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# 'My room is the kitchen': lived experience of home-making, home-unmaking and emerging housing strategies of disadvantaged urban youth in austerity Ireland

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## ABSTRACT

The current Irish housing crisis shows that the 2008 financial crash lingers on in everyday lives and spaces. As especially poorer populations became increasingly excluded from affordable housing under austerity, it is increasingly felt as a 'personal crisis'. This paper explores the impacts of austerity on home-(un)making to reveal home as a place where austerity becomes 'lived' and 'felt'. Building on interviews with young people aged 18 to 25 in Cork and Dublin, it focusses on a group eager but unable to leave their parental home. Their experiences illustrate the immediate home-unmaking of austerity and the role of past memories and anticipated futures in home-unmaking under austerity. As future expectations and home-making strategies are adjusted to the austerity context, these reconfigure the facets and spheres through which crisis and austerity are experienced. The becoming-everyday of the financial crisis affects the places and spaces of everyday life, creating an all-encompassing 'slow crisis' that alters domestic routines and materialities, creates new forms of living together, and presents new strategies for housing and home-making. Housing and home are critical spheres through which austerity and recession become embedded in the everyday lives of disadvantaged urban youth and shape contemporary life courses in the city-after-austerity.

## « Ma chambre, c'est la cuisine »: expériences de créations et de dé-crétions de foyers et nouvelles stratégies de logements parmi les jeunes irlandais défavorisés vivant en milieu urbain

La crise du logement qui sévit actuellement en Irlande démontre que le krach financier de 2008 persiste dans le quotidien des vies et des espaces. Comme ce sont surtout les couches les plus pauvres de la population qui se retrouvent graduellement exclues du marché des logements abordables en période d'austérité, ce phénomène est ressenti progressivement comme une « crise personnelle ». Cette communication explore les répercussions de l'austérité sur la fabrication et la défabrication des foyers, révélant ces derniers comme des lieux où l'austérité devient « vécue » et « ressentie ». En s'appuyant sur des entretiens avec des jeunes de 18 à 25 ans vivant

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## Palabras clave

austeridad; hacer-hogar; gente joven; experiencia vivida; alojamiento; crisis financiera

à Cork et à Dublin, elle se concentre sur un groupe désireux de quitter le domicile familial, sans être en mesure de le faire. Leurs expériences illustrent la défabrication immédiate du foyer engendrée par l'austérité ainsi que le rôle qu'y tiennent les souvenirs du passé et les attentes pour l'avenir. Comme les espérances pour le futur et les stratégies pour créer un foyer sont réajustées au cadre de l'austérité, elles réaménagent les aspects et les domaines par lesquels sont vécues la crise et l'austérité. La réalité quotidienne de la crise financière altère les lieux et les espaces de la vie de tous les jours, créant une « crise au ralenti » qui englobe tout et change les habitudes et les matérialités domestiques, produit de nouvelles formes de cohabitation et présente de nouvelles stratégies pour le logement et la fabrication d'un foyer. Le logement et le foyer sont des domaines essentiels à travers lesquels l'austérité et la récession deviennent intégrées à la vie quotidienne des jeunes défavorisés en milieu urbain et forment les cycles de la vie contemporaine dans les villes après les années d'austérité.

### **“Mi habitación es la cocina”: experiencias de creación de viviendas y estrategias emergentes de residencia de jóvenes urbanos desfavorecidos en Irlanda**

La actual crisis de vivienda en Irlanda muestra que la crisis financiera de 2008 perdura en la vida cotidiana y en los espacios. A medida que la población particularmente pobre se ve cada vez más excluida de vivienda asequible por la austeridad, la experiencia se siente cada vez más como una 'crisis personal'. Este artículo explora los impactos de la austeridad en la creación y desarticulación del hogar para revelarlo como un lugar donde la austeridad se 'vive' y se 'siente'. Empleando entrevistas realizadas a jóvenes de entre 18 y 25 años en Cork y Dublín, el artículo se centra en un grupo ansioso pero incapaz de abandonar su hogar parental. Sus experiencias ilustran la desintegración inmediata de la austeridad en el hogar y el papel de los recuerdos pasados y los futuros anticipados en la desintegración del hogar bajo la austeridad. A medida que las expectativas futuras y las estrategias de hacer-hogar se ajustan al contexto de la austeridad, estas reconfiguran las facetas y esferas a través de las cuales se experimentan la crisis y la austeridad. El devenir cotidiano de la crisis financiera afecta los lugares y espacios de la vida cotidiana, creando una 'crisis lenta' que lo abarca todo y que altera las rutinas y materialidades domésticas, crea nuevas formas de convivencia y presenta nuevas estrategias de residencia y de la construcción del hogar. La vivienda y el hogar son ámbitos críticos a través de los cuales la austeridad y la recesión se integran en la vida cotidiana de los jóvenes urbanos desfavorecidos y configuran el curso de la vida contemporánea en la ciudad después de la austeridad.

## **Introduction**

The economic growth, employment expansion, and burgeoning real estate market of the Celtic Tiger period in Ireland, characterised by an open and deregulated economy, was celebrated as a success story of neoliberalisation (Kirby, 2004). An expanding mortgage market drove up house prices and facilitated buy-to-let purchases, while an ideology of

homeownership took firm hold in Irish society (O'Riain, 2014). Simultaneously, expanding government budgets in a thriving economy facilitated the expansion of housing welfare for lower-income households (Byrne & Norris, 2018). However, the dependence of the Irish economy on credit, real estate and the construction sector made it vulnerable to the 2008 financial crisis that arrived on top of a bursting Irish property bubble (Kitchin et al., 2012). The Irish state implemented a harsh austerity regime after it intervened in the Irish banking system with capital injections and bank guarantees (Fraser et al., 2013). As the economy slowly recovered, the country was celebrated as a champion of neoliberal policy once more, this time as a 'poster child of austerity' (Kinsella, 2014). However, the uneven distributions of crisis and recovery raise issues of socio-spatial justice (Kearns et al., 2014; van Lanen, 2017a). For many, the crisis lingers on through consistently higher unemployment rates in the 2010s (CSO, 2016a), an increase of households living in deprivation from 13.8% to 26.9% between 2008 and 2012 (CSO, 2016b; Haase & Pratschke, 2016; O'Connor & Staunton, 2015), widespread precarious labour conditions (M. Murphy & Loftus, 2015), and reduced social-welfare payments. Every day, groups and individuals continue to experience the lingering of crisis and austerity (Raynor, 2018), experiences often exacerbated for youth from a disadvantaged background (Verick, 2009).

One way in which crisis and austerity linger on is in the provision of suitable and affordable housing (Aalbers, 2015; Hearne & Murphy, 2018). As prices of residential real estate recovered since the crisis, contemporary housing prices and private rents are prohibitively expensive for growing parts of the population (DKM, 2014; Kapila, 2016). Disinvestment and transformations in social housing provision led to severe shortages and a 60% increase of households on social housing waiting lists between 2008 and 2013 (Byrne & Norris, 2018; O'Connor & Staunton, 2015). As a result of the emerging crisis of housing affordability, 82% of Dublin respondents could not find proper housing at a reasonable price in 2015 (European Commission, 2016), and the number of Irish homeless individuals in emergency accommodation tripled between 2014 and 2018 (Hearne & Murphy, 2018). Therefore, this paper explores experiences of home and home-making in post-crisis Ireland as a way to illuminate how lingering austerity is lived and felt in everyday life (Hitchen, 2019).

The main aim of this paper is to illuminate how crisis and austerity linger on in the everyday lives of disadvantaged urban youth through the home. To do this, I employ the concept of home-unmaking (Baxter & Brickell, 2014; Nowicki, 2014) to illuminate how austerity has slow and protracted impacts on the material and affective aspects of home. Furthermore, I employ the notion of a 'very personal crisis' (Hall, 2019a) to explore how austerity and the housing crisis become personal as they interact with life-course expectations and realities of youth, including the role of memories and anticipated futures (Horton, 2016). As such, this paper contributes to two bodies of work. First, it extends the literature on everyday austerity through an explicit focus on home and home-(un)making. Second, it contributes to work on austerity and housing by illuminating the lived experiences of home and housing policies under austerity. The argument that home-(un)making is a critical form of lingering crisis holds valuable insight for those who are interested in the lived and felt legacies of the financial crisis and austerity.

This paper builds on qualitative research with youth from two of Ireland's most deprived urban areas; Knocknaheeny in Cork and Ballymun in Dublin. Their experience

illuminates how austerity impacts on their capabilities to make home under austerity, and how these effects reverberate through the past, present, and future. To do this, the rest of the paper is organised as follows. First, I explore the centrality of housing to austerity and the impacts of austerity on housing in Ireland, followed by a discussion of 'everyday austerity' and its impacts on the home. The next section describes the methods of data gathering and analysis, which is followed by a discussion on the impacts of austerity on home-(un)making in the present, past, and future. The conclusion presents the centrality of housing and home for the lingering of austerity in everyday lives and the importance of home-unmaking as one of the ongoing injustices of austerity.

## Austerity and housing

Austerity describes both an ideology and a set of policies implemented to restore national economic competitiveness through a reduction of wages, prices and public spending (Blyth, 2013). Such policies became a common policy paradigm in the period following the 2008 financial crisis, as governments in Europe and the United States sought to rebalance their budgets after bank bail-outs and corporate stimulus packages (Aalbers, 2013). Reduced state spending has the most severe effects on populations of lower socioeconomic status, and according to Peck (2012), this vulnerability is exacerbated for poor urban populations who depend on public services, social welfare, and public sector employment. The vulnerability of youth to austerity and recession is aggravated by their relative lack of skills, work experience, professional networks, and financial resources (McDowell, 2017; Verick, 2009). Indeed, austerity intensified socio-spatial inequalities for youth in Ireland and elsewhere (Cairns, 2013; van Lanen, 2017a).

Housing played a central role in the 2008 financial crisis and the austerity response that followed. The embeddedness of US mortgages in international finance transformed the local collapse of sub-prime mortgage markets into a global financial crisis (Aalbers, 2009; Martin, 2011). These global financial tremors had severe local consequences as municipalities were invested in mortgage-backed securities, governments bailed out struggling financial institutions, and employment in industry and services fell (Aalbers, 2009; Kitson et al., 2011). The impacts on state spending, construction sectors, and real estate markets spread globally to form 'the first global housing crisis' because 'never before so many countries faced a housing crisis at the same time' (Aalbers, 2015, p. 56). Ongoing austerity measures exacerbated housing inequalities as they failed to shield residential mortgages from financial instabilities and ongoing neoliberal policies prioritised private landlordism over social housing (Kennett et al., 2013). Housing related austerity measures include the UK bedroom tax, housing welfare reforms in the UK (Nowicki, 2018; Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019), and the decline of social housing in Dutch cities (Hochstenbach, 2017). The centrality of housing is mirrored in emerging social movements, which centred around opposition to neoliberal conceptions of housing and challenged existing housing subjectivities (Berglund, 2017; Di Feliciano, 2016). As housing affects everyone, from youth unable to realise their desired residential mobility to those worrying about their home equity (Coulter, 2013; Dorling, 2014), it plays a central role in shared experiences of crisis and austerity.

In Ireland, the importance of residential real estate to the country's pre-crisis economic growth created the conditions of housing vulnerability to crisis and austerity. The so-

called Celtic Tiger period of high employment and economic growth was largely fuelled by property developments since the early 2000s (Kitchin et al., 2012; O’Riain, 2014). While wages and construction costs doubled between 1991 and 2007, the quadrupling of new-built and quintupling of second-hand house prices was fuelled by the rapid expansion of residential mortgages (Kitchin et al., 2012). During the 2001–2007 housing bubble, Irish state revenue was expanding due to construction sector income taxes, newly-built VAT receipts, and stamp duty (Lyons, 2015). This revenue shift from income tax to property-related taxes enabled an expansion of welfare spending and public sector wages (Honohan et al., 2010). However, when the property bubble burst and construction came to a halt in 2007, state revenue fell sharply while rising unemployment meant rapidly increasing state expenditure (MacLaran & Kelly, 2014). Between 2008 and 2012, house prices fell 55%, housing markets shrunk by almost 90%, while unemployment rose from 6.5% to 14.8% (Lyons, 2015; MacLaran & Kelly, 2014). This radical shift in budgetary balance was accompanied by €64bn worth of state liquidity injections into the Irish banking system (Fraser et al., 2013), setting the state’s balance sheet up for the implementation of a fierce austerity regime.

Similar dynamics transformed Irish social housing and exposed social tenants to the vulnerabilities of crisis during the Celtic Tiger period. In the early 2000s, property-dependent revenues facilitated increased social housing investment, but the share of social housing fell as a result of tenant sales and accelerating private construction (Byrne & Norris, 2018). Following the neoliberal doctrine of marketisation, affordable housing was realised by 20% cost-price sales of new housing developments (Lyons, 2015). Increasingly, low-income households had to seek accommodation on the more precarious private rental market, supported by the expansion of rent supplement as a public subsidy to unemployed private tenants, or by taking out risky mortgages (Byrne & Norris, 2018). As a result, social housing spending gradually moved from capital to current account spending (Lyons, 2015). In short, increasingly pro-cyclical social housing policy contributed to the marketization of the whole housing sector.

The ongoing marketization of housing created the vulnerabilities of housing to the financial crisis and austerity. Between 2007 and 2010, a 40% drop in real estate values froze the residential property market (Kitchin et al., 2012), leaving 34% of residential and 52% of buy-to-let mortgages in negative equity (Hearne et al., 2014). Rising unemployment and falling wages lead to widespread mortgage arrears, putting both owner-occupiers and private tenants at risk of repossessions and homelessness (Threshold, 2013). Between 2008 and 2014, social housing outputs fell by 92% and capital funding for social housing declined by 88%, as the ministry responsible for social housing ‘suffered the second-highest proportionate budget reductions of any ministry between 2008 and 2012’ (Byrne & Norris, 2018). Combined, the collapse of construction, lack of affordable accommodation, and minimised social housing put increased pressure on private rental markets. Although rents initially followed falling house prices, they surpassed pre-2008 levels in 2015 (PRTB, 2015). Already in 2014, 59% of private tenants struggled to find suitable accommodation (DKM, 2014), and the income of social-welfare dependent tenants without housing supports was inadequate to rental prices (O’Connor & Staunton, 2015). In Dublin 11, where rents were lowest in the capital, 80 hours of minimum-wage work per week were required to spend under 30% of pre-tax income on a one-bedroom apartment in 2015 (Kapila, 2016). Private rents, especially Cork and

Dublin, have soared since, reaching a peak of average rents of €1.391/month amidst record-low availability of rental housing in early 2019 (Yimbog, 2019).

Housing support was reduced under austerity. The Supplementary Budget 2009 halved rent supplement payments and Budget 2012 raised minimum tenant contributions. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) was rolled out between 2011 and 2017 to assist private tenants not in receipt of social welfare. HAP effectively subsidises private tenancies, as local authorities collect a monthly contribution from tenants and provide rental payments to the landlord. The scheme relieves rent pressures and provides security of tenure, but is less cost-effective compared to direct built social housing (Hearne & Murphy, 2017). Furthermore, the rent limits attached to rent supplement and HAP exclude market-rate rental dwellings in urban areas as Dublin and Cork (Threshold, 2012). Overall, social housing waiting lists increased by 60% from 2008 to 2013 (O'Connor & Staunton, 2015). The pressing need for affordable and secure housing is the consequence of negative equity, social housing shortage, increased private rental pressures, and an urban renaissance of skyrocketing real estate prices.

This housing crisis is not restricted to Ireland (Aalbers, 2015). In various countries 'the housing crisis has become a motif for a seemingly enduring state of affairs in which rising evictions, overcrowding, unaffordability, substandard conditions, homelessness, and displacement have become the norm' (Fields & Hodkinson, 2018, p. 1). As Dorling (2014, p. 32) states; '[i]t's not just in places that are in a completely dire situation like Greece, or in Portugal; it is right across Europe'. This paper contributes to the literature on the post-2008 housing crisis by illuminating lived experiences of housing under austerity. Rather than focussing on a particular housing issue, this paper presents experiences of the Irish housing crisis by one particular group; disadvantaged urban youth. The next section brings this housing literature in conversation with 'everyday austerity' and home.

## Everyday austerity and home

the effects of public-service cutbacks, job losses and increased exposure to socioeconomic risks are experienced in daily life, in workplaces, households and the public sphere. (Peck, 2012, p. 632)

'Everyday austerity' concerns how austerity policies 'bleed into the very fabric of everyday geographies – the spaces where people live, meet, work, play' (Hall, 2019b). Beyond austerity as an economic policy, it focusses on processes of meaning, life-shaping, and home-making under austerity (Hitchen, 2019; Raynor, 2017), and how austerity's diverse consequences can ultimately create a 'very personal crisis' (Hall, 2019a). By assessing how austerity is 'lived' and 'felt' (Hitchen, 2019), this approach illuminates how austerity transforms everyday and intimate places.

Beyond its economic consequences, austerity has affective impacts on the spaces it infiltrates. Horton (2016, p. 349), for example, showed how an atmosphere of anxiety for the future encapsulated visitors and staff of youth centres and reshaped 'everyday relationships, spaces and the efficacy of service provision'. Such anxieties, induced by the lingering of austerity, also affects public library staff (Hitchen, 2019), where its 'particular familiarity' summons collective atmospheres of paranoia. Other engagements with everyday austerity include spaces such as youth services (Youdell & McGimpsey,

2015), education (Mericille & Murphy, 2017), neighbourhoods (van Lanen, 2017a), food banks (Strong, 2020), and health care (Watkins et al., 2017). Others have focussed on austerity's relational impacts on debt (Dawney et al., 2020), social welfare (Hamnett, 2014), and family, friendship and intimate relations (Hall, 2019b). This paper similarly conceptualises housing and home as 'spaces' of austerity 'to think about how everyday experiences "talk up" to economic policy' (Hall, 2018. P4).

So far, scholarship on lived experiences of housing under austerity has predominantly considered specific forms of housing (García-Lamarca & Kaika, 2016; Hearne & Murphy, 2017; Waldron & Redmond, 2017). In contrast, this paper starts from the perspective of disadvantaged urban youth in Ireland, a group particularly affected by austerity (Bradford & Cullen, 2014; Verick, 2009). Illuminating their experiences of house and home, in their current and anticipated situation, contributes to the study of the 'political economy of everyday life' (Elias & Roberts, 2016).

This paper considers home as a place where the financial crisis and austerity are felt and negotiated. Austerity affects home in multiple ways. First, home is a site of intimate care and relations (Blunt & Dowling, 2006), where family and friends can provide care in absence of state support, where intergenerational cohabitation occurs, where families move in and offspring cannot move out, all with consequences for relationships of care (Hall, 2019a, 2019b). Second, the household within home connects the economic and cultural networks of its members (Smith & Stenning, 2006; van Lanen, 2020a), which can transform homes into places of financial stress-management, material negotiations of poverty, or everyday relational care (Hall, 2018). Third, home joins together people's living place, living partners, and their potential inability to change these (Hall, 2019b; Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2017). Home, therefore, mediates access to work, people, facilities and the spaces of everyday life. Finally, home is a critical place for the formation and transformation of subjectivities (Di Feliciano, 2016). Overall, austerity's political economy intersects with its affective and cultural politics through home. An assessment of home-making under austerity can thus provide critical insights into lived realities of austerity.

The centrality of housing to the Irish political economy and the importance of home for everyday experiences of austerity make home-making a valuable lens to explore everyday austerity. Discussing the financialisation of Irish housing, Downey (2014, p. 121) stressed the importance of '[t]he lived space and place wherein households reside, experience the material world, create and recreate their perception and conception of home and seek to reproduce themselves'. Although housing and home are related, they are different. A house is the building where someone dwells, while home captures the dynamics of the individual, their inhabited site, and the experience and meaning attached to it (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). To understand home under austerity, it is vital to acknowledge that the experience of home is not always positive. Feminist scholars have long argued that comfort at home is not given and the home can be a place of violence, neglect and boredom (Manzo, 2003). Moreover, Nowicki (2014) showed that the experienced sense of 'homeness' can decline during political-economic developments. Home thus relationally connects location, a physical structure, social-political dynamics, and emotions (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Home extends beyond the house and household, and home-making beyond construction and decoration (Cook et al., 2013). Therefore, home can be upset by internal and external developments that alter the needs and aspirations of inhabitants



(Gibas, 2010). Homeless individuals underline this affective importance of home, as they equally value security and social relations to certain physical qualities (Kellett & Moore, 2003). Simultaneously, housed individuals who lack 'normative values of home' feel 'homeless at home' (Bennett, 2011). Home thus entails both shelter and a reflection of self, and home-making involves the 'cultivating, nurture and preservation of home' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 5). If the need for a home remains, home-making practices thus need to adapt to the socio-economic context of austerity.

This paper employs home-unmaking to assess austerity's impacts on home. Home-unmaking is 'the precarious process by which material and/or imaginary components of home are unintentionally or deliberately, temporarily or permanently, divested, damaged or even destroyed' (Baxter & Brickell, 2014, p. 134). Economic and political processes can initiate home-unmaking, as shown among elderly British migrants in Spain amidst Brexit (Miller, 2019). Porteous and Smith (2001) called the intentional destruction of home 'domicide' which, however powerful, is criticised for its simplistic physical, heteronormative and family concept of home which downplays the agency and resistance of its 'victims' (Nowicki, 2014). Engaging everyday experiences of the destruction of home, Nowicki stresses the importance of connecting the personal and political aspects of home. More than domicile, she argues, home-unmaking provides attentiveness to the complexities and multiplicities of undoing home (Nowicki, 2014).

Baxter and Brickell (2014) distinguish four themes of home-unmaking. First, 'porosity' connects home-unmaking to internal and external process, including political-economic measures, at multiple scales. Second, '(in)visibilities' consider what 'home-makings' receive attention, which processes are made visible or remain invisible. Third, the agents who enact home-unmaking directly or indirectly. Fourth, temporality assesses the role of time and occasional simultaneity of home-making and unmaking. These four themes are applied to home experiences under Irish austerity to extend the study of everyday austerity to the spaces of home. To further connect home and austerity experiences, I employ the notion of 'very personal crisis', where austerity is 'lived in, through, and punctuating everyday life, manifesting as a life crisis, and shaping life courses, biographies and imaginaries of the future' (Hall, 2019a, p. 480). Developing temporal relations of crisis experience (Edwards & Weller, 2010; Pimlott-Wilson, 2017), Hall (2019a) argues that individuals reposition their current, past, and future life-course positions in the context of expected life unfolding, here to include housing and home. Crisis and austerity negatively affected possibilities for youth to transition into independent living and/or homeownership (Dewilde et al., 2018). This troubles an important marker of adulthood (Clark & Mulder, 2000), and this conjuncture of housing, austerity, and the life course of disadvantaged urban youth can thus illuminate processes of home-(un)making in austerity Ireland.

## Methodology

This paper is based on a qualitative research project into the austerity experiences of young adults, aged 18 to 25, in two of Ireland's most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods; Knocknaheeny in Cork and Ballymun in Dublin (van Lanen, 2017b). In total 33 individuals, which were predominantly recruited through youth organisations in these neighbourhoods, shared their experiences during 31 interviews conducted in 2015. The

age group 18–25 was chosen in line with the Irish Youth Work Act and several youth-specific austerity measures. Despite being legal adults, not all participants were looking for independent housing whether alone, with a partner, or with others. Nonetheless, this group transitions into adulthood during a period of disrupted life-course expectations and possibilities which transform their real and expected housing and home-making trajectories. Furthermore, so far youthful home-(un)making received less attention than other home-related topics such as homelessness and transitioning into independent housing (Gorman-Murray, 2015; Hopkins, 2010).

Participants' austerity experiences were elicited through loosely-phenomenological semi-structured interviews (Moustakas, 1994). As such, they could express their experiences in their own narratives, encouraged by interviewing in places they were familiar and comfortable with. Interviews predominantly took place on the premises of recruitment organisations, but occasionally in coffee shops and participants' homes. The discussed topics included questions on youth's home situation, their desire to move out of their parental house, and their future housing expectations. As such, it provided insight into the expectations and realities of youth transition into adulthood under austerity, which were analysed through the lens of home-(un)making. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded based upon pre-defined codes, such as 'home unmaking', 'future imaginaries', 'housing strategies', and 'social inclusion', and emerging codes, such as 'entrapment. These codes were then interpreted in relation to the temporal frames of the life course – present, past, and future – to assess how home-(un)making becomes part of personal crisis experiences. The next section starts from these temporal frames to discuss home in the context of austerity. For reasons of anonymity, all printed names are pseudonyms and identifying information was removed or altered.

## Youthful home-making under austerity

The main themes that emerged during the analysis are grouped according to their life-course references to the present, past, and future of the interviewed individuals. As such, it shows that conceptions of home and evaluations of life stages are made in relation to the multiple temporalities of lived austerity. This section first discusses home-(un)making in relation to immediate consequences of austerity, followed by past memories and experiences, and finally anticipated futures. Together, these sections illuminate how austerity interacts with the past, present, and future of home to construct personal crises of austerity home-making.

## Present home-unmaking

The socio-economic transformations brought about by austerity contribute to home-unmaking processes in various immediate ways. First, the financial consequences of austerity, especially for lower incomes, threaten the materialities of home. Reduced income through lower social-welfare rates, (parental) redundancies, and lower wages affect the materialities needed for homely qualities like comfort, privacy and rest. Several participants recall moments of insufficient food provision or eviction notices following the inability to pay rent. In such moments, the threatened discontinuity of material reproductions of home and house disrupted affective notions of home.

... it was kind of hard for my mom to, kind of, financially support three kids and a grandchild, as well as herself, and a fiancé, in a three-bedroom house. So as me brother got older, he got a job, a full-time job, and the rent went up, and then I turned eighteen and the rent went up more, and me mom's hours was being cut and she wasn't getting hours, [...] there was a couple of times that she couldn't, like, actually pay to, like pay the rent to keep the house going and stuff, and we were getting letters to say that we'd be evicted if she was missing, [...] missing payments. (Tara, 18, Ballymun)

Although Tara did not experience a severe drop in income herself (van Lanen, 2020a), her mother's loss of employment meant the household financially struggled to provide for its five members: Tara, her siblings, her mother and her grandmother. Their inability to pay the rent resulted in threats of eviction and, therefore, homelessness. The consequences of labour-market adjustments affected the household's materialities of home-making, including their inability to provide enough food and their received eviction threats. The uncertainty of access to the material structures needed for home-making directly affected the home experience. Anxieties and stress over these material structures thus have immaterial consequences (Blunt & Dowling, 2006), as their affective presence distorts the expected qualities of home.

These material impacts of austerity impact on the affective elements of home, for example, increasing household tensions or a lingering awareness of financial vulnerability. A regular dynamic linking the material and affective was overcrowding, often resulting from youth being unable to move out of their parental house and/or family members being taken in who could no longer afford to pay their rent or mortgage. Illustrating the intricate relationship between the material and affective (Gillon, 2018), overcrowding affected much more than available space. Josh, himself looking for independent housing with his girlfriend, experienced overcrowding as he and his siblings were unable to move out.

... at the minute I'm living in a three-bedroom council house, there's my ma and me da, and then there's meself, me brother and me sister and me other sister, so there's four kids and two parents in it, and then me girlfriend does be in the house as well, so it's getting a bit packed, so we're trying to get ourselves somewhere else, 'cause it does get a bit packed now. (Josh, 21, Ballymun)

A 'packed' house, following the inability of young people to move out affected Josh's sense of home and his ability to find rest and privacy in his dwelling (Ortega-Alcázar & Wilkinson, 2017). Overcrowding often followed home-unmaking elsewhere, as households took in family and friends unable to sustain their own home. In this 'secondary process', home-unmaking of one household contributed to home-unmaking of another. As previously state-provided care is transposed on already vulnerable populations, austerity spreads through intimate networks of family and friends (Hall, 2019c; Tarrant, 2018). However, this relational assistance, including sheltering family, challenged available home space and affected expected homely qualities. Tara, for example, expressed;

There was seven, and at one point there was more because my auntie [...], had a mental break down, her man passed away, she didn't have money for the house and stuff, and she has three kids, and one of the sons' girlfriends living, and a baby, and herself, so that's six, and we had, kind of, been helping them out. [...] ... just the seven of us in the house, we had six other people to provide for as well, so altogether there was eleven people living there, and you couldn't just pick one and not do the other, like, you couldn't just say, 'Niamh, I want you and your two boys, and Sarah and Eoin and Michael have to find their own house' [...] we were kinda helping, but that's what family is all about ... (Tara, 18, Ballymun)

Tara's household provided family support at the cost of overcrowding and amidst their own financial struggles because 'that's what family is all about'. The sharing of scarce resources under austerity is both indicative of persistent care networks, deepening deprivation processes and home-unmaking (Hall, 2019a, 2019b). Austerity-induced home-unmaking spread beyond the household with material and immaterial consequences for both moving and receiving households. Austerity's material and immaterial consequences thus induced home-unmaking for several participants as home was jeopardised by changing memories, experiences, and emotions attached to home.

The porosity of home makes it vulnerable to political-economic policies, such as austerity, which illuminates how external developments permeate home with negative emotions and experiences (Baxter & Brickell, 2014). Home-unmaking, furthermore, is relational as it spread through care networks necessitated by retracting welfare and public services. Austerity thus enters homes, and contributes to home-unmaking, for disadvantaged urban youth in Ireland.

However, home-making simultaneously continued under austerity. This complex temporality unfolds through adjusted expectations and practices of home. Expectations were adjusted in relation to overcrowding and the materialities of home, as expressed by John and Eimear (Baxter & Brickell, 2014).

I live with me mom and me da, and me four little brothers and, four little brothers and me sister moved out [...] I have my own room yeah, I sleep down in the kitchen, with the toilet across so it's grand ... (John, 22, Ballymun)

... my living situation is all right, [...] I share a room with my sister, just because the room in, the window in my room is broken, [...] But it's okay, like, we, my mom has her own room, my nan has a room, and I share with my sister, but it's okay, like it's not cramped or anything. It would only be crowded if there was another person living there ... [...] I usually go in [my room] to just be away from people for a while. [...] when it is cold I just find a jacket, like, I just play my video games, so that doesn't matter. (Eimear, 20, Knocknaheeny)

John, who shared social housing with his parents and siblings, reconceptualised the kitchen as his private bedroom with a sense of privilege. In response to overcrowded conditions, John contextualised his home and appreciates the kitchen, which is neither fully private nor secluded, as his own space. Eimear, living with three family members, shared a room with her sister because of a broken window in her room. Unable to afford a replacement, she used her room for privacy and playing video games, enduring cold temperatures if necessary. Both John and Eimear adjusted home-making practice so their current house fulfilled their needs, whether by sleeping in the kitchen or retreating into a cold room. Without accepting the current situation as perfect (Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019), youth found strategies to 'make do' and maintain a sense of home.

Youth also adjusted their expectations to move out of their parental home and the strategies they employed in their attempts to transition to independent housing. As accessibility to affordable housing declined, participants downgraded their expectations or abandoned their transition attempts. As such, they could avoid disappointments and spend energy on more useful and rewarding activities (Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019). Hannah and her sister had planned to move out of their father's house, but they gave up as they realised their restricted access to private and social housing.

... but with the DCC [Dublin City Council], [...] you have to have really hard circumstances before they even consider you for a house, or an apartment, and eh, there's also a homeless situation going on around here as well, not just around here but the whole of Dublin. [...] ... there's not enough council houses for people to go around, and people are getting emergency stuff, so we thought, we'd better off not bother with that, because there is people in more need for them kind of council housing. (Hannah, 19, Ballymun)

Hannah and her sister accepted the futility of applying for social housing in the contemporary housing context and aborted their attempted transition. Life-course expectations were momentarily postponed amidst the situation of high private rents and a lack of available social housing. These housing and home-making expectations are adaptations (Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019); youth reconstruct their expectations to fit contemporary housing contexts by downscaling prospects or delaying transitions.

However, such strategies of 'getting on' (Hitchen, 2016) are not without their own problems. Interrupted transitions to independent housing resulted in experiences of 'entrapment' at home, fuelled by experiences of being stuck in the parental home and exacerbated by falling service levels in disadvantaged urban areas (van Lanen, 2017a).

I feel bored, just a long bore. There is just so much you can clean a home, you know. (Ciara, 21, Knocknaheeny)

We'd just sit there, in me friend's house or something, go up to her room, that's pretty boring I suppose, that's all we do, like. There's nothing for us to do, there's nothing to do. Unless we go out and start taking drugs or something, and nobody wants that ... (Alice, 25, Ballymun)

Ciara desired to move out of her parental house but did not have the stability of income to pay for her own rent. Her low income further prevented engagement in meaningful activities, resulting in boredom and monotony penetrating her experience of home. Alice, working full time to save for a mortgage with her partner, felt similarly entrapped as the neighbourhood could not offer her much. Unable to relocate from a disadvantaged neighbourhood with declining service availability became a signifier for stalled life-course progression and entrapment (Edwards & Weller, 2010). While housing unaffordability for low-income populations existed before austerity, ongoing precarisation, social housing disinvestment, rising rents, and mortgage restrictions intensified experiences of home entrapment (Manzo, 2003). Furthermore, home transformed into a meeting place of last resort amidst service decline. The conjuncture of stalled life-course progression and lacking neighbourhood opportunities reinforced home as trap on a day-to-day basis. The external impacts of austerity that exacerbate experiences of entrapment further underline the porosity of home-unmaking.

Home entrapment speaks to the (in)visibilities of home-making (Baxter & Brickell, 2014). Youth retreat into the home and withdraws from the visibility of others, including support organisations (see also: van Lanen, 2020b). Simultaneously, the failed transition to independent living potentially hides youth poverty and deprivation as they remain part of supportive households in overcrowded conditions. By affecting the life course and living situations, austerity becomes a personal crisis (Hall, 2019a). Interactions of economic and personal crises transform home into a place of entrapment and dependence instead of identification and independence. This unmaking of home becomes a critical way in which austerity is lived and felt.

## Past experiences of home

Crises are not only experienced in the present, but can be retold through and woven together with memories. (Hall, 2019a, p. 488)

As Hall expresses, contemporary practices of living with austerity are entwined with experiences in and of the past. The past provides the personal life story that shapes the contemporary position which enables and restricts youth's responsive repertoire to confront austerity and provide the frame of reference to interpret and evaluate the present. The circular and ongoing temporality of everyday austerity guarantee the continuous role of the past in austerity's present (Hitchen, 2019).

The role of the past in shaping a responsive repertoire to home-unmaking is expressed by Simon after his partner lost employment and they could no longer afford the rent.

[My girlfriend] was having trouble with the work, so she moved home [...], and I couldn't go back home 'cause there was charges brought up against me, so I had to move into a hostel. So I moved into a hostel, it was horrible, horrible, it was dirty, like, it's not a nice place ... (Simon, 24, Knocknaheeny)

Faced with homelessness, Simon's possibilities to find housing were limited by his past of alcohol abuse which disrupted his familial relations. This precluded his possibility to move back into his parental house, unlike his partner, and his only option was checking into a homeless hostel. Previous barriers to home-making resurfaced in response to employment loss in Simon's intimate network, aggravating the contemporary home-unmaking tendencies of austerity. Simon's past and present coalesced to result in his homelessness and inability to make a home in the hostel. Understood as a 'vital conjuncture' (Hall, 2019a), the crises in the economy, housing, intimate relations and family created the circumstance of severe home-unmaking for Simon.

More often, the past provided the frame of reference to interpret the present. Participants invoked expectations shaped during the pre-crisis period which included work, prosperity and, for some, home-ownership. In contrast to mobilising previous experiences of hardship (Hall, 2019a), this past interpretative frame aggravated contemporary experiences through comparisons to 'what could have been'. Cormac, who lived with his home-owning parents, compared the current restrictions on loans and mortgages to this pre-crisis period of easy credit (Kelly, 2014; Kitchin et al., 2012). While not expecting mortgage access at his age, Cormac's awareness of previous mortgage availability indicates the referential frame in which contemporary home expectations are formed. Brendan, whose income made him move back to his parents, compares his life course to the pre-crisis situation.

If that was then years ago, like, they would throw the money at them, like. [...] ... like my mom there, she was getting an extension added to the house, and she wanted to get a loan, [...] well before the recession, and she wanted seven thousand euro, and she went to [inaudible] with a thousand euro, offered her ten thousand. (Cormac, 20, Knocknaheeny)

I'm twenty-four, like, and I'm still living at home, [...] I really want to get out and start doing my own thing there, [...] live my life, like, 'cause my parents, like, told me when they were younger they were out, they were out living by themselves at eighteen, like, and then starting families at twenty-two, twenty-three, like, you know. And her I am, twenty-four, like, still doing the same old thing, like just different day. (Brendan, 24, Knocknaheeny)

These narratives illustrate how previously shaped value systems survive during periods of crisis (see also: van Lanen, 2018). Austerity does not operate purely in the present, it is entangled with past memories and experiences in complex temporalities and reinterpretations of past and present (Hitchen, 2019; Hall, 2019a). Home-making intentions emerged in individuals who were young during the Celtic Tiger period, and these expectations re-emerged to interpret contemporary home-making capabilities. For Brendan, for example, the mismatch between his and his parents' life-course created dissatisfaction. The past thus haunts the present and critically shapes the interpretation and evaluation of life-course developments.

The contradictions between pre-crisis and post-crisis credit provision and property developments fed feelings of exclusion and injustice. Michael, who was trying to save for his mortgage deposit, was frustrated by shifting mortgage regulations.

... nearly as if it's unfair, like, [...] you're getting punished for previous mistakes, like, when you had mortgages out for nothing like, and you copped on, now it's, they made them nearly impossible to get ... (Michael, 24, Ballymun)

Michael not only lamented his inability to secure a mortgage 'easily', but feels excluded from privileges enjoyed before the crisis. While not opposing conditionality as such, the discrepancy felt unjust to him. Therefore, Michael felt 'punished' for previous mistakes by others, he felt disallowed to make home in order to compensate for lenient mortgage provisions in the past. However, while Michael felt 'punished' for other's mistakes, he and other participants did not blame the crisis on older generations (Murphy, 2014).

These excerpts show how present experiences of austerity intertwine with the past, which restricts responsive repertoires and shapes interpretative frames of disadvantaged urban youth in the context of home-making. This intermingling creates the 'vital conjuncture' in which the absence, full or partial, of home is mourned (Hall, 2019a). Home is unmade as the past resurfaces in the present and either restricts housing options or places home expectations in an untenable framework. Persistent cultural values of home-ownership inform perceptions of successful life-course transitions and social inclusion (Somerville, 1998). The temporalities of home-unmaking under austerity thus entangle the present and past (Baxter & Brickell, 2014), and create the mismatch between the desire for and experience of home in which home is unmade, lacking, or delayed for disadvantaged youth.

### ***Future imaginaries of home***

... crisis have been shown to be part of the everyday, as well as future imaginaries ... (Hall, 2019a, p. 490)

Home-unmaking in the context of austerity extends from the present into the future. Understanding anticipated home-(un)making is vital, as the 'anticipation of funding cuts is having manifold everyday, lived consequences that are arguably more wide-ranging, intractable and troubling than impacts of funding cuts themselves' (Horton, 2016, p. 349). Youth from Knocknaheeny and Ballymun form their anticipated futures within the limited opportunities to transition into independent housing of the post-crisis context. It are

these adjusted anticipations that extend the home-unmaking tendencies of austerity into the future.

Despite an ongoing crisis of affordability, youth often constructed their ideal housing futures as if unaffected by austerity. These future imaginaries closely resembled conventional life-course developments which are merely delayed. These imaginaries include stable full-time employment and preferably owner-occupied housing. The ongoing centrality of work and housing for imaginaries of adulthood were clearly expressed by Aaron and Alice;

... if you have a job, a job and a house, if you got your mortgage sorted, so live your own life ... (Aaron, 18, Knocknaheeny)

Probably should have a job, and have their own house and all, but I know a lot of twenty, thirty-year-olds that live with their ma [...]. I don't know what's expected of us, if you think about it, like, how can you do anything when you live here, like, there's nothing, there's no housing, there's no jobs, we're in a recession, so, can't expect anything of us. (Alice, 25, Ballymun)

Aaron and Alice constructed an idealised life course that eventually included work and homeownership or independent housing. The austerity context, however, prevented them from progressing along this life course and provided a barrier to their anticipated home-making. Alice expressed the frustration generated by her experience of these barriers. She felt excluded from adulthood as she was unable to acquire independent housing or other markers of adulthood. Moreover, she not only lamented her home situation but was also anxious about her anticipated future in general. Youth were unable to progress to independent housing and could neither anticipate to do so in the near future. Through these anticipated futures (Horton, 2016), home-unmaking under austerity extends into the future.

These imaginaries of home-(un)making can be read as adaptations when youth adjust their futures to the austerity context by downscaling or delaying their expected home-making (Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019). Although anticipated futures regularly included such adaptations of home and housing, participants were also 'getting on with life'; 'an attempt to suppress the futures that issue from austerity and the subsequent affective consequences' (Hitchen, 2016, p. 113).

I can see myself going to college, and I can see myself furthering that and just getting a stable job, going, getting my own place and just become an, a real adult, as they say ... (Hannah, 19, Ballymun)

Not at the moment, but I will, that [moving out] will happen soon, well, not soon, it could be another year or two or so, like, once I found myself in a job ... (Gaby, 21, Knocknaheeny)

I can still sit down have dinner everyday, so, and I have a hou. like a bed to sleep on, like, we never go hungry and, [...] that's the most important to me anyways, [...] the luxuries can wait ... (Tessa, 23, Ballymun)

Hannah remained hopeful to successfully transition into independent housing in the future despite temporarily forestalling the leaving of the parental house. Gaby was similarly aware of the difficulty of finding accommodation, but eventually anticipated stable employment and independent housing. Such anticipated home-making serves as strategies of future home-making to temporarily suppress the affective consequences of austerity (Hitchen, 2016). These 'getting on with life'-narratives signify either future hopefulness or coping



mechanisms amidst the realities of contemporary austerity (Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019). For Tessa, home played another function in 'getting on with life'. After a year of homelessness, her ability to make home provided the stability from which her future life could unfold. She could start working on other expectations after her need for home was achieved, thus home-making allowed her to get on with life. These narratives illustrate how illusions and disillusion of (failed) home-making reach into anticipated futures, shape youth's expectations, and provide the basis for future life courses to unfold. As austerity disrupts, constructs, and enables these futures of home-making (Baxter & Brickell, 2014; Horton, 2016), these narratives expose the future temporality of home-(un)making.

The reshaping of anticipated futures of home under austerity results in the emergence of non-standard housing strategies. Disadvantaged urban youth employed common housing strategies, such as house sharing, mortgage saving, or co-searching with friends or family. Simultaneously, some participants employed alternative strategies to find housing, including strategic homelessness where participants became purposefully homeless to gain priority access to social housing.

... that house is me nanny and me grandad's, like, it is not corporation, they bought it, so, like, when the few of them die, like, that house will be left to me, like. Yeah, well, left to someone in the family but I am not going to be going, I'll be staying. (Ian, 18, Ballymun)

Half of me is thinking down the country it is slightly easier, there is the house prices quite cheaper, compared to Dublin. (Owen, 20, Ballymun)

"If you're homeless you're, you'll become first priority like, you know, and they have to give you an allowance like, [...] Its bad things are going that way, but [...] you wouldn't have to do it with [mumbling], and if things were cheaper. (Colm, 26, Knocknaheeny)

These interview excerpts illustrate some attempted housing strategies of youth from Knocknaheeny and Ballymun to secure future housing. Ian strategically planned his life course to improve his chances of inheriting his grandparents' house. Owen considered leaving Dublin to access more affordable housing, a consideration often balanced against fewer employment opportunities outside urban areas. Colm was one of the participants employing strategic homelessness after he had considered rural living. Despite being able to afford housing outside Cork City, he consciously chose to live in a homeless hostel to remain connected to occasional construction work and gain priority for social housing. This tactic was applied in various ways. Mike, for example, lived in health service (HSE) housing since his parents passed away and therefore classified as homeless. Other participants would stay with friends or family for the same reason. Such strategic homelessness is a response to anticipated future geographies of home and housing (Horton, 2016). Temporary homelessness is accepted in anticipation of a future home. This strategy further disrupts the home/homeless binary of inclusion and exclusion as homelessness is applied as a temporary solution to ongoing home and housing issues (Bennett, 2011; Kellett & Moore, 2003), thus providing an avenue towards inclusion. Generally associated with exclusion, homelessness represents another potential coping mechanism or purposeful tactic for disadvantaged urban youth to make a home in a post-crisis context.

## Conclusion

This paper has explored the impacts of austerity on housing, and consequently on experiences of home-making of disadvantaged urban youth in Ireland. In Ireland and elsewhere, the impacts of austerity and recession on housing access and affordability have created a housing crisis in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis (Aalbers, 2015; Hearne & Murphy, 2018). As interviews with young adults from Knocknaheeny and Ballymun show, the impacts of austerity reach beyond a housing crisis and shape various processes of slow and protracted home-unmaking (Baxter & Brickell, 2014). As austerity affects the houses, neighbourhoods, and cities in which youth dwell or might dwell (Shaw, 2019; van Lanen, 2020a), the gradual unmaking of home is one way in which crisis and austerity linger on in everyday life (Raynor, 2017). Home brings together the material and immaterial consequences of austerity which create the affective and personal crises through which austerity is lived and felt (Hitchen, 2019; Hall, 2019a). Home-unmaking, however, is a multi-temporal process, and through reinterpretations of the past and anticipated futures, the impacts of austerity work its way into the past and both real and expected futures.

Employing Hall's (2019a) notion of 'personal crises', which pays particular attention to the conjunctures of life courses and austerity, revealed the role of various temporalities in the unmaking of home. First, austerity contributes to home-unmaking in the present as its material impacts on individuals and households reduce feelings of home. Furthermore, the inability of friends and family to maintain home resulted in overcrowding leading to secondary home-unmaking where home is impacted by the provision of relational care (Hall, 2019b). Second, the past works through contemporary experiences of home by providing an interpretative framework for the present. The inability to achieve expectations based in the past, such as Celtic Tiger ideals of home-ownership (Kitchin et al., 2012), results in feelings of exclusion and 'stuckness' in the life course. Third, youth adapt their future expectations of home and housing to the austerity context, downscaling ambitions and giving rise to new housing strategies. Nonetheless, uninterrupted imaginaries on 'getting on' are sometimes mobilised to affectively negotiate experiences of austerity in everyday life (Hitchen, 2016; Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019). Together, austerity and the multi-temporality of home-unmaking reverse, devalue and transform contemporary and future attempts to make a home.

Austerity affects the four themes of home-unmaking for disadvantaged urban youth; porosity, (in)visibility, agents and temporality (Baxter & Brickell, 2014). The responsiveness to external processes of austerity reveals the intimate relations between the 'inside' and 'outside' of home, and thus its *porosity*. While plenty of attention is given to the effects of crisis on homeowners, increasing rents, and the rising numbers of homeless in Ireland (Hearne & Murphy, 2017; E. Murphy & Scott, 2013), this paper highlights less visible forms of home-unmaking under austerity, and thus speaks to its *(in)visibilities*. It also points to unintentional *agents* of home-unmaking, such as siblings unable to move out or family members forced to move in, beyond the obvious agency of landlords or policymakers. This is not to blame those unintentional agents, but to highlight the personal relations through which austerity spreads through families (Hall, 2019c). Finally, by evaluating home-unmaking in relation to the present, past and future, and showing the continuous efforts to make a home in adverse conditions, the paper also acknowledges the *temporality* of home-unmaking.

Amidst austerity's home-unmaking, new housing strategies emerge and homes keep being made among the hubris of crisis, recession and austerity. Nonetheless, the generalised frustration of finding independent housing prevents the conclusion that home-making is transformed rather than structurally curtailed for disadvantaged youth in Ireland. Home-unmaking is one of austerity's ongoing injustices. Home-unmaking provides a valuable lens into the deprivations caused by austerity. However, its victims are not without agency and 'perpetrators' are diffuse and transient. Home-unmaking is lingering rather than sudden, and protracted austerity slowly diminishes the opportunities for under-privileged people to make home and be included within the post-crisis city. These experiences of disadvantaged urban youth, importantly, portray home as more than housing. When confronting the housing crisis in Ireland or elsewhere, it is vital to not merely provide housing but extend the capabilities of individuals to build and sustain a home.

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