


The dynamics of accumulation by dispossession in the 21st century

Objective 2.1

To recognize the dynamics of accumulation by dispossession in the 21st century.
(15 minutes)

2.0 Watch "Enclosure Movement." (7:13)

<p>Enclosure Movement</p> 
<p>Glass, Geof. "Enclosure Movement," video, 7:13, posted by tclim988 to YouTube on April 20, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhZ7UruXRBs . (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhZ7UruXRBs)</p>

2.1 Watch "David Harvey on Accumulation by Dispossession." (7:02)

David Harvey on accumulation by dispossession



Harvey, David. "David Harvey on Accumulation by Dispossession", video, 7:02, posted by 2birdsswimming to YouTube on March 8, 2009.


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3a9TAbQHziQ> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3a9TAbQHziQ>)

This simple first video depicts the enclosure movement in England. How the common lands became enclosed over time, or otherwise put, privatized, was a key component in laying the foundation for the emergence of the capitalist system. It highlights the state of political struggle (including force and bloodshed) as being central to the dynamic of enclosure.


In this next video, human geographer David Harvey applies Polanyi's double movement to the contemporary neoliberal global economic context. Taking off from the history of resistance to enclosures in England during early capitalism, he examines the modern dispossession experienced by people worldwide because of neo-liberal economic policy. He shows too how dispossession has triggered resistance at local, national, and global levels. Note his view of the unique relevance or role of the global finance system in modern enclosure.

Today consciousness is heightening, but how we organize resistance, with whom we align, and to what ends directly relates to our assumptions and our analysis. Listen carefully to Harvey for his reflections on contemporary human history. Pay particular attention to the implications of his analysis for shaping and joining up diverse movements and forging them into more politically powerful agents of systems change.

2.2 Watch "A Beginners Guide to Land Grabs." (1:54)

<p>A beginner's guide to land grabs</p> 
<p>OXFAM. “A Beginner’s Guide to Land Grabs,” video, 1:54, posted by oxfaminternational to YouTube on October 4, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExCQlobfAUU _ (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExCQlobfAUU)</p>

2.3 Watch “Land Grabbing - The Movie - Trailer.” (1:51)

<p>Land Grabbing - The Movie - Trailer</p> 
<p>Langbein and Partner. “Land Grabbing—the Movie—Trailer,” video, 1:51, posted by the creator to YouTube on May 11, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieioj-036hA _ (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieioj-036hA)</p>

These two additional short videos depict the factors and actors driving 21st century dispossession, the rationales they marshal for doing so, the mounting consequences for millions of people in the global south, and also for many in the global north. The importance of Harvey’s challenge offers a striking backdrop when one examines the massive increase in land grabs of common lands across the planet.

2.4 Read “It’s Time to Call the Housing Crisis What it Really is: The Largest Transfer of Wealth in Living History.” (~4 minutes)

McFarland, Laurie. "It's Time to Call the Housing Crisis What it Really is: The Largest Transfer of Wealth in Living History," on openDemocracy, November 13, 2017. <https://neweconomics.opendemocracy.net/time-call-housing-crisis-really-largest-transfer-wealth-living-memory/>
(<https://neweconomics.opendemocracy.net/time-call-housing-crisis-really-largest-transfer-wealth-living-memory/>)

Not all forms of dispossession are so immediate. Nevertheless, each time, the process of dispossession makes it more difficult for people to meet basic needs. Whether you own or rent, for example, rising housing costs and land values are a huge factor in the escalation of poverty and insecurity. Laurie McFarland explores rapidly escalating land prices and the housing crisis in contemporary Britain. Consider how the logic of the private property market operates here. Note the levels and the actors that make up the system at its core. Where might we exercise key levers for change?