

By Any Means Necessary: Urban Regeneration and the “State of Exception” in Glasgow’s Commonwealth Games 2014

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Abstract: When compulsory purchase for urban regeneration is combined with a sporting mega-event, we have an archetypal example of what Giorgio Agamben called the “state of exception”. Through a study of compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) on the site of the Athletes’ Village for Glasgow’s 2014 Commonwealth Games, we expose CPOs as a classed tool mobilised to violently displace working class neighbourhoods. In doing so, we show how a fictionalised mantra of “necessity” combines neoliberal growth logics with their obscene underside—a stigmatisation logic that demonises poor urban neighbourhoods. CPOs can be used progressively, for example to abrogate the power of slum landlords for social democratic ends, yet with the increasing urbanisation of capital they more often target marginalised neighbourhoods in the pursuit of land and property valorisation. The growing use of CPOs as an exceptional measure in urbanisation, we argue, requires urgent attention in urban political struggles and policy practice.

Keywords: exceptionality, compulsory purchase, territorial stigmatisation, biopolitics, neoliberal urbanism, Glasgow

Introduction

Giorgio Agamben (2005) argued that the contemporary paradigm of government is the “state of exception”: a borderline “zone of indistinction” lying between public law and political fact. One of the hallmarks of contemporary states, including democratic ones, he demonstrates, is the voluntary creation of states of emergency, even when not formally declared. Exceptionality has been most widely scrutinised in the context of war-like situations such as the Nazi concentration camps, Guantanamo Bay, the US War on Terror and the response to 9/11 (Armitage 2002; Butler 2002; Diken and Laustsen 2004; Ek 2006; Gregory 2006). We argue, however, that war provides only a “limited state of exception” (Hardt and Negri 2005:5). Agamben (2005:14) shows us that the state of exception is in fact a “normal technique of government” radically altering the structure and meaning of legalistic and political forms everywhere. Just as Foucault’s reading of the panopticon

interrogates a singular phenomenon that indicates a wider apparatus (Ek 2006:372), so the state of exception is extensively operative in everyday life.

In this paper, we emphasise the operation of the state of exception at the level of urban planning and governance, disentangling “political” and “fictitious” states of exception in order to illustrate a special kind of law operating in the field of everyday urban governance. Mobilising theories of exception here allows us to identify not only forms of expropriation but also shifts in legal mechanisms that facilitate expropriation. For us, the lens of the state of exception is particularly useful as it helps illustrate the increasingly normative suspension of legal planning procedures, particularly in relation to “spectacular” mega-events (Marrero-Guillamón 2012; Sánchez and Broudehoux 2013; Shin 2012). Enhanced exceptional measures in mega-events are routinely legitimised by temporal and budgetary pressures, “legacy” promises, and we argue, fraudulent claims to serve the “public good” under the gaze of the international media.

Drawing Agamben’s work into conversation with critical approaches to urban studies (Baptista 2013; Belcher et al 2008; Schinkel and van den Berg 2011; Swyngedouw et al 2002), we explore the role and definition of *necessity* as a foundation for urban state exceptionalism in Glasgow’s hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games (CWGs 2014); a key catalyst for the largest regeneration project in Scotland in the city’s East End (Gray and Mooney 2011). In particular, we examine the use of compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) (expropriation or “eminent domain” elsewhere) as a discriminatory tool of exceptionality in delivering Games-led urban regeneration. This case highlights two things: the *kinds of mechanisms* by which we might analyse how the state of exception is practiced by local states in consort with urban growth coalitions, and the *particular form* of legal suspension that the CPO exemplifies. This paper follows a two-part structure, elaborating a theoretical framework first, before analysing compulsory purchase as an exceptional measure in our case study. Before that, what is at stake in this discussion can be understood from our brief description of one particular CPO process.

Exceptional Violence as “Public Good”

Most of the residents of Dalmarnock, living in typical four-storey high multiple occupancy tenement housing in Glasgow’s East End, were evicted and re-housed following a decision by the local Housing Association¹ to demolish the area in 2000. Margaret Jaconelli and her family, however, remained in their home in an empty building surrounded by advancing dereliction. Her last neighbour departed in 2002, leaving the family to face damp, cold, vermin, insecurity, no social services, and winter fuel bills of £140 per week (Porter 2009). Unlike many others in the area who socially rented, the Jaconelli family owned their own property, with no mortgage. They refused a desultory offer of £30,000 compensation, or removal to Housing Association and shared ownership properties via the City Council. The house had been independently valued at £90,000 and removal to other tenures was deemed to be neither like-for-like, nor a legitimate exchange for full home ownership. In 2008, they were made subject to CPOs and it became apparent their home was situated on the site designated for the CWGs 2014 Athletes’ Village.



Figure 1: The Jaconelli family facing eviction (photo by Neil Gray)

After lodging an unsuccessful objection to CPO in 2009 concerning a lack of appropriate negotiation and reasonable compensation, the Jaconelli family signed up a prominent local housing rights lawyer to represent their case. When these appeals failed, the Jaconelli family took the decision to barricade themselves into their home in protest, in the process attracting a large media scrum (Figure 1). They were supported by dozens of local people, students, activists, and the Glasgow Games Monitor 2014, a group set up by the authors and others in late 2008 to “unmask the myths of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games” and work in solidarity with people negatively affected by regeneration.² After four days, Sheriff’s Officers arrived in the pre-dawn hours of 24 March 2011, with more than 80 police officers and 15 riot vans. Police cleared protestors from the street and cut the power, while Sheriff’s Officers took a sledgehammer to the doors and windows. By 11 am, the Jaconelli family had been forcefully removed from their home of 35 years, bruised and battered from their ordeal. They remain without a home of their own and continue their fight through local campaigning and the European Court of Human Rights. This pernicious and violent eviction was justified by the local state on the basis of the wider “public good” and the exceptional circumstances of the Commonwealth Games. With the backing of such a discursive framework, the family’s local councillor suggested the family take the eviction “on the chin” (Margaret Jaconelli, personal communication, 20 March 2011).

Before returning to the particularities of this case as an exceptional measure, we provide a brief overview of the state of exception and its generalisation as a tool of government.

The State of Exception: A Core Technique of Government

No sacrifice is too great for our democracy, least of all the temporary sacrifice of democracy itself (Rossiter, in Agamben 2005:9).

The state of exception can be defined as the merging of two factors: the suspension of the constitution, and the extension of military authority into the civil sphere (Agamben 2005:5). For Agamben, the history of the state of emergency is its gradual emancipation from a “real” wartime situation to a “fictitious” political situation where the declaration of the state of exception, “has gradually been replaced by an unprecedented generalization of the paradigm of security as the normal technique of government” (2005:14). As Walter Benjamin famously claimed, the transformation of military powers into political, civil powers shows us that the state of emergency in which we live is not the exception but the rule. Thus he argues: “We must attain to a conception of history in keeping with this insight” (1999:248). This advice sustains Agamben’s (1996:153) interpretative focus: how could we think that a system which only functions on the basis of emergency, he asks, “would not also be interested in preserving such an emergency at any price?”

The widespread use and abuse of the “state of exception” can be gleaned from Agamben’s (2005:11–22) brief history of state exceptionalism, which demonstrates the progressive normalisation of its use. He shows how exception is routinely mobilised to deal with political and economic crisis, acutely illustrating a shift from military to civil powers in the politics of the twentieth century, and suggesting how the state of exception might be generalised in the contemporary political and economic conjuncture. Belcher et al (2008:499) note the importance of exploring Agamben’s “topological challenge” which situates the state of exception as an “unlocalisable” process of transformation and technique of governance manifested “everywhere and nowhere”. While it is true, they argue, that operative spaces of exception can be identified, the exception also materialises ordinary spaces. The topological challenge is met by Hardt and Negri (2005:7–8), who argue that the basis for sovereign exceptionalism is now evident across the global terrain. In a context of political and economic “omni-crisis”, the state of exception is constructed as “permanent and general, pervading both foreign relations and homeland”.

Such a reading of the state of exception informs our own analytical and theoretical framing, which reconsiders how the agency of statecraft, “actively produces naked life and states of exception” (Ek 2006:374). To do this we examine three bases of the state of exception in the context of governing and thus producing urban spaces: the spaces of sovereignty and the ability to decide; governmentality and biopolitics; and finally, discourses of necessity as a constitutive basis for state exceptionalism.

The Decision, Sovereignty and Biopolitics

Sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception (Schmitt, in Agamben 1998:11).

In *Dictatorship* (1921) and *Political Theology* (1922), written in the crisis years of the early Weimar Republic, the conservative legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt saw a Hobbesian world of dangerous nature that required a strong state to ensure order, peace and security. In this context, Schmitt attempted to anchor the use of the state of exception to the sovereign decision and the juridical order (Agamben 2005:35). But as Agamben observes, the state of exception is in fact the separation of “force

of law”—which serves *in place of the law*—from legislative law. This could be written: “force-of-law” (2005:38). Diverging then from Schmitt, Agamben observes the “paradox of sovereignty” (1998:15–29): the sovereign as simultaneously outside and inside the legal order. The power of sovereign rulers, he argues, is their ability to suspend law and order at the same time as belonging to it. This inclusion/exclusion dynamic is also true for the citizen who is subject to the sovereign decision on exception. The decision on the state of exception thus opens up an indeterminate relation—a “zone of indistinction”—whereby citizens/bodies are removed to a threshold bereft of the law but at the same time turned over to it: “*Being outside, yet belonging*, this is the topological structure of the state of exception” (Agamben 2005:35). As we will see, Agamben’s analysis questions both the sovereign right of decision and sovereignty itself.

As Claudio Minca (2006) stresses, the structure of sovereign exceptionality is fundamentally spatial, involving the very creation and definition of space in which the juridical-political order can have validity—state space. Legg and Vasudevan (2011:9–10) note that every basic order (nomos) in Carl Schmitt’s terms is viewed as a distinctively “spatial order”. For his part, Agamben argues that the inscription of bare life into the sovereign state is the central project of governance. Informed by Foucault’s (1998, 2010) conception of biopolitics—whereby the territorial state is gradually transformed into a “state of population” and the nation’s bodily health and wellbeing becomes a problem of governance for sovereign power—he observes that, “the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power” (1998:6). While Foucault, perhaps surprisingly, never brought his insights to bear on the camp, Agamben considers it the paradigmatic site of modern biopolitics. Only because politics had already been transformed into biopolitics (a literal “politicisation of life”), he argues, were the camp and the most extreme forms of totalitarianism and “bare life” possible. This thesis, as Agamben observes, “...throws a sinister light on the models by which the social sciences, sociology, urban studies, and architecture today are trying to conceive and organise the public space of the world’s cities...” (1998:181).

For Foucault (2010:22–23), the problem of biopolitics and population could only be understood when the relation between governmental reason and “economic truth” is grasped. In his study of “the birth of biopolitics”, he argued that the “self-limitation” of the art of government, beginning from the middle of the eighteenth century, was predicated on facilitating “economic truth and the truth of the market” through a calculus of utility (Foucault 2010:51). As Noys (2010) argues, neoliberalism must be understood as a form of governmentality in which the state permeates society to subject it to the economic. This new “regime of truth”, as Jason Read (2009:29) observes, produces subjects as *homo economicus*, “structured by different motivations and governed by different principles, than *homo juridicus*, or the legal subject of the state”. Biopolitical regimes also have disciplinary effects. Painter stresses that a significant aspect of regional biopolitics is concerned with augmenting, “the economic potential and productivity of the workforce” (2013:1247). Paton et al (2012), meanwhile, emphasise the *classed* nature of biopolitical governmentality, critically interrogating attempts to transform disorderly “flawed consumers” into active “consumer citizens” in their analysis of Glasgow’s Commonwealth Games. Aligned with regulatory workfare strategies, this aspect has been all too evident in Glasgow’s East End regeneration (Gray and Mooney 2011).

Thus the market economy becomes the general index for governmental action, and the role of the state is to act on the conditions that allow political economy to become a general matrix of social and political relations under biopolitical capitalism (Rossi 2013). With this understanding, we argue that the sovereign *decision* which characterises the exception is fundamentally subject to a presumed “factuality” of economic truth. We therefore suggest that a fundamental critique of the *economic* basis behind the sovereign decision is required in critical studies of the state of exception. Further, Agamben (1998:126–133) is at pains to remind us that the state of exception is as much a creation of the so-called democratic tradition as the absolutist one: the same bare life that epitomised the totalitarian states of the twentieth century, even if transformed and humanised, is central to the inscription of human rights at the birth of democracy. Therefore, he argues, we must call into question every theory of the contractual origin of state power and, along with it, every attempt to ground political communities in something like a “belonging” (1998:181). The time is ripe, he claims, “to place the originary structure and limits of the form of the State in a new perspective” (1998:12).

With this ontological challenge in mind, we aim to confront and dispute the entanglement of state exceptionalism and biopolitical power with reference to urban policy. In particular, we argue that the concept of *necessity*, linked inextricably to the market economy and “common well being”, undergirds contemporary urban state exceptionalism as much as it has provided legitimation for exceptional practices historically.

Necessity Creates Its Own Law

Law has no existence for itself; rather its essence lies, from a certain perspective, in the very life of men (Savigny, in Agamben 1998).

Central to Agamben’s position is the constructed nature of law and the ways and means by which law is mobilised. Any discussion of the state of exception, he argues, must begin with an analysis of the state of necessity. He starts with St Thomas of Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*, the influential thirteenth century compendium of Christian moral teachings, where necessity, it is argued, acts as the justification for a case of transgression by means of an exception. Necessity, in this formulation, is not the law itself, nor does it suspend the law; rather, it functions as a moral concept to release a particular case from the application of the law. Importantly for St Thomas, the ultimate ground of exception is justified by the principle of the “*common well-being of men*” (in Agamben 2005:25, emphasis added). Only by virtue of an emphasis on the “common good” does the exception have the force and reason of law. Romano, an influential Italian jurist between the two great wars of the twentieth century, takes the principle of necessity further, claiming it as the foundation of the modern state and modern law:

It can be said that necessity is the first and originary source of all law ... And it is to necessity that the origin of and legitimation of the legal institution par excellence, namely, the state, and its constitutional order must be traced back (Romano, in Agamben 2005:27).

Romano's formulation brings Agamben closer to his argument that the state of exception, based on the principle of necessity, is the contemporary paradigm of government. The fundamental problem with this principle, however, is that the grounds for necessity cannot be objectively determined. The "naïve" presupposition of "pure factuality" that supports the principle, Agamben argues, is easily countered:

far from occurring as an objective given, necessity clearly entails a subjective judgement ... obviously the only circumstances that are necessary and objective are those that are declared to be so (2005:30).

This entails a moral or political evaluation where law and fact are blurred and indeterminate: "fact" is converted into law, and at the same time law is suspended and obliterated in fact. Necessity is borne from knowledge that *constructs* a certain norm as fact, blurring the line between actual and fictitious forms of emergency. We argue here that the state of exception is founded on the fictional *necessity* of maintaining "economic truth" as a public good (Foucault 2010; Read 2009)—even if democracy itself must be sacrificed. In our case study, this is the case precisely. Far from being a response to a lacuna in normative law, the state of exception appears as a fictional gap in the order that safeguards the norm and its application. These brief reflections on necessity and the state of exception guide our investigation of urban planning, governance and spatial production in the next section.

Urbanisation and the State of Necessity

In the 1970s, Henri Lefebvre (1976, 1991, 2003) argued that industrialisation was increasingly being supplanted by urbanisation as a primary means for the "survival of capitalism" (Lefebvre 1976). Developing an "urbanisation of capital" thesis, Harvey (1985) argued that this logic has only intensified, stressing the fundamental role of urbanisation in contemporary accumulation strategies (Harvey 2012). Central to this urbanising logic is an *ideology* of economic growth as a means by which the "common good" can purportedly be realised (Harvey 2007; Molotch 1976; Smith 2002). This ideology, much contested of course, rests largely on eighteenth century liberal economic assumptions (cf John Locke, Adam Smith), which argue that the free "exercise of individual self-interest leads to the optimal collective social good; that private property is the foundation of self-interest; and that free market exchange is its ideal vehicle" (see Smith 2002:429).

Urban growth discourses typically have two central themes: enhanced inter-city competition for resources, and the entrepreneurial urban developer as "salvationist"; a necessary panacea for urban crisis (Wilson and Wouters 2003). But the "urban growth machine", posited as a panacea for *all* citizens, is commensurate with deeply uneven results, typically transferring wealth to urban elites, costing residents more money, and diminishing quality of life for the majority of citizens (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 2007; Molotch 1976). Yet, public discourses

on the necessity of large-scale urban development projects (UDPs) and their promised role in shaping or saving the wellbeing of all remains a routine justification for the (often exceptional) means by which projects are undertaken (Christophers 2010; Peck 2012; Swyngedouw et al 2002). We challenge the factuality of these boosterist discourses here, beginning with a brief summary of literature on the urban state of exception.

Some authors have shown the urban state of exception to have very commonplace manifestations: sunbathing resorts, gated communities and theme parks as forms of “camp” (Diken and Laustsen 2004); Portugal’s flagship programmes of urban development in the early 2000s (Baptista 2013); and “revanchist” urban policies in Rotterdam (Schinkel and van den Berg 2011). More concretely, for our study, Marrero-Guillamón (2012) notes how the highly subjective notion of financial threat via “inter-city competition”, often transposing the vocabulary of war to the civil sphere, provided the necessary “fictional” state of emergency to justify exceptional measures in urban planning for the London Olympics, 2012. The underlying justification for these measures were necessity, temporality, atypicality and the threat of terrorism. The result was a widespread “architecture of fear”, leaving Marrero-Guillamón to wonder whether the “exceptional legacy” promised through the Games, might instead be a “legacy of exception” (2012:29). Raco (2012) usefully cautions against viewing the London Olympics as an exceptional event separate from normal everyday forms of urban politics. Yet temporal pressures undoubtedly exacerbate the mobilisation of *exceptional measures* within mega-event urban policies (Marrero-Guillamón 2012; Sanchez and Broudehoux 2013).

These are paradigmatic examples of the state of exception mobilised in relation to mega-events. But perhaps the most sustained examination of everyday exceptionality in urban literature is provided by Swyngedouw et al (2002), even if no direct relation to Agamben’s theory of exception is acknowledged. In a comprehensive study of 13 large-scale UDPs in 12 European Union countries, the authors argue that state exceptionality is one of five key measures associated with new forms of elite-driven governmentality. Typical justifications for exceptional measures include temporal pressures, emblematic scale and character, efficiency criteria, greater “flexibility”, promised “trickle-down” benefits to the city’s population, and general “well-being”. These measures consolidate an “extraordinary regulatory environment” (Swyngedouw et al 2002:566) with special or exceptional powers of intervention routinely operating outside of traditional democratic forms of public accountability (Swyngedouw et al 2002:566). The non-exceptional result is accentuated socio-economic polarisation, socialisation of risk and privatisation of gain, democratic deficit and shifting geometries of power in governance, and weak integration of projects with wider urban processes and planning (Swyngedouw et al 2002).

Drawing from the analysis of these everyday processes of urban exception, this section grounds our general thesis on the urban state of exception and the regeneration programmes associated with Glasgow’s CWGs 2014. Before proceeding to a detailed case study of the Dalmarnock area, we outline in the following section a view of CPOs as a model of urban exceptionality.

Compulsory Purchase Orders: A Model of Urban Exception

Compulsory purchase is the power held by the state to acquire title to property without the consent of an owner. In western property systems, land title and the rights to enjoy and use privately owned property are vested in individual land-owners by the state—private property derives *from* the state in this sense (cf Delaney 2005; MacPherson 1978). Compulsory purchase is the power of the state to “return” property to state ownership and is thus a key driver of urban change in European cities. Indeed, it was a lynchpin of the UK’s progressive modernist public housing programme enshrined in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 (Christophers 2010:869). But while contemporary discourses around compulsory purchase are similarly laced with “common interest” sentiments, they revive the *language* of modernism, but not its principles. What marks the most recent turn in the use of compulsory purchase powers is the contemporary context of neoliberalising urban policy, producing an approach neatly captured by Owen Hatherley (2010:xvii) as “slum clearance without the socialism”. With urbanisation now increasingly central to accumulation strategies (Harvey 1985; Lefebvre 2003), and the mediating role of the social democratic state much diminished under entrepreneurial conditions (Hardt and Negri 2005; Harvey 1989), we argue that CPOs have become an increasingly instrumental form of state regulation facilitating neoliberal urban development.

Recently in the UK we have seen high-profile examples of CPO usage heavily promoted by private companies with large vested interests: London docklands (Batley 1989); Cardiff’s docklands (Imrie and Thomas 1997); the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder schemes in cities of northern England (Allen 2008); London 2012 Olympics (Davis and Thornley 2010); and the redevelopment of Croydon town centre (Christophers 2010). Powers of compulsory purchase for urban planning and redevelopment purposes have been significantly extended under recent planning legislative reforms in England and Scotland. The Scottish Government recently completed a review of its compulsory purchase guidance and policy³ as a result of heavy lobbying by the development industry and its peak bodies the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Scottish Property Federation. The key purpose of this review was to make the use of compulsory purchase in urban regeneration “more accessible” to local authorities. The Scottish Government, the RICS and the Scottish Property Federation have gone to considerable effort to “enhance developer awareness” of the powers held by local authorities under the rationale that if more widely known about, developers will more readily lobby agencies to use their compulsory purchase powers.⁴ Since the early 2000s, Glasgow City Council has led an expansion in the use of CPOs for urban regeneration, advancing more orders than any other Scottish local authority in the past 10 years.

Expropriation, then, is a crucial feature in the history of urban development and restructuring not only in Scotland, but globally under eminent domain (Harvey 2012:28–29). Our main interest here, however, is the legal mechanisms by which the sovereign power to decide, on the basis of necessity, intersects with biopolitical power to produce the “outside, yet belonging” spatial and social ordering that Agamben identifies. Drawing on these reflections we now turn to our case study, the CWGs 2014.

The Show Must Go On! Restructuring, Regeneration and the CWGs 2014

We must be ambitious as a nation. Indeed, in the current economic climate it is even more important to develop a lasting legacy to strengthen our economy and reinforce national confidence across Scotland (First Minister Alex Salmond 2009).⁵

This will bring a host of benefits to Glasgow and Scotland, including everything from regeneration, job creation, inward investment and just a huge pride in being Scottish (Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon 2007).⁶

These statements, by the Scottish First Minister and his deputy, neatly summarise the assumed condition of political and economic *necessity* that underpins large-scale urban regeneration in Glasgow's CWGs 2014, and the premise of general wellbeing that sustains this necessity. Glasgow's East End, one of the UK's most disadvantaged areas (Gray and Mooney 2011), has been the focus of intermittent, largely failed, regeneration initiatives since the 1980s (Damer 1990; Pacione 1995). The city's successful bid in 2007 to host the CWGs intensified that regeneration focus. While the Games are located in multiple existing and newly built venues throughout and beyond the city's boundaries, our focus here is in the East End where a cluster of major new venues are being developed. In particular, we concentrate on Dalmarnock, a recently demolished neighbourhood of tenements where the Athletes' Village is now sited.

The CWGs must be seen in the context of Glasgow's wider Clyde Corridor regeneration strategy. The Clyde Gateway Initiative is a partnership urban regeneration company focusing on Parkhead, Bridgeton, Dalmarnock, Rutherglen and Shawfield. The initiative claims it will generate 21,000 new jobs, 10,000 new housing units, and a population increase of 20,000 in the designated area over the next 20 years. In addition to a tangled mix of local authority institutions, a coalition of organisations will "deliver" the Commonwealth Games. This includes "Glasgow 2014" (the Organising Committee), and a host of multinational consultants (such as KPMG, PMP Legacy) in its employ.

Like many areas targeted for Games events, Dalmarnock has been subject to sustained disinvestment and stigmatisation (Gray and Mooney 2011). The neighbourhood now being reconstructed as the Athletes' Village was, until the 1970s, a relatively thriving and populated one, comprising classic red-sandstone tenement flats, typical of the housing type and population density of the area. The area saw significant disinvestment from the 1980s, and displacement of residents began in the late 1990s when The New Housing association demolished its high-rise and most of its tenement properties before transferring the land to Glasgow City Council for general purposes of "area-based regeneration". According to a report by Hilland Richie Consultants (1999), parts of Dalmarnock had good housing stock and stable populations, but there was no funding commitment forthcoming from either the public or private sector. By the mid-2000s, the area had become largely derelict, characterised by deteriorating tenement buildings, abandoned shops and large areas of vacant land.

The central focus of this paper is the situation of one family and some small businesses who found themselves trapped in this downward spiral of disinvestment. On Springfield Road, four premises—a pharmacy, a newsagent, a post office and general store, and a fish-and-chip shop—remained to serve the local residents. The chip shop closed quickly with reduced patronage, but the remaining businesses held on in rapidly deteriorating circumstances. The residential household belonged to Margaret Jaconelli and her family whose story we outlined earlier. Our detailed analysis of this case is enabled by our close critical engagement with recent events in the area. As noted in the introduction, we helped found an activist group called “Glasgow Games Monitor 2014”⁷ in late 2008, which sought to provide critical information on the Games, and a basis for direct action. We have gained a thorough understanding of the situation and context through our active participation in local campaigns and struggles, our extensive primary and secondary literature research, and our photographic and documentary archives and interviews with those affected.

In 2008, Glasgow City Council began assembling the land required for the Athletes’ Village and “legacy housing” development. The combination of neoliberal urban policy setting, stagnating economy, powerful vested interests, and a Games event as catalyst is precisely the kind of potent cocktail that can produce an enhanced range of exceptional measures. In this case, these measures are encapsulated in the Commonwealth Games Act (2008), a calculated piece of legislative machinery representing the extra-regulation of all sorts of social fields, and justified in public discourse through a “legacy” framework. The model adopted to deliver the land for the Athletes’ Village and legacy housing follows the familiar mantra of “public pain, private gain” in large-scale UDPs (Swynegdouw et al 2002). The local state subsidised the initial cost of assembling and servicing land, then tendered the right to develop to the private sector, ultimately handing over the land (at nil cost) to the winning bidder. Some of the land in question was already in public ownership, and some was acquired through negotiation with landowners—we will come to an account of the uneven character of the latter shortly. But there remained those small shops, and one family, who had been stuck in their properties since the mid-1990s in rapidly declining environmental conditions. To acquire these titles, Glasgow City Council advanced a CPO in 2009.

One of the exceptionality measures provided for in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Act (2008) is enhanced compulsory purchase powers so that property interests can be acquired under the auspices of delivering the CWGs. The clause, deliberately vague and indeterminate, enables compulsory acquisition of land, “required in order to facilitate the holding of the Glasgow Games 2014”. This legal clause creates the constituent components of the sovereign right of decision based on necessity: the sovereign creates a “zone of indistinction” that is bereft of the law, but turned over to it in the name of the public interest (Agamben 2005:24–31). Thus the possibility of spatialising a *subjective* geography of exceptionality based on necessity is created for sovereign power, which can determine who will be subject to CPO, and where. This was the case in Dalmarnock.

Compulsory purchase in its contemporary reformulation, we argue, is an archetypal example of the “state of exception”. The case of the Commonwealth Games site in Dalmarnock exemplifies three such properties of exceptionality. First,

certain procedural norms of law in relation to accountability, democracy and access to justice are suspended through an invocation of the public good—a modulation of the inclusion—exclusion dynamic which Agamben identifies as intrinsic to the state of exception. Second, in what at face value appears to be a paradoxical move, the delivery of that privately funded public good is advanced on the suspension of normal private property rights. That it does so purportedly in the service of the public good is a necessary fiction. Third, differentiation in the transgression and re-appropriation of property is the next modulation of exceptionality—that of the suspension of the liberal norms of equality before the law. CPOs in this case are a specifically classed strategy of urban restructuring, reserved for the poorer, working class and non-establishment property interests of a city, while establishment property interests are treated very differently. In the next three sections, we take each of these “suspensions” and interrogate them closely with evidence of CPO usage in Dalmarnock in the context of land and property valorisation strategies related to the CWGs.

“Legacy”: A Necessary Neoliberal Framework

Proceeding with a CPO in Scotland, as in many other systems of expropriation, requires a justification that the acquisition is for a broader “public interest”, tested through public inquiry. In reality, this has little meaning. The sheer weight of legal complexity, the timing and process for lodging an objection, the very limited grounds for appeal, and the almost non-existent access to expert legal advice in an extremely complex and specialised area of law means the cards are stacked entirely in the acquiring authority’s interests. Even legal experts stress that there is a lack of transparent, accessible documentation of the CPO record in Scotland, but available data show that less than a quarter of all CPOs in Scotland since 2002 went to public inquiry and, of those that did, almost all were confirmed.⁸ The final result ultimately rests with the individual decision of the Minister responsible for calling the public inquiry.

What the public interest justification offers to the acquiring authority and the urban growth coalitions manoeuvring behind the scenes is an almost water-tight discursive framework from behind which defence of almost any necessary action can be made. Legal and procedural rights of owners in a CPO process are a mirage: they evaporate upon arrival at the point they might be wielded. This is more than a procedural and practical problem. It is also a marker of the open-ness and non-materialisation of the law, for subjects stand in anticipation of a law that is always deferred in a “zone of indistinction” and made subject to the sovereign decision. Athanasiou states: “the law draws its force from the constant deferral of its implementation, from its always already wide-open gate. The subject who seeks to access the law is bound to stand, in a position of perpetual presumption and anticipation, always before the law, before the aporia that the law is” (in Butler and Athanasiou 2012:127–128).

Despite these barriers, the landowners in this case did object, as did one of the authors of this article (Porter), who lodged as a third party objector. Objections to planning issues in Scotland including CPOs have to be heard either at a public inquiry, or a more informal “hearing”. Policy at the time recommended a full public inquiry for objections to CPOs, especially where development was of national significance or particularly controversial. This case was a CPO to advance a flagship

development not just for Glasgow, but purportedly for the whole of Scotland (Scottish Government 2009). Yet the Scottish Government did not allow a public inquiry, instead arranging a less formal hearing, at which Glasgow City Council was represented by a Queens Counsel (QC), a high status jurist conferred by the Crown, while objectors had no legal representation at all. The Inquiry Reporter, appointed to run the hearing by the relevant Scottish Government Minister, noted that many of the objectors were willing to sell their properties and urged Council to negotiate directly with them, but it was no surprise that he confirmed the necessity of the CPO to allow the Commonwealth Games developments to proceed on the basis of “public interest” (Jackson 2009).

Following confirmation of a CPO, the acquiring authority takes ownership of the property through a General Vesting Declaration. No money has changed hands at this point; indeed in most cases just like in Dalmarnock, compensation had not yet even been agreed. Once vesting was complete on the Dalmarnock properties, continued occupation was illegal. Law provides for the sovereign’s power of decision to push these citizens’ bodies to a threshold of legality, and then subject them to the full violence of that law. This is the topological structure of the CPO, where bodies are made bereft of the law, at the same time as being turned over to it. The Jaconelli family remained in their home of 38 years because they had nowhere else to go, having not been paid any compensation to enable them to move. Three of the shops were still operating, also because they were both uncertain of what to do next, and had little capital with which to relocate. All were summonsed to Glasgow Sheriff Court where Council’s QC argued for their immediate removal. They all pleaded (with no legal representation) for more time to come to an appropriate settlement with Council. Margaret Jaconelli appealed her case to the Sheriff-Principal in mid-March 2011. While that appeal was pending, all of the shop-owners were evicted. Having seen the inevitable coming, they had moved their stock out and ceased trading a few days before. Eviction is a cruel event for people who have spent a lifetime building their livelihood in a local neighbourhood. As we have seen, the Jaconelli family managed to sign up a prominent local housing rights lawyer to appeal their case, but when these appeals failed, they had no other option but to defend their property by barricading themselves into their home in protest. All this in the face of sustained defamation and enormous pressure to make way for the Games development.

Two aspects of the “public interest” dimension are crucial here. First, enormous state-sponsored effort goes into vilifying neighbourhoods, properties and those being displaced: “territorial stigmatisation” (Gray and Mooney 2011; Wacquant 2008) is central to the revalorisation of land and property markets. Also, to fight a CPO is to be labelled greedy and recalcitrant, deferring the “public interest” for a personal agenda of private gain. Glasgow City Council mounted a direct campaign against the Jaconelli family via channels of media collusion and political patronage that are well known in Glasgow (Gray and French 2010). A *Glasgow Herald* report (Braidon 2010), for instance, suggested that the Jaconelli family were “holding out” for £360,000 in compensation, when in fact a high ambit claim is a legal bargaining routine in such cases. Another tactic was to release confidential data about the family’s council tax payments to a journalist who went on to publish a

story designed to humiliate and discredit the family. Council were later lightly rapped on the knuckles by the Scottish Information Commissioner.

The second important aspect is the sovereign's *subjective* power of decision. The public interest is whatever the state says it is. More accurately, the public interest is very precisely framed within the growth-based economic logic of late capitalism. It is a mode of governance for political economy that makes the specific measures of biopolitical control wielded here justifiable as a measure of necessity. In particular, we would argue that the concept of "Legacy"—a constitutive part of the competitive bidding process since Manchester hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2002—has become the chief symbolic means by which the mantra of "public interest" is perpetuated in Games events. Despite the widely acknowledged paucity of evidence supporting legacy claims in sporting mega-events (Davies 2011; Matheson 2010; Short 2008), it is the central justification for suspending normal procedure in attendant regeneration planning and policy.

The Fictional Suspension of Private Property Rights for the Public Good

The ideology of private property, that "terrible and arduously accomplished expropriation of the mass of the people" (Marx 1990 [1867]:928), is hegemonic under the (neo)liberal-democratic model of late capitalism. At the heart of this ideology is a conception of the "possessive individual" as the "proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them" (MacPherson 1962:3). The whole edifice of states and markets arising from this model reduces the social contract to a mode of exchange between freely possessive individuals, with the state becoming a "calculated device for the protection of this property and for the maintenance of an orderly relation of exchange" (MacPherson 1962: 3). In this way, governmental reason and a presumed factuality of "economic truth" merge (Foucault 2010).

Compulsory purchase, however, appears to turn the unassailability of private ownership on its head by enabling the state to seize the rights of private property owners, without their consent. Private property interests that stand in the way of redevelopment necessitate the exceptional suspension of legal norms that ordinarily prioritise the very same rights. Exception appears as a gap where law is suspended in the face of necessity: private property rights must of necessity be transcended for exceptional public interest reasons. It is the double-move of exception that Agamben so incisively details that is of most salience in our case here. Because the gap *is a fiction*. The norms (private property) over which the suspension of law (compulsory purchase) appears to hover are the very norms being protected and maintained.

In a world where the purity of the marketplace has become axiomatic, with a property system entirely geared toward private accumulation, deviating from the normal rules of the land market appears almost nonsensical. This is the entanglement that Christophers identifies in the use of CPOs by Croydon City Council, where the biopolitical dimension is encapsulated in the notion of economic and social "wellbeing", enabling public bodies to enact the expropriation of private property on that basis. Yet for Christophers (2010:866), the key point is that transfer into

council hands represented “only a temporary means to a very different end, for once acquired the land would immediately be passed on to a private entity”. State intervention is invoked to enact a transfer from private to public (temporarily), and back to private hands, but this time with the aim of higher end uses. Compulsory purchase momentarily suspends private property rights in order, it turns out, to maintain the power of private accumulation. The “decision” governing this logic is entirely subjective and dependent on the discretion of the sovereign as we will see in the next section.

For those people that find themselves on the receiving end of a CPO, the suspension of “normal” market expectations is bewildering. We do not say this in defence of markets. What we seek to highlight is that this immense contradiction is routinely wielded by the powerful over the poor. To repeat the formula of Walter Benjamin (1999:248), the exception proves the rule. In what follows we set out the complex details of a legislative regime whose internal contradictions demonstrate this particular suspension mechanism of urban exceptionality. As outlined earlier, vesting is the arbitrary moment when title formally transfers to the acquiring authority. No money exchange has yet occurred. This brings our analysis to the contentious question of valuation of property under CPO rules in Scotland. Compensation is based on two components: a valuation of the property by the District Valuer, and a percentage of that valuation for disturbance and business/income or home loss. In the Scottish system, the law, as set out in S12 of the *Land Compensation (Scotland) Act 1963*, requires a valuation of the property as if there was “no scheme”: in other words, as if the purchase was not compulsory, as if there were a willing seller and a willing buyer in an open market, and as if the property was not blighted by a development proposal. The valuation is made based on mortgageable value and the valuation takes place on the basis of the state of the property and its surrounds *after* the CPO is confirmed.

However, it is well documented that urban regeneration often proceeds *because* of routine and systematic disinvestment (Smith 1996; Weber 2002). Devaluation is both an essential springboard and a necessary result of capital accumulation strategies (Harvey 2006). Consequently, CPOs are often advanced over properties which have little remaining *current* exchange value. This is how the state effectively delivers the “rent gap” that Neil Smith (1996) diagnosed, where the distance between actual and potential land value post-development becomes large enough for disinvested areas to become attractive for capital. A “discourse of decline” (Beauregard 2003) and “territorial stigmatisation” (Wacquant 2008) generate both the cultural legitimisation and objective economic conditions that eventually make capital revaluation a potentially profitable market response. Such has certainly been the case in Glasgow’s East End (Gray 2008; Gray and Mooney 2011). The valuations regime under compulsory purchase *capitalises on these very conditions*.

What did this mean for the Jaconelli’s and the shopkeepers? Under conditions of systematic disinvestment and widespread dereliction as well as major environmental disruption through the Commonwealth Games developments, the compensation rates determined by the District Valuer were extremely low. This is a common problem faced by those made subject to CPO. Yet the capacity for people to dispute compensation amounts is very limited due to the “closed shop” nature of the property

valuations industry and a process that is so lengthy, stressful, complex and specialist most people just accept what is offered and walk away. In the literature on the supposed “benefits” of forced displacement this is uncritically interpreted as people “choosing” to leave (Kleinhans and Kearns 2013). When we understand the full context and impact of that supposed “choice” we can see it is no choice at all (Allen 2008; Hartman et al 1982).

Our discussion has focused on the impact of the legislative and policy framework governing CPO use in urban regeneration. We reiterate an important caveat here: our analysis of the detailed procedures of CPOs should not be read as a “lack of proper procedural rights” or “corruption” narrative. To see these problematics as merely the application of careless procedure, or poor practice, is to miss how law, biopolitical power, and the imperatives of urban accumulation combine systematically. As Žižek (2009:125) reminds us, “the legal-ideological matrix of freedom-equality is not a mere ‘mask’ concealing exploitation-domination, but the very form in which the latter is exercised”. The final mechanism of exceptionality we identify exposes this point exactly, showing that CPOs are wielded not merely as a tool to extract the highest and best use of land generally, but as a *specific tool of class cleansing in the city*.

Exceptionality as a Classed Strategy

In 2008, when Glasgow City Council were ignoring the requests of those subject to compulsory purchase to negotiate a voluntary acquisition, they closed a series of property deals with prominent city investors who owned land directly adjacent to the Jaconelli family and the other shop-owners (see Figure 2). While the Jaconelli family were offered only £30,000 on a “no-scheme” basis for a property independently valued at £90,000, other private landowners in adjacent sites were offered deals *far in excess* of the initial purchase price while suffering from similar levels of dereliction.

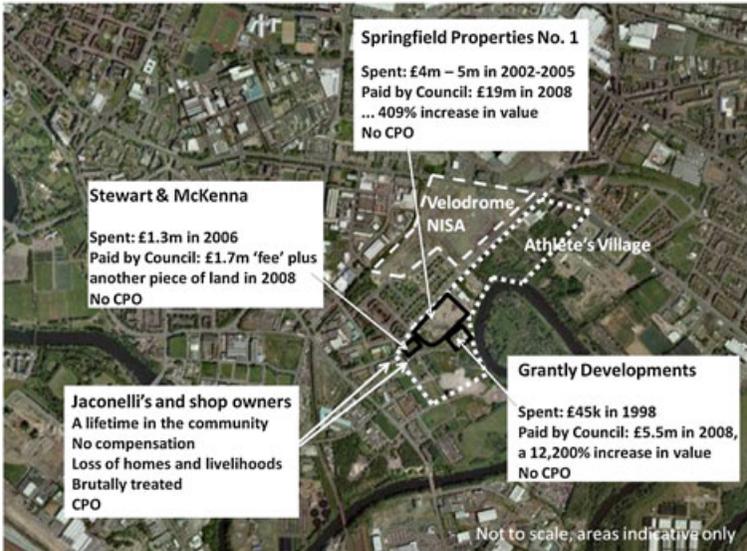


Figure 2: Map showing geographical relation of CPOs (image by Libby Porter)

The largest was Springfield Properties, a shell company of Charles Price, a Glasgow-based developer. Springfield Properties had purchased some vacant former industrial sites along Springfield Road, which by 2008 sat squarely in the centre of the planned Athletes' Village. The parcels of land were bought by Price in 2005 and 2006 for a total of £3.37 million, just at the time that Dalmarnock was being suggested as a preferred site for the Games. In 2008, Glasgow City Council paid Mr Price's company £19 million for the land he owned—which was now needed for the Athletes' Village site—a deal that has subsequently been investigated by Strathclyde Police.

Adjacent to Charles Price's large land holding, was a small corner parcel—a former church—that had been purchased by the property arm of Stewart & McKenna Ltd in 2006 for £1.3 million. Both were major donors to the Scottish Labour Party, with former Leader of Glasgow City Council, Stephen Purcell, holding a position on their charity foundation. Glasgow City Council paid the company £1 for the land plus a "fee" of £1.7 million, and gifted them another parcel of land in Dalmarnock. At the end of what was then Millerfield Road, abutting the Clyde River, was a parcel of derelict land owned by Graham Duffy through his company Grantly Developments (Parkhead). This 2.5 ha parcel had been purchased in 1988 for £45,000, at around the same time that the Jaconelli family purchased their flat just along the road in Ardenlea Street. In 2008, just as it began pursuing a CPO against the Jaconelli family, Glasgow City Council paid Grantly Developments a total of £5.5 million for their land.

While a *direct* comparison between the private ownership of a family home and areas of land owned by private companies cannot be made, it is striking that the Jaconelli property was given a *current* valuation based on values associated with environmental deterioration through disinvestment, while the other landowners were given far in *excess* of current market value on the basis of *potential* value due to forthcoming development. It is also vital to recognise that these landholders could have been made subject to CPO through section 42 of the *Commonwealth Games Act 2008*, just as the Jaconelli family and shopkeepers were, but this option was not pursued by Council. Here the realm of fact and law become indistinguishable, and the sovereign power of decision emerges as a subjective classed strategy. Major landholding companies with significant development interests are treated with all the special deals and incentives that the entrepreneurial city can muster, receiving massive profits in the land assembly process. Yet working-class citizens are ignored and vilified, and subjected to CPOs leaving them dispossessed of their homes and livelihoods, and displaced from their local neighbourhood. The Jaconelli family, for instance, remain dependent on family for a roof over their heads, while they struggle for urban justice years after eviction.

Conclusion: The State of Exception in Contemporary Urban Redevelopment

Our purpose has been to generalise Agamben's thinking on state exceptionalism in the sphere of the urban environment. We have focused on a specific legal regime, the CPO, to unpick the ways by which the "state of exception" becomes operative in the neoliberalising city. Our analysis of these modes of urban exceptionality has

revealed certain specificities about the modality of necessity at work in Games-led urban regeneration. Necessity for urban regeneration is catalysed via the intertwining of two logics: a market-oriented growth logic supported by a discursive framework of “public interest” and “legacy”, and its obscene underside, a stigmatisation logic that demonises certain neighbourhoods as part of urban accumulation processes. These two logics legitimise the *necessity* of mega-events and urban regeneration as a remedy for urban underdevelopment. This then legitimates all sorts of associated exceptional measures, including special powers for governments and the suspension of certain norms of procedural justice.

The state of exception here occurs along three axes. First is the suspension of “normal” practices that are usually “standard” in urban development and planning procedure. This is not to say that “standard” urban development and planning processes are procedurally and socially just (which is clearly not true), and that this case is one of “bad practice”. What we mean is that the hallmarks of most western planning systems (the commitment, not always delivered, to legally instituted planning and development frameworks) are suspended by the state of exception in the name of necessity. In this case, we show how the particular procedure of CPOs suspended “normal” rights and procedural protections to advance a CPO in the name of a Games event and the subjectively defined “public interest”.

The second mode of exceptionality we have highlighted surrounds the paradox of private property in expropriation. A normalised legal and moral order usually places and protects private property rights above most others. In urban regeneration, however, the overwhelming public good is often served, so it is argued, by abrogating private property rights because those private property rights (and more particularly the individual holders of those rights) are “holding up” growth and development. It is a perverse form of public interest, this one, because the enabling mechanism set up to achieve it is private gain. What we have, then, is a lacuna in the law which fixes the norm: a chimerical suspension in which what appears at first glance to be an abrogation of private property actually turns out to be a suspension in the name of what it purports to suspend. At the heart of the whole exercise is the protection and reification of private property.

The specifically classed way by which the state decides on the suspension of “normal” private property means only certain groups become the target of exceptional measures. In an era of neoliberal urban development, compulsory purchase is a tool being applied in urban regeneration strategies to deliberately displace poor people to make way for “higher end land uses” rather than supporting progressive planning policy and public housing construction (Christophers 2010). With urbanisation increasingly becoming the centre of accumulation strategies and the frontline for struggles over resources (Harvey 2012), the evolving issue of compulsory purchase as a measure of exceptionality, we argue, requires more sustained analysis and action.

A key question is *who* decides on a state of exception and on what basis? As Agamben points out, this is not an innocent question but is directly determined by presumed factuality and the power of the sovereign decision. Augmented by a discursive framework of “public interest” and “legacy”, compulsory purchase as an exceptional measure supports the neoliberal mantra of private accumulation. But the social *necessity* underpinning the realisation of human needs in the city requires

other logics than that of *homo economicus*. The case of the Jaconelli family and their struggle for justice represents at least one of them.

Endnotes

- ¹ Housing Associations are Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) regulated and in part funded by the state. They have become the preferred “third sector” model of social housing in the UK, replacing fully funded public or council housing. For many people, including the authors, they are a “Trojan horse” for housing privatisation. See Defend Council Housing: http://www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk/dch/dch_stocktransfer.cfm
- ² <http://gamesmonitor2014.org/q-and-a/>
- ³ See links and documents arising from the review at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Policy/themes/ComPur>
- ⁴ <http://www.inhouselawyer.co.uk/index.php/scotland-home/8222-compulsory-purchase-crusade-mission-possible>
- ⁵ First Minister’s Foreword in Scottish Government (2009) *A Games Legacy for Scotland*, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/gameslegacy>
- ⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow_and_west/7086680.stm
- ⁷ <http://gamesmonitor2014.org/>
- ⁸ <http://www.inhouselawyer.co.uk/index.php/scotland-home/8222-compulsory-purchase-crusade-mission-possible>

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