

Resisting Redevelopment

The politics of urban development is one of the most enduring, central themes of urban politics. In *Resisting Redevelopment*, Eleonora Pasotti explores the forces that enable residents of “aspiring global cities,” or economically competitive cities, to mobilize against gentrification and other forms of displacement, as well as what makes mobilizations successful. Scholars and activists alike will benefit from this one-of-a-kind comparative study. Impressive in its scope, this book examines twenty-nine protest campaigns over a decade in ten major cities across five continents, from Santiago to Seoul to Los Angeles. Pasotti sheds light on an approach that is both understudied and remarkably effective: the practice of successful organizers deploying “experiential tools,” or events, social archives, neighborhood tours, and performances designed to attract participants and transform the protest site into the place to be. With this book, Pasotti promises to provide a creative and novel contribution to the literature of contentious politics.

ELEONORA PASOTTI is Associate Professor of Politics at the University of California Santa Cruz. She is the author of *Political Branding in Global Cities*, published by Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics.

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Resisting Redevelopment

Protest in Aspiring Global Cities

ELEONORA PASOTTI

University of California, Santa Cruz



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*To those affected by displacement, and those who fight to
preserve a home*

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Acknowledgments

In their remarkable ability to stunt criticism with catchall branding campaigns, the powerful mayors of my first book left me with significant anxiety. How does opposition reframe, once traditional cleavages of contention have been veiled over or even invalidated by mayoral messaging? How do critics garner support, when public opinion is distracted by flashy mega-projects and the festivalization of politics? Not quite knowing how to tackle this issue, I embarked on a long trip across South American capitals searching for clues. When, along a leafy street in Santiago I noticed a kiosk selling a glossy magazine titled *Bello Barrio*, I knew I found what I had been searching for. The unlikely mobilization and impact of the neighborhood group that had issued the magazine provided the impetus for this book.

The scope of the project grew, and so did the list of individuals without whom it could not have come to light. For inspiring this project, I feel indebted to my adviser, Chuck Tilly – and on many occasions wished he was still with us, ready to provide his characteristically crystal-clear recommendations.

The power of comparison allowed me to uncover trends and variations in resistance, but I would be lying if I didn't state that I often regretted the scale of this endeavor. This was particularly the case because I did not have prior knowledge of the complex and multilayered urban contexts described in this book. Many experts, with wise theoretical insights and vital empirical advice, generously lent their knowledge and helped me better understand and research the cases. I cannot emphasize enough my gratitude to these individuals. The complete list would take several pages, but for essential help at various stages and in the different sites of this long

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As an uninvited guest to these sites, my principal debt is to the activists and communities that hosted me. The work that they do requires more courage than I can describe. I have struggled deeply with how my role in these places might contribute to dynamics of displacement by making sites and practices more legible to outsiders. Notwithstanding this risk, I hope this book contributes to sharing lessons that can help us move closer to housing justice. This work is accountable to the groups and individuals who generously shared their stories and recognizes them as the primary experts whose experience I try to interpret and translate. What follows, I have learned from them, and it is to them and their fearless and vital quest that I dedicate this book.

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