

Joanna Kusiak

Deutsche Wohnen & Co. enteignen: An attempt at law-based revolution?

My talk investigates the complex space-law-politics tangle of the Berlin-based referendum campaign Deutsche Wohnen & Co. enteignen (DWE). Launched in 2018, this grassroots campaign has been leveraging Art. 15 of the German constitution to propose socialization (de-privatization) of ca. 250 000 housing units owned by stock-listed financialized corporation. No matter of the final referendum results (the abstract submission deadline falls one day before the Berlin-wide referendum), DWE not only has shifted the landscape of German politics, but it also made the interrelation between law and politics in the socio-spatial context of global capitalism much more visible to the public. At the same time, DWE touches upon all geographical scales: it is a local, grassroots movement that uses national legal framework to confront global financial powers including shadow banks BlackRock and BlackStone (which both are shareholders of Berlin's stock-listed landlords). The talk reviews and summarizes the political, legal and spatial implication of the campaign on all these scales. It also reflects on my own position as a scholar-activist and one of the spokespersons of the movement.

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BBB (online)

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Joanna Kusiak is an urban sociologist at the University of Cambridge and a Humboldt visiting fellow at Georg-Simmer-Center for Metropolitan Studies in Berlin. She is also an activist and member of the Deutsche Wohnen & Co. enteignen working group. Her research examines the role that law, legal technicalities and judicial systems play in shaping urban space.