



# Displacement and Inequality. An Analysis of the Negative Consequences of Displacement at Society's Margins

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## Abstract

The article explores experiences of displacement from housing. The data draws from qualitative semi-structured interviews with people who were displaced from their homes due to urban renewal in two cities in Finland (N=37). Most of the residents had a background in homelessness and were also in other ways in a vulnerable position in society. The aim was to examine the impact of displacement on the residents and its connection with homelessness. Gathered interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The results point to the experience of inequality, which exacerbated the negative consequences of displacement for many of the residents despite the help and support provided in the process. This finding is discussed in the article with theories of urban displacement and inequality. In future research, a multidimensional understanding of inequality is needed to clarify the consequences of displacement especially for vulnerable population groups.

## Keywords

displacement, urban renewal, inequality, segregation, gentrification

## Introduction

In 2021, 250 people in two Finnish cities were forced to leave their homes and neighborhoods and move to new ones due to urban development. It was a small number and a small event in international comparison, but in the life of the residents, the displacement had profound effects. Most of the displaced residents had a history of homelessness. Many suffered from low income, poor mental health, and substance abuse problems. For many, the area and home that they were forced to leave behind had been their first permanent residence in

a long time. The cities were, however, committed to providing replacing housing for all based on their Housing First policy (on policy in Finland, see e.g., Juhila et al., 2022). Also, various types of support were included in the process to minimize its burden for the residents. Registers gathered on the residents show that most of them transferred into either ordinary rented accommodation or supported housing units. However, some became homeless again, and a few also died during the process or its aftermath (Mäki et al. 2022). Many of those who were successfully rehoused also considered the process unsatisfactory and experienced feelings of insecurity, loneliness, and depression in their new housing.

In this article, we examine the experiences of the displaced residents applying the concepts of urban displacement and inequality. We ask what explains the abovementioned negative results of displacement, even though the residents were offered a range of help and support during the process. Displacement is a common, global, and widely investigated phenomenon that Peter Marcuse (1985) defined as an involuntary removal of people from their homes, concerning especially vulnerable population groups. People may be displaced, for example, by war, natural disaster, or ethnic persecution, but also for personal reasons such as bankruptcy. In the field of urban research, displacement has been discussed with the negative aspects of urban development, such as gentrification and segregation (Agustín Cocola-Gant, 2019; Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; Slater, 2021b; Tammaru et al., 2021; Valli, 2015a). Kearns & Mason (2013) find evidence of urban displacement from US cities as far back as the late nineteenth century. According to them, the debate on, for example, the effects of displacement has remained remarkably similar from then to the present day, highlighting the high social costs associated with the process.

Since 2000 the research interest on urban displacement has remained active, but with some critical observations (Persdotter et al., 2022). One criticism has concerned the failure to address the structural power relations involved with displacement, such as socio-economic inequality or racial discrimination, which are not only related to the individual displacement process but are continuous and enable both the displacement itself and reinforce its negative effects (*ibid*). Theoretical and methodological gaps in the research have seen to led to an insufficient consideration of phenomena such as experiences linked to displacement, which, however, are crucial in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of its effects as well as of the phenomenon itself (Goetz, 2013a; Pull & Richard, 2021; Valli, 2015a, 2020).

This article contributes to the debate by looking at displacement from the viewpoint of vulnerable groups of people, who are presented in the beginning of the article. Our aim is to refine particularly the role of different types of inequalities in displacement processes. We believe that a multidimensional understanding of inequality is needed to clarify the consequences of displacement especially for vulnerable population groups, such as people with a background in homelessness in our data, and also to explain why the support provided might not be sufficient, if it does not recognize or address the wider, social structures and inequalities involved in the process. The displaced residents' experiences play an important role in this. As Valli (2020, 68) writes, these experiences are not, for instance, simply idiosyncratic feelings but reflect individuals' positions in wider social structures. In this way, they also offer a view to the relationship of power and domination present in these structures.

The qualitative interview data (N=37) used in the article deals with the experiences of displaced residents regarding the displacement process, their previous and current housing, and the help and support they received during the process. The research setting is described more thoroughly in Section 4. The concept of inequality is defined and discussed together with other research literature in the theoretical Sections 2 and 3. The analysis of the data is

presented in Section 5, and it is based Göran Thernborn's (2012) division of different dimensions of inequality.

## Urban displacement in previous literature

Involuntary displacement from housing occurs on many levels and in many instances. Urban displacement is typically driven by urban renewal and is also often strongly linked to gentrification (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020). Displacement occurs, for example, when urban rental areas are demolished and converted into owner-occupied housing with the aim of raising their profile and attractiveness (Walks & Soederberg, 2021a). Today, displacement and gentrification have been increasingly linked to the ideas of ecological sustainability and building up a more cohesive urban environment under the concept of eco-gentrification (Dooling, 2009; Quastel, 2009; Rice et al., 2020). On the whole, displacement takes numerous different forms in different places and contexts (Agustín Cocola-Gant, 2019).

A classic example of large-scale urban displacement has been the HOPE VI project in the United States, which took place across the country in 1994–2004. During that time over 50,000 households were displaced as large social housing areas were demolished to fight segregation and improve the condition of public housing (Goetz, 2013a; Manzo et al., 2008; Popkin et al., 2004a). In Europe, similar processes have taken place, for example in Britain (Ferreri, 2020), the Netherlands (Posthumus et al., 2014) and Hungary (Jelinek, 2010). In the Nordic countries, such processes are only now starting to emerge, and debates about gentrification, particularly in larger Nordic cities, are ongoing (Hedin et al., 2012; Larsen & Hansen, 2008; Wallin, 2021). In Sweden, the renovation needs of the Million program, a million public housing apartments built in the 1960–1970s, are creating pressure for evictions and rising rents (Baeten et al., 2017). In Finland, reports have recently been published about the 'renovation debt' in affordable housing, which is under similar pressure (Lius, 2022).

Research addressing the consequences of displacement processes has brought to the fore the negative effects of the projects and the dissatisfaction of many of the displaced residents (Anil et al., 2010; Boston, 2005; Brazley & Gilderbloom, 2007). Displacement is also more likely to affect vulnerable and low-income groups more than wealthier ones (Chase & Hansen, 2021; Crommelin et al., 2020). Elliott-Cooper and colleagues (2020) have presented urban displacement as a form of violence that can remove the sense of belonging to community or home-space. On the other hand, the widely negative perspectives of displacement in urban policy have also been questioned. In the Hope VI project, for instance, the displacement led to improvements in housing quality and safety for some residents (Popkin et al., 2004a). Kearns and Mason (2013) criticize the fact that the research debate has concentrated too much on the physical dimension of the displacement and that there is, in fact, less evidence of social and psychosocial displacement after relocation. Prior attitudes to moving, degree of choice and distance in relocation, as well as the studied time and context, are also important moderators of the outcomes (ibid).

Recent research has emphasized the importance of investigating people's experiences to understand displacement processes and their consequences in depth (Persdotter et al., 2020; Pull & Richard, 2021; Valli, 2020). In particular, the use of qualitative methods has been seen to provide insights into the multidimensional consequences of displacement processes (Goetz, 2013a). Goetz's qualitative case studies on the experiences of low-income households in the Hope VI project (ibid.) provide, for instance, a more nuanced picture of the project and its outcomes, where improvements in the quality of housing had not always led to improvements in the overall quality of life for these residents.

## Displacement and Multidimensional Inequality

Some residents are, indeed, more unfortunate in the displacement processes than others (Popkin et al., 2004a). Valli's (2021) qualitative analysis provides a critical perspective on the questions of class, wealth and symbolic power involved in the displacement process from the point of view of the low-income and racialized residents. Persdotter et al. (2021) use the example of gentrification-driven displacement and marginalization of Black and Indigenous communities from North American cities, the origins and consequences of which cannot be understood without taking into account underlying historical inequalities and oppression. Similarly, in Lees and Hubbard's analysis (2022) displacement was linked to long-standing racial discrimination and the inequality of the BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) population in their study. Chatterjee's (2021) analysis on the urban poor in Ahmedabad, India, highlights the long chains of inequality that precede displacement, which make displacement possible both in the present and, most likely, in the future.

Similar chains of inequality related to displacement can be detected in the Nordic countries. The displaced people in these countries are, for example, typically low-income and live in traditional working-class neighborhoods (Pull & Richards 2021). Listerborn (2021) writes about the new housing precariat in Sweden, whose fragile housing position reflects the replacement of previous ambitious housing policies based on welfare state-led social engineering by market-orientated policies, with less subsidized and affordable housing available. The findings made in the Anglo-American context are not always directly applicable to the study of these phenomena (Listerborn & Baeten 2022). The displacement processes in the Nordic context are, for instance, often slower, more indirect, and harder to detect than their Anglo-American counterparts. This, in turn, would require a broader lens and theoretical tools to examine them, which would not focus just on the actual displacement but also on wider questions of housing insecurity, displacement pressure, and sense of displacement and loss of home (*ibid*; see also Pull & Richard, 2021).

In the forthcoming analysis we will contribute to the analysis of displacement by coupling displacement literature with research literature on inequality, namely Göran Therborn's (2013) multidimensional analysis of inequality. Therborn's definition of inequality builds on the capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2009) and on the question asked by Martha Nussbaum (*ibid.*, 32) about what life worthy of human dignity requires. From these discussions, Therborn derives three dimensions of inequality that diminish individuals' equal capability to function as fully-fledged human beings in a society: resource, vital, and existential inequality.

Resource inequality refers to unequal material, economic, cultural, and social resources, which are essential for people's capacity to function. These resources can be, for example, income, education, social networks, and access to decision-making processes. Vital inequality refers to the disparities in life conditions that have a negative effect on health, such as diverging healthy life years, mortality, life expectancy, hunger, and malnutrition. Lastly, existential inequality points to the inequality in the ways in which some individuals or groups are denied an equal status as persons, which diminish opportunities to function as full members of society. Existential inequality can be based on overt discrimination but also on more subtle status hierarchies and exclusion. In practice, these three dimensions relate to each other and are distinguishable only through analysis.

We chose Therborn's theory as our theoretical tool as the multidimensional view of inequality allowed us to understand some of the paradoxes involved in the displacement processes we were examining. In our data, the support offered to residents was, for example, was quite comprehensive, including various types of practical help in packing, cleaning,

moving as well as assessment of social and health service needs and psychosocial support. As mentioned, the cities were also committed to finding replacement housing for displaced residents, which was driven by the political will of the cities not to increase homelessness in the process. Yet, the consequences of displacement were still in many instances negative, leading to our research question at the beginning of the article about why the residents still experienced these multifaceted negative consequences.

In the forthcoming analysis we show that the residents' experiences of the displacement can be understood as resource, vital, and existential inequalities. The connection with inequality contributed, in turn, to the negative consequences that displacement had on the residents.

## Data and Methods

The qualitative interview data for the article was collected between 2021 and 2022. The interviews were gathered from three different displacement sites, located in two different cities in Finland. In all the sites the former residents had been forced to leave their homes due to upcoming renovation of the sites or selling of the property, and they had not been able to return to their homes. All the sites had a somewhat bad reputation as transient places, and the processes were underpinned by the notion of 'cleaning them up'. Two of the sites were situated near the city centers and the purpose of the renovations was to increase the housing capacity and profile of the areas. A large part of the displaced residents shared a background in homelessness, substance abuse and/or mental health problems. However, many of the residents had been living in the areas for quite a long time and in this way succeeded in breaking their period of homelessness.

The actual displacement processes took about six months to a year to complete. During this time, all the residents received their eviction order, new housing was sought for them, and they then relocated to this housing – if the relocation took place. In one of the sites, the process was preceded by long administrative and political processes, and the displaced residents had been living in uncertainty about their housing for some time before the actual displacement.

The number of people who we consider as displaced was approximately 260. Of these people, we reached 37 people (14 %) for qualitative interviews. The estimated age of interviewees ranged from 30 to 70 years. Men accounted for 31 of the interviewees. All were ethnic Finns. In general, the interviewees are representative of the displaced population in terms of age, gender, and social situation. However, in one of the sites, the interviewees represented the residents who had been living in the area for a long time. We also didn't reach people who had become homeless in the process. We reflect both these issues in our results. The interviewees were reached through the employees involved in the displacement process. Informed consent regarding participation was ensured, and the participants were able to withdraw their participation at any stage of the process. The study underwent a formal ethical review before the interviews began.

The interviews were qualitative, semi-structured thematic interviews that covered four themes: 1) life and living in the displaced area, 2) the process of displacement, 3) settling into a new home, and 4) thoughts about support during the process and in general. The duration of the interviews was one to two hours. In addition to the pre-established interview themes, the interviewees were able to bring in their own themes. Many raised the problems they had faced or were currently facing in their lives and also offered a critique of society and its institutions. Many reflected on the process in relation to their background in

homelessness. Most of the interviews were conducted within a few months of the displacement. Some interviews were conducted about a year after the process. The timing of the interviews did not have a major impact on the content of the interviews. However, we reflect on the issue when presenting our findings.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcribed records were analyzed using the ATLAS.ti program. We first coded the interviews into four categories, which followed the structure of the interviews (Table 1., stages 1–4). As the coding progressed, a picture of the interviewees' vulnerable situation in society began to emerge, defined by their history of various problems and related negative experiences of society's institutions. We coded this speech with the additional code 'inequality', which we further separated to resource, vital, and existential inequality according to Therborn's classification (Table 1., stage 5).

**Table 1.** Data, Data Gathering Process and Ethical Considerations

Number of Displaced Residents	260
Number and Percentage of Interviewed Residents	37 (14 %)
Estimated Age Distribution	From 30 to 75 years old
Gender Distribution	6 women and 31 men
Contacting the Interviewees	Through the staff in the displacement process or approaching them directly at the displacement site. The interviewees were fairly representative of the displaced population in terms of age, gender and social situation.
Ethical Considerations	Informed consent regarding participation was ensured, and the participants could withdraw their participation at any stage of the process. The study underwent a formal ethical review before the interviews began.
Interview Data, themes	Qualitative, semi-structured theme interviews. Five themes: 1) experience of housing and homelessness 2) living in the displaced area and the process of displacement 3) settling into a new home 4) thoughts about housing and homelessness support 5) inequality

In the analysis, we focus on bringing out the experiences expressed by the interviewees. The analysis has, however, been theory-driven, and we present an interpretation of these experiences based on previous literature. According to Valli (2021), making displacement-related experiences the subject of research is one way of making these processes visible. Methodologically speaking, the focus is, however, not on these experiences; they are rather a window into the underlying social power relations (ibid). This starting point has also directed our analysis.

## Results

### Experiences of displacement

Our data are in line with the findings of previous investigations on the negative consequences of displacement processes in many of the displaced residents' lives. In our data, they were particularly related to the already difficult circumstances of the displaced residents, to which displacement brought additional challenges.

Some described a mental health breakdown and subsequent increase in substance use and, for example, insomnia for which they had had to take medication. For some, displace-

ment had led to the ‘domino effect’ (Cusack et al., 2020), where particularly a fear of a return to homelessness had led to a deepening of already existing problems. Table 3 brings together the consequences of displacement brought up in the interviews. We divided them into material, psychosocial, health and social effects in order to make visible the wide range of the consequences.

**Table 2.** Consequences of displacement

Consequences of displacement	Consequences listed from the interviews	Examples from the interview data
Health effects	Increased substance abuse problems Depression and anxiety (including suicidal thoughts) Insomnia Stress	Of course, the thought crossed my mind that what if there’s not going to be a new apartment. Maybe I got a little depressed by it, because I didn’t have the strength to take good care of my hygiene. I didn’t have the strength to take care of the apartment and else (...) My substance abuse increased when I tried to numb the idea that I have to leave the apartment.
Psychosocial effects	Loss of community and neighbors Loss of residential area Loss of home Complication of everyday life Uncertainty about the future Loneliness Fear of homelessness	It was a tough situation for me at first. I was shedding tears for a few days. I had been living there for over 20 years. When I had moved there, I thought that I’m only going to leave here in a coffin.
Material effects	Loss of property Worsening financial situation Worsening housing situation	Then I had a shitty situation when I moved here. It had to be done very quickly and I still had the old lease and then I had to pay for the new one too. I had to pay two rents and I immediately got into rent arrears.
Societal effects	Worsening situation of the homeless people Abandonment of the poor and homeless people	I think it was basically fucked up in some ways, to take away from supported housing places and also from the crisis housing side, without anything to replace it. That’s out, that’s a hell of a lot out for the homeless people.

In the third column, the consequences are described by some of the interviewed residents in their own words. The samples represent the data well with respect to negative descriptions of displacement, and they are from different interviews. The top column shows the domino effect that occurred in some of the interviewees’ lives and particularly the related negative health effects, such as increasing mental health problems and substance abuse. The second highest column highlights the psychosocial consequences such as the loss of home and community, which was brought up by many, even in situations in which the new housing was also considered satisfactory. Some had feared a return to homelessness, which we interpreted as a strong psychosocial consequence.

The bottom two columns highlight the negative material consequences and societal consequences of displacement, using the examples of the accumulation of rent arrears due to the bureaucratic difficulties involved in the displacement process, and the deterioration of the social position of homeless people in general. Another frequently cited material consequence was the loss of property, such as furniture. Criticism was sometimes accompanied by strong emotions such as anger, sadness, and disappointment, which is reflected, for instance, in the last interview extract in the Table 3. Thus, even if the physical displacement itself had gone fairly well and the tenant had been able to move into the new home (cf. Kearns & Mason, 2013b), emotional displacement nevertheless had a negative impact on people’s well-being (cf. Valli, 2021).

As was mentioned in the introduction, in the register data some of the residents had become homeless again in the displacement process, and some had also deceased. Both negative consequences also emerged and were described by the residents in the interviews. They were included especially in the above-mentioned domino effect, where, according to interviewees, some residents' lives had begun to spiral out of control due to the anxiety of being displaced. Some of the interviewees mentioned that the recurrence of homelessness could have been, and could still be, a risk for them too, and some had also contemplated suicide. Both were explained by the shock of being displaced and the fear of experiencing a renewal of homelessness and other past difficulties as a result.

We interpreted that one of the central reasons for the negative consequences of displacement in the data was the already vulnerable life situation of many residents, which was further aggravated by displacement. Next, we explore this dynamic in more detail through Therborn's concept of inequality.

### Inequality in displacement

Therborn's definition of inequality, which we presented in Section 3, highlighted the multi-dimensional nature of inequality: resource, vital and existential. The consequences we outlined above can also be seen through these dimensions.

For example, the vital inequalities identified by Therborn are strongly present in the extracts, as reflected in the increased mental health and substance abuse problems brought about by the process of displacement. The same applies to the material consequences, which can be seen as a reflection of the resource inequalities: residents were deprived of material resources, which affected their lives in a negative way. Other forms of resource inequality in the data included a lack of ability to participate in and influence the process, which was criticized in several interviews. The interview example in Table 2 on rent arrears related to displacement is a good case in point, as rent arrears are one of the typical reasons for terminating a tenancy contract in Finland. Some of the displaced residents were therefore put in a very vulnerable and unequal situation for reasons beyond their control. Table 3 opens up the dynamics in more detail through additional extracts from the interview data and our interpretation of them from the viewpoint of inequality.

**Table 3.** Resource, Vital and Existential Inequality in the Interview Data

Dimension of Inequality	Example from the interview	Mechanism of Inequality
Resource Inequality	Q: What would you have done differently? A: I wouldn't have torn down the place. Simple. Q: Do you know whether the buildings are still in place? A: Yes, I just walked by the other day. Even my furniture is still lying there.	People have had to give up their homes against their will. People have also lost belongings in the process, causing them tangible material loss without compensation.
Vital Inequality	This has brought those, 10–11 years ago, really difficult things to the surface. I already went, in January in February, just in case, to a health nurse because I was afraid that my mind would collapse.	People's health has suffered in the process, for example in the form of renewed or worsened mental health problems due to displacement-related stress or fears



Dimension of Inequality	Example from the interview	Mechanism of Inequality
Existential Inequality /Displacement	You know, somewhere high up someone sets an order that the area will be demolished, so no one really starts to ask anything, but will behave like sheep. It also feels that the group does not really have any importance at all.	The process has involved asymmetrical power relations, where the needs of people in lower positions of power have not been heard or considered important.
Existential Inequality/Chains of Inequality	They will do everything in their power to make it as difficult as possible to get the substitute medicine (for opioid addiction). You have to go to a clinic every day with cap in your hand begging for medicine. How do you think that affects, say, housing? Or people in general, for fuck's sake.	There are other distressing aspects to an individual's life in addition to unstable housing, and these are perpetuated in particular by the institutions' repressive practices. The use of power limits an individual's capacity to act.
Existential Inequality/Gentrification	I would never have left the apartment, had the city renovated it for me. But did the city just want to turn the area into money, or what was the point of this in the end? Because it started to be the best area in the city.	Residents felt they had to move because the area had become too expensive for them. Inequality is reflected in the fact that the residents had no choice but to leave their homes.

In addition to material and vital inequalities, we have included in the table the existential inequality discussed by Therborn. These descriptions were characterized, firstly, by the residents' experience of not having had sufficient influence on a decision that had a decisive impact on their lives (Table 4, row 3). Secondly, existential inequality was shown in the interviewees' descriptions of their other difficult life situations, of which the displacement was but one expected continuation (Table 4, row 4). Finally, many interviewees raised the issue of possible gentrification (Table 4, row 5). Gentrification is a good example of existential inequality, in which some of the residents feel they were not valuable enough for the new area that would replace their homes.

We conclude our analysis with an interview extract that illustrates the diversity of inequalities and the contradictory aspects of displacement visible in the interviews. Although the resident interviewed in the extract is satisfied with the apartment he received in the displacement process, the process has left a bitter aftertaste, reflecting his past experiences of homelessness and distrust towards city officials. His choice of the word 'granted' can also be seen as a reference to the relationships of power and inequality in the process.

A: I'm very happy that I was now 'granted' my own apartment, but my friend asked if I needed a diagnosis to get an apartment.

Q: You have-

A: Yes, I got this serious diagnosis few years ago (...) One is 'rewarded' with one's own place. Why did it take so many years?

Q: You mean...

A: I was homeless for several years because of few hundreds of euros in rent arrears (...) I was left with nothing (back then).

## Discussion

Our analysis has been a contribution to the literature on displacement due to urban development. The analysis has shed light on how the displaced residents experience the displacement process, focusing on the experiences of negative consequences, which were many in our data. The starting point was to identify what could explain these negative consequences, despite the wide range of support offered to residents during the process.

Our results point to the human and social costs of displacement for the residents, which, in our data, reinforced existing structures and chains of inequality. Using Therborn's (2013) concepts we divided them into resource, vital and existential inequality. Understanding the multidimensionality of inequality provided a way to grasp the complexities of the displacement process in the experiences of the residents.

Resource inequalities were reflected in the financial problems and loss of possessions caused by displacement, but also in the lack of opportunities to influence the process. Health inequalities manifested in the worsening mental health and substance use problems during the process. Existential inequality took many forms, such as the haunting idea of being replaced by wealthier households in one's own neighborhood. All in all, what was at stake was not a single process of displacement but a wider chain of inequalities in the lives of the residents, of which displacement was just one unfortunate extension. This, in turn, exacerbated the negative effects of the displacement.

These findings are in line with previous studies, which have shown that vulnerable people are also vulnerable in displacement (Chatterjee, 2021b; Goetz, 2013b; Lees & Hubbard, 2022b; Popkin et al., 2004b; Valli, 2015b). A longer follow-up period or more frequent interviews might have brought out more positive views on, for example, how the interviewees settled into their new home and life, and for some of them such views were also expressed now (cf. Kearns & Mason 2013). However, this does not detract from the fact that it was the very act of displacement itself that had been very difficult for many, and that for both the interviewees and others who had been displaced there was a risk of life deterioration and, for example, of a recurrence of homelessness. In fact, not being able to reach those left homeless in the process of our interviews may have excluded from the analysis even the most negative consequences of displacement. However, this is something we cannot know for sure.

The important question that arises is how this vulnerability and inequality could be interrupted or at least taken into account in similar situations in the future. In the light of our analysis, much can be done even when the factual outcome remains the same. The interviewed residents would clearly have wished for greater involvement, interaction, and emotional support in the displacement process as well as more information about how the process develops. In Finland, such housing social work has been developed in recent years under Housing First policies to improve the quality of housing of people with different vulnerabilities in life (Granfelt & Turunen, 2021; Juhila et al. 2022). Efforts to take these things into account in the processes we have looked at were also made by the city officials. However, they were clearly not enough, and not for all residents at least. For instance, the background in homelessness of many residents should have been given more consideration in the process as the fear of recurring homelessness clearly increased the risk of negative consequences.

In light of our analysis, the help and support offered in the displacement processes should, however, go beyond concrete assistance with future relocation and housing. In particular, the different inequalities that emerged in the data should be given more consideration, as these inequalities and their combinations break people's relationship with society in

a fundamental way and deteriorate their well-being. The central ethical premise of the processes should at least be that the life situation of the people forced to move should not deteriorate as a result, as was the case for some in our data. Literature on problematizing the connection between gentrification and displacement is currently growing internationally (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Tighe & Ganning, 2016; Uitermark & Loopmans, 2013). This literature refreshingly questions whether low-income residents always have to be permanently relocated when urban areas come up for development. Also, could different areas and their residents receive support at a much earlier stage so that major renovation would not be necessary at all? These are also important questions with regard to inequality and vulnerable people's right to stable housing.

The questions are not, of course primarily administrative, but political, reflecting the position of low-income people in urban development and their right to housing (Slater, 2021a; Walks & Soederberg, 2021b). In our own data the support for the process and the commitment of cities to find new housing for the residents under the principle of Housing First were steps towards more sustainable urban development. However, the different dimensions of inequality that were not sufficiently considered in the process led to a less positive outcome than intended.

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