



Gentrification and Domination*

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AT its core, *gentrification* is an influx of relatively affluent people into neighborhoods previously occupied by the less affluent. Gentrification has generated a vast body of explanatory literature in economics, sociology, urban studies, and other fields. By contrast, there is surprisingly little normative work on gentrification within political philosophy. This article develops an original assessment of gentrification from the standpoint of *social equality*. I focus on the aspect of gentrification that elicits the strongest intuitions of injustice: *displacement* of current residents from their homes and neighborhoods because of unaffordable market-rate rent increases. My central claim will be that gentrification-induced displacement is pro tanto unjust in virtue of instantiating a distinctive *nexus of domination* between state actors, private landlords, and gentrifying residents. My argument for this claim will proceed as follows.

Section I identifies three circumstances that produce paradigm cases of gentrification-induced displacement. These include (1) a significant population of low-income, market-rate tenants, (2) for whom market-rate rents are becoming unaffordable, (3) because of an influx of more affluent residents to the neighborhood. Section II identifies some of the harms of gentrification-induced displacement. These include significant setbacks to a person's morally weighty interests in *continuity of residence*, *located attachments*, and *security of shelter*. Section III draws the first link in the nexus of domination. Whenever a low-income, market-rate tenant cannot afford the market rent on her home, she is *dominated* by her landlord, in virtue of being completely dependent on the landlord's arbitrary benevolence for her continued residence, located attachments, and security of shelter.

Section IV draws the second link. When market rents are poised to become unaffordable *because* of an influx of gentrifying residents, gentrifying residents stand in a relationship of *higher-order domination* to current residents, insofar as the former's arbitrary preferences effectively determine whether and to

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what extent the latter end up at their landlords' mercy. The upshot is that gentrification embodies a two-tier *nexus of domination*. Importantly, both tiers are essentially enabled by the state, insofar as it treats rental housing in gentrifying neighborhoods as just a commodity. Finally, Section V concludes. I address three questions: whether the domination diagnosis of gentrification implies a more general indictment of market allocation; what housing reforms are pro tanto supported by the domination diagnosis; and how moral responsibility for the nexus of domination is distributed. I wrap things up by briefly comparing the domination diagnosis with Margaret Kohn's luck egalitarian alternative.

I. GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

"Gentrification" was first coined by British sociologist Ruth Glass to describe changes she observed in early-1960s London. She described a process wherein middle- and upper-middle-class people moved into predominantly working-class neighborhoods and renovated derelict buildings. "Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district," she famously wrote, "it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupants are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed."¹ When Glass wrote, gentrification was something of a novelty. But since the 1970s, it has become an increasingly conspicuous trend in the world's major cities. Indeed, gentrification is now happening to some degree in almost every major city in the developed world and many cities in the developing world.² It is ubiquitous.

But what exactly *is* gentrification? Paradigm cases involve an influx of relatively affluent people to low-income neighborhoods. This much, at least, seems clear. Beyond that, there's no consensus definition of what gentrification means. Partly for that reason, a multitude of normative questions can reasonably be addressed under the heading "gentrification and justice"—far more than could be done justice to in a single article. Accordingly, I will focus on just one aspect of gentrification: *displacement* of current residents by unaffordable increases in market-rate rents. Although there is some empirical controversy about the degree to which gentrification produces displacement, four facts are clear.³ First, even if only a small proportion of current residents are displaced by gentrification, displacement can be profoundly harmful to those whom it befalls. Second, actual

¹Ruth Glass, "London: aspects of change," Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly (eds), *The Gentrification Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 7–8, at p. 7.

²Neil Smith, "New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as global urban strategy," Lees et al., *The Gentrification Reader*, pp. 495–508.

³For a defense of the view that gentrification is not a significant driver of displacement, at least in New York City, see Lance Freeman, "Displacement or succession? Residential mobility in gentrifying neighborhoods," *Urban Affairs Review*, 40 (2005), 463–91. For a study finding significant levels of displacement in a less regulated market, see Rowland Atkinson, "Measuring gentrification and displacement in Greater London," *Urban Studies*, 37 (2000), 149–65.

displacees are not the only people harmed by displacement. A much larger population experiences *displacement pressure* as market rents climb.⁴ Furthermore, people who lose family, friends, and neighbors to displacement are clearly harmed, even if they themselves securely remain. Third, of all the issues surrounding gentrification, displacement elicits some of the strongest intuitions of injustice. Fourth, the justice claims advanced by real-world social movements responding to gentrification tend to put residential displacement front-and-center.⁵

Of course, these considerations don't establish that there is *in fact* anything unjust about gentrification-induced displacement. But they do justify taking that hypothesis seriously. To do so, we must first clarify what distinguishes gentrification-induced displacement from residential displacement in general. In general, residential displacement happens whenever someone is forced to leave her home because of circumstances beyond her control. Paradigm cases of gentrification-induced displacement occur because of a confluence of three factors.

First, *there is a significant population of low-income, market-rate tenants* (1). "Hyper-gentrification" may displace affluent tenants, but this is not a paradigm case of gentrification-induced displacement. Nor does it evoke the same justice intuitions as displacement of the economically vulnerable. And although homeowners are sometimes displaced by rising property taxes, the burden of gentrification-induced displacement falls primarily on market-rate tenants.⁶ Second, *market-rate rents are exceeding what a significant number of current residents can afford* (2). Although someone who can afford the market-rate rent on her home might be displaced if her landlord demands *more* than market rate, this would not be a standard case of displacement *by* gentrification. Finally, *the cause of (2) is an influx of more affluent residents to the neighborhood* (3). Although low-income tenants in a neighborhood with *falling* rents might be displaced if they lose their jobs at the local factory, this too would not be a standard case of gentrification-induced displacement. Only insofar as someone is displaced in circumstances (1)–(3) do we have a paradigm case of gentrification-induced displacement. And insofar as someone is displaced in these circumstances, we do.

⁴Lance Freeman, summarizing ethnographic research on gentrifying Brooklyn, writes that even when actual levels of displacement are low, a fear of displacement "permeate[s]" the neighborhood, "much like a thunderstorm that inspires fear of lightning"; see Lance Freeman, *There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), p. 73.

⁵Lees et al., *The Gentrification Reader*, pp. 525–9.

⁶Isaac William Martin and Kevin Beck, "Gentrification, property tax limitation, and displacement," *Urban Affairs Review*, 54 (2016), 33–73. On this point, it's worth noting that even in New York City—where significant gentrification has taken place in the context of a relatively highly regulated housing market—over 40% of residents in gentrifying neighborhoods are market-rate tenants; Freeman, *There Goes the Hood*, p. 11.

II. THE HARMS OF DISPLACEMENT

Our next question is what makes gentrification-induced displacement *harmful*. At least three important interests are undermined by gentrification-induced displacement.

First, an interest in *continuity of residence*: being able to remain in one's home. Although some people freely choose a nomadic lifestyle, most of us become attached to home. This attachment can be understood in different ways. Margaret Radin has argued that continuity of personal identity depends in part on continuity of context, insofar as our sense of self becomes invested in where we live.⁷ More recently, Cara Nine has argued that our attachment to home can be understood in terms of the extended-mind hypothesis.⁸ However attachment to home is understood, it is clear that being forced to leave one's home is normally a significant setback to one's well-being.

Second, an interest in *located attachments*: relationships, plans, and projects whose satisfaction depends causally or constitutively on remaining in a particular neighborhood.⁹ For example, take localized forms of *social capital*. These include networks of care, trust, and practical reliance between family members, friends, and neighbors. Research on social capital demonstrates that low-income people are especially dependent on localized social capital to satisfy basic needs and interests which richer people either don't need to satisfy or can afford to pay others to satisfy. If money's short one month, they borrow from relatives; if crime's on the rise, they rely on neighbors to keep an eye out; rather than hire a babysitter, they call upon a trusted friend.¹⁰ And so on. Notably, not only displacees but also those with close ties to displacees suffer a setback to located attachments when there's significant displacement.

Third, an interest in *security of shelter*: being able to count on having a roof over one's head. The importance of this interest is obvious, encompassing inter alia interests in health, privacy, associational freedom, bodily integrity, and physical safety. It may seem dramatic to suggest that shelter is at stake when someone can no longer afford the rent. After all, can't she just find another place to crash? But recall that gentrification involves a low-income population confronting significant rent increases across the neighborhood—if not the city—as a whole. So shelter itself may very well be at stake when a person or family is displaced by gentrification.

⁷Margaret Radin, "Residential rent control," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 15 (1986), 350–80.

⁸Cara Nine, "The wrong of displacement: the home as extended mind," *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 26 (2018), 240–57.

⁹For a closely related discussion of "located life-plans," see Anna Stiliz, "Occupancy rights and the wrong of removal," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 41 (2013), 324–56. For an application of this idea to gentrification, see Jakob Huber and Fabio Wolkenstein, "Gentrification and occupancy rights," *Politics, Philosophy, and Economics*, 17 (2018), 378–97. Their account is congenial to the domination diagnosis defended herein. The basic difference is that they posit a prima facie outcome against displacement itself, whereas I posit a pro tanto procedural interest in not being displaced *arbitrarily*.

¹⁰Mark Warren, J. Phillip Thompson, and Susan Saegert, *Social Capital and Poor Communities* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), p. 1.

In short, gentrification-induced displacement typically undermines at least three general human interests: continuity of residence, located attachments, and security of shelter. Moreover, I take it that each of these interests is morally weighty, in the sense that strong pro tanto moral reasons count in favor of protecting or promoting them. Furthermore, and crucially, gentrification-induced displacement is not something that merely *happens*. It's something that *agents do*. The proximate cause of gentrification-induced displacement is the landlord's demand for more than the tenant can afford. But what translates the landlord's demand into actual displacement is the threat or imposition of state coercion. At the most general level, this issues from a practice of removing people from their homes whenever they cannot afford whatever rent their landlord demands. Call that the *practice of displacement*.

There are two key elements here. First, *whenever*: the property regime's treatment of a tenant's inability to afford the rent demanded by her landlord upon lease renewal as sufficient grounds for displacement. Second, *whatever*: the general omission of the state to constrain what landlords can demand. Both elements define the relationship between landlords and market-rate tenants. Indeed, the practice of displacement is partly constitutive of the property regime's treatment of rental housing as just a commodity—a point we'll revisit in Section V.

It could be objected that the practice of displacement cannot possibly be unjust because tenants forfeit any moral claim against displacement simply in virtue of signing a lease which makes continued occupancy conditional on paying whatever rent one's landlord demands upon lease renewal. However, this objection begs the question. For what we're asking is precisely whether there's something morally objectionable about the practice of recognizing and enforcing such contracts. If there is, then the mere fact that tenants signed such a contract cannot be used to settle that question. Indeed, if contracts were morally self-justifying in that sense, then many clear-cut injustices, ranging from indentured servitude to marriage under extreme patriarchy, would cease to be objectionable with the stroke of a pen. This illustrates the more general point that the justice of a given transaction depends in part on the justice of background institutions. Hence, it cannot be inferred from the mere fact of agreement.¹¹

Clearly, one question is whether there's a general moral objection to the practice of displacement. Our question, however, is narrower. At least as applied to neighborhoods where circumstances (1) – (3) obtain, is there something unjust about the practice of displacement? The next section will demonstrate the justice-relevance of circumstances (1) and (2). The following section will demonstrate the justice-relevance of circumstance (3).

¹¹John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 265–9.

III. LANDLORDS AND TENANTS: THE FIRST LEVEL OF DOMINATION

A few words about *domination*.

Paradigmatically, domination has three elements: the *capacity* to *interfere arbitrarily* with another person's *morally weighty interests*.¹² Briefly, domination involves, first, the *actual capacity* to interfere in another person's life—that is, an ability to interfere that is “ready at hand” to be exercised by the dominator(s).¹³ Second, the capacity for interference is *arbitrary* insofar as it (1) is not, in any meaningful way, controlled by those subject to it;¹⁴ or, (2) is not, to any substantial extent, regulated by procedures which track the interests of those subject to it;¹⁵ or, (3) issues from a standpoint of *deliberative isolation*, in that its exercise is constrained only by the power-holder's preferences.¹⁶ Finally, as noted, a person's interests are morally weighty if and insofar as there exist strong pro tanto moral reasons in favor of protecting or promoting them.

Domination is morally objectionable. In particular, a state which *enables* relationships of domination between its citizens is—at least in that respect—pro tanto unjust. But what does it mean for the state to “enable” domination? Consider the “benevolent master.” Although he never *would* beat his slave (we trust), the point is that he *could* do so with impunity. Moreover, the arbitrariness of this capacity is largely a function of society's laws. In particular, the property regime of a slaveholding society defines the roles of master and slave such that anyone occupying the master role possesses the capacity to interfere arbitrarily with the important interests of anyone occupying the slave role in relation to him. To that degree, the property regime enables the slave's domination. And in that respect, among many others, a slaveholding regime is unjust.

Of course, there are many important differences between a property regime that recognizes slaveholding and a property regime that imposes the practice of displacement. But I want to pursue the thought that such a regime *also* enables domination. In particular, I will argue that the practice of displacement enables landlord–tenant domination at least insofar as circumstances (1) and (2) obtain. Let us take each circumstance in turn.

The relevance of circumstance (1) is fairly straightforward. Although being forced to leave one's home because one can't afford the rent is stressful and unpleasant for anyone, there is a qualitative difference between the interests generally at stake when a low-income cashier confronts that prospect and the

¹²For a defense of basic interests as the relevant object of interference, see Ian Shapiro, *Politics against Domination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). For the view that options are the relevant object of interference, see inter alia Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹³For a defense of this interpretation of the capacity condition, see inter alia Pettit, *Republicanism*, p. 53.

¹⁴E.g., Philip Pettit, *On the People's Terms: A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁵E.g., Frank Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁶E.g., Chris McCammon, “Domination: a rethinking,” *Ethics*, 125 (2015), 1028–52.

interests generally at stake when a well-to-do professional does. The latter doesn't have to worry about the nightmare of homelessness; the former very well may. The latter doesn't have to worry about losing located attachments which he *needs* to satisfy basic needs and interests;¹⁷ the former does. The latter can probably find new accommodation in the same city; the former may be expelled from the city altogether. And so on. In short, circumstance (1) is relevant to domination because, insofar as it obtains, the morally weighty interests condition is generally satisfied.

The relevance to domination of circumstance (2) is more complex. Consider first a low-income neighborhood where market-rate rents *don't* exceed what tenants can afford. Suppose a landlord demands more than her tenant can afford. By hypothesis, this is also more than what the market will bear. In these circumstances, the landlord does have the capacity to significantly interfere with her tenant's life: if she sticks to her guns, her tenant will have to leave. And this capacity is—to a large extent—arbitrary: what the landlord demands is entirely at her discretion. However, in two important respects, a landlord whose tenant can afford the market-rate rent wields less arbitrary power over her tenant than does a landlord whose tenant can't afford the market-rate rent.

The degree to which someone wields arbitrary power is a function of both the degree to which he has *power* and the degree to which that power is *arbitrary*. In a neighborhood where tenants can afford the market-rate rent on their homes, an unregulated landlord does have the power to displace her tenant from his home. Hence, she has the capacity to interfere with his interest in continued residence. But she does not normally have the capacity to significantly interfere with his interest in located attachments, because by hypothesis he can afford the going rate for a comparable unit nearby. Ditto for security of shelter. To that degree, the extent of the landlord's power is circumscribed. Furthermore, that power, such as it is, is less arbitrary. When the tenant can afford the market rate, he wields *reciprocal power* in virtue of the fact that leaving would itself interfere with the landlord's options.¹⁸ If he were to leave, the landlord would be stuck with the hassle and uncertainty of finding a new tenant, plus the cost of forgone rent, which cost she couldn't reasonably expect to pass on to the new tenant by charging more. Moreover, these facts are typically common knowledge. Obviously, this gives the tenant negotiating leverage.

By contrast, when what the market will bear is significantly higher than what the tenant can afford, threatening to leave has no bite: it is precisely what the landlord wants, and would improve rather than worsen the landlord's options. As a result, tenants in these circumstances are completely dependent on the good will of their landlord to remain in their homes. In practice, the only thing standing between the tenant and the street is the landlord's arbitrary benevolence: her

¹⁷Because he can afford to pay babysitters, security services, and so on.

¹⁸For a discussion of reciprocal power as one of two strategies for avoiding domination, see Pettit, *Republicanism*, p. 67.

willingness to charge much less than she knows she could get. Relating “without reason for fear or deference” is impossible in these circumstances.¹⁹

Suppose, finally, that the landlord does demand more than her tenant can afford. If the tenant refuses to leave, then sooner or later agents of the state will come banging on the door to take him away.²⁰ That *actual* interference is performed by state agents could be taken to suggest that it must be the state which possesses the *capacity* for interference, hence the state which dominates. But that inference would be too quick. For it overlooks the possibility of a division of labor between dominators and interferers. Suppose a master employs an overseer, who whips slaves if but only if the slave does not comply with the master’s demands. Suppose furthermore that the overseer is effectively bound by these instructions, possessing little room for discretion. It would be odd to say that just because the overseer does the actual interfering, the overseer dominates and the master does not. On the contrary, a more natural description is that the master dominates via the overseer. Although the master himself never raises the whip, the whims of the master determine if the whip shall be raised. Setting aside many obvious and important differences, there is a formally analogous structure in the case of landlord–tenant domination insofar as circumstances (1) and (2) obtain. The arbitrary preferences of one person (the landlord) effectively determine whether other agents (state actors enforcing the property regime) will coercively interfere with the morally weighty interests of a third person (the tenant).

In short, landlords dominate their low-income, market-rate tenants once market rents exceed what tenants can afford. In these circumstances, landlords have the capacity, unmitigated by any meaningful reciprocal power, to interfere with tenants’ morally weighty interests in continued residence, located attachments, and security of shelter. This brings us to circumstance (3). What is the relevance, to domination, of the fact that market rents are becoming unaffordable *because* of an influx of more affluent residents?

IV. GENTRIFYING RESIDENTS AND CURRENT RESIDENTS: THE SECOND LEVEL OF DOMINATION

Consider two low-income neighborhoods on the cusp of unaffordability.

Hurricane. The weather section says there’s a significant chance a hurricane will destroy half the housing stock in the adjacent neighborhood. If half the housing stock next door gets destroyed, market rents in this neighborhood will double. Most current residents couldn’t afford that. As a result, they’d be put at their landlords’ mercy.

¹⁹The “eyeball test” for domination; Pettit, *On the People’s Terms*, p. 72.

²⁰For a far-reaching study of how displacement is coercively implemented on the ground, see Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (New York: Crown Books, 2016).

Gentrification. The lifestyle section, reporting on the opening of a new café, says there's a significant chance this neighborhood will become trendy among rich hipsters. If this neighborhood becomes trendy among rich hipsters, market rents will double. Most current residents couldn't afford that. As a result, they'd be put at their landlords' mercy.

In both cases, residents are vulnerable to landlord-tenant domination.²¹ However, the sources of their respective vulnerabilities—and the objects of their warranted fear—are quite different. In *Hurricane*, what residents have reason to fear is ultimately a natural event: a change in the “whims” of nature. If the wind blows one way, current residents will end up at their landlords' mercy; if it blows another way, they won't. In *Gentrification*, by contrast, what residents have reason to fear is ultimately a change in the whims of *agents*. If the preferences of rich hipsters change in certain ways, current residents will end up at their landlords' mercy; if they don't, they won't. In other words, whether current residents become completely dependent on the arbitrary preferences of their landlords to remain in their homes and communities itself depends on the arbitrary preferences of others. This suggests the following thought. When gentrification looms, current residents are subjected to *higher-order domination* by those whose arbitrary preferences effectively determine whether they will end up dominated by their landlords at the first-order level.

Whose arbitrary preferences? There is an important sense in which all low-income market-rate tenants depend on the arbitrary preferences of more affluent people in general for their security from landlord-tenant domination. Regardless of where his neighborhood falls on the spectrum of gentrification, any low-income market-rate tenant is constrained by the following conditional: if enough people with the option of outbidding him on his home *were* to form a preference for his neighborhood, then he would no longer be able to afford it, and would thereby end up at his landlord's mercy. However, it does not follow that all low-income market-rate tenants therefore stand in a relationship of higher-order domination to the set of all market actors whose members jointly possess the power to make market rents unaffordable through a shift in their arbitrary preferences. For any given low-income neighborhood, only a small subset of these possible gentrifiers plausibly satisfy the *capacity condition* on domination.

To satisfy the capacity condition, it is not enough that one possess the option of interference. First, one must also be *aware* of having that option.²² With respect to any given low-income neighborhood, many possible gentrifiers are either not aware of the neighborhood's existence or not familiar enough with local real estate to know that it's affordable. Hence, they do not plausibly belong to the set of market actors whose members jointly possess the capacity to make market

²¹For a discussion of vulnerability to domination in contrast to domination per se, see Shapiro, *Politics against Domination*.

²²Philip Pettit, “Republican liberty: three axioms, four theorems,” C. Laborde and J. Maynor (eds), *Republicanism and Political Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 102–30, at p. 107.

rents unaffordable in that neighborhood. Furthermore, in addition to being “live” in that sense, the option of interference must also be *reasonably feasible*, in the sense that the prudential costs of interference do not significantly outweigh the prudential benefits from the perspective of the would-be dominator. Although this criterion is of course somewhat vague, it seems clear that if moving to a given neighborhood—on the other side of the world, say—would require completely uprooting one’s life projects without any remotely offsetting benefits, then even if one is aware of the option of doing so, one does not plausibly possess the *capacity* to do so in the sense that is relevant to domination.

Conversely, insofar as one *does* possess the live and reasonably feasible option of moving to a given neighborhood and outbidding current residents on their homes, it is plausible that one does belong to the set of market actors whose members jointly possess the capacity to put current residents at their landlord’s mercy. Call the members of this subset *potential gentrifiers*. For potential gentrifiers, moving into the relevant neighborhood is not merely a theoretical possibility; it is, in a sense, “on their radar.” Now consider the threshold that’s passed when a low-income neighborhood is “on the radar” of a *critical mass* of potential gentrifiers. By “critical mass,” I mean a set of potential gentrifiers who satisfy the following conditional: *if* the members of that set were to form a preference for the neighborhood, *then* market rents would exceed what many current residents can afford. Once that threshold is passed, the formal structure of domination is in place. There is a set of agents whose members jointly possess the capacity to interfere with a morally weighty interest of current residents: namely, in not being put at one’s landlord’s mercy. Moreover, whether that capacity gets actualized depends entirely on the unregulated, uncontrolled, and deliberately isolated preferences of the members of that set. Together, these considerations suggest that a low-income neighborhood which is “on the radar” of a critical mass of potential gentrifiers instantiates *higher-order domination* of current residents by potential gentrifiers.

Of course, the mere existence of a critical mass of potential gentrifiers—while a necessary precondition of gentrification, and in a sense “the first step”²³—does not itself suffice to bring about gentrification. Rather, whether a neighborhood experiences significant gentrification depends on whether it subsequently becomes desirable to a significant number of potential gentrifiers. The dependency of gentrification itself on the desires of potential gentrifiers raises an important question about the conceptual connection between gentrification and domination. Does gentrification represent a change in the *structure* of higher-order domination itself between potential gentrifiers and current residents, or does it represent merely a change to the *outcome* of that relationship?²⁴ If the latter, it does not

²³Indeed, one way to think about the significance of a neighborhood’s “discovery” is that it secures the existence of this critical mass.

²⁴For a discussion of the structure–outcome distinction, see Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*, pp. 40–6.

follow that gentrification is normatively epiphenomenal. After all, gentrification does change the facts about domination at the first-order level: it dramatically increases the incidence of landlord–tenant domination. Moreover, that it does so via an *exercise* of higher-order domination clearly marks a morally relevant difference between gentrification and cases such as *Hurricane*. Nonetheless, if gentrification merely represents a change to the outcome of the relationship between current residents and potential gentrifiers, it follows that—at least at the higher-order level—gentrification does not change the domination relationship *as such*.

However, there is another interpretation of what happens when a neighborhood gentrifies under which gentrification *does* make a difference to the relationship of higher-order domination itself. This alternative interpretation depends on two thoughts: first, that domination comes in degrees, and second, that *desirability* and *desiredness* differ in domination-relevant ways. The first thought is a familiar one. As Philip Pettit, Frank Lovett, and others have emphasized, the elements of domination are scalar.²⁵ Although there is a threshold degree of capacity for arbitrary interference below which it does not make sense to attribute domination, differences above that threshold can vividly affect the severity of domination. These include the degree to which the interference capacity is arbitrary, the degree to which the dominated depend(s) on the dominator(s), and the moral importance of the interests at stake. The second thought, by contrast, is less familiar. Let me explain.

We have already seen that domination requires the interference option to be *reasonably feasible*. If interfering is not a reasonably feasible option for the would-be dominator, then the would-be dominator does not possess the capacity for interference in the relevant sense. But reasonable feasibility, like domination itself, comes in degrees. This in turn suggests a more general thought about the relationship between interference, prudence, and domination. Within the context of an extant relationship of domination, *the prudential cost/benefit ratio of interference is inversely related to the degree of domination*. In other words, even if interference is reasonably feasible, if the prudential costs of interference significantly outweigh the prudential benefits from the perspective of the dominating party, then to that degree the dominated party is less dependent on the dominator's good will for her security from interference. For prudence itself counts against interference. To that degree, she is less dominated than she otherwise would be. Conversely, if the prudential benefits of interference significantly outweigh the prudential costs of interference, then to that degree the dominated party is more dependent on the dominator's good will for her security from interference. For prudence supports interference. To that degree, she is more dominated than she otherwise would be.

²⁵E.g., Pettit, *Republicanism*, p. 53; and Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*, p. 120.

To motivate that general thought, consider the wife living under patriarchy. Ex hypothesi, she is already dominated by her husband due to the absence of appropriate external constraints on battery and marital rape. Now suppose an evil neighbor offers her husband \$50,000 to beat her. Intuitively, the fact that the husband now stands to gain a great deal by harming his wife renders the wife that much more dependent on the husband's good will for her security of bodily integrity. In particular, she is that much more dependent on his *prudential forbearance*: that is, on his willingness to forgo the self-interested benefits of harming her. To that degree, she is more dominated by him. This stands in contrast to the familiar scenario, where the external cost/benefit ratio of battery remains unchanged, but the husband's desires—roughly, his subjective assignment of weight to those costs and benefits—shift in favor of battery. Here, the degree of domination itself has not changed. She's just as dependent on his good will as she was before; it's just that the content of his will has changed for the worse, along with the odds of actual interference.

If this analysis is correct, it suggests a more complex interpretation of the relation between gentrification and higher-order domination. On balance, this interpretation is, I think, more plausible. Insofar as gentrification represents a change to the *actual desires* of potential gentrifiers, it increases the probability of an interfering outcome—that is, first-order landlord–tenant domination caused by an influx of actual gentrifiers—without changing the higher-order domination relationship itself. But insofar as gentrification represents a change to the neighborhood itself which makes it more desirable to potential gentrifiers, gentrification changes the relationship of higher-order domination *as such*, insofar as current residents are that much more dependent on the prudential forbearance of potential gentrifiers for their security from first-order domination. Indeed, the well-documented ambivalence of many current residents about neighborhood improvements, such as decreased crime, better public services, and more amenities, makes perfect sense when seen in that light.²⁶ Insofar as these improvements decrease the cost/benefit ratio of moving into the neighborhood for potential gentrifiers, these changes increase the severity of higher-order domination.

Regardless of which interpretation of the relation between gentrification and higher-order domination is correct, there's an important assumption about the sorts of entities that can dominate which underlies both interpretations and which needs to be examined. The assumption is that a set of individual agents can dominate, even if they do not jointly constitute a group agent. After all, neither potential gentrifiers nor actual gentrifiers constitute a group agent.²⁷ Hence, if group agency is a necessary condition of domination on the part of multiple individual agents, it follows that there's no higher-order domination of current

²⁶Freeman, *There Goes the 'Hood*, pp. 95–115.

²⁷They don't share intentions or coordinate plans, for example.

residents by gentrifying residents. Clearly, then, two important questions are: (1) whether gentrifying residents display a sufficient degree of unified agency to qualify as joint dominators, notwithstanding their falling short of full-fledged group agency, and (2) whether the broader diagnosis of this section depends essentially on the premise that gentrifying residents are themselves joint dominators.

Let me begin with (1). It is certainly true that neither potential gentrifiers nor actual gentrifiers jointly constitute a group agent. However, it does not follow that their desires and preferences are formed and acted on independently. On the contrary, a familiar aspect of gentrification is its self-reinforcing character. When young professionals start moving into a neighborhood previously regarded as “edgy,” they signal to their peers that it’s “okay” to live there. They also contribute to changes in the commercial and built environment which make the neighborhood more desirable to potential gentrifiers: new coffee shops, bars, restaurants, and so on. In short, *desiredness begets desirability*. It follows that potential gentrifiers are strategically related, in the sense that what it’s rational for any given potential gentrifier to do depends in part on what other potential gentrifiers do, where this rational interdependence is itself an item of common knowledge. To that degree, potential gentrifiers stand in a social relationship.²⁸ One implication of this social relationship is that actual gentrifiers pose an outsized risk to current residents, in at least two senses.

First, insofar as the presence of actual gentrifiers makes it more likely that others will follow suit, the presence of any given newcomer increases the likelihood that current residents will be “priced out” over and above the direct contribution of that one newcomer to raising market rents.²⁹ Second, the presence of actual gentrifiers exacerbates the dependency relationship between current residents and potential gentrifiers by pro tanto shifting the balance of prudential reasons in favor of moving in. Intuitively, the fact that potential gentrifiers pose an outsized risk in both these respects makes it more difficult for interactions with current residents to pass the “eyeball test” for non-domination. Concretely, the presence of an affluent white professional checking out houses in a predominantly low-income minority neighborhood is reasonably taken as a sign that more will come—and that one’s housing security and the security of one’s community are thereby diminished. Needless to say, it is difficult to see how this significance would not get in the way of genuine relating as equals in that context.

The hypothesis that gentrifying residents themselves dominate current residents notwithstanding their lack of group agency also makes sense of key aspects of the social experience of gentrification. As Dorothea Gädeke points out, “the core idea of domination [i]s a denial of status.”³⁰ Given the connection between

²⁸Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*, pp. 34–6.

²⁹As measured by, e.g., the individual gentrifier’s likelihood of being a “tipping-point” renter.

³⁰Dorothea Gädeke, “Does a mugger dominate? Episodic power and the structural dimension of domination,” *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 28 (2020), 199–221.

domination and unequal status, ethnographer Chiara Valli's observation is especially striking: "for long-time residents, newcomers are living embodied reminders of structural inequalities and unbalanced power relations."³¹ There are structural inequalities and unbalanced power relations apart from domination, of course. But Valli specifically attributes this interpersonal dynamic to the superior market position of gentrifying residents—the fact that they can outbid long-time residents on their homes. The capacity to outbid someone on her home *just is* the capacity to displace someone from her home for no other reason than the mere fact that now you'd prefer to live there. This suggests that a perception of arbitrary power, not just unequal power, lies at the heart of many current residents' complaints. Finally, it is also striking that social justice movements responding to gentrification frequently invoke analogies with colonialism.³² Even if these comparisons are at times polemical or overblown, they suggest that many current residents of gentrifying neighborhoods at least experience gentrification as, among other things, a significant kind of domination. This experience is itself worth taking seriously.³³

Having said all this, I recognize that many readers may remain skeptical of the claim that gentrifying residents *themselves* dominate. This brings us to (2). For two main reasons, I don't think the broader diagnosis of this section—that gentrification instantiates a nexus of domination connecting gentrifying residents, landlords, and current residents—depends essentially on the premise that gentrifying residents themselves dominate. First, suppose you reject that premise. Then there's a weaker claim for you: namely, that gentrifying residents are *peripheral agents* in relation to landlord–tenant domination. Peripheral agents do not themselves dominate, but they do contribute causally or constitutively to relationships of domination.³⁴ Clearly, this weaker claim does not posit the two-tier structure which I have advertised as a distinguishing feature of gentrification. However, it still assigns an important role to gentrifying residents in the nexus of domination which distinguishes gentrification from cases like *Hurricane*. More generally, even if we reject the stronger claim, we still need some other way of accounting for the intuitive asymmetry of *Gentrification* and *Hurricane*; the dependency of residents on the arbitrary preferences of gentrifying residents for security from landlord–tenant domination; the strategic relatedness of gentrifying residents; and the real-world experience of arbitrary power and unequal status expressed by many current residents. I argue that, on balance, the best

³¹Chiara Valli, "A sense of displacement: long-time residents' feelings of displacement in gentrifying Bushwick, Brooklyn," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39 (2015), 1191–208, at p. 1207.

³²For a comprehensive overview of this general analogy, see Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

³³For a general discussion of the normative relevance of sociological evidence about the social experiences of justice claimants, see inter alia Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (New York: Verso, 2003).

³⁴Thomas Wartenberg, *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), pp. 144–5.

interpretation of these considerations is simply that gentrifying residents dominate current residents. But even if the better interpretation is the weaker claim, that fact would not itself undermine the substantive basis for the stronger claim.

A second reason to think that the broader diagnosis of this section does not depend essentially on the premise that gentrifying residents are themselves agents of domination stems from the availability of an alternative, more structural account which does not predicate dominating agency of gentrifying residents. I have relied on the familiar, agent-centered picture of domination in terms of agential capacity for arbitrary interference. I have done so in part to make the argument's assumptions as uncontroversial as possible. I have also done so to strengthen the persuasiveness of the argument from those assumptions. If it can be shown that *even* an agent-centered picture of domination provides the resources for diagnosing gentrification in terms of domination, then, a fortiori, so does a broader view of domination that encompasses both agential and purely structural forms of domination. Indeed, a more radical, structural account of domination could diagnose gentrification in terms of *structural vulnerability*: the property regime is structured such that current residents are made to depend for their security from landlord–tenant domination on the arbitrary preferences of others. Although it would take a separate article to develop an analysis of gentrification on this alternative basis, there is much to recommend that project.³⁵

Now is a good time to take stock. In this section, I have argued as follows. Once a critical mass of potential gentrifiers jointly possess the live and reasonably feasible option of moving into a low-income neighborhood and outbidding current residents on their homes, they stand in a relationship of higher-order domination to current residents, in virtue of jointly possessing the capacity to put current residents at their landlord's mercy through a change in their arbitrary preferences. As the neighborhood undergoes gentrification and becomes increasingly desirable to potential gentrifiers, the degree and severity of higher-order domination increase markedly. And if a critical mass of potential gentrifiers in fact moves in, they actualize the capacity to put current residents at their landlords' mercy and thereby exercise higher-order domination. Against this diagnosis, it could be objected that gentrifying residents cannot possibly dominate current residents in virtue of the fact that they do not constitute a group agent. However, gentrifying residents do approximate group agency in virtue of being strategically related. Moreover, ethnographic evidence about the social experience of gentrification directly supports the domination hypothesis. That said, even if the specific claim that gentrifying residents *themselves* dominate is rejected, that would not undermine the broader diagnosis of a nexus of domination, both because a weaker claim is available—that is, that gentrifying residents are

³⁵See Gädeke, "Does a mugger dominate?," for a pertinent discussion of recent work on structural domination.

peripheral agents—and because of the centrality of structural factors in any plausible account of domination under gentrification.

V. WHAT FOLLOWS?

If the arguments to this point are sound, then the state's practice of displacement, at least as applied to neighborhoods which satisfy the standard circumstances of gentrification, enables a two-tier nexus of domination between current residents, landlords, and gentrifying residents. Moreover, it is pro tanto unjust for the state to enable relationships of domination between its citizens. Hence, at least as applied to neighborhoods which satisfy the standard circumstances of gentrification, the state's practice of displacement is pro tanto unjust. Furthermore, because the practice of displacement is partly constitutive of the property regime's treatment of rental housing as just a commodity, it follows that the commodification of rental housing in gentrifying neighborhoods is pro tanto unjust. Notably, so too is the commodification of rental housing in neighborhoods *at risk* of gentrifying, at least when such neighborhoods are “on the radar” of a critical mass of potential gentrifiers.³⁶

In a moment, I will discuss some of the policy interventions supported by the domination diagnosis. But first, I want to clarify the *scope* of this diagnosis. It is a general feature of market allocation that a consumer's ability to afford a given commodity depends on the arbitrary consumption preferences of richer prospective consumers. This raises a question about the extent to which my diagnosis generalizes. Because of the distinctive contribution of circumstances (1)–(3) to the two-tier nexus of domination that obtains with respect to rental housing in gentrifying neighborhoods, I am skeptical that the commodification of rental housing *in general* produces such a nexus, even if there are shadows of that nexus in broader swaths of the housing market. Nonetheless, this leaves open the question of whether commodities other than rental housing instantiate a parallel nexus. Although a full exploration of that question is clearly a task for another day, rental housing has three characteristics which both distinguish it from other commodities and contribute to the nexus of domination under gentrification: *basicness*, *relationality*, and *non-fungibility*.

First, unlike most commodities, housing is a *basic good*, in the sense that it protects morally weighty interests. Given the morally weighty interests condition on domination, only basic goods can generate a nexus of domination. Second, rental housing is a *relational good*, in the sense that it is obtained via an ongoing relationship from which there are high exit costs. This distinguishes housing from

³⁶Surprisingly little has been written on housing in the commodification literature. Instead, discussions have tended to focus on relatively marginal goods and services, such as organs, reproductive labor, and the like. However, Debra Satz's point that “noxious markets” can produce inequalities of *social standing* is clearly applicable here; see Debra Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 12–25.

other basic goods like food and clothing. Simply put, the local baker does not have the power to effectively set the price on one's interest in nutrition, in the way that one's landlord has the power to effectively set the price on one's interests in continued residence, located attachments, and security of shelter. This suggests that, if there is a relationship of domination between poor consumers of food and clothing and rich consumers of food and clothing, it does not have the same two-tier, higher-order structure.

Third, housing is to a significant extent *non-fungible*. In contrast to equally priced units of food and clothing, equally priced units of housing cannot be substituted without significant costs to the possessor.³⁷ One practical consequence of this fact is that richer consumers of housing have a greater capacity to interfere with the interests of poorer consumers of housing than do richer consumers of food and clothing in relation to poorer consumers of food and clothing. Concretely, a poor person may have plenty of reasons to fear loss of access to food—his absolute share of resources may decline, the market price of food may spike because of a reduction in supply—but an increase in market prices due to the mere fact that richer people have changed their culinary preferences is not normally such a reason. For even if some of the foods he's used to eating become prohibitively expensive due to a change in richer people's culinary tastes, provided neither his absolute share of resources nor the overall supply of food declines, there will remain comparably priced alternative foods which are just as good as far as the interest in nutrition is concerned. Things are different with housing. If the home and neighborhood he's used to living in become prohibitively expensive due to a change in richer people's locational tastes, no comparably priced substitutes will remain which are just as good as far as his interests in continued residence and located attachments are concerned, even if neither his absolute resource share nor the overall supply of housing decline.

These preliminary considerations suggest that the nexus of domination that obtains with respect to rental housing in gentrifying neighborhoods does not have any straightforward counterparts in markets for other goods. However, there is obviously much more to say about this question. For now, the point is simply that no general indictment of market allocation is implied or presupposed by the domination diagnosis of gentrification.³⁸

Returning, then, to gentrification, our question is what reforms would mitigate the nexus of domination. Briefly, they fall into three main categories. One way to reduce domination is to reform the practice of displacement so that landlords retain the coercively enforceable power to demand whatever rent they want, but tenants are not necessarily displaced *whenever* they cannot afford to pay that amount. This implies a straightforward justification for housing subsidies. A second way to reduce domination is to reform the practice of displacement so that landlords don't have the power to demand *whatever* rent they want. This

³⁷A point defended by Radin, "Residential rent control."

³⁸Which is consistent, of course, with that indictment being *justified*.

implies a straightforward justification for rent control. Bracketing its many well-known problems, and subject to the qualification that safeguards are necessary to protect against loopholes and abuse, rent control does constitute third-party interference which mitigates arbitrariness by requiring landlords to formally justify significant inflation-adjusted rent increases. Finally, a third means of mitigating domination is to significantly expand public housing. Because rising rents give private landlords an incentive to push out their low-income tenants, there is a standing incentive for private landlords in gentrifying neighborhoods to displace their tenants. But insofar as the housing stock is public, there are no private landlords and hence in principle no such incentives.

The general lesson is that the domination diagnosis implies a pro tanto justice rationale for de-commodifying rental housing, the strength of which increases in proportion to a neighborhood's risk of or exposure to gentrification. Because this rationale is pro tanto, it must be balanced against any considerations counting in favor of full commodification, starting with any competing justice considerations. Clearly, the optimal balance of reasons in any given case will depend largely on the contingent empirical consequences of this or that reform. Nonetheless, if strong competing considerations clearly outweighed the non-domination rationale for de-commodification under all or most plausible empirical assumptions, that would render the non-domination rationale rather weak tea. So let me briefly explain why I think that antecedent is false.

The two most obvious considerations counting against de-commodification would appeal to (1) the mobility interests of prospective residents or (2) the economic interests of landlords. A threshold question is whether these competing interests are interests *of justice*. Not all interests are. Each of us has an interest in maximizing our incomes, and in having our preferred party win every election. Furthermore, these interests do deserve some weight in the social calculus; hence the need for fair procedures governing the distribution of resources and the allocation of political offices. However, none of us has a claim on the state to fulfill those interests, nor do we have grounds for complaint against the state if those interests are unfulfilled.³⁹ Although I cannot adequately defend it here, my own view is that prospective residents do not have a claim on the state to maximal residential mobility, nor do residential landlords have grounds for complaint if they cannot charge whatever rent they want. Theirs are interests of welfare, not of justice.

If that is correct, then current residents' justice-based claim to freedom from domination enjoys a strong presumption in its favor when weighed against the competing welfare interests of prospective residents and private landlords. This, of course, does not imply that the pursuit of non-domination is normatively

³⁹For a defense of the view that reasons of justice are distinguished by their conceptual connection to claims and complaints, see, e.g., Elizabeth Anderson, "The fundamental disagreement between luck egalitarians and relational egalitarians," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 40 (2010), 1–23.

unconstrained by the latter's welfare interests. At the very least, if two institutional reforms would equally mitigate the nexus of domination, but have different consequences for others' welfare interests, we ought to do what leaves people better off overall.⁴⁰ Furthermore, sufficiently greater welfare losses on the side of prospective residents and landlords might outweigh significant gains in protection against domination. So perhaps the all-things-considered balance of reasons will recommend something short of maximally reducing domination.⁴¹ What's not plausible is that the non-domination interest of current residents is simply swamped by competing interests in all or most cases, such that all-things-considered we have little reason to de-commodify rental housing in gentrifying neighborhoods. We have weighty undefeated reasons, indeed, to do so.

At this point, a few words about *moral responsibility* are in order. I take it that primary responsibility for the nexus of domination lies with the state. This is so not only because the nexus of domination violates the state's standing pro tanto obligation of justice not to enable domination between its citizens. It's also because the state is, in general, far better positioned to mitigate the nexus of domination than are private citizens. However, just because the state is the primary addressee of the relevant justice complaint doesn't mean that landlords and gentrifying residents are off the hook. At the very least, people who exercise domination are liable to moral criticism in the absence of a valid excuse. A landlord who doubles the rent just because he can is morally blameworthy; among other things, he wrongfully exploits.

The moral responsibility of actual gentrifiers is more complex, in part because soaring housing costs can make it difficult for many *not* to become part of a group that jointly exercises higher-order domination. However, at the very least, it is plausible that more affluent people who move into a gentrifying neighborhood thereby incur a special obligation to mitigate displacement. Discharging this obligation could include things like supporting legislation aimed at protecting low-income tenants and working towards strengthening community organizations—in addition to simply being a good neighbor. Finally, although it is less plausible that private citizens who merely impose domination are liable to moral criticism *as such*, there is intuitive support for the judgment that occupying a dominating role generates special obligations to work towards reforming the laws and practices in virtue of which that role is dominating. For example, a landlord or potential gentrifier who understands that they are part of a nexus of domination, but does nothing to reform that nexus, is plausibly open to a higher degree of moral criticism than someone who's not part of that nexus and merely recognizes from an agent-neutral standpoint that domination's happening “over there.”

⁴⁰This might be a reason to prefer housing subsidies to rent control, for example.

⁴¹Although there *is* a case to be made that justice will require us to minimize domination; Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*.

Of course, there's much more to be said about each of these tentative proposals. For now, the point is simply that the domination diagnosis gives us a framework for thinking about moral responsibility. Hence, even people with different substantive views about collective responsibility and responsibility for domination can at least agree about what sorts of issues need to be settled to apportion responsibility for the nexus of domination.

I want to conclude by briefly comparing the domination diagnosis with one alternative assessment of gentrification-induced displacement: namely, Margaret Kohn's. Kohn's diagnosis is a straightforward application of luck egalitarianism.⁴² Her major normative premise is that it's pro tanto unjust for someone to be made worse off than others through no fault or choice of her own. Her empirical premise is that people displaced by gentrification fit that description. Hence, gentrification-induced displacement is pro tanto unjust. This conclusion implies a straightforward rationale for housing subsidies to prevent displacement, and compensation when displacement cannot be avoided.

The domination diagnosis is compatible with the luck egalitarian diagnosis. I don't claim that the nexus of domination is the *only* aspect of gentrification-induced displacement in virtue of which it is unjust. However, for several reasons, I think that the domination diagnosis does a better job articulating the intuition that there is something unjust about gentrification-induced displacement. First, it is more fine-grained. On Kohn's view, there is no principled difference between the injustice of gentrification-induced displacement and the injustice of displacement caused by equally unchosen circumstances which are otherwise quite different from gentrification. For example, the luck egalitarian diagnosis *as such* does not distinguish between *Gentrification* and *Hurricane* or, for that matter, between *Gentrification* and *Hurricane**, where natural events displace people directly by making their homes uninhabitable. To be sure, Kohn's view could be supplemented to accommodate the intuition that these cases differ in morally relevant ways—but supplementation is what's needed

By contrast, the domination diagnosis *starts* with the intuition that gentrification-induced displacement differs from other kinds of displacement in morally relevant ways. It then vindicates that intuition by articulating the nexus of domination. Second, the domination diagnosis relies on more ecumenical normative premises. There is, of course, considerable disagreement about whether luck egalitarianism is a plausible theory of justice, and some of its most trenchant critics are fellow egalitarians.⁴³ By contrast, it is considerably less controversial that there's a fundamental moral objection to the imposition or exercise of arbitrary power, even if lively disagreement continues about how to specify that objection. Third, the domination diagnosis is more novel. Luck egalitarianism is

⁴²Margaret Kohn, *The Death and Life of the Urban Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), ch. 5.

⁴³See inter alia Elizabeth Anderson, "What is the point of equality?", *Ethics*, 109 (1999), 287–337.

a strong distributive egalitarian premise. Though important, it is not terribly surprising that strong distributive egalitarian assumptions support the conclusion that gentrification-induced displacement is unjust. By contrast, the domination diagnosis appeals to the values of social equality and negative liberty. In its egalitarian aspect, the novelty of the domination diagnosis consists in showing that substantial material restructuring—viz., of the housing market—is supported by reasons of social equality, not just by reasons of distributive equality. In its libertarian aspect, the novelty of the domination diagnosis consists in showing that the same value enlisted by opponents of market regulation—namely, negative liberty—in fact supports significant state regulation of the housing market in a range of salient circumstances.⁴⁴

To conclude, it is important to put the domination diagnosis in context. First, I have addressed only one aspect of gentrification: residential displacement. Clearly, many other aspects of gentrification warrant moral assessment. Furthermore, some of these aspects—including socioeconomic and racial integration, improved public services in previously underserved areas, and a wealth infusion to low-income minority homeowners—plausibly count in favor of gentrification from the perspective of justice values. Second, as emphasized, my objection to the practice of displacement as applied to gentrifying neighborhoods is limited to just one aspect of that practice: its instantiation of domination by landlords and prospective residents. Third, as emphasized, my diagnosis is limited to a central range of paradigm cases. Clearly, the actual extent of domination in a given neighborhood depends heavily on contingent circumstances, notably the proportion of market-rate tenants and their absolute and relative economic vulnerability.

Nonetheless, if the arguments of this article are persuasive, then no moral assessment of gentrification is complete unless it gives proper weight to current residents' justice claim to non-domination. More fundamentally, if we have reason to care about freedom from arbitrary power, relating as equals, or both, then we should be deeply troubled by the fact that economically vulnerable people can be forced to leave their homes and communities under threat of state coercion for no other reason, ultimately, than that a critical mass of richer people now find their neighborhood preferable. That is the moral core of gentrification-induced displacement, and it is unjust.

⁴⁴For an assessment of homelessness that's similar in this respect, see Jeremy Waldron, "Homelessness and the issue of freedom," *UCLA Law Review*, 39 (1991), 295–324.