**Editorial**

**For Home *Un*making**

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From violent clashes in the United Kingdom over state-enforced eviction of Dale Farm travellers, to formal regime change symbolized by Libyan rebels posing for photographs in ransacked Gaddafi family mansions, the year 2012 saw home and its *un*making take a very public and politicized stage. On the academic stage meanwhile, home *un*making was relatively absent, usurped by a longstanding and primary focus within interdisciplinary home studies on the productive making of the domestic world. Inspired by events happening globally, and in light of scholarly gaps to be redressed, we convened two sessions at the 2012 Royal Geographical Society-with Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG) Annual Conference dedicated to exploring what we called ‘home *un*making’. In this special issue, we bring together these papers and more, to speak ‘For Home *Un*making’. Our editorial is aimed towards the interdisciplinary readership of *Home Cultures* and to groups beyond academia who engage with home-making in their professional and creative practice. It is intended to provide stimulus for greater dialogue on home *un*making between scholars working on historical and/or contemporary concerns from the Global North and/or South.

Home *un*making is essentially a critique of the centrality of home-making in literatures on home. The latter concept is at the heart of how scholars habitually think about home and has resulted in the taken-for-granted idea that ‘home is made’. Home-making is understood as the suturing of social relationships, identities and materialities into a place called home, and is a ‘pattern of regular doings, furnishings and appurtenances’ which fashion and reproduce the domestic (Douglas, 1991: 290). Associated words ‘construct’ and ‘build’ suggest that home-making is a process, or action, that carves out material and/or imaginary characteristics of home to the exclusion of the state or condition of homelessness. In sum, home-making is lauded as the ‘underlying goal of all housing processes’ (Dayaratne and Kellett, 2008: 55). But where does home *un*making stand? Is it simply the reversal of home-making, the subtraction from some dimension of home previously made? Is it the antithesis of all housing processes even?

Just as Colloredo-Mansfield (2003: 246) problematizes ‘the banal fact that material practice revolves around loss more often than preservation…[yet] receives scant attention or is tidily dismissed’, we argue that the sidelined notion home *un*making warrants its own storytelling. Moving beyond the apocalyptic-tone of seminal work by Porteous and Smith (2001: 12) on ‘domicide’ – ‘the deliberate destruction of home’ – we define home *un*making in more varied and expansive terms. Home *un*making 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.

The majority of synergist scholarship focuses on obstacles to home-making rather than home *un*making per se. In the realm of sexuality, for instance, idealised discourses of home tied to the heterosexual nuclear family renders in this framework at least, gay men’s and women’s home-making a challenge (see Gorman-Murray 2006; Valentine, 1993). This and other bodies of existing research which (implicitly) engage with home *un*making allows four key ideas on home *un*making to be outlined before we turn to the special issue papers specifically. Indeed, to date, home *un*making is implicated not only in literatures on forced evictions (Porteous and Smith, 2001; Windsor and McVey, 2005), war and genocide (Meade, 2011) and natural disasters (Brun and Ragnhild 2008; Morrice, 2013), but also through life events encompassing, but not limited to, moving and leaving home (Ahmed, 1999; Jansen and Löfving, 2009); homelessness (May, 2000; Meth, 2003); marital breakdown (Brickell, 2013; Watkins and Hosier, 2005), domestic violence (Price, 2002; Warrington, 2001), burglary (Chapman, 1999) and death (Finch and Hayes, 1994; Marcoux, 2001).

First then, home *un*making is part of the lifecourse of all homes and is experienced by all home dwellers at some point in their housing biographies. Although we couched the opening to the editorial within the media spectacles of eviction and political regime change, home *un*making is also associated with more mundane and unreported happenings of domestic life and times passing. The term lifecourse has ‘been adopted as a way of envisaging the passage of a lifetime less as the mechanical turning of a wheel and more as the unpredictable flow of river’ (Hockey and James 2003: 5). Home *un*making thereby recognises that peoples’ domestic lives are rarely fixed or predictable, but rather dynamic and varied.

Second, our focus on home *un*making does not necessarily preclude home-making from analysis. As Blunt’s (2008) research on a settlement house in New York City illustrates, exploring a building’s biography draws attention to linear home-making and *un*making. In this case, the *un*making demarks the end of one historical phase and enables the beginning of a new one. However, often these processes occur at the same time. Such simultaneity is captured by Dayaratne and Kellett (2008: 66) who conceptualise home-making as a process which ‘continues and consolidates itself with each event of significance that adds to the sense of home by overcoming the obstacles which might diminish it’. Rather than operating in degenerative isolation from one another, home *un*making casts a spotlight on these diminishing forces in concert with home-making.

Third, developing from the former point, home *un*making should not be understood as an exclusively negative erosion of material integrity and/or loss of attachment. Rather, *un*making can also work symbiotically with the recovery or remaking of home too. For women who leave abusive marriages in Cambodia, for example, Brickell (2013) has shown how home *un*making has the potential to be concurrently liberating and disempowering as trade-offs are made between a life free from violence and the stigma associated with a broken family. Other scholars, in different fields, have also reflected upon how the displacement of home may lead to the placement of others. Providing the example of decaying books cum stores of raw material for rodent home-making, DeSilvey (2006) notes in relation to museum objects how their erasure can be viewed as a generative process and manifestation of simultaneous identities.

Fourth, our focus on home *un*making should not be taken to mean that there is necessarily a fully-fledged home to be *un*made. It is now established that home is an ambiguously experienced ‘space of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear’ (Blunt and Varley, 2004: 3) meaning that dwelling and belonging ‘at home’ is rarely a completed endeavor. Moving beyond humanistic perspectives on homes as places of innate sanctuary, homes are generally (*un*)made in *some* rather than *all* senses at any one time. Critiquing romanticized definitions of home in the book *Domicide* (Porteous and Smith, 2001), Harker (2009: 324) argues that in the face of homelessness, discrimination and domestic violence which all problematize spaces that count as a home, ‘it is important to define exactly what sort of “home” is being destroyed’. This is also the case with home *un*making.

In this special issue we focus on home *un*makings that involve domestic injustice. Burrell, Fernandez and Jervis-Reed each examine home *un*makings in the context of class-based inequality in the UK, Puerto Rico and India respectively. Through the Edwardian novel, Saunders explores gender inequality, while finally Gorman-Murray et al. argue that the challenges of natural disaster recovery are exacerbated for LGBT communities. The prevalence of home *un*making ethically calls for the processes and power geometries of this process to be better foregrounded. Exploring the special issue papers, we now turn to four main themes of porosity, (in)visibilities, agents, and temporality that each contribute to furthering understanding of home *un*making.

***Porosity***

The public/private divide has been thoroughly critiqued in feminist literature on the domestic (see Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Marcus, 1999). Rather than representing a ‘place liberated from fear and anxiety, a place supposedly untouched by social, political and natural processes’ (Kaika, 2004: 226) home-making is now understood through its connections to, and interactions with, the ‘outside world’. Indeed, the photograph from a Cambodian eviction site featured on the *Home Cultures* front cover speaks to this porosity as the walls delineating public from private become no more than a symbolic marker rather than functioning feature of home. As Massey (1992: 14) elaborates, the identity of home derives ‘precisely from the fact that it had always in one way or another been open; constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretched beyond it’. Often related to wider social inequality, home *un*making similarly brings the multi-scalarity of home into view.

In the papers by Burrell, Fernandez and Jervis-Reed, the domestic interior is impacted upon by the political economy. Burrell argues that deprivation and a transient population create discomfort in Leicester homes. Manifest in negative anti-social behaviour on the street, it is documented how home dwellers change the internal layout of their homes to overcome this disturbance. For Fernandez and Jervis-Reed neoliberalism ultimately leads to home demolition, or the threat of it, in poor neighbourhoods of San Juan and Mumbai. They illustrate how home *un*makings in the domestic interior can be the result of powerful structural forces, which transcend the physical boundaries of the house. Moving beyond home’s association just with house, Gorman-Murray et al. argue that the destruction of LGBT neighbourhood facilities in natural disasters is particularly damaging to LGBT communities. Due to wider discrimination, these are important sites of belonging and attachment that help in feeling at home. It thereby follows that home *un*making can also occur outside the domestic interior.

Objects and technologies at the threshold of the interior and exterior are central to home-making. This is best illustrated by work on gated communities where fences, gates, security devices and patrols protect the home from perceived ‘outside’ threats (Davis, 2006). Materialities at boundary points can, similarly, take heightened significance in home *un*makings. While Burrell’s paper discusses the role of windows and doors, Fernandez illustrates how materials on the cusp of home can become central in its *un*making. Decaying staircases and failing lifts, for example, often prevent the elderly from venturing out or act as a reminder to residents of an unpleasant past. Thus the area surrounding the domestic becomes a space of non-presence and non-belonging. Implicated in the power dynamics between the state and residents, these thresholds also hold some sway in processes of demolition, eviction and gentrification. As an example here, narratives about the deficiency of windows were important in the decision to demolish the high-rise estate Red Road in Glasgow (Jacobs, 2007).

Materiality is, of course, not the only component of home. As Blunt and Dowling (2006) argue, home also involves the imaginary, such as feelings and meanings. At the same time, recent work in the social sciences has also emphasized the importance of attending to the multi-sensory (Pink, 2009). Burrell’s paper shows home *un*making as a multi-sensory process, involving excessive noise and dirt, which impacts on residents’ emotions and behaviour. In this case, class-based inequality materializes as negative multi-sensory affects, which, in turn, lead to feelings of unhomeliness and the material and corporeal retreat of residents into the interiority of home. This illustrates the complex sequence of events that can be involved in home *un*making, and acts as a reminder that *un*making is also something sensed, perceived, felt, smelt touched and heard. There is potential for future work to further explore the relationships between the material and imaginary in this regard.

***(In)Visibilities***

Some home *un*makings, such as in natural disasters, are highly visible especially when they are given global media coverage. Yet it is also important to consider the invisibilising of home *un*making stemming from discrimination, a lack of recognition, and the choice to selectively attend to normative spaces of home and exclude those that do not fit an ideal model. Gorman-Murray et al. speak to the failure of the media and authorities to report, and respond to, the *un*making of the LGBT home in natural disasters. The paper draws attention to the plight of LGBT communities by bringing to light experiences that might otherwise remain silenced. There is a politics as to what home *un*makings are told and those that are left unheard and marginalised. Although the home *un*making agenda goes beyond this, the special issue showcases these largely unheard stories and paves the way for further exploration by scholars.

Saunders’ more historical piece also brings the previously unseen into view. The writer John Galsworthy had helped to develop Edwardian literature, which challenges the ideals of the Victorian period, to create a grittier and arguably more ‘real’ understanding of home. Here backstage conflict and tensions, such as marital rape and threat of divorce, were revealed rather than secreted away from the reader in the intimate spaces of the home. This brings to the fore the important issue of challenging unjust home *un*makings or ‘doing something about it’ (Brickell, 2012: 77). In this case, Galsworthy was able to influence popular consciousness by bringing gender injustice more forcefully into the public domain of the UK Edwardian period.

*Un*makings in the domestic, and even in the wider neighbourhood, can be especially ‘hidden’ and, therefore, more challenging to research and identify. There may additionally be underlying reasons behind the concealment of home *un*making. In the context of domestic violence, for example, research has emphasized how ‘the ideological scripting of home as intimate and safe makes violence against women difficult to see’ with women often tolerating violence so as not to signal a deep failure or collapse of home (Price, 2002: 40). If home is the site of significant trauma and hardship, as it is for the fictive character Irene Forsyte in Saunders’ paper, then real-world participants may not want to discuss these in research interviews. Such difficulties may also be repressed by the human psyche to avoid conflict with self-constructed identities and emotional turmoil. The difficulties of studying less visible home *un*makings, especially in the context of domestic injustice, make research methods and fieldwork even more salient. There are issues of access, length of time in the field, trust, ethics and interpretation, which go beyond the scope of this special issue. This practical dimension is another reason why the study of home-making is more apparent in literature on home and why its kin process home *un*making warrants greater attention.

***Agents***

Social and cultural theory has long drawn attention to the role of agents in reproducing, or resisting, unequal structures (Giddens, 1984). The papers draw attention to these agents, which play important roles in home *un*makings. In Burrell’s paper we have the figure of the private landlord, which speaks to an absent presence that asserts control on domestic life and can cause hardship for tenants. This observation is akin to work on the spectral, ghost like, presence of the council in local-authority owned flats (Miller, 2001). In Gorman-Murray et al.’s piece the initial home *un*making results from natural disaster, but the injustice is magnified by state policy. For example, regulations do not account for the challenges and marginalisation that LGBT communities face in emergency shelters. In this sense, there is a double enactment of home *un*making that Gorman-Murray et al. posits as queering notions of domicide. In relation to the state too, Fernandez reveals the demonizing narratives and work done to justify the demolition of high-rise homes in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The presence of these narratives is a common phenomenon in state-led home destruction throughout the globe (Crump, 2002; Lees, 2013; Porteous and Smith, 2001) and is particularly relevant for the much-maligned residential high-rise. Highlighting the role of these agents also has much broader purchase in providing recommendations for social change.

A theme in the papers is also agency, or how these wider processes and power relations are negotiated by home dwellers. This provides a means for asserting some control over difficult conditions and the possibility of making home.

While the Indian government has looked to de-legitimise ‘squatters’ as rightful home dwellers (akin to Fernandez), Jervis-Reed shows how, through their agency, some residents are able to strategically negotiate home *un*making to present opportunities in the long term. For example, some participants subdivided their homes prior to demolition to acquire a greater number of plots in the place they are being relocated to. Equally, while Burrell reports a lack of agency to control the permeability of home, she still identifies how some residents in Leicester offer some resistance, and hope, by divesting themselves of objects. This form of divestment, ‘exiled into storage’ (page in Home Cultures), enhances the feeling that they will leave for a better home at some point in the future. Home *un*making is therefore not a straightforward rejection of home as the core aim of housing processes. This focus on agency adds nuance and complexity to home *un*making events and shows how home-making and *un*making practices are mutually constitutive.

***Temporality***

Beyond the spatiality of public/private distinctions, temporality also warrants further attention since this is intertwined with the making and *un*making of home. Although not fully articulated in the literature, a biography of home is a story of its making and *un*making. As illustrated by Myerson’s (2005: 91) house biography of her Victorian house in Clapham, home is a place of comings and goings, of living and dying, of moving in and moving out, of material decay and repair. These makings and *un*makings signify change and the passing of time. The significance of temporality is evident in this special issue. Through a longitudinal approach, Jervis-Reed shows how the homes of ‘slum’ dwellers in Delhi are subject to cycles of making and *un*making, or settlement and demolition. These cycles do not just say something about the past and present, but also the future. In Fernandez’s paper a future home, which is acceptable to the state and middle class society, is fundamental in the *un*making of low-income high-rise homes. Without this vision of a ‘better’ future, or the ‘Sim City’ (Lees, 1998: 234), the demolition would not go ahead.

Such temporal patterns can be constituted by complexity. In Gorman-Murray et al.’s piece, the *un*making of LGBT homes is also a drawn out process that happened at different speeds. The initial instantaneous home destruction from the natural disaster was followed by a series of more gradual unravellings in the neighbourhood, which compounded and exacerbated the negative impact on LGBT communities. Their paper illustrates the advantages of incorporating time into the analysis of home *un*making since this can reveal the multiple and interrelated events, or factors, that coproduce domestic injustice. As Brickell (2012: 228) writes, ‘divergences from idealized versions of home…emerge either from sudden, gradual or routine exigencies of daily life’.

Moving beyond linear temporal paths, as previously discussed a key argument in home *un*making is that home is simultaneously made and *un*made. As Burrell and Fernandez illustrate home *un*making practices, such as anti-social behaviour on the street or the material deterioration of shared spaces, are accompanied by residents still making home in their houses and flats. Despite living in difficult conditions, the routines and rhythms of daily life still go on (see also Gans, 1962). These processes, which unfold in the present, can also reach into a past or future. Such temporal connections are particularly relevant to home, which is infused with powerful emotions, attachments and memories (see Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Part of the reason why the destruction of home, such as in Gorman-Murray et al.’s paper, can be so traumatic is because the present is thick with memories of happier times and relationships. By comparison, temporal connections can also help to ease discomfort. In Jervis-Reed’s paper the future relocated home, which some residents were able to influence through their agency and tactics, offered some comfort, at least, from impending demolition. This further supports the assertion that home *un*making is not necessarily a negative process.

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