than human was accepted, the possibility that they were anything else [...] was not possible.” (Beck, 1989).



*“For sale, a prime lot of Gypsy slaves, to be sold by auction at the Monastery of St. Elias, 8 May 1852, consisting of 18 men, 10 boys, 7 women and 3 girls: in fine condition.” Wallachia. From Ian Hancock, The Pariah Syndrome, 1987.”*

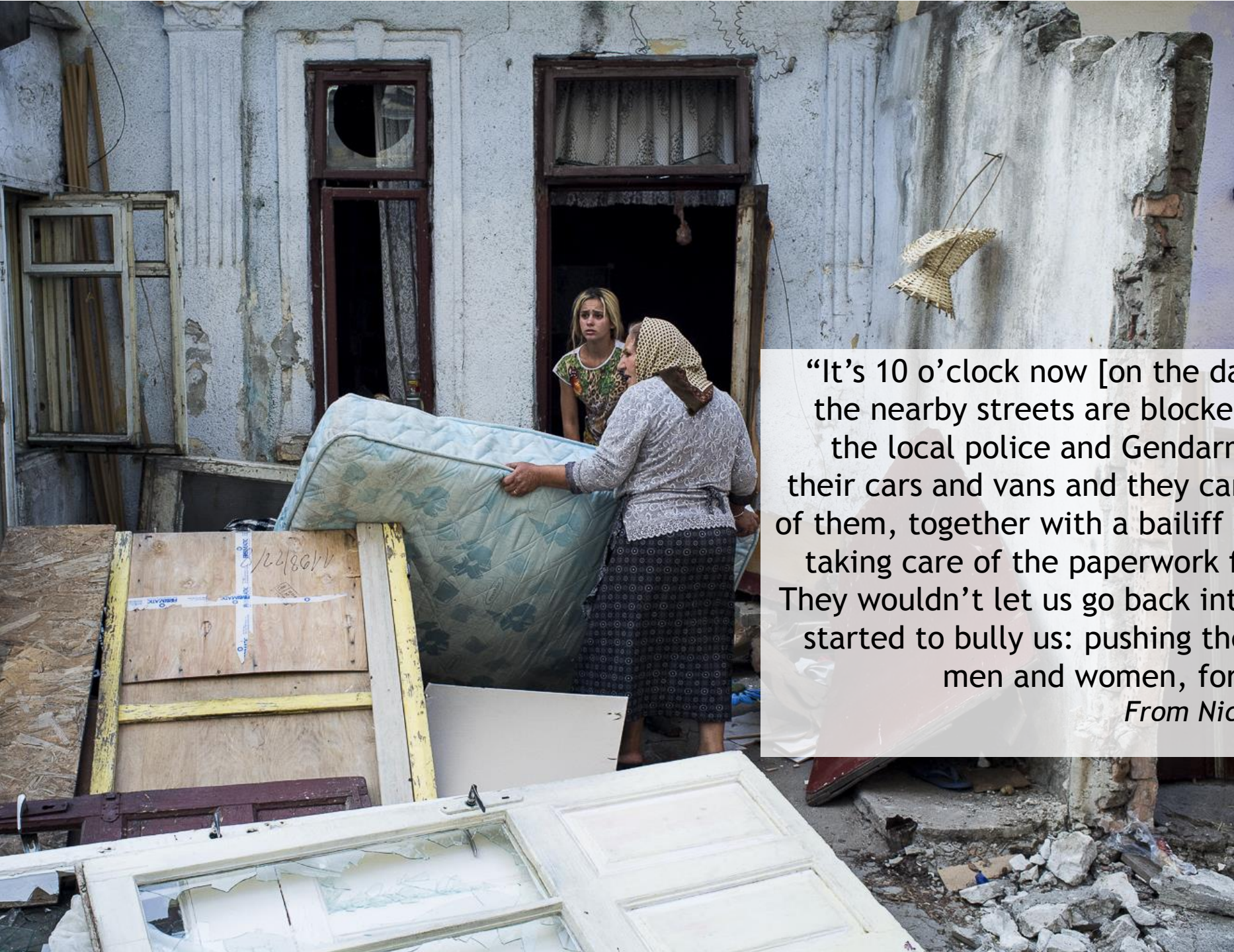


Map from Chelcea, 2012

### Capitalist makings

Housing is a crucial nexus for today’s urban precarity, by which “the post-socialist state became an ally of the ‘free’ residential market [...] against the socioeconomic needs and rights of its citizens” (Vincze, 2013)





## Inmakings

“It’s 10 o’clock now [on the day of the eviction]. All the nearby streets are blocked by cars belonging to the local police and Gendarmerie. They got out of their cars and vans and they came to get us, so many of them, together with a bailiff and a lawyer who was taking care of the paperwork for getting us evicted. They wouldn’t let us go back into our homes and they started to bully us: pushing the children, hitting the men and women, forcing us to come out.”

*From Nicoleta’s community diary*

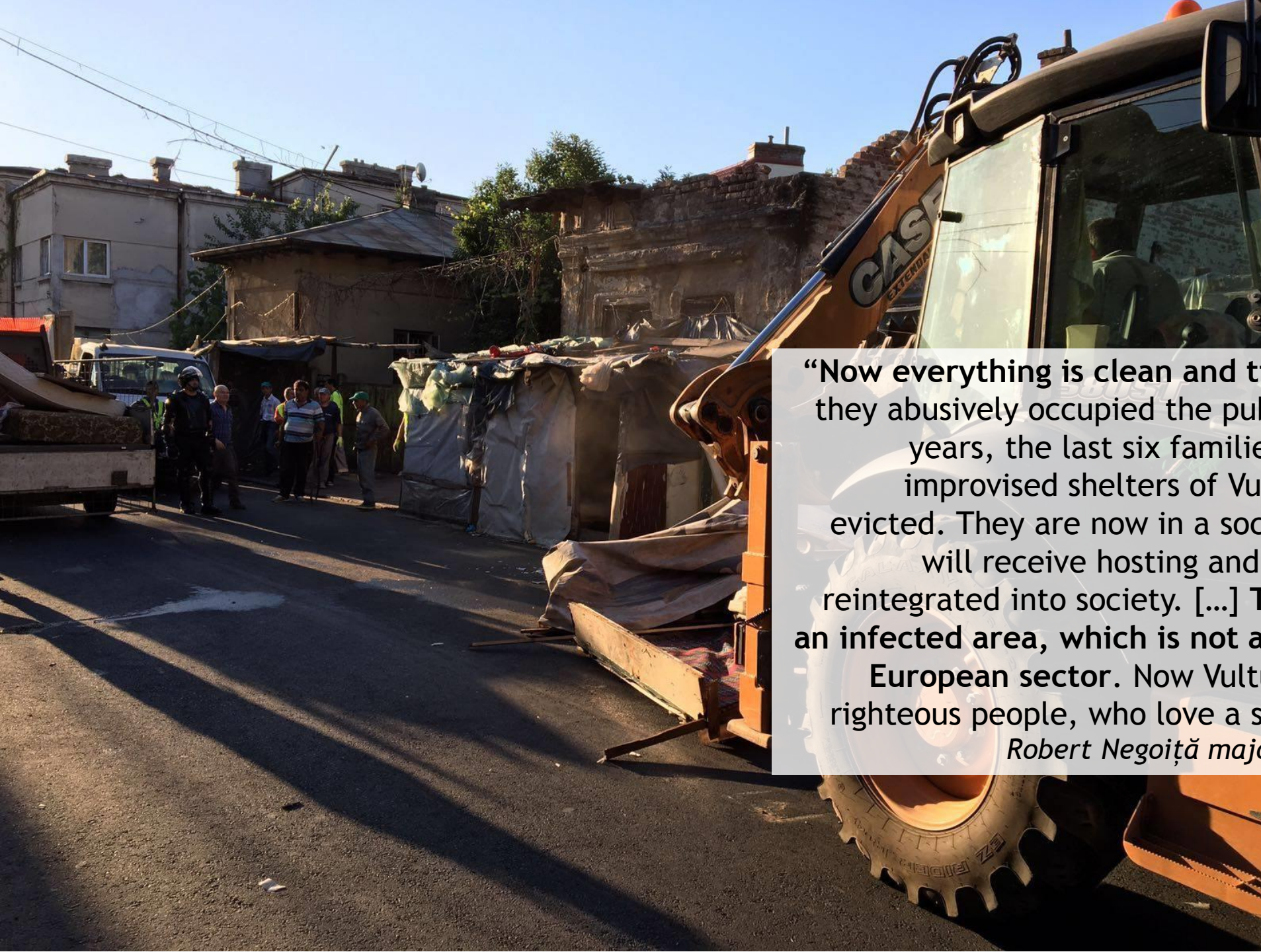


## Unmakings

The people of Vulturilor dwelt in shacks in front of their old home for almost two years, to protest for their right to housing. This was the longest action-protest in the history of contemporary Romania. The sidewalk is the liminal zone in-between pure homelessness (symbolised by the street) and pure illegality (what squatting their old house would have meant). In this in-between, through their bodies and “through their action” the people of Vulturilor brought “the space of appearance into being” (Butler, 2011); a space for the urban political to flourish (Vasudevan, 2015a).







## Remakings

**“Now everything is clean and tidy in Vulturilor! After they abusively occupied the public domain in the past years, the last six families that still lived in the improvised shelters of Vulturilor have now been evicted. They are now in a social centre, where they will receive hosting and care until they will be reintegrated into society. [...] The place had become an infected area, which is not a situation worthy of a European sector. Now Vulturilor has gone back to righteous people, who love a safe and clean Sector!”**

*Robert Negoită major of Bucharest's Sector 3*





Premakings are relevant to avoid portraying precarity as an exception out of the norm.

A grounded approach to the **make+shifts of precarity** shows that humanitarian approaches are not enough. They are not 'right'.

The **politics of precarity** is more than 'resilience'. It is a politics of alterity. It's not transcendental but immanent.



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.



**@michelelancione**  
m.lancione@sheffield.ac.uk



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2017

# A ÎNCEPUT PLOAIA

O POVESTE A RETROCEDĂRIILOR

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO HOUSING IN BUCHAREST  
A FILM BY MICHELE LANCIONE

LIVED AND EXPERIENCED BY THE PEOPLE OF VULTURILOR 50 - WRITTEN, RESEARCHED AND DIRECTED BY MICHELE LANCIONE - PRODUCED BY A COMMUNITY PRODUCTIONS  
EDITING AND MOTION GRAPHICS BY ELEONORA MIGNOLI - GRAPHIC DESIGN BY ANOUVONG SOUTHPHONG - COLOUR GRADING BY JACK STRANGE - MUSIC LICENSING BY FRANCESCO MENEGAT  
SOUND MIX BY ALESSANDRO CIANI - PHOTO OF THE EVICTION BY ADRIAN CATU - TRANSLATIONS FROM ROMANIAN BY ALINA HUZUI STOICULESCU

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## Free political tool

A început ploaia/It started raining **is the first feature documentary about forced evictions against Roma people in Bucharest, Romania.** The film document the full history of these evictions, as well as showing the powerful resistance enacted by a community of Roma who dwelt on the street for two years in order to fight for their right to housing. The documentary can be watched and downloaded for free at **[www.ainceptploaia.com](http://www.ainceptploaia.com)**. It is offered as a political tool to elicit debates and solidarity around the fight for the right to housing worldwide.

Romania and UK, 2017, 72''

English, Hungarian, Czech and Italian subtitles