

Squatters In The Capitalist City: A Hidden History of Resistance



Squatting is often seen as a last resort for the homeless and the desperate. But it is also a form of resistance against the commodification of housing and the displacement of low-income people from urban areas. In *Squatters In The Capitalist City*, historian Matthew Desmond tells the story of squatting in New York City from the 1970s to the present. He shows how squatting has been a vital part of the city's history, and how it has played a key role in shaping the city's housing policies.



Squatters in the Capitalist City: Housing, Justice, and Urban Politics (Housing and Society Series) by Steve Allen

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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The Early Years

Squatting in New York City began in the early 1970s, as the city's housing crisis worsened. Thousands of people were losing their homes to foreclosure and eviction, and the city's shelters were overcrowded. In response, activists began to organize squatters' collectives, which helped people to find and occupy abandoned buildings.

The early squatters were a diverse group of people, including homeless families, single adults, and artists. They came from all walks of life, but they shared a common goal: to find a place to live that was affordable and safe.

The squatters often faced opposition from the city government and from private landlords. The city would often try to evict squatters, and landlords would sometimes hire private security guards to intimidate them. But the squatters refused to be intimidated. They organized protests, and they lobbied the city government to pass laws that would protect their rights.

The Tompkins Square Riot

In 1988, the Tompkins Square Park riots broke out in the East Village of Manhattan. The riots were sparked by the city's attempt to evict squatters from a building in the park. The squatters fought back, and the riots lasted for several days.

The Tompkins Square Park riots were a turning point in the history of squatting in New York City. They showed the city government that squatters were not going to be easily evicted. They also helped to raise awareness of the housing crisis and the plight of the homeless.

The Present Day

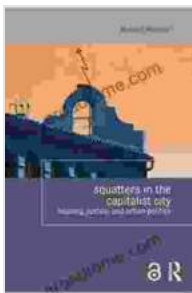
Squatting is still a common practice in New York City today. There are an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 squatters living in the city, and they come from all walks of life. Some squatters are homeless people who have nowhere else to go. Others are activists who are fighting against the commodification of housing.

The city government has taken a more tolerant approach to squatting in recent years. In 2012, the city passed a law that made it more difficult to evict squatters from buildings that are not being used. The city also provides some services to squatters, such as access to healthcare and social services.

However, squatting is still a risky practice in New York City. Squatters can be evicted at any time, and they often face harassment from landlords and the police. But for many squatters, the risks are worth it. Squatting provides them with a place to live that is affordable and safe. It also gives them a sense of community and belonging.

Squatting is a complex and controversial issue. But it is also a vital part of the history of New York City. Squatters have played a key role in shaping the city's housing policies, and they continue to fight for the right to housing for all.

Squatters In The Capitalist City is a powerful and moving account of the history of squatting in New York City. It is a must-read for anyone who is interested in the city's history, or in the fight for housing justice.



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