Cities for All

Proposals and Experiences towards the Right to the City

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Editors

Habitat
International
Coalition HIC

For over thirty years, Habitat International Coalition (HIC) has focused on the link between human habitat, human rights, and dignity, together with people's demands, capabilities, and aspirations for freedom and solidarity.

HIC has been committed to be involved in the creation of a theoretical and practical framework for the right to the city. This first edition of *Cities for All. Proposals and Experiences towards the Right to the City* in three languages is intended as an additional source of inspiration for people to live in peace and dignity in every city.

Here, we give the word to the actors who fight for the right to the city in the world in many different ways, all towards the same goal that another city is possible.

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Habitat International Coalition, HIC

To Han van Putten,
and all of those fighting for the right to the city

Glossary

This book gathers experiences and proposals that have emerged from different contexts. The original texts were written in Spanish, Portuguese, English and French. In the translated texts, we have kept some of the terms in their original language in order to comply with their respective local or regional specificity. To simplify the reading of this book, we present here a definition of four of these terms.

Pavement dweller: Expresses a particular reality in India of people who live in extreme poverty on the sidewalks of city streets, where they settle and build their precarious homes.

Población (pl. poblaciones): A term used in Chile to define a consolidated settlement, the result of land seizures that took place in the 1950s and 60s, or of poorly urbanized plots of land. The process of urbanization in *poblaciones* has been undertaken by its *pobladores* (see definition below) and through several public policy interventions.

Poblador (pl. pobladores): A term used in Latin America which adds a social and political connotation to the concept of 'inhabitant'. It refers to collectives of popular settlements that fight for their space, neighbourhood, street, and rights in the city.

Shack: Housing with no security of tenure, built with precarious housing materials, and lacking urban services.

Index

Prologue

Habitat International Coalition (HIC) is a global network of social movements, organisations and individuals based in more than 100 countries, in the South and North, enhancing thought and action to advance the human right of all to a place to live in peace and dignity.

Over the last three decades, the HIC focus has been the nexus between human habitat and human rights and dignity, with due recognition of peoples' claims and capabilities and the struggle for freedom and solidarity. HIC perspectives go beyond individual rights and assert that the commitment of civil society and the state[1] to collective rights and responsibilities is fundamental to realize a just, habitable world — for the many rather than the few.

Peoples' claims, as history testifies, emerge as rights through prolonged struggles. HIC envisages the struggles for various emerging rights — of indigenous people, of migrants, for food sovereignty, for the right to the city, and so on — as challenges for domestic and global civil societies to confront in order to advance the idea that "another world is possible."

HIC commitments to advance the understanding and the resolution of the complex right to the city over the last decades, among other things, have involved creating theoretical and practical knowledge in collaboration with others and sharing it through publications. The first edition of the book, in three languages, is a very substantive, intellectual effort towards this end. Our hope is that the book will inspire many to advance the struggle for the emergence of the right of all to live in peace and dignity in the cities of the world.

I sincerely thank all the contributors to the book from around the world, on behalf of HIC.

Davinder Lamba
HIC President

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1   In this book, 'civil society' and 'state' are written in minuscule letters, so as to respect the link between these two actors of equal importance.

Introduction

Cities for All: Articulating the Social-Urban Capacities[1]

Ana Sugranyes and Charlotte Mathivet

In the Urban Reform tent during the World Social Forum held in Belém, Brazil, in January 2009, geographer David Harvey stated, "I am very grateful for this invitation because I always learn a great deal from social movements.[2] He ended his lecture by stating that "it s come to the point when it s no longer a matter of accepting what Margaret Thatcher said, that 13 There is no alternative, and we say that there has to be an alternative. There has to be an alternative to capitalism in general. And we can begin to approach that alternative by perceiving the right to the city as a popular and international demand and I hope that we can all join together in that mission.[3]

This book is a response to that hope and also to the call to unite under the right to the city banner, thus giving the floor to a wide range of actors who fight for the right to the city. The wide variety of views, discourses, cultures and experiences are the guiding themes of this publication. We propose to articulate different ideas and converge their differences towards the same goal: the right to the city as a banner of the struggle against neoliberalism. We are not referring to an ideological abstraction, but to the effects felt by inhabitants in their daily life, including, among others: the lack of access to land and services; insecurity of tenure; evictions which occur for numerous reasons including privatization, property speculation, mega-projects and mega-events; abuse and trafficking of power; the deregulation of public space; and urban planning in the interests of a few.

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1 The slogan for the World Urban Forum 5 in 2010 is The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide. Rather than focusing on the divided, HIC works to articulate the positive forces towards the right to the city.

2 http://www.hic-net.org/news.php?pid=2953, David Harvey at the World Social Forum, Belem: The Right to the City as Alternative to Neoliberalism, Harvey, David, 2009.

3 Ibid. Loc.cit

This raises the idea of appropriating the right to the city as a political proposal for change and as an alternative to urban living conditions created by capitalist policies, which today are neoliberal. According to Purcell, "Lefebvre's right to the city involves the radical reinvention of social relations of capitalism and the spatial structure of the city."[4] This is why Lefebvre stated that "the right to the city cannot be conceived as the simple right to visit or return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a right to urban, transformed, renewed life."[5]

This reformulation of urban life offers more equity, where the majority of inhabitants achieve happiness and solidarity, generating and redistributing the benefits of the city for all. We are aware of the challenges of this particular aspiration for social justice. Some call it wishful thinking or an illusion. We call it indispensable utopia in order for another world to be possible.

In this major task of (re)inventing the terms of "good living"[6] as many indigenous Andean, Quechua, and Aymara peoples have called it it is essential to build comprehensive global strategies to create another kind of city and other kinds of human relationships. As Harvey said, social movements play an important role in this through their daily struggles for a more egalitarian society, and specifically for a more just city.

Let us be reminded of the historical context in which the right to the city emerges as a concept, idea, and program (and not just a slogan) as defined by French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre in 1968 in his book "Le droit à la ville."[7] At the time, Lefebvre was a professor of urban sociology at the Faculty of Sociology at Nanterre University, where the May'68 movement began. For many, Lefebvre's ideas about the right to the city influenced the events of May 68. It is true that in the collective imagination, Lefebvre is not automatically linked with the French social movement. Instead the movement is linked with famous names such as Levi-Strauss, Lacan and Debord. These intellectuals (and others) have appropriated the movement of May'68 even though it was driven by the ideas of Lefebvre and his assistants. In this regard, "May 1968 is not the work of academics of the major schools, but of the people. Lefebvre did not attend l'École

4   Purcell, Mark, Le droit à la ville et les mouvements urbains contemporains, Droit de Cité, Rue Descartes, N.63, p42. 2009. Original citation in French : "Le droit à la ville de Lefebvre implique de réinventer radicalement les relations sociales du capitalisme et la structure spatiale de la ville".

5   Lefebvre, Henri, 1968, Le droit à la ville, Ed. Economica, 3ième édition, 2009, p108. Original citation in French : "Le droit à la ville ne peut se concevoir comme un simple droit de visite ou de retour vers les villes traditionnelles. Il ne peut se formuler que comme droit à la vie urbaine, transformée, renouvelée.

6   From the Ecuadorian Quichua phrase Sumak kawsay, which expreses the idea not of a better life, nor or a better life than others, nor to continually improving life, but simply to a good life. www.kaosenlared.net/noticia/sumak-kawsay-suma-qamana-buen-vivir, Sumak Kawsay, Suma Qamaña, Buen Vivir, Tortosa, José María, 2009.

7   Ibid. Préface, Hess, R, Deulceux S Weigand , G.

Normale Supérieure [...]. He learned about sociology driving a taxi in the 1920s in Paris."[8] Also, let us not forget that Nanterre "was a faculty built near slums".[9] It is the relationship between urban poverty, the critical intellectual formulation against the system, and the social movement of 1968, which developed Lefebvre s right to the city. Thus it can be gathered that "Lefebvre was a great influence in the training of activists. [10]

Taking a look at the different actors, among them the social movements that demand the right to the city in their struggles, we believe that this right remains of paramount importance in the validity of Lefebvre's thinking and those who have continued to develop the subject. This force and persistence over time appears to be a great strength. In 1968 it was Lefebvre[11], through his writings and classroom discussions on the right to the city, who nurtured the student movement towards subversion and rebellion against the established order. However today it is the social movements under the banner of the right to the city who are empowered in their struggles against the harmful effects of the neoliberal system previously mentioned.

Forty-two years after the first formulation of the right to the city, it is surprising that this idea continues to hold up and convoke social and academic movements and civil society organisations, all so heterogeneous, and all from different parts of the world. Perhaps it is not so surprising, since popular strategies to fight against the commercial logic of globalization act locally with a global perspective of the right to the city.

Habitat International Coalition (HIC) is part of this story and this proposal. This is why the decision was made to publish a compilation of articles relating experiences and analyses that consider the right to the city as their rallying flag and as their political proposal for change. This goal is very evident in some cases whereas in others the right to the city is not directly mentioned. Many of the texts interpret the right to the city in very different ways: as a political, legal or cultural tool.

This book seeks to articulate struggles, describing them according to each local context, with a global perspective to build links, networks, and alliances. It is not a theoretical study disconnected from reality, but instead it is part of a process of action and reflection in which the movements are committed to their daily struggles.

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8   Ibid. p VI Original citation in French : "Mai 1968'n est pas le fait des gens d'école mais des gens du tas. Lefebvre n est ni normalien ni agrégé. Il a fait ses classes de sociologie en conduisant un taxi dans les années 20 à Paris."
9   Loc.cit, Original citation in French: "Nanterre était une faculté construite autour des bidonvilles."
10 Loc.cit, Original citation in French: "C' est du côté des apprentissages militants que Lefebvre a eu une importance."
11 As well as situationists, among others. For more on this debate between situationists and Lefebvre, see Simay , Philippe, 2009, Une autre ville pour une autre vie. Henri Lefebvre et les situationnistes, Droit de Cité, Rue Descartes, N.63.

According to Jordi Borja, "the development and legitimization of civil rights depend on a threefold process: i) cultural, hegemony of the values that underlie these rights and the act of demonstrating them; ii) social, citizen mobilization to achieve their legalization and the creation of mechanisms and procedures that ensure their implementation, iii) political and institutional, to formalize, consolidate and develop policies and thus make them effective".[12]

Borja also affirms that the key and emerging actors from this process are not the traditional political structures of power (state and political parties) but social groups, very often heterogeneous.

For twenty years, HIC has been involved in this threefold process, accompanying social movements and groups of various sorts. This publication intends to illustrate the diversity of these actors in building the right to the city through conquests, defeats and re-articulations (in other words, successes, failures and reconstitution of forces). This publication documents political strategies that arise from the diversity of the participating actors who seek to include this collective-rights approach in instances of decision-making. It is difficult to see and understand the changes, rebellions, and proposals arising from neighbourhoods and local areas. Each of these expressions corresponds to different problems of marginality, crime, segregation, poorly supported self-assistance, and the stigmatization of poverty. Faced with these realities, we must disseminate new approaches to understand local circumstances, to respect diversity and reject the perverse effects that carry negative images created by welfarism and media discourse.

Uruguayan author Raúl Zibechi states that "we who are committed to the cause of emancipation and of social movements need to promote reflection, analysis and theoretical formulations that recognize and address 16 other societies that social scientists have difficulty visualizing. [13] He adds that this is why we are in need of thought and ideas rooted in these different societies, to not only be committed to them but to be a part of them. [14]

Unlike Lefebvre and several other authors with particular emphasis on Harvey this book is not a scientific study on the right to the city. This book is intended as a forum for debate, the exchange of ideas, illustration of experiences, formulation of questions, but most of all, to prove the strength of the right to the city as a tool for a city and thus a better world.

The structure of the book demonstrates this same desire. It consists of two

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12 Borja, Jordi, Los desafíos del territorio y los derechos de la ciudadanía. 2001. http://www.lafactoriaweb.com/articulos/borja10.htm#.

13 Zibechi Raúl, 2007, Dispersar el poder, Los movimientos como poderes antiestatales, Editorial Quimantú, Santiago de Chile, p 8.

14 Loc.cit.

main parts: the first includes articles from a theoretical consideration of prominent authors. Jordi Borja[15] introduces the city's problems from the perspective of democracy. Yves Jouffe[16] presents a critical analysis of the right to the city by focusing on the access to urban space. This criticism can be further examined through the gender-based analysis of Tovi Fenster[17], supported by the definitions that Shelley Buckingham[18] introduces to this approach. From another perspective, Patricia Ezquerra and Henry Renna[19] propose another indispensable dimension of this utopia, the right to happiness. Peter Marcuse[20] leads us to reflect on the duality between the individualistic approach to human rights and the collective approach to the right to the city. Giuseppe Caruso[21] questions how the right to the city can mobilize a global movement under its banner. This first part concludes with the contributions of Enrique Ortiz[22] and Bola Fajemirokun[23] who explain how this right has been expanding in their regions, in Latin America and Africa.

After these theoretical introductions, the second part of the book is a compilation of experiences of implementing the right to the city in different parts of the world. These experiences are developed in very diverse geographic, cultural, political, and economic contexts. They also correspond to a wide variety of strategies adopted by the actors involved.

To understand the different facets of these experiences, this second section is built around four approaches which correspond to the previously mentioned strategies: grassroots struggles against marginalization and evictions; the empowerment of grassroots initiatives; the implementation of the right to the city through the legal framework; and public policy and planning.

These strategies are closely articulated with each other. They are based on a logic that ensures continuity and are guided by a paradigm of resistance against violations of the city through its implementation. Thus, through these popular social struggle initiatives that have been sustained for decades, several countries have incorporated the right to the city in their constitutional and regulatory frameworks. This is illustrated by the analysis from Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Mexico, which have been Latin America s pioneers in this great challenge.

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15 Borja, Jordi, Democracy in Search of the Future City, p 29
16 Jouffe, Yves, Countering the Right to the Accessible City: The Perversity of a Consensual Demand, p 43
17 Fenster, Tovi, The Right to the City and Gendered Everyday Life, p 63
18 Buckingham, Shelley, The Right to the City from a Gender Perspective, p 57
19 Ezquerra, Patricia and Renna, Henry, A Horizon for Public Policies? Notes on Happiness, p 77
20 Marcuse, Peter, Rights in Cities and the Right to the City?, p 87
21 Caruso, Giuseppe, A New Alliance for the City? Opportunities and Challenges of a (Globalizing) Right to the City Movement, p 99
22 Ortiz, Enrique, The Construction Process towards the Right to the City: Progress made and challenges pending, p 113
23 Fajemirokun, Mobola, The Concept and Implementation of the Right to the City in Anglophone Africa, p 121

The section on public policy and planning demonstrates how these tools can be counteractive to the right of the city and good living, accelerating and deepening the negative effects of globalized trade. In turn, they can also be tools that generate processes of change that reverse situations of inequality and injustice.

These articles are the fruits of the work of several authors and academics, but mostly militants and activists of the right to the city. Many of them belong to grassroots social movements. This diversity of actors and hence the type of articles is a reflection of what Zibechi expressed: there should be a willingness to publicize the ideas and practices of social movements, as long as we maintain respect for these movements without incorrectly speaking on their behalf. The other challenge is to accompany these movements by providing skills and knowledge. Aware of these challenges, the book expresses the different paths towards the realization of the right to the city and the construction of another city.

It is essential to recognize and capitalize on this diversity of ways of thinking about the right to the city and the different ways of action that lead to its implementation. This touches on the articulation and feedback between actors as well as between theory and action. In order to avoid distortion of the perception of this right, it is important to respect social processes through continuous self-criticism and through monitoring of possible encroachments on the initial purpose of the right to the city. Authors such as Yves Jouffe and Tovi Fenster express their concerns towards this right in different ways, stating that when it is manipulated, and not improved, it can suffer negative effects.

Many changes have taken place in the world between the appearance of the right to the city in Professor Lefebvre s classroom and the current ways it exists today through the demands of urban social movements. Sociologists were convinced that the agent of change, the only class that could actually achieve a transformation of society and thus transform the city by implementing the right to the city, was the proletariat led by the working class. In this regard he stated that "only the working class can be the agent, carrier, or social support of this realization".[24] In 2010, the scenario is different since the working class has been pushed to the background of the neoliberal globalized world, and no longer holds the political role that it did before. For this reason, social movements, organisations, intellectuals, militants and diverse activists all looking for social change, make their demands as a collective movement mobilized by the right to the city and no longer as part of the working class. One of the most important changes that has occurred in recent decades is the recognition of the role of women in these processes. When building more

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24 Lefebvre, H.Op.Cit. p108. Original citation in French : "seule la clase ouvrière peut devenir l'agent, porteur, ou support social de cette réalisation."

equitable cities, it is important to recognize the additional discrimination towards women that exists in public spaces.

As discussed by Giuseppe Caruso, it is also important to highlight the role that the World Social Forum (WSF) has provided for social movements and their coordination as a global expression of the right to the city in the world. Indeed, the WSF for the past ten years has facilitated the construction of comprehensive strategies for different movements to meet, share, learn and re-analyze their own experience in light of what is discerned in other movements. This has led movements and networks to formulate charters, statements and agendas to continue the struggle for the right to the city. In other publications[25], HIC has analyzed the processes of the different charters for the right to the city, and in particular the World Charter, as is explained in this book by Enrique Ortiz.

Cities for All recounts experiences developed by many actors from various regions of the world. It counts on the participation of different authors from diverse backgrounds: professionals, academics, urban planners, architects, lawyers, sociologists, political scientists and grassroots activists, all driven by a resistance force and a will for a proposal that is guided towards the right to the city.

For this reason, we highlight that this diversity is the essence of the right to the city and a possible global alliance, but also shows its weaknesses and possible perverse effects. This book provides critical perspectives of the right to the city. They are intended as constructive criticism to continue creating alternative practices and policies to the hegemony of neoliberalism throughout the world. We need to continue building the right to the city in debates as well as actions aiming towards a process of emancipation.

The progress towards the right to the city faces a decisive moment now. The UN, which is not known for its support of social struggles, internalized the right to the city in the World Urban Forum 5 (WUF) in Rio de Janeiro[26]. Faced with this challenge, HIC places this book on the institutional and entrepreneurial urban fair; which has been the role of civil society for decades. According to Nelson Saule and Karina Uzzo[27], if the UN includes the right to the city at WUF 5 it is because Brazil is the country where social movements and organisations have been building this right for more than twenty years. However, it also presents a danger since it is also an opportunity to manipulate these struggles and the issues that constitute the right to the city. This can be particularly vulnerable because of

25 Nehls Martínez, N., Ortiz, E., Zárate, L. (comp.), 2008, El derecho a la ciudad en el mundo. Compilación de documentos relevantes para el debate HIC-AL, Ciudad de México.

26 World Urban Forum 5 "The Right to the City-Bridging the Urban Divide , Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, March 22 to 26, 2010.

27 Saule, Nelson and Uzzo, Karina, The History of Urban Reform in Brazil, p 247

the diversity of opinion and strategies among the actors, which can easily lead to them emptying its contents to transform the city and the system that governs it. In this perspective, the preparation of an Urban Social Forum   organized for the first time in Rio de Janeiro in the same institutional space as the WUF   can be a powerful tool in these efforts to build a global movement for the right to the city from the social movements.

We dedicate this book to organisations and social actors, professionals and academics from civil society, working and fighting for the right to the city in the world. This dedication is also extended to the people interested in these issues, that while not knowing that there is a right to the city, without being aware of the growing experiences, demonstrations and discussions about this right, they perceive the power of such ideas and the need to interweave the struggles. The book is a tool to recognize the broad spectrum of potential struggles for the right to live well in the city, owning our own destiny, showing the actions that have been developed with the issue and leaving clues to articulate the different forms of struggle towards another possible city.

To facilitate reading of the proposals and experiences presented in this publication, we present a definition and explanation of the right to the city so that all readers can have the basic tools to understand and take control of this proposal, path, and project of the right to the city.

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The Right to the City: Keys to Understanding the Proposal for "Another City is Possible"

Charlotte Mathivet

History of the Right to the City: A proposal that goes beyond a new concept

The right to the city is not a new proposal. The term was first articulated in 1968 by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in his book "Le droit à la ville". The book describes the negative impact that the capitalist economy has on cities, converting the city into a commodity serving only the interests of capital accumulation. To counter this phenomenon, Lefebvre proposes that inhabitants demand control over the construction of urban spaces. Facing the effects caused by neoliberalism such as the privatization of urban space, the commercial use of the city, and the predominance of industries and commercial areas, a new political perspective was proposed known as *the right to the city*. The city, overtaken by the interests of capital, has ceased to belong to the people and thus Lefebvre advocates for the "rescue of man as the main protagonist of the city he has built." Therefore, the right to the city focuses on restoring the city's significance to its inhabitants, establishing the possibility of a high quality of life for all, and constructing the city as "the meeting point for collective living" (Lefebvre, 1968).

Further, collective living can be constructed based on the idea of the city as a cultural, collective, and therefore political product. As analyzed by Jordi Borja (2003), the city is a political space where the expression of a collective will is possible. It is a space for solidarity but also for conflict. The right to the city represents the possibility of building a city in which people can live with dignity, where they are recognized as part of its structure, and where equal distribution of all kinds of resources is possible, such as labour, health, education, and housing, as well as symbolic resources such as participation and access to information. The right to the city is the right of everyone to create cities that meet human needs. All people should have equal rights to build the different types of cities that they want. As David Harvey (2009) argues, "the right to the city is not simply the

right to what already exists in the city; it is also the right to transform the city into something radically different."

The necessary demand of the possibility of creating another type of city is based on a human rights framework, and more precisely on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). The phenomenon of the city is analyzed and envisioned through concepts of citizenship and public space, incorporating a comprehensive and interdependent vision of human rights to achieve the goal of reclaiming the city for all its inhabitants. However, it is important to clarify that the right to the city is not an additional human right; rather it is the right to enforce other rights that already formally exist. As such, the right to the city is based on a dynamic of process and conquest, in which social movements are the engine driving the achievement of this right.

The World Charter on the Right to the City

A crucial step in building the right to the city was the development of the World Charter on the Right to the City, as coordinated by the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) among other bodies. The formulation of the Charter included the participation of an array of popular movements, NGOs, professional associations, national and international civil society forums and networks, all committed to social struggles for just, democratic, humane and sustainable cities. The Charter seeks to collect the commitments and measures that should be undertaken by civil society, local and national governments, parliamentarians and international organisations to ensure that all people live with dignity in cities.

The process that sparked this initiative began during the preparatory activities leading to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as the "Earth Summit," held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. The National Forum for Urban Reform (FNRU), and the Continental Front of Communal Organisations (FCOC) joined forces to draft and sign the treaty on urbanization entitled "For Just, Democratic and Sustainable Cities, Towns and Villages."

As part of the preparatory process toward the Earth Summit, that same year HIC organised the International Forum on Environment, Poverty, and the Right to the City, held in Tunis. That event marked the first time the theme was debated among HIC members from diverse regions of the world. A few years later, in October 1995, several HIC members participated in UNESCO's expert meeting "Towards the city of solidarity and citizenship." That occasion inaugurated UNESCO's participation in the theme of urban rights. That same year, Brazilian organisations promoted the Charter of Human Rights in the City, civilian precursor of the City Statute promulgated several years later by the Brazilian government.

Another important milestone leading towards the formulation of a World Charter for the Right to the City was the First World Assembly of Urban Inhabitants, held in Mexico in 2000, where approximately 300 delegates from social organisations and movements from 35 countries participated. Within the theme "People rethinking the city," participants debated the conceptualization of a collective ideal that would provide the foundation for proposals oriented towards the creation of democratic, inclusive, educative, liveable, sustainable, productive, and safe cities.

One year later, at the time of the first World Social Forum, the Charter formulation process began. Since then, and in conjunction with the annual World Social Forum and regional Social Forums, work has continued on defining the contents of the Charter as well as on developing strategies for its dissemination and promotion.

Parallel to these civil society initiatives, some governments at the regional, national and local levels have been generating legal instruments seeking to regulate human rights in the urban context. The most advanced of these include, at the international level, the European Charter to Safeguard Human Rights in the City, signed to date by more than 400 cities, and the already-mentioned City Statute of Brazil decreed in July 2001, and on the local scale, the Montreal Charter and the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City. Also with due recognition is the recent inclusion of the right to the city in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia.

The Dimensions and Components of the Right to the City

The right to the city is:
- The right to habitat that facilitates a network of social relations
- The right to social cohesion and the collective construction of the city
- The right to live with dignity in the city
- The right to co-existence
- The right to influence and access the municipal government
- The right to equal rights

According to the World Charter for the Right to the City, this new right is a collective right of urban dwellers, especially of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, that legitimizes their action and organisation based on their habits and customs, with the aim of achieving the full realization of the right to self-determination and an adequate standard of living.

The right to the city is achieved when people are guaranteed:

- The full exercise of citizenship and the democratic management of the city
- Equality without discrimination
- Special protection for groups and people facing vulnerable situations
- A social commitment from the private sector
- A stimulus for economic solidarity and progressive tax policies
- Social planning and management of the city
- Social production of habitat
- Equal and sustainable urban development
- The right to public information
- Liberty and integrity
- The right to justice
- The right to public security and peaceful, supportive and multicultural co-existence
- The right to water, access and provision of urban and domestic public services
- The right to public transportation and urban mobility
- The right to housing
- The right to work
- The right to a clean and sustainable environment

In short, the World Charter for the Right to the City bases its proposal on three fundamental axes:

1. The exercise of full citizenship, namely the realization of all human rights to ensure the collective well-being of inhabitants and the social production and management of their habitat.

2. The democratic management of the city through the direct participation of society in planning and governance, thus strengthening local governments and social organisation.

3. The social function of the city and of urban property, with the collective good prevailing over individual property rights, involving a socially just and environmentally sustainable use of urban space.

According to Borja, the development and legitimization of civil rights depends on a threefold process:

- A cultural process of explaining the hegemonic values that underlie the basis of these rights;
- A social process of civil mobilization to legalize and create the mechanisms and procedures to guarantee and make effective these rights; and,
- A political-institutional process to formalize and consolidate these rights and to develop policies to implement them.

Borja also states that the main actors in this process are not the traditional political structures of the state and political parties; rather they are social movements. Thus, the right to the city is a strategic response, a paradigm against social exclusion and the spatial segregation generated by neoliberalism. It is the people's demand to once again become masters of the city and it is the sphere for the construction of a collective life.

Strategies to realize the right to the city

Based on the fact that there are now "cities without citizens," the right to the city represents the struggle of invisible city dwellers that have been robbed of a space where they can develop and live with dignity. The right to the city constitutes a variety of human rights, making it more challenging to demand and implement this collection of rights. Realizing the right to the city is therefore a struggle that can be fought by social movements.

It is first important to disseminate information concerning its significance in order to initiate social mobilization processes and to influence the formulation of public policies. These processes have been widely developed in several Latin American countries especially in Brazil, Mexico and Ecuador. However the right to the city is not a proposal that resonates only in Latin America as it clearly embodies a global character as well. This publication aims to disseminate experiences of the right to the city in different countries around the world so as to demonstrate that yes, another city is possible.

This involves deep structural changes in patterns of production, consumption and in the ways in which territories and natural resources are appropriated. The right to the city refers to the "search for solutions to the negative effects produced by globalization, privatization, scarcity of natural resources, increasing global poverty, environmental fragility and their resulting consequences for the survival of humanity and the planet." (HIC-AL, 2006) Considering the global crisis we are currently facing, Harvey affirms that "if this crisis is fundamentally a crisis of urbanization, then the solution should be urbanization, and this is where the fight for the right to the city is crucial, given that we have the opportunity to do something different." There are alternatives to urban development based

on commodification, privatization, and the deterioration of social ties and the right to the city is one of them; it is a proposal to construct different cities where everyone can live with dignity.

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Part One

Proposals for the Right to the City

Democracy in Search of the Future City

Jordi Borja

Democracy and the City

We only find something when we know what we are looking for. This is a basic epistemological principal, or maybe not. According to Bachelard, to research is to search for what is hidden, but while we are searching it is difficult to specify exactly what it is.

For those of us focused on the city, what attracts us most is that it is a place of freedom and potential adventures, offering unplanned encounters and random events. The city provides surprises at every corner (Breton) and that is where we want to live.

The city is simultaneously a personal experience and a collective action. Its iconic squares, streets and buildings are the places where history is made: the Berlin Wall, Mexico City's main plaza known as the "Zócalo," Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Travelling a bit further into the past, we find the Bastille and the Jeu de Paume salon of revolutionary Paris, where the Declaration of *Droits de l'Homme*[1] was proclaimed, stating that "Men are born and remain free and equal." The original myth of the city is the story of the Tower of Babel: people who are different, yet equal, working together to build their "city" to challenge the power of the gods as an affirmation of their independence. Citizens are people living in coexistence, free and equal, in a self-governed territory with a unique identity[2].

The city, therefore, is a metaphor for democracy, with its dualities: individual, and social, lyrical and epic. The city, like democracy, should maximize individual freedom through a collective lifestyle that minimizes inequalities. The city humanizes the abstract democratic ideal, introducing the pleasure of the senses to systematic rationality while the intimate desires of each person modulate collective projects.

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1   The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen
2   Borja, Jordi, "La ciudad conquistada," Alianza Editorial. 2003.

This metaphor is especially interesting as it emphasizes the character of the former and the necessary on the latter: the sentimental and sensual dimension, friendly and loving, individual and cooperative, pluralistic and homogenizing, protective and sheltering, uncertain and surprising, transgressive and mysterious. Also, we live in an age in which it is no coincidence that city and democracy are disappearing, as if they had dissolved into public space in both a physical and political sense. The chasm between citizens and political institutions and political parties is growing. In one sense it is part of the effect of globalization and the nation-state crisis; however, it is also expressed and emphasized by the new, large-scale forms of urban development, which are socially segregating, environmentally unsustainable and politically dubious. If the city is both the producer of citizenship and the generator of innovation, it is therefore the soil in which democracy lives, progresses and responds to new challenges. Without the city, the place that maximizes exchanges between people, democracy loses its strength to create potential futures and promote current actions. The city is the past, present and future of democracy. Without a vision and constant activity to construct the city that is built up and torn down every day, we accept the slow, steady degradation of democracy.

The parallel dissolution of the city and democracy

The urban revolution we are experiencing is one of the fundamental expressions of our age. We will not examine at length a subject that has been widely addressed, including by the author of this article[3]. The new metropolitan regions lead us to question our idea of the city: they are vast areas of intermittent urbanization, in some cases fragmented, in others diffused, without precise borders, with sparse physical and symbolic resources that mark the territory of poor public spaces, and are subject to powerful privatization dynamics. These metropolitan regions are characterized by social segregation, large-scale functional specialization and gentrified (class-based) or "museumized" city centres, converted into theme parks or stratified by consumption level. This city, or "non-city,"[4] is also the expression and reproduction of a society that is both heterogeneous and compartmentalized (or "ghettoized") and lacks cohesion. The promises of the urban revolution, particularly the optimization of individual autonomy, are only within the reach of a minority. The variety of jobs, housing, culture, education, leisure, etc., requires a relatively high level of income and information as well as an effective right to mobility and access to information technology networks. For a minority of the population, social relationships are extended and become less

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3   Ibid.
4   Augé, Marc, *Non-Lieux, introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, París, Le Seuil, 1992.

dependent on work and housing. However for the majority these relationships are poorer, due to precarious jobs, time spent on daily commutes and cultural exclusion.

This new urban society is not structured into large social groups like those of industrial society. It is an individualized society, fragmented, with fractures between those afraid of losing their income, mediocre privileges and vulnerable security and those who live in unstable conditions, both in terms of their work and their rights, without any visible future except uncertainty, with only the guarantee that they will not be able to reach their expectations. It is a society that needs a welfare state, but it is precisely this that does not exist, or not in sufficient amounts, for those that need it most. In Spain, the commendable proposal of defending this welfare state as "our state by right"[5] neglects the fact that this plan does not guarantee anyone's "well-being." Today, it is insufficient for or does not serve those who need it most: the "*mileuristas*" (those who barely make 1,000 Euros per month, today the largest group of salaried workers), the unemployed, the youth without access to housing, and immigrants without recognized rights, school drop-outs and those excluded by the "digital divide." Also excluded are those who live within the vicious circle of marginalization, in peripheral urban areas or disintegrating neighbourhoods far from everything and in close quarters with those who live in the same or worse situations than themselves.

Democracy is lost in these urban spaces and fragmented societies. Through the adequate management of the municipal government that is attentive to the electorate and more reproductive than innovative (in other words "more of the same"), democracy maintains a respectable institutional existence. Television enables the fabrication of necessary electoral moments, in which the only thing expressed with certainty is the negative vote. There is a progressive dissolution of political parties throughout local areas, as a social, cultural and political force, due to the lack of activist roots, particularly in the social sectors which are most discriminated against, in some cases, and the more reactionary, in other cases. Above all, their discourse is disappearing. If there is a city crisis, democratic parties must propose, in the present, a plan for the future city. In democratic Spain today, local governments have undoubtedly been able to develop positive policies for the compact, historical city, particularly in the reconstruction of public spaces and the relative maintenance of the social and functional mixture. However democratic political institutions have demonstrated much greater impotence, when they are not actual accomplices, in the face of the perverse effects of globalization and groups promoting vast urbanized spaces that lack the quality of a city. Conversely, through sector-driven and short-term policies they end up bowing to the market's segregating, exclusionary logic, thus contributing

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5   Ridao, José Mª *La izquierda sin crisis,* El País, 25-11-2007.

to the dissolution of civic life. To which the government authorities (the confused right and left) and large companies add, in the name of competitiveness and urban marketing, architectural ostentation and the exportation of neo-monumentalism, trivializing the city and alienating its citizens. Many political and intellectual leaders shift between abstractions of the state, the global economy and opinion polls. The city of flesh and blood, of people who are a blend of both desires and needs and who demand rapid, comprehensive answers, is a distant concept to them. Close by, in the best cases, are the local managers of the day-to-day, who are inevitably limited to the only comparative advantage they have: proximity, which is not sufficient to confront the current dynamics that reduce urban freedoms and increase inequalities throughout the local areas.

Conflict in the Local Areas and Political Asymmetry

The idea that conflict in our societies has shifted from the corporation to the land is almost commonplace in Europe; in other words, the capital-labour conflict has shifted to a public policies-living conditions conflict. However, this conflict is confusing because of the many different forms of the issues through which it is expressed, which are as varied as housing and security, precarious work and immigration, environmental protection, heritage and mobility. This confusion makes it difficult to construct opposing symmetrical plans.

In addition to this asymmetry, there is a wide variety of actors with contradictory interests who find it difficult to define a shared space in which to negotiate conflict (this occurs only if the conflict is heightened and in specific cases). The conflict is asymmetrical when the parties in conflict are unable to define negotiable objectives or are not willing to assume responsibilities. An extreme case of conflict is when an "anarchist" rebellion occurs (for example, the protests of the "*banlieusards*"[6] in Paris). This occurs, for example, when there is a variety of actors with parallel conflicts, as occurs frequently between state and regional governments.

The interesting issue in this case is not the complexity of the conflict but the weakness of the policies in addressing these conflicts. This weakness arises mainly from theoretical inconsistencies and the lax moral values of individuals or political parties' choices at that moment.   This weakness of principles and values drives electoral opportunism and routine management. We see a series of conflictive issues which are expressed in local areas. These are issues that can serve as tests for evaluating whether the imminent democracy can provide

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6   The "banlieusards" are inhabitants of peripheral neighbourhoods in France's larger cities. The term has a social and cultural connotation as these neighbourhoods generally house lower-income people, including many immigrants.

a more democratic plan for the future, or if it is simply more management of the present, with its acquired advances and ongoing contradictions and setbacks.

The Precariousness of Work

The evolution of the market economy has "naturalized" the precariousness of salaried employment, devaluing jobs and the process of acquiring professional qualifications. Today's democracies have implemented corrective measures for the most debilitating effects of precariousness (unemployment insurance, continuing education programs, minimum periods for work contracts, reduction of the work day). However, these measures will not achieve a global vision that values work and professionalism in all of these activities. If we consider late entrance into the job market, the almost unavoidable periods of unemployment that affect a large part of the population and retirement even when individuals have two or more decades of life left to live, we are faced with the question of the necessity of a guaranteed minimum income. Currently, pension systems are characterized by inequality and uncertainty. The proposal for a universal minimum wage is definitely debatable in its conception and the difficulty of its implementation, but it indicates the existence of a problem that requires a global solution. We are aware that this problem is not specific to the local area, but that is where it is manifested and most visible. A high-level French civil servant, Jean-Marie Delarue, hardly one to be suspected of being a leftist, said many years ago that industrial society's social conflict has shifted from companies to the land[7].

Housing and Land

Housing is a basic right recognized in constitutional texts and human rights charters, but it is merely a guiding principal for public policies. It constitutes a "programmatic right" that is often not guaranteed by the state of law. Today, housing has become one of the largest social problems for vast sections of the population and at the same time, one of the main sources of speculative profit, caused by financial capitalism and an extensive, diverse array of landowners, developers and construction companies. Urbanization, housing construction and civil works are definitely the most significant factors in social and political corruption. In Spain, both left-wing and right-wing governments (although the right have certainly contributed more to this process) have destroyed the coastal landscape. Urban sprawl has enabled the greatest land speculation in our history, as hundreds of thousands of housing units have been built with no buyers or located so far away from centres for employment and services that they generate

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7   Delarue, Jacques, *Banlieues en difficulté, la relégation* , Paris. 1991.

huge social and environmental costs. The left has abandoned its traditional goals: publicly owned urban and developable land; priority for rental housing (which should not cost more than 10 to 20 percent of family income); the continuity and blending of the urban fabric, etc. As for conservative governments, they have implemented legislation to enable "everything to be developable," resulting in an increase in urban sprawl and in the price of housing and land, the former having risen from 30 to 50 percent of a housing unit's value. Today, democratic governments do not have a clear understanding of "the right to housing" and even less of "the right to the city" in relation to the future city, which is being built on the periphery.

Infrastructure and Mobility of Citizens

The current debate about infrastructure seems to be focused on which institutional level should be primarily responsible for management. It is undoubtedly an important topic and it seems likely that local management of ports, airports, and road and railway networks would be more efficient as there would be greater social oversight. But the right and the left both support the same "incremental" proposals despite the fact that in many cases the social and environmental costs are unsustainable. It would seem logical that the starting point should be the recognition of the fundamental "right to mobility," which should be considered a universal right, at all times and at every level of society. Thus, large-scale and more frequent transport must be prioritized, as should suburban transport, which is not the case now. Infrastructure drives urban development and it would make sense to support urban development supported by a compact, high-density urban fabric. However, there is no democratic political culture that adopts mobility in practice or in law, nor the good use of infrastructure to create a city.

Citizen Security

Once again, we find ourselves participating in discussions and practices characterized by ambivalence and contradictions and subscribing to conservative and exclusionary values and behaviour that engender the most primitive of opinions. The creation of safe environments is a fundamental right for the entire population and political policies should guarantee this, particularly in the poorest sectors. Lack of security has many causes: unemployment or job insecurity, inhospitable urban surroundings, poverty, the existence of many culturally distinct groups which are perceived as potentially "dangerous", frailty of the social fabric, etc. We are living in an age in which the politics of "fear" has become an instrument for manipulating international public opinion used by the most reactionary government administrations of the United States.

Unfortunately, this policy has tainted many democratic European governments and in many cases they have also fallen prey to this security discussion and engage in preventive repression tactics, often against the most vulnerable groups. As a result, Bologna and Barcelona, two cities that in recent decades have served as examples of democratic government, have approved regulations based on very controversial principles such as the criminalization of social groups and the practice of preventive repression such as the Coexistence Ordinances approved by Barcelona's municipal government. These ordinances criminalize street vendors, prostitutes, beggars, the homeless, and others, and impose sanctions that are so disproportional as to be impossible to apply[8]. This is all in the name of the "regular citizen" and their right to "not see what disgusts them." Let's be clear: this is not about defending a permissive policy; quite the opposite. Local policy, swift local justice, immediate sanctions on uncivilized behaviour, and other means should be part of democratic public policies which affect the vast majority of citizens. However, the basis of the policy should be the equal treatment of all citizens, the protection of the weakest, and the construction of an environment of coexistence that promotes mutual understanding, cooperation among citizens and solidarity with the weakest and most marginalized. Strangely, when the above-mentioned "ordinances" were announced they were described as penalizing racist or xenophobic behaviour, but such good intentions were later forgotten. Today, the right to security does not seem to exist nor is it addressed by democratic governments when applying the principles of progressive liberalism, Christian social thought and left-wing values and practices to new realities. Instead, they submit to the authoritarian fears and reactions of more conservative ideologies that criminalize the poor, the youth, low-income people with little opportunities, and immigrants.

Public Education and Religion

Public, mandatory and secular schooling has historically been one of the greatest achievements of democracy. Its three main goals are: to guarantee basic education for all citizens as a means of promoting more fair and effective social and economic development; to create a mechanism for upward social mobility that reaches low-income sectors and groups which are discriminated against and excluded; and finally, to educate citizens for democracy, tolerance and rationality through an education system that does not impose beliefs that seek to monopolize the truth or dismiss any beliefs that are different. Currently, the combination of the upper class' desire to set itself apart and the low-income sector's access to

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8   Jordi Borja, Inseguretat ciutadana a la societat de risc, Revista Catalana de Seguretat Pública, No. 16, 2006. Spanish language version published in La Factoría No. 32 (wwwrevistalafactoriaweb.com).

the educational system, including that of immigrants, has created a major rift in the educational system. The Catholic Church has played a central role in this kind of behaviour, defending inherited privileges of the past and converting itself into a large company that has transformed teaching into a business and a source of power and influence. Democratic governments, including left-wing governments, have often demonstrated significant weakness in response to the reactions of the sectors that have used religion to defend their privileges. Thus, they have allowed charter schools which are 100 percent subsidized to practice discrimination (for example, against immigrants) and to have mandatory religious education, which has even returned to some public schools. This has led to the progressive weakening of secularism and has resulted in public schools serving the most marginalized sectors, so that instead of being a lever for social mobility, they merely reinforce social exclusion. As a result, none of the three objectives of public, mandatory and secular schooling is achieved.

Urban Public Services and Public Health: Multinationals against Democracy

Everyone knows this: there are hidden relationships, important pockets of public corruption and privileged positions in large service companies that generate enormous private profits that weigh heavily on contributors and service quality. It is obvious that one of the most important advances promoted by democratic governments is the "welfare state," the establishment of a system of "universal" public or general interest services. Today, this system is affected by a process of deterioration that is growing mainly because of two factors. First, the relative inadequacy of services for new urban realities characterized by sprawling housing development and thus social segregation on a larger territorial scale, as well as greater diversity of social groups and their demands. Low-income populations are poorly served, both in terms of public transport and socio-cultural facilities and in terms of access to information and communication technology (the "digital divide"). Second: de facto monopoly situations guarantee an impunity that permits deficits in terms of investment and maintenance, weakening services such as water and energy. It is a never-ending paradox that these same utility companies use public-private cooperation policies to establish themselves in less developed countries and impose onerous contracts while transferring inadequate technologies to them.

Democratic culture must recover something so fundamental which is part of its reason for being — public ownership of humanity's basic goods — at least when it comes to four natural resources: water, air, land and fire (or energy, in modern terms). Communication, health and educational services must also be included. Private ownership of these goods should not be allowed, as it leads to profit-making by some and exclusion of others. If water management is

privatized, an important part of the world's population goes without drinking water because it is unable to pay for it. The right to pollute can be purchased, so dominant countries pollute the poorest populations. Privately owned land is one of the main factors leading to social marginalization, private speculation and public corruption. The biggest fortunes are made in the energy sector and are distributed according to the income levels; the paradox is that in many cases, the populations and places that produce energy are not able to afford it.

Public health merits particular reflection. One of the achievements of the welfare state is that it guarantees services to the whole population (including those who are not recognized as citizens). This system is currently overwhelmed due to high maintenance costs and poor administrative organisation. Its services are directed toward meeting massive demands and are not always adapted to treating local situations and diverse populations. There has been a significant increase in demand, due to the growing tendency to seek medical attention for any discomfort and advances in medical care, as well as the weakening of family units and more women working outside the home. In addressing this crisis, the tendency has been to provide answers which are purely economic and managerial in their perspective, based on privatization of medical services and autonomy of medical centres. Without discussing the details of these trends, one omission is notable: the weak criticism of the negative influence of multinational pharmaceutical companies which encourage over--medicating, exclude low-income groups from access to many medications and increase their profits at the expense of those who contribute most to public and private assistance funds. It would be logical to expect that democratic governments, both locally and globally, would denounce and confront these multinational companies, promote generic medications everywhere, distribute formulas so that these medications reach even the poorest countries, impose conditions on production and distribution of medications produced by the private sector, create local alternative distribution networks and prioritize research in public medical centres. It is shameful how multinational corporations (finance, services, energy etc.) are treated as if they act in the "national interest" solely because they are based in a country.

Immigration

The discourse and practice of democratic governments, locally as well as nationally, have taken an ambiguous stance that goes beyond the inevitable consideration of limits that both economic and legal frameworks (national and European) as well as public opinion impose on immigration policy. There is a contradiction or dual discourse between the principles which are stated and the regulations which are imposed. While they claim the best of intentions, such as recognizing and protecting the rights of immigrants and promoting their

integration in all respects, the texts are always full of limitations on the exercise of basic rights. While they make declarations refusing to regularize "illegal" immigrants, we all know that it is inevitable that groups which are established in the country and working eventually obtain legal status, which should happen periodically. There is no mention of the unfair social costs borne by this reserve labour force, which works in precarious conditions while waiting years to obtain legal status. They face obstacles to such basic rights as family reunification or labour organising rights. It is not always possible to have an open-door policy for everyone, but the democratic culture — humanist and universalist — includes the right of citizens of the world to have their own life plan. Therefore, the policy must establish regular and dignified channels through which to receive a population that is in any case arriving in our developed countries. There is a lack of clear principles regarding immigrant rights, such as: the right to dignity, to recognition of identity, treatment based on "positive action" to facilitate the integration process, penalties for mistreatment by civil society or public servants, awareness of their values and contributions to the country that receives them. The fundamental issue for a democratic society is to recognize immigrants living in the country as citizens with full rights. The population which does not originate from the European community with legal residence should have the same rights as nationals, including all political rights.

Reconstructing Democratic Culture: Three Brief General Reflections

In this brief article, we do not claim to analyze all of the new challenges currently facing democracy. This article attempts to point out several themes linked to urbanism, to local territories and to the framework of daily life for citizens. The central idea of the article is that the thinking and the policies behind current democracies, if they are to be true to the historical objectives of freedom and equality, to their universalist vocation and desire to support those who are victims of and potential resistors to a system based on global squandering and personal profit, must rebuild or develop their theoretical bases and moral values. In other words, they should rethink citizenship.

One area of reflection that promises to be productive is rethinking the citizenship rights of our modern society[9]. One of these can be the "right to the city" which integrates the rights that this article has previously discussed: the right to housing, to public spaces, to access to jobs and services, to mobility, to visibility in the urban fabric, to the identity of a place, etc. In other dimensions of social, economic and political life it is necessary to redefine and specify "new

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9   Borja, Jordi. Los derechos ciudadanos, Documentos, Fundación Alternativas, Estudios, No. 51, 2004. (Includes an extensive bibliography).

rights." Such rights will be distinguished by being more complex than the traditional, emblematic rights of democratic revolutions and social reforms in the former industrial society. For example, recognition of all political rights for legal residents in a city or region (to do away with the required connection between nationality and citizenship); continuing education — understanding education as not being restricted by age; a basic, universal salary or income as a complement to the right to work, etc.

We conceive of these rights as those of citizenship and not of humanity, since they are part of the statute of citizenship and thus people are recognized as subjects of rights and obligations that enable them to live freely in the country where they have chosen to live, just like everyone else in that country.

A second area of reflection is rethinking the societal plan**.** This comes from three different sources: historical democratic memory; theoretical and practical criticism of existing society; and aspirations and objectives that emerge from social conflicts and which express the values of freedom and equality. The failure and deserved rejection of Soviet-type models and the exhaustion of the traditional "welfare state" have provoked a certain fear of thinking that "another world is possible." However, the historical ideals of the Enlightenment, of democratic liberalism, of social Christianity, of socialism, practices of workers movements and struggles for democracy as well as the achievements of the "welfare state," represent not only a positive part of heritage, but a foundation on which to rethink the future. The cultural vacuum of current policy causes dizziness, as it does not want to look back nor does it dare to look forward. It avoids critical reflection on the current economic models — wasteful, unsustainable, exclusionary and violent — that characterize our way of life.

Finally, the third area of reflection requires a connection between political theory and practice, the "local" with the "global." It is offensive to go back and read the statements of politicians and the news media defending the West, its systems and companies, and labelling as "populism" any criticism or threat to the neo-colonial interests of governments and companies. Recovering the "universalism" in the framework of globalization is a task that the Western left-wing has yet to undertake.

Epilogue: Return to the City and in Praise of Chance

I do not believe that a new political culture is generated principally by government institutions or constructed in research centres and academic institutions. The former governs or thinks about elections. In the academic world, creativity is not the most appreciated virtue. We are left with alternative (global) political movements such as those that criticize the real world's globalization in the name

of another possible world, and (local) social and cultural resistance movements that defend collective but limited identities or interests. We are left to wait for institutional politics, areas of research and intellectual debate and local and global movements to engage in exchange and transfers to create the foundations of a political culture that is pragmatic in terms of action but radical in its objectives.

As the vast differences and distances between these actors cannot be bridged, the only thing that has occurred to me is to trust in chance and in the city — in the "serendipity"[10] of the city. I will explain the origin of this word for those who are not familiar with it. It was invented by the English writer Horace Walpole in one of his stories, "The Three Princes of Serendip," a country once called Ceylan and now known as Sri Lanka. On their journey, the three princes discover, unintentionally and by chance, many curious and novel facts and events. "Serendipity" may be understood as finding something without looking for it (Viagra, for example, is a product of hypertension research conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense). It is by chance that people become randomly connected or as a result of casual encounters between people and events. Serendipity obviously requires that people observe, learn and relate to one another. For chance to occur, it is necessary that the medium which produces serendipity be dense and diverse, for it to generate many unexpected contacts, and for its subjects to participate in events that have nothing to do with their work or daily life. Surprise or adventure can happen on any corner (just like Breton's quote at the beginning of this essay)[11].

The city, real and imagined, compact and diverse, is characterized by the size of the population and the speed of the connections that make possible and multiply the interactions between many different people. There can be a danger in excess rational planning, in functional order, in planning connections and predicting behaviour. Sennett, in one of his first works, was already warning against the perverse effects of functionalist urbanism and advocated for a city where different people could meet in many ways[12]. The urban planning director for the City of London stated in an international meeting that "pubs" were ideal places for economic and cultural innovation as informal meetings were by far the most productive kind[13].

We are not proposing that actors sit in cafeterias and get on and off the tramways. We are proposing that we make urbanism a "political" issue. Current

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10 Ascher, François, La ville c'est les autres, CCI-Centre Pompidou, Commemorative catalog, 2007 and Examen clinique, journal d'un hypermoderne, Editions de l'Aube,2007.
11 Breton, André, Nadja, Gallimard, 1964.
12 Sennett, Richard, The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life, New York 1970 (Spanish language version published by Ediciones Península, 1975).
13 The quote from the director of urban planning of the City of London is from a presentation at the Large Cities Seminar, San Martín Cultural Centre. It was previously published by the Municipal Government of Buenos Aires in a volume that included all of the presentations (1997).

dynamics tend to atomize the city, to segregate social groups and activities, to reduce exchanges between citizens, substituted by exchanges between services and users, facilities and clients. As Ascher says, "urbanism should create places, moments and situations which enable serendipity."

The city is a place of history, of cultural and political innovation. It is the environment in which the left can recreate and develop itself. Today, there is a tendency to break up the city and separate citizens from one another. It is a double challenge that democracy faces: to reinvent the city and reinvent itself within the city.

Countering the Right to the Accessible City: The Perversity of a Consensual Demand

Yves Jouffe

The right to the city constitutes a fundamentally anti-neoliberal concept: put the city to work for the inhabitant and not the inhabitant to work for a city dominated by capitalist interests (Purcell, 2009). In 1969, Lefebvre presented this ethical demand of the right to the city as a standard to unite urban experts and political groups around the working class, as it was this class that represented the primary actor and beneficiary of the conquest of the city against capital.

However, the right to the city causes confusion because of its indistinctive character. In particular, it can be reduced to a question of accessibility to different places and services in the city. Those who defend the right to mobility and who promote accessibility as a fundamental principal of social justice and economic efficiency in the city, tend to make this simplification. The reformulation of the right to the city as the right to an accessible city diverts it into the neoliberal order of urban space; in other words, the exact opposite of Lefebvre's initial intention and that of many current activists. However, it is not enough to merely highlight this threat. It must be understood that the ambiguous nature of the right to the city founds both the risk of its diversion as well as its tactical use, opening possibilities for creating broad and unconventional alliances.

From the Right to the City to the Right to Access

Through the right to the city, inhabitants can exercise their rights to produce, transform, and to use the city. An initial simplification consists of neglecting the participatory element, by prioritizing the issue of production where production is necessary, as well as prioritizing the issue of using urban spaces where they already exist. In this way, public institutions or the market take on the responsibility of constructing the city for the inhabitant and making it accessible.

Secondly, the right to the city can be reduced to the guarantee of access to the city, thereby undermining the issue of production. The socio-spatial segregation characteristic of massive megacities reinforces this simplification. Many urban services such as hospitals, civil services, cultural areas, or employment centres exist but are out of reach for the disadvantaged masses because of distance or some other kind of exclusion. The issue of access dominates the production of services. For example, urban planning has abandoned the idea of bringing workplaces closer to workers, thus forcing and imposing them to commute to their jobs. The right of the city is materialized in these respects as a right to access to the city.

From the Right to Urban Life to the Right to Common Access

Certainly, many activists who fight for the right to housing and to neighbourhood services like public spaces insist that what they are fighting for eludes this logic because their goals involve local development and distribution throughout the city, in order to be closest to inhabitants. Due to the localized nature of this production, access is not a problem. However, even the definition of the right to the city as the right to urban life (Lefebvre, 1969) leads to the valorization of access for its own sake. Localized production becomes open to question as it undermines the need for access.

If urbanity is based on the existence of differences (Lévy, 2005), then urban life demands the suppression of borders, distances and discrimination in order to guarantee access to all spaces in the city. Consequently, actions that promote urban life on a scale smaller than the metropolis may be accused of creating separate zones that fragment the overall urban environment. Certain social housing policies impose the beneficiary to become a property owner, as is the case in Chile. In this way, the right to housing can seem like a diffusion of private property that causes everyone to enclose themselves in their own homes. The right to public space can also look like the imposition of community isolation, every community living happily in its own exclusive neighbourhood. The importance of the porous character of neighbourhoods for urban life often seems to be actually denied by public policies and real estate operations which construct these neighbourhoods (Márquez, 2003). Neighbourhoods can even impose codes excluding the majority of urban dwellers, as in the case of mandatory styles of clothing for females in "their" "public" spaces in an ultraorthodox community in Jerusalem (Fenster, 2005). The most extreme form is the closing of neighbourhoods to non-residents with the use of guards and concrete walls (Hidalgo et al., 2005). The right to the city enters into tension with its local applications as expressed through property ownership and all-encompassing ideas of community.

Finally, when criticism of this localized production is combined with weak support from centralized public institutions, the logic of access even overpowers the rights to housing and to the neighbourhood. It is no longer simply a question of constructing the awaited buildings and neighbourhoods, but of allowing inhabitants to move there. Here, the right to residential mobility replaces the right to housing, reducing it to another commodity, and the right to the city is reduced entirely to the right to access to the city.

Right to Proximity or Right to Accessibility

The right to access seems to be legitimately universal because access is necessary. However, this right is ambiguous as access to the city can be manifested in many different ways more or less associated with neoliberal capitalism.

Two urban configurations in particular are in contrast: minimal access and maximum access, which can be identified as "proximity" and "accessibility." Minimal access connects the individual with the places she or he needs to get to: their workplace, hospital, recreation centre, etc. Maximum access connects the individual with markets corresponding to services needed: job markets that correspond to qualifications, the health services market, the entertainment market, etc. Whereas maximum access aims to provide the entire city with accessibility, minimum access tends to promote a more local scale making long trips unnecessary due to the proximity of essential services. If the goal of accessibility is the ability to shift the metropolitan scale, then the goal of proximity primarily consists of the redistribution of services in urban spaces to be as close as possible to the inhabitants. In this way, proximity is concerned with the infrastructures of necessary services, whereas accessibility guarantees transportation infrastructure to reach those services.

Accessibility at the Service of the Neoliberal Metropolis

The most important difference between proximity and accessibility is that the latter reinforces neoliberal organisation in society putting urban dwellers at the service of the city, or rather, the economy. In effect, by allowing them to reach workplaces and services in the metropolis, accessibility effectively creates competition within the workforce and commercial services. In other words, accessibility creates the market.

This commodification reaches as far as public services, which is what distinguishes neoliberalism from liberalism. While the liberal government compensates for inequalities due to the inefficiency of the market, the neoliberal government fights against exclusion in regards to the market (Desjardins, 2008).

The liberal fight against inequality leads to the creation of public services that are distributed independent of the market logic, in proximity to the population. On the contrary, the neoliberal fight against exclusion promotes the mobility of the most disadvantaged populations towards services and jobs. Accessibility works to service the neoliberal metropolis.

Anti-subversive Accessibility

Added to this structural support of neoliberal urban functions is the neutralization of eventual alternative positions. In reality, accessibility disperses and exhausts urban dwellers.

On one hand, individuals are dispersed physically. New flexible working arrangements and insecurity in general form the base of the urban configuration of accessibility and widely limit the establishment of collective protests in sites of production. Furthermore, the distancing of residences combined with the dispersion of workplaces prevents work collectives from meeting in neighbourhoods. The mobilization of the "industrial belts" protests in Chile in the 1970s demonstrates the subversive power in the proximity between neighbourhood and factory. In contrast, the dispersion of suburban subdivisions, gated communities and urban insecurity completes the enclosure, from a conservative standpoint, of domestic space. Finally, the hierarchal transportation network is redundant and frequently reinforces this phenomenon of individualization by dispersing inhabitants from the same neighbourhood and workers from the same companies into modes of transportation filled with anonymous masses that are never the same from one day to another.

On the other hand, accessibility captures and exhausts inhabitants' resources, which are therefore not used for autonomous or subversive actions. Accessibility promotes the use of metropolitan markets through intensive mobility. This exhausts inhabitants, their bodies, their families and their wallets (Le Breton, 2008). More broadly, as a structural element of neoliberalism, accessibility allows and encourages participation exclusively within the market. In other words, it encourages consumption and production at the same time. This participation could suffer as a result of the individual desires of inhabitants, but the neoliberal city absorbs them and reduces them to a state of impulsion, at the price of widespread unease and violence (Stiegler, 2006). Accessibility seems to offer the city to the inhabitant, but in reality it directs its energy towards the functioning of the neoliberal city.

The Tyranny of Accessibility

Metropolitan accessibility structures the neoliberal city. Reciprocally, the social and economic organisation of neoliberalism fosters metropolization and therefore accessibility.

While proximity corresponds to small urban areas where service markets are quite reduced, accessibility grows with the expansion of cities and the fragmentation of metropolises. The city extends as it reconstructs itself around the car and motorized transport in general (Wiel, 1999). Due to widespread urban commuting, residences and workplaces are pushed outwards towards less costly land, increasing distances and commute times (Ducci, 2002; Wenglenski, 2006).

In addition, employment insecurity has become the norm in industries which demand daily as well as professional mobility (Massot and Orfeuil, 2005). This flexibility has increased the number of daily trips that may occur at any time of day or night. The fragmentation of professional careers has increased the number of workplaces tenfold and discourages moving close to these workplaces. This destabilizing effect is amplified by work insecurity which takes the form of job insecurity or of the degradation of working conditions. Workers protect themselves by choosing their housing in relation to the most extensive labour market possible and not in relation to the site of their current employment.

Transportation systems have also followed this evolution from proximity to accessibility (Trumper, 2005). The former company buses and minibus networks that transported workers directly from their neighbourhood to their factory have given way to a hierarchal network of urban transportation. The neighbourhood bus no longer goes to the workplace, but to the metro station or the express buses that traverse the metropolis (Díaz et al., 2006). Inhabitants are less connected to their workplace than to the transport network which opens them up to the markets of the metropolis.

Moreover, transport infrastructure demands the development of an individual capacity for mobilization. Urban dwellers learn to be mobile. The entire urban configuration is forced to adapt. The most tangible form of this is the widespread adoption of the car as an articulating element of an ordinary lifestyle. The dependence that the car creates as a system (Dupuy, 1999) as well as the "radical monopoly" in which motorized means of transportation are slowly pushing out walking and bicycling (Illich, 1973), largely participate in the forced dispersion of accessibility instead of proximity.

The Attraction of Emancipatory Accessibility

Despite the fact that accessibility is imposed by urban functions, it is often confused with the power to choose. This serves to both seduce and constrain inhabitants.

It appears desirable as a means of freedom of choice, user and citizen become client and consumer. Beyond the affirmation of this freedom, accessibility claims to bring inhabitants their spatial and social emancipation. This promise of emancipation is at the heart of the perversity of the right to the accessible city: seducing yet alienating. In effect, daily commutes (Buffet, 2005) and relocating (Bonvalet and Fribourg, 1990) seem the norm, and the reflection and metaphor for social mobility. We have to "move to get ahead" (Le Breton, 2005). Inhabitants of the city therefore associate mobility and emancipation (Jouffe, 2007) and demand their right to the accessible city.

Demanding the Right to Mobility

Many different institutional actors have brought attention to and supported this individual aspiration to mobility. Since 1982 in France, the right to transportation has been included in the Transportation Law as "the right of every user to transportation and the freedom to choose their method of transportation."[1] In its 1996 best practices guide, the World Bank also indicates "growing individual aspirations for more access and mobility" (p. ix).

Similarly, para-scientific institutions such as the UN's Cities for Mobility network and automobile manufacturer PSA Peugeot Citroën's Institute for a City on the Move (*l'Institut pour la Ville en Mouvement*, IVM) fight for durable mobility, or in other words "mobility which is accessible to all, environmentally-friendly and economy-focused."[2] IVM emphasizes "movement and mobility in the city, a right and a pleasure," explaining that "the means for people, goods, and information to travel around, in a city whose facilities are easily reached, is, today, an essential social requirement. It conditions access to the home, the workplace, to education, recreation, culture, and to family relationships."[3] These statements are supported by academic studies that point to forms of mobility as the new essence of Western societies (Urry, 2001). Once rendered virtuous for being sustainable, mobility becomes a legitimate goal and even a right to be exercised.

The right to mobility is sometimes criticized for the imposing and exhaustive nature of mobility itself on commuters (Bacqué and Fol, 2007), and for transportation being a threat to urban dwellers and to the environment (Galetovic, 2006). On the contrary, potential mobility, or accessibility, is not affected by these attacks. Accessibility allows individual progress by social ascension and collective progress of the modern metropolis in global competition (Maillet, 2008). In addition, it

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1   See the Law of Orientation of Interior Transportation (LOTI), December 30, 1982.

2   http://www.cities-for-mobility.net

3   http://www.city-on-the-move.com

constitutes a criterion of academic evaluation (Cebollada and Avellaneda, 2007) and technocratic social justice in urban planning policies. The right to mobility creates debate whereas the right to accessibility remains consensual. The idea of accessibility is sold as the choice of freedom and it sells well.

The Reduction of the Right to the City to the Right to Accessibility

These approaches fight for mobility or accessibility as urban functions which are more structural than sectoral in dimension. In this respect, they implicitly present the right to accessibility as a kind of right to the city. As such, the World Bank (1996) promotes transport to serve capitalist development because "investing in transport promotes growth…. Improvements in urban transport have increased labor market efficiency and access to urban amenities, making changes in the scale and form of urban agglomerations possible"(p. 1).

Similarly, in 2007 the "Declaration of Stuttgart" of the cities and regions of Europe gives even more legitimacy to the right to mobility in praising its central role for the freedom, independence and quality of life. The committee states that they are "aware that the right to mobility is universal to all human beings, and is essential for the effective and practical realization of most other basic human rights" in "recognizing that developments in mobility over the past 100 years, and notably the development of the motor car and of advanced public transportation systems, have greatly enhanced the freedom and independence of most European citizens, not only those in rural areas, and have helped them to lead fuller lives without restrictions due to their geographical situation." Specifically, these collectives are seeking legislative and financial support from the European Union for their local public transportation services. However, this sectoral objective is supported by demands for the right to mobility, which would not be included in a more general demand, but would be in itself a structural element for the city. This formula implicitly reduces the right to the city to the right to mobility, or in other words, the right to accessibility.

The Necessary Ambiguity of the Right to the City

The reduction of the right to the city to the right to accessibility serves neoliberal urban functions. In other words, the claim contradicts the objective formulated by Lefebvre as a class struggle, and by many other social movements in terms of the resistance against urban commodification to benefit a habitable city for all. This reversal of the concept of the right to the city is not arbitrary. It is linked to the ambiguous nature that is necessary in order to make a useful claim.

For one, the right to the city has become so all-encompassing that it can not be

reduced to a list of concrete and applicable rights. It is a necessity, an ethical call to arms as emphasized by Purcell (2009) who does not attempt to fully characterize it, but rather to propose a "developed but open" concept. The legal transcription of the right to the city is not enough to make it effective; on the contrary, it creates the risk of it being standardized. This impoverishes the varied local and global struggles that underline everything it stands for. For this reason the right must remain ambiguous, so that it can be interpreted for the needs of the particular goals of every social struggle.

In other respects, the imprecision of the right to the city allows different social movements to take ownership of it and to join together under a common standard. Purcell emphasizes the importance of this capacity for tactical assembly. He affirms that social classes alone are unable to reverse the social order. No one is able to garner support from activists for their own interpretation of the right to the city. Only a horizontal alliance will work. Hence the necessity of transversal demands, that is to say open and sufficiently generic, where the right to the city serves as an example suitable for certain alliances.

What Kind of Alliance for the Right to the City?

An alliance is necessary and the ambiguity of the right to the city allows for one. However, the confusion between the right to proximity and the right to accessibility calls for what kind of alliance? Would it be against the nature of the right to the city given the structural link between accessibility and the neoliberal order? The specification of rights associated with proximity and accessibility allows for the characterization of the two social groups that use them: socialist forces and liberal forces. This distinction established by French social history does not claim to exhaust the many different political forces in other societies, for example, the specificity of anti-imperialist nationalism or indigenous resistances. It simply proposes a prism of analysis that is relevant for understanding the tension between proximity and accessibility.

Credit-rights and Freedom-rights

Proximity relies on the geographic distribution of services that are necessary for the inhabitant. From this point of view, society must provide all of these services if they do not exist. This debt to the inhabitant designates corresponding rights as social credits, or "credit-rights": that society must provide certain services. However, accessibility guarantees the capacity for city dwellers' mobility around the metropolis. The right to mobility includes a credit-right to the disposition of indispensible transportation infrastructure. However it first reflects on the

right to circulation, which constitutes a freedom-right (Ascher, 2005): that society must not stop the circulation of people. This right is expressed in particular as the right to security: that society must not threaten people on the move. The right to circulation constitutes the paradigm of a freedom-right in the sense that the deprivation of freedom is the restriction of movement by confinement. Conversely, the credit-right to transportation infrastructures seems negligible when it is compared to the many credit-rights to service infrastructures assumed by proximity. In this way, accessibility is characterized by freedom-rights while proximity is characterized by credit-rights.

Return of the Tactical Liberal-Socialist Alliance

This opposition reflects on two political positions that traditionally conflict in the struggle for rights, in France as elsewhere. It is therefore capable of creating a major rift in the movement for the right to the city.

Freedom-rights were demanded and obtained by the liberals during the French Revolution to serve their class, the bourgeoisie. They were set to invest their economic, social and cultural means in economic competition, but this needed to be regulated by civil, political and economic freedom-rights. Conversely, credit-rights constituted economic, social and cultural laws favouring the working class which did not have enough means to benefit from the liberal competition. At the beginning of the 19th century, socialist movements[4] demanded and partially obtained these rights.

If these two types of rights complement each other, the interests of the social classes that bear them are antagonists. However, the French Revolution had seen the tactical alliance of these classes against the feudal regime. The French republican motto seems to reaffirm this tactical fraternity between the classes fighting for freedom and the classes fighting for equality. Tactical victories were won such as the decree of August 4, 1789, abolishing feudal privileges, although it was to the essential benefit of the liberal order.

The current political configuration suggests that the same tactical alliance is necessary. A neoliberal tendency has dominated the political field since the crisis during the 1970s which de-legitimized a less radical liberalism (Premat, 2009). Whereas neoliberalism relied on conservative movements and their freedom-right to security, socialist and liberal groups found themselves as new minorities and tactical allies.

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4   This is not about bringing out the actual socialist parties even though their social-liberal evolution reflects this contradiction between liberalism and egalitarianism.

Legitimacy of the Alliance

Reformulating the right to the city as the right to access to the city therefore facilitates the forming of a tactical alliance: between socialist groups for the credit-right to proximity and liberal groups for the freedom-right to accessibility. Although accessibility characterizes the urban shape of neoliberalism, it constitutes a legitimate component of access to the city and therefore of the right to the city. In effect, certain specialized services such as hospitals can not be close enough to inhabitants to render transportation infrastructure unnecessary. Similarly, sites considered common national heritage for all inhabitants of the metropolis should be accessible as well. In more general terms, efficiency allowed by the specialization of sites and their accessibility, especially for the labour market, is in favour of this configuration. This is what constitutes the main argument of neoliberalism. Accessibility therefore claims legitimacy in the right to the city, just as proximity does.

Perversity of the Alliance

Nonetheless, behind the complementary nature of the claims, the two models are opposed and can conflict. This contradiction forms the basis for the perversity of the alliance for the right to the city.

For one, the combination of claims allows for the complete reversal of the right to the city towards neoliberalism. In effect, satisfying the right to accessibility gives authorities an argument to not respond to other demands of the right to the city. Accessibility without proximity reinforces the neoliberal functioning of the city. For example, instead of promoting a public education service, the government institutes free transportation for students. While this free transportation constitutes a legitimate claim, it facilitates the commodification of education.

This reversal may be the direct result of the liberal-socialist alliance. Once the right to accessibility is secured, the liberal groups abandon the socialist groups in their quest for the right to proximity. As such, the neoliberal urban configuration is even further reinforced.

For another, the association of antagonist claims undermines the latter. The coalition for the right to the city appears as two separate alliances each having half as much legitimacy as the coalition overall claims to have. They are revealed to be contradictory which reciprocally weakens their powers of conviction and mobilization. As a result, activists for nearby health services and those for large competitive public hospitals can avoid the formal privatization of the health sector, but having opposite goals, they can not impose a policy. The government can therefore put into place neoliberal methods for managing the public sector, in other words, a slow privatization from the inside out.

Five Proposals for Resolving the Contradiction

Faced with the threat of reversing and weakening the alliance for the right to the city, there are several positions that have the potential to resolve the contradiction.

The first possibility consists of negating the contradiction by continuing to unite dispersed activist forces for the benefit of a common legitimacy. However internal threats to the movement would persist.

In contrast, a second solution clearly exposes the contradictions between the two models, states their respective legitimacies and assumes their tactical alliance. Drawing a line of conflict between and through the heart of these activist organisations risks the dissolution of any coalition. However, this solution permits mobilization to continue despite the inevitable conflicts, as these will surface even though the differences are negated. In addition, synergies become possible between two fronts. On one side, mobilization on a metropolitan, national and global scale claims freedom-rights and credit-rights that are minimal but consensual. On the other side, at the heart of the metropolis, local actions, factory protests, civil disobedience and temporary autonomous zones rely on global mobilization to enact other freedom-rights and create local instances for the management of credit-rights. Subversive local experiences and established networks in return participate in global actions (Zibechi, 2006).

It is nonetheless possible to clearly distinguish the right to the city from one of its two antagonistic models. As such, a third solution is to make explicit the right to the city as the socialist demand for the right to proximity, leaving liberal forces to assert only their right to accessibility. This raises questions again of the capacity of fragmented social actors to mobilize around a radical right. One such position would permit the development of a coherent ideological body of thought, likely to gain in legitimacy to reach the point of a reconfiguration of social forces. The right to proximity would rely in particular on the degrowth movement that promotes the relocalization of the economy and of democracy working towards an ecological "voluntary simplicity."

Reciprocally, it is possible for the movement to distance itself from this radical position. This fourth alternative places the right to the city as the smallest common denominator of the potential demands, and concentrates on freedom-rights. This option risks mobilizing for an anecdotal demand. This refocusing allows for the sufficient specification of these rights to limit certain aspects of the neoliberal model, for example security surveillance, consumerism and overproduction. The implementation of a slow city[5] at the heart of a fast city corresponds to this position.

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5   See the contribution from Charlotte Mathivet in this publication.

A fifth possibility consists of finding a concrete project that satisfies all of the activist forces, leaving to one side the contradictions of the ideological models. It is not said that such a project does in fact exist. Nonetheless, urban planning could, for example, be adjusted using taxes towards spatial redistribution of activities in order to encourage diffusion of jobs and services closer to inhabitants (Wiel, 2007). In addition, specialized transportation networks could satisfy the needs of the metropolitan economy and the daily lives of inhabitants at the same time. Specifically, it would involve reserving rapid infrastructure for the movement of metropolitan interests, limiting the speed of intermediate networks and preventing transit on a local scale (ibid).

The current discussion on the ambiguity of the right to accessibility expands into other dimensions of the right to the city, left aside from the beginning of this analysis, namely, the right to participation and to production of the city. These also call for the inclusion of antagonistic actors in the tactical alliance for the right to the city. The activists for participation fight for democracy under potentially conflicting forms: between institutions and self-management, from global and local levels. The question of production notably opposes growth-oriented and degrowth-oriented modes of urban development, in the same way that proximity is opposed to accessibility to the neoliberal metropolis. The inherent ambiguity of the right to the city causes each activist to ask themselves: do the contradictions threaten my struggle for the right to the city? A confrontation of theoretical questions of the objectives and local circumstances seeks to build the necessary collective responses.

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Examining the Right to the City from a Gender Perspective

Shelley Buckingham

The right to the city is a collective right for all people who inhabit, access, and use the city. It entails not only the right to use what already exists in urban spaces, but also to define and create what should exist in order to meet the human needs to live a decent life in urban environments (Harvey, 2003)[1]. Following this understanding, it includes the right to use what the city has to offer and to participate in the creation or re-creation of those elements which it lacks.

Of course, there exists no singular homogenous human prototype to use as a basis to define what all people's needs are, and in turn how they must be fulfilled through articulating their respective rights. The process of defining a particular human need to live an adequate standard of living must consider the multitude of different and intersecting[2] identities which live in a particular environment and how their social identity shapes the way they experience and create their surroundings.

Gender represents only one category of difference in identity, but it is one that affects every person on the planet, albeit in different ways. Beyond some of the violations of the right to the city involving spatial displacement — for example driven by forced evictions, gentrification, and beautification of the city — violations of women's collective rights to the city occur on a daily basis,

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1   See Charlotte Mathivet (2010) "The Right to the City: Keys to Understanding the Proposal for 'Another City is Possible'" in this publication.
2   Intersecting identities, widely recognized in feminist literature, include a combination of social identities such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and physical ability, among others factors. All of these factors can contribute to a person's experience with discrimination, inequality, and violence in intersecting ways, depending upon the systems of power and oppression which surround and affect them. This discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important to note that the right to the city debate should include examinations of all of these identities which experience discrimination and violations of their human rights.

through their everyday life experiences and encounters with the city (Fenster, 2006). These daily realities are the product of the socially constructed functions and roles which pertain to gender categorizations, and the discriminations and inequalities experienced within these social constructions as the result of patriarchal power relations. Likewise, space is created or produced through social practices, and is therefore a product of the social and power relations in society (Fenster, 1999; Koskela, 1999).

If we understand that people are not neutral and have been socially constructed into categories of gender, and we understand that space is also socially produced and does not simply exist (Koskela, 1999), then we can acknowledge that space is not neutral (Fenster, 1999; Martinez, 2009) and therefore must be analyzed with consideration of the different actors and functions which participate in the creation of everyday life. This is the key to understanding the particularities of women's right to the city. The everyday experiences of women in cities directly stem from the social constructions of gender and space. As such, it is absolutely vital to any debate surrounding human rights — and in this case the right to the city — to incorporate an analysis of gender in order to fully examine the inequalities which exist, and to identify and satisfy human needs and human rights.

Towards a Common Agenda

Similar to the challenges in articulating a global right to the city movement[3], the inclusion of a gender perspective in this debate has varied in the contributions made by the different local, national, and international bodies involved. While particular contexts have influenced the criteria for defining women's right to the city, some overarching criteria may be drawn from these articulations and can serve as a general overview to the debate, as presented in this paper. They are distinguished below into five points of consideration; however it is important to mention here that none of these points may be fully realized if the others are not incorporated simultaneously. Just as the right to the city is composed of a set of collective rights, the points mentioned below must also be considered as interconnected and essential to the full realization of women's equal use and participation in exercising their right to the city.

Safety in urban environments

Fear of violence and the use of public space is a major cross-cutting issue when considering women's right to the city, and wide-ranging discussions of

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3   See Giuseppe Caruso (2010) "A New Alliance for the City? Opportunities and Challenges of a (Globalizing) Right to the City Movement" in this publication.

women's everyday life in cities most often indicate their safety as being a key issue. Women's experience with violence is directly related to patriarchal power relations of domination which prevail in societies all over the world. While a large part of this violence indeed occurs within the home or private sphere, urban spaces present dangers to the lives of many women. Furthermore, the fear of violence remains present and is perhaps heightened among women who experience violence within the home, as understandably a "feeling of fear or threat cannot be expected to be spatially separated" (Koskela, pp. 113).

In the urban sphere, the unrestricted use of public space can be both a luxury and a source of threat and fear of violence. Within the right to the city, fulfilling a neutral right to use public space does not account for the patriarchal relations of power and control which are produced in public spaces. Women experience a much higher threat of sexual violence than men, and as a result, tend to avoid certain areas they deem to be dangerous. In doing so, Koskela notes that "by restricting their mobility because of fear, women unwittingly reproduce masculine domination over space" (pp. 113). Therefore, in order to challenge male domination and patriarchy in general, ensuring women's safety in public space is of key consequence.

Public infrastructure and transportation

Ensuring women's safety in cities is intricately linked to public infrastructure and transportation, as the risk of violence usually increases at night when streets and parks are poorly lit and when transportation is not as readily available and frequent. It is through safe, affordable and extensive means for mobility that women may fully exercise their rights to a safe city. In urban planning, it is important to ensure: that buildings and parks are well-lit; the availability of public phones for emergency situations; the availability of appropriate signage indicating transportation routes, emergency services, and general maps of the city; that transportation routes connect women to public services and sources of income within the proximity of their homes; and that transportation services and public infrastructure are accessible to children and the elderly, for whom women are primary caregivers.

Proximity between housing, services and employment

Location, location, location. This pervasively used selling slogan for real estate advertisements indicates the situation of housing as the most important aspect when considering habitat within the city. The issue of transportation must also be

viewed in light of Yves Jouffe's (2010) valuation of proximity above accessibility[4]. Women are primarily responsible for reproductive work — such as caring for children, the elderly, and the home — and are also largely involved in productive, income-earning labour. The services they need in their daily use of the city — the home, workplaces, and commercial centres — are all dispersed, creating difficulties for women's mobility to access all of these services. Proximity to the quotidian uses of the city is most important for women, considering the greater variety of their needs and roles within the city.

Breaking the dichotomy of public and private domains

The separation between public and private spheres must be examined in order to fully understand women's particular needs in fulfilling their right to the city, as noted by Tovi Fenster (2006)[5]. This public/private divide may be better understood as domains where productive/reproductive work is realized, respectively. While productive work, including income-producing activities, is still regarded as primarily men's work in many societies around the world, reproductive work, caring for families and the home, is considered to be traditionally women's work. Urban spaces have been designed to value production and undervalue reproduction (Martinez, 2009), putting particular pressure on women considering their participation in both realms. This is not to say that women do not partake in productive work or vice versa for men. However, this sexual division of labour presents another blockade in the equal use of the city when the city is currently designed in favour of economically driven productive work, and can be very unfriendly to reproductive work activities, usually undertaken by women. Additionally, the reproductive work that women perform within as well as outside of the home must be viewed in light of its direct impact on the capacity for productive work in the public sphere. The reproductive work of caring for the home, children, the elderly and spouses or partners is a support to these individuals to be productive in their economic, academic, social and political endeavours outside of the home. This reproductive work is assigned no monetary value but is nevertheless innumerable and invaluable.

Participation in decision making, governance and planning

Following the second central aspect of the right to the city — the right to participate in the city's creation or re-creation — it is absolutely vital that women

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4   See Yves Jouffe, "Countering the Right to the Accessible City: The Perversity of a Consensual Demand" in this publication.

5   See Tovi Fenster, "The Right to the City and Gendered Everyday Life". *Makan, Adalah's Journal for Land, Planning and Justice.* Vol. 1, pp. 40-50. 2006.

are involved in urban planning, local governance and decision-making processes related to their urban environments. This includes the equal participation of women in all levels of government, positions as architects and urban planners, and forming formal working relationships between feminist and women's organizations and local governments.

It is not only impossible to discuss the right to the city for all people while neglecting to consider the pluralities which encompass this idea of 'all', but it is also counter to what this right actually represents and strives for. Due to a naturalized gendered society, fulfilling particular human rights for men may actually lead to the violation of other particular human rights for women. This presents the debate of the right to the city for all with a contradiction. To continue in the struggles for the right to the city without consideration for gendered differences in everyday life, realizing the right to a neutral city may very well infringe upon women's right to the city.

Some of the points listed above have indeed been included in the World Charter for the Right to the City; however they pertain more to the accessibility of services and less to women's equal participation in the creation of urban spaces or to challenging persistent gender inequalities. Also, widespread discussions which include a gender perspective in the debates which have followed the creation of the Charter are still lacking. It is absolutely essential to understand that there exists no one identity in any given society and as such, difference must be included in the development of the right to the city so as to avoid the same hegemonic power dynamics which have contributed to the massive inequalities that exist in contemporary cities. Gender roles must be challenged so as to break down these power dynamics which relate directly to the social construction of space and have negative impacts on realizing women's rights to the city. Further, women must be included in the participatory planning processes which shape debates around the right to the city, as they represent an overarching group of intersecting identities which experience the city in different ways. Although there are differences in the particularities of different groups of women's needs and uses for the city, the commonalities as mentioned above need to be incorporated into all global debates surrounding the right to the city.

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The Right to the City and Gendered Everyday Life[1]

Tovi Fenster

Introduction

This paper discusses new forms of belonging and citizenship in cities in the age of globalization from a gendered and feminist perspective, and connects them to women's everyday lives and to the planning and governance of cities. In doing so, it challenges the Lefebvrian notion of "the right to the city" using a gendered and feminist critique, by arguing that the identification of the right to the city according to this notion pays insufficient attention to patriarchal power relations, and therefore does not produce a relevant standpoint for this discussion. This critique will be developed by looking at women's everyday experiences and their reflections on their feelings of comfort in, and sense of belonging and commitment to, the city in which they live.

Some of the current discussions on citizenship in this era of political and economic restructuring indeed point to the reconstruction of forms of citizenship and belonging. While traditional definitions of citizenship discuss the legal and jurisdictional aspects of the concept, referring mainly to equality, communality and homogeneity as components of the meaning of citizenship, new forms of this concept incorporate normative expressions of belonging which highlight issues of difference, and cultural, ethnic, racial and gender-based diversity[2]. The result is a shift in the discussion from the widely-used conceptualization of citizenship to more complex, sophisticated, and for some less optimistic, interpretations of

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1   This article was first published by HIC member Adalah, The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel in Makan: Adalah's Journal for Land, Planning and Justice, The Right to the City issue, vol. 1 (spring 2006), pp. 40-50.

2   Nevertheless, one of the most widely-used interpretations of citizenship remains the one Marshall defined (1950, 1975, 1981) as "full membership in a community," encompassing civil, political and social rights. Critiques of this definition have based their arguments on current political and social crises, wherein the exercise of the power of the nation state is challenged.

exclusion, and towards new formations and normative definitions of belonging, particularly on a gendered basis (Kofman, 1995; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 2000).

The current literature on citizenship shows how women have been the object of discrimination in numerous cultures and political contexts at all levels and within all sectors, from the private (the home) to the public (the city and the state) in economic, social, welfare-related and political contexts (Yuval-Davis, 1997; McDowell, 1999; Lister, 1997; Young, 1990).

Within this framework, this paper attempts to shed a gendered light over the discourse on citizenship and belonging in the city, rather than the state. In particular, it looks at the Lefebvrian idea of "citadenship," that is, the right to the city. This idea connects the everyday life of the individual to local governance activities and, as argued in this paper, is blind to the effects of gendered power relations on the fulfilment of women's right to the city. The paper demonstrates how, in fact, the abuse of the right to the city has become a daily experience for many women, as is expressed in their narratives.

The paper begins with a brief contextualization of the notion of the right to the city within the discourse on new forms of citizenship. It then analyzes the right to the gendered use of the city, by revealing the tight links between the discussion on the right to use public spaces (the city) and the right to use private space (the home). This analysis is followed by a discussion of everyday belonging and gendered practices, gendered exclusions from the right to the city resulting from issues of fear and safety, and the practices of "sacredization" of public spaces.

The analysis in this paper is based on research carried out between 1999 and 2002, in the course of which residents of London and Jerusalem[3] were interviewed about their everyday experiences as they relate to comfort, belonging and commitment, as three elements which together comprise quality of life. They presented their interpretations of these three components with regard to the various scales which form part of their daily environment: home, building, street, neighbourhood, city centre, city, and urban parks (Fenster, 2004).

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3   The reason for the selection of these two cities is that they reflect contrasting images and symbolisms. Jerusalem is a home to people of diverse identities, especially in light of its image as one of the holiest cities in the world; a place of symbolism for Muslims, Christians and Jews. Jerusalem is also a city associated with rigidity, perhaps fanaticism, strict rules and boundaries, which sometimes find their expressions in spaces of sacred belonging. These spaces sometimes exclude women (B'Tselem, 1995; Bollens, 2000; Cheshin, Hutman & Melamed, 1999; Romann & Weingrod 1991; Fenster (forthcoming). London is a city famous for the impacts which globalization has had on it, and for its cosmopolitanism, openness, and tolerance, but also for negative and depressing connotations, especially for non-English people (Fainstein, 1994; Forman, 1989; Jacobs, 1996; Pile, 1996; Raban, 1974; Thornley, 1992). Analyzing the narratives of women living in these two cities helps to expose the multi-layered nature of gendered belonging, which is constructed through daily urban practices.

Citizenship and Belonging in the Era of Globalization

As Purcell notes, radical reconstructions of formal citizenship point to three main changes in its formation (Purcell, 2003). The first is a *rescaling of citizenship*, whereby the former hegemony of the national scale is weakened by the creation of other scales of reference[4]. The second change involves a *reterritorialization of citizenship* so that the tight link between the nation state's territorial sovereignty and political loyalty to the nation state is called into question. Such a situation follows from a redistribution of authority to the local — to the city. The third change entails a *reorientation of citizenship* far away from the nation as the predominant political community and from citizens as homogenous entities. Here, the notion of differentiated citizenship, introduced by Iris Marion Young (1998), or the multi-layered citizenship, introduced by Nira Yuval-Davis (2000), replace the ideal of universal citizenship according to the liberal democratic approach. As Purcell argues (2003), this reorientation of citizenship leads to a proliferation of identities and loyalties to multiple political communities.

One of the alternative voices in the growing discourse on traditional and legal forms of citizenship is the normative notion of "the right to the city" developed by Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1991 a, b; Kofman and Labas, 1996). Lefebvre's right to the city constitutes a radical rethinking of the purpose, definition and content of belonging to a political community. Lefebvre does not define belonging to a political community using the terminology of formal legal citizenship status, but grounds the right to the city in a normative definition based on *inhabitancy*. Those who inhabit the city have a right to the city. The right to the city is earned by living in the city, and belongs to the urban dweller, whether citizen or stranger.

Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city evolves within it two main further rights (Purcell, 2003):

- *The right to appropriate* urban space in the sense of the right to use: the right of inhabitants to "full and complete use" of urban space in their everyday lives. It is the right to live in, play in, work in, represent, characterize and occupy urban space in a particular city.
- *The right to participation*: the right of inhabitants to take a central role in decision-making processes surrounding the production of urban space at any scale, be it the state, capital, or any other "actor" which partakes in the production of urban space[5].

4   This change works in two directions: either upscaling, including EU citizenship, which results in new forms of cosmopolitan citizenship and global democracy, or downscaling citizenship, which refers to shifts to subnational scales, such as municipalities, neighborhoods, regions, or districts, particularly in cosmopolitan cities.

5   As Dikec (2001) points out, the right to participation entails the involvement of inhabitants in institutionalized control over urban life including participation in the political life, management, and administration of the city.

The specific rights to appropriate and to participate are earned by meeting particular responsibilities and obligations, through which each person helps to create the city as an artwork by performing one's everyday life in urban spaces[6]. This perspective expands the discussion on citizenship and views citizenship as a "spatial strategy," as a spatial process whereby identities, boundaries and formations of belonging are fixed and then deconstructed (Secor, 2004).

Within this conceptual framework, the first question that comes to mind is to what extent this notion of the right to the city is sensitive to issues of identity difference. Lefebvre indeed includes the right to difference as a right which complements the right to the city (Dikec, 2001). In this he relates to, "the right not to be classified forcibly into categories which have been determined by the necessarily homogenizing powers" (1976, in Dikec, 2001:35). However, as Dikec notes, Lefebvre's emphasis is on the 'be' of the right to be different rather than the 'different' itself. As such, his definition does not relate to the notions of power and control, which are identity and gender-related. Therefore, it does not challenge gendered-power relations as one of the dominant factors affecting the potential to realize the right to use the city, and the right to participate in urban life. The gendered aspect is not the only aspect absent from Lefebvre's model. Other identity-related issues and their affect on the fulfillment of the right to the city also seem to be missing (Mitchell, 2003)[7].

The Right to Gendered Use of the City — The Private and Public in Lefebvre's Theory

A large amount of work has been dedicated to different definitions and perspectives of the 'private' and the 'public': their cultural orientation (Charlesworth, 1994; Fenster,1999b); their associations (at least the public space) within the political sphere (Cook, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 1997); their roots in Western liberal thought and different forms of patriarchy (Pateman, 1988, 1989); and their feminist perspectives. In this context, Lefebvre's right to the city clearly refers to the public, to the use of public spaces, those which create the *oeuvre* — a creative product of and context for the everyday lives of its inhabitants. However, the

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6   For Lefebvre, the city should be thought of as a work of art. The artist is the collective routines of daily life of urban dwellers and inhabitants. The city is a creative product of and context for the everyday lives of its inhabitants.

7   Mitchell (2003), for example, examined how homeless people were excluded from using public spaces through their regulation in such a way that aesthetics are elevated above people's survival needs. Anti-homeless laws, he argues, undermine the very right to the city. This example again demonstrates the sometimes opposed and contradictory meanings of citizenship, and the extent to which new formations of belonging can be identified when expanding definitions of citizenship.

oeuvre, the 'public,' is perceived by some feminist critics as the domain of the white, upper-middle class heterosexual male. This means that women in cities, both Western and non-Western, simply cannot use public spaces such as streets and parks, especially when alone (Massey, 1994), and in some cultures cannot wander around in them at all (Fenster, 1999a). Women belong to the 'private' sphere.

However, what women's narratives uncover is that their right to use is denied even in the 'private.' This means that we must look at the right to use from both private and public perspectives in order to fully understand the roots of the abuse of the right to use. Therefore, the discussion in this paper on the right to use public spaces and the right to participate in decision-making must begin at the level of the home. As the narratives below show, in spite of the idealized notion of the 'home,' the 'private' — the women's space, the space of stability, reliability and authenticity, the nostalgia for something lost which is female (Massey, 1994) — can be a contested space for women, a space of abuse of the rights to use and to participate. A narrative follows which exemplifies how the rights to use and participate at the level of the home are abused when women talk about their feelings of comfort or discomfort:

> I feel very uncomfortable and like I don't belong to the home because I live with my partner and he has his own needs and his own tastes, which are different from mine. The way the house is arranged is not exactly how I would have arranged it. It is too neat. I don't like the furniture...it makes me feel less like I belong. Belonging for me means to be in my own space, and that I decide what will be in it. Total control.
>
> Amaliya, 30s, married with one child, Jewish-Israeli [living in London], London, 22 August 1999.

This narrative[8] in fact illustrates the extent to which the right to use and the right to participate is sometimes abused at the level of the home because of patriarchal domination, which for many women around the world becomes a daily routine. For Amaliya, the order and arrangement of space in her home, which was made without her participation, is what makes her feel a lack of comfort and belonging. This experience perhaps reinforces the feminist critique of the division between the 'private' and the 'public' inherent in Lefebvre's ideas. As feminists argue, these divisions are invoked largely to justify female subordination and exclusion, and to conceal the abuse of human rights at home from the public sphere (Bunch, 1995). By isolating the discussion on the right to the city from the right to the home, Lefebvre creates a rather neutral 'public'

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8   Due to limitations of space, only a few narratives are presented as examples in this paper. For an elaborated analysis, see Fenster, 2004.

domain, which ignores gendered power relations as a dominant factor in the realization of the right to use, and which therefore has no relevance to the reality of women's everyday lives in cities. Obviously, this does not mean that women who experience strong patriarchal control at home also necessarily suffer from restricted use of the city, but it is important to highlight the strong linkages between the 'private' and 'public' when evaluating Lefebvre's notion of the right to the city.

These strong links sometimes find contrasting expressions, as Fatma's narrative shows, below. She describes a situation of strong patriarchal power relations at the level of the home, which makes her feel less comfortable in and less like she belongs to the home than to the city. For her, as her control within her home is very restricted, the city becomes a liberated space:

> Home – prison! Although in my room I have all I need to 'get out': computer, internet, video, TV. Cables with 50 channels... I have everything, but this is not enough.
>
>   City – freedom, personal freedom, atmosphere, spring.

For Fatma, an unmarried Muslim woman in her 40s who lives with her mother, home is a place of no rights whatsoever. It is a culturally constructed space in which she feels constrained by the strong patriarchal control of the extended family and local community, while the city is where she feels liberated, a place where it is easy for her to practice her citizenship as a negotiated process. It is as if the city becomes her 'private' or 'intimate' space, where she is able to be herself. "These cities," writes Elizabeth Wilson in her book, *The Sphinx in the City* (1991), "brought changes to the lives of women. They represented choice" (p. 125). She refers to the new colonial cities of West Africa. However, the role of cities in providing choice in women's lives also seems relevant to women in other places.

The above examples emphasize the necessity of discussing the right to use at the level of the home as part and parcel of the discussion of the right to the city. The narratives suggest that many women, even those who identify themselves as 'Western' or part of the majority, experience gendered, controlled, power relations at home. However, some narratives show that those who experience strong patriarchal power control at home may find the city an easier space in which to negotiate their sense of belonging and citizenship. These narratives emphasize the importance of connecting the private and public domains in the discussion of the right to use.

The dominance of patriarchal power relations in the private domain obviously affects the different ways in which women fulfill their right to the public sphere — to the city. For example, women cannot always leave their homes and engage

in activities in the public sphere, such as studying, let alone partake in political activities, which usually take place in the public sphere. Moving onward in the discussion, let us now explore the right to use the city, and the different formations of belonging in the narratives of women.

Everyday Belonging and Gendered Practices

The right to belong inheres in the right to use the city. In fact, the possibilities of the daily use of urban spaces are what create a sense of belonging to the city. De Certeau's book, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) makes a connection between these two elements of 'use' and 'belonging.' Belonging for him is a sentiment, which is built up and grows with time out of everyday life activities and use of spaces. De Certeau terms it "a theory of territorialization" through spatial tactics: "*Space is a practical place*. Thus, the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers" (p. 117). For de Certeau, everyday corporal activities in the city are part of a process of appropriation and territorialization. He actually defines the process through which a sense of belonging is established by a repeated fulfillment of the right to use. Belonging and attachment are built here upon a base of accumulated knowledge, memory and intimate corporal experiences of everyday use, mainly by walking. These daily practices of appropriation and re-appropriation of space — tactics in de Certeau's terminology — become the means of encountering and contesting the hegemonic notion of citizenship (Secor, 2004). Citizenship is thus viewed as a technique of spatial organisation in which gendered identities, gendered roles and patriarchal powers become markers in negotiations and contestations over rights and formations of belonging in city spaces. For de Certeau, citizenship is a strategy which works to define and lay claim over a bounded space of belonging (de Certeau, 1984; Secor, 2004)[9].

Claim and appropriation of space are a construct of the everyday walking practices as noted by de Certeau, and are part of the strategies used to define and claim a specific space. These practices, which are repetitive, engage what Viki Bell (1999) defines as "performativity and belonging."[10]

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9   Examples of such practices are the different uses of public spaces, mainly urban parks, by individuals and groups, which occur as part of casual daily encounters between people or groups: individuals wish to appropriate sections of public settings in order to achieve intimacy or anonymity, or for social gatherings. These appropriations are mostly temporary, but even temporal appropriations are sometimes negotiations over the rights to belong, to be part of a community, and to be visible (Fenster, 2004).

10   Performativity is the replication and repetition of certain performances, which are associated with the ritualistic practices through which communities colonize various territories. These performances are in fact the realization of the right to use in certain spaces, and through them a certain attachment and belonging to a place is developed (Leach, 2002).

Using urban spaces for the practice of belonging and the spatial negotiations of citizenship results in the sense of spatial knowledge which women experience in their environment, a spatial knowledge which comes out of claims to and symbolic appropriation of spaces:

> I know the street. I live here. I know the building – every stone of it. I know it more and more. A very intimate knowledge.
>
> Susana, 30s, married with one child, Jewish-Israeli, Jerusalem, 13 July 2000.

> I feel connected to Salah al-Din and some places in the Old City. I have memories from my school days and boarding school in front of the Orient House. I used this area a lot in my life so I feel connected to it.
>
> Saida, 30s, single, Palestinian-Muslim, Jerusalem, 30 December 2000.

The use of space and knowledge of it is an expression of the right to use and the right to appropriate public spaces. Knowledge comes with intimacy of use and a sense of belonging. Everyday practices are expressions of gendered role definitions within households. Women experience their daily practices — their strategies and tactics of formulating their frameworks of belonging — when they fulfill their gendered roles and responsibilities for maintaining the cultural norms of their communities by raising children or cooking. To perform their social and familial duties, they must negotiate their spatial practices of citizenship in order to ensure that they can realize their right to use, so that they can go to work, do their shopping, take their children to educational and health services, and so forth. Here, the right to use public spaces engages fundamental human rights to food, shelter, health and employment: the basic necessities of human survival (Kaplan, 1997). Here, too, the connection between the 'private' and the 'public' becomes clear. For women to fulfill their duties in the private sphere, they must negotiate their 'public' citizenship.

Gendered Exclusions from the Right to the City

The narratives presented so far have exposed everyday practices in which the right to use has been fulfilled to a certain extent within the context of women's traditional gendered roles. However, there are other experiences, which indicate the violation of the right to use and belong to the city through patriarchal, cultural and religious powers' construction of forbidden public spaces.

Legitimized forms of exclusion are usually associated with traditional definitions of citizenship[11]. These definitions are viewed as identity-related, in

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11   Many critics from both the left and right recognize that citizenship is by definition about exclusion rather than inclusion for many people (McDowell, 1999).

that they dictate which identities are included within the hegemonic community, and which are excluded. These definitions can have negative effects on women, children, immigrants, people of ethnic and racial minorities, gays and lesbians and sometimes also on elderly people. In this respect, the normative definition of the right to the city seems to be inclusive with regards to marginal groups, such as transnational migrants or people of different identities living in the city, and also to women. However, these inclusive practices are not always fulfilled, precisely because of patriarchal domination at the various levels discussed in this paper: home, building, street, neighbourhood, city, and so on. In the previous section we saw how the dominance of patriarchy abuses the right to use at the level of the home. At the level of the city, patriarchal practices are expressed in feelings of fear and safety, and in gendered exclusions from public spaces, in accordance with religious and cultural norms. Both practices create 'forbidden' spaces for women and limit their right to the city.

Fear and Safety

Fear of using public spaces, especially the street, public transportation and urban parks, is what prevents many women from fulfilling their right to the city (Valentine, 1998; Pain, 1991; Madge, 1997)[12]. Fear and safety can be seen as a social as well as a spatial issue connected in many cases to the design of urban spaces:

> The avenue in my street is scary because there is only one exit to it – you can't leave it from everywhere. And there are benches where weird 'creatures' can sit and molest you and you feel trapped... so it is not so pleasant... if you get into the avenue you are lost... it is really male-planned – 'they' did it because of the transportation, but it prevents me from walking in the avenue.
>
> Rebecca, 30s, married, Jewish-Israeli, Jerusalem, 3 February 2000.

Rebecca expresses an experience common to many women when their daily use of the city is disrupted because urban spaces are designed in such a way that they become a trap for women, unpleasant and thus unused. They become, then, a planned trap. That is, planners created or designed those spaces without paying sufficient attention to gendered sensitivities, and again created unused spaces in the city. Here women voluntarily restrict their mobility and movement, and reduce their right to use. Resisting these male spatial constructions of space can be part of women's negotiations over the expansion of their use of public spaces.

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12   Fear of harassment in public spaces cuts across women's everyday life experiences in both London and Jerusalem. It also cuts across other identities, such as nationality, marital status, age, sexual preference, etc.

Urban parks have the same association. Some women perceive parks as hostile male areas: "They are 'conquered' areas. I feel angry that I can't use them" (Aziza, 30s, single, Palestinian citizen of Israel, Jerusalem, 7 August 2000). What Aziza expresses here is mainly a sense of exclusion from public spaces because of fear and lack of safety, but perhaps she is also expressing her anger at the misuse of public spaces in a way that prevents her from using them, because they are controlled and dominated by men. It seems that fear is a feeling which transforms urban parks into forbidden spaces after a certain time of day. Most women in both Jerusalem and London avoid using this space at night. Indeed, other research (Madge, 1997) shows that fear of urban parks, especially at night, is the main common denominator in their lack of use, not by women but also by men.

What, then, are safe spaces? These are the spaces which allow for practices of citizenship and the fulfillment of the right to use. Aziza's narrative illustrates the characteristics of such areas:

> I feel most comfortable in this neighbourhood because it is the most beautiful place in the city of Jerusalem. I am a person of constraints: I am a woman, Palestinian, alone, [this neighbourhood is like] a microcosm – it reminds me of London; a variety of people... in such places I bloom, like a fish in the water, this is my sea. I feel very protected because this neighbourhood is on the border between West and East Jerusalem and it is the ideal place for me. I lived once in Rehavia [a Jewish neighbourhood] and felt suffocated. From here I can easily get to the Old City.
>
> Aziza, 7 August 2000.

What Aziza expresses here is precisely what is incorporated in the notion of the right to the city. For her, a safe space is an urban space, which allows her to live as an anonymous person. This is a space which allows her to negotiate her rights as a citizen. As a single Palestinian woman, she acknowledges the constraints which exist for women in her culture, and also for people of her nationality in the current political situation of the occupation. The right to the city is therefore fulfilled when the right to difference on the basis of nationality is also fulfilled, and people of different ethnicities, nationalities and gender identities can share and use the same urban spaces.

'Sacredization' and Gendered Exclusion as a Result of Religious & Cultural Norms

The second example of gendered exclusions in the city is expressed through the cultural and religious norms of the body and its representations. The cultural guards of society, i.e., men and elderly women, dictate the boundaries of sacred spaces and privatize them so that only those who follow restrictive rules of

clothing can use them (Fenster, 1999a). Such symbolic spaces are often the symbol of a particular national collectivity, its roots and spirits (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Therefore, women's spatial mobility is very much dictated, if not controlled, by these cultural-symbolic meanings of space. In this way, religious and cultural norms create spaces of belonging and disbelonging, which then become, for example, forbidden and permitted spaces for women in certain cultures, and certainly have their effects on practices of the right to use as expressions of citizenship (Fenster, 1998, 1999b).

In 1999, I wrote about the cultural construction of space of Arab Bedouin women living in the Negev (Naqab), in the south of Israel (Fenster, 1999b, c). There, I mentioned the construction of the public/private dichotomy as forbidden/permitted cultural constructs of space, which become restrictions on Arab Bedouin women's movement within their towns. The narratives of women living in Jerusalem and London reveal that these terminologies are relevant not only for Arab Bedouin women, but also for women in other cities around the world. In Jerusalem, for example, most women I talked to, both Jewish and Palestinian, mentioned the ultra-orthodox Mea Shearim neighbourhood as an area they associate with discomfort, because they have to dress according to certain cultural codes. They therefore avoid walking in this area because of the sense of threat they feel there. (Fenster, 2004).

Conclusions

This paper exposes the multi-layered nature of the everyday gendered belonging and citizenship entailed in the Lefebvrian right to the city, and presents a feminist critique of this notion. The basic premise of the paper is that citizenship and belonging should be seen as spatial dynamic processes, and not as static definitions which are articulated in women's everyday lives and identities.

The paper highlights the extent to which the right to the city, that is, the right to use and the right to participate, are violated because of gendered power relations. These violations are expressed through women's daily lives in Jerusalem and London when they talk about their sense of comfort in, belonging and commitment to their cities.

To conclude, "the right to the gendered city" means that evaluations of the right to use and the right to participate must included patriarchal power relations, both in the private and the public spheres, as well as of the extent to which these power relations harm the realization of the right to the city for women, people of ethnic and racial minorities, etc. Such a discussion is missing from Lefebvre's current conceptualization of the right to the city, an omission which makes this concept rather utopian.

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A Horizon for Public Policies?
Notes on Happiness

Patricia Ezquerra Aravena and Henry Renna Gallano

Introduction

This article addresses a subject that has gained increasing importance and relevance globally in the social sciences in recent decades: the question of happiness. The challenges in the coming years for elected governments in Latin America will be centered on the quality of social policies, programs and plans. The road taken by governments thus far has enabled large-scale coverage of unsatisfied basic needs, but has also inflicted negative impacts on families which are sometimes invisible to the state and those who develop public policies. In the face of these challenges, it is insufficient to simply redirect the policies which have been promoted thus far. Instead, it is necessary to rethink the future of development strategies. Happiness, in this sense, is a driving idea and a broad field of study to be used to define government actions that should seek to improve redistribution, recognition and participation.

Happiness: Good Action, Good Conditions, and Subjective Enjoyment

During the second meeting of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), held in Cochabamba, Bolivian President Evo Morales declared that the goal of new governments in the region is to achieve *"buen vivir"*[1] or, good living. Likewise, the new Ecuadorian constitution proposes the creation of a new form of coexistence, through diversity and harmony with nature, to achieve *buen vivir*, also called *sumak kawsay*. The proposal is not to live better than before or to live better than others. Rather, it is another form of finding satisfaction with our lives; a future built on people's dreams and desires to create a place where they can be happy. From this perspective, the idea of happiness opens up a fertile field of

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1   The term *buen vivir* stems from the Andean indigenous concept *sumak kausay,* which means to live in harmony with oneself, society, and the natural world.

study for approaching the complexity of orienting public policies toward new horizons.

An initial meaning of happiness comes from moral philosophy, in which the significance of happiness is understood as being based on *good action*: happiness as participation in a community. This is the sphere in which by definition it is possible to achieve individual well-being. As Aristotle posed, it is the whole community which enables its members to fulfill their purposes and where human beings can achieve *buen vivir* (*eu zeen*) or happiness (*audaimonía*).

A second meaning understood by social philosophy refers to happiness in terms of good living conditions: happiness as redistribution of a society's resources. New thinkers were concerned about cases in which the very formation of a community is fundamentally unequal because it ensures the well-being of some members but not others, in addition to all of the inequalities created by these original unequal relationships themselves. Living conditions themselves determine the fate of an individual. Human beings depend on their external environment, so to improve living conditions and aspire to happiness, it is necessary to reconstruct the places where human beings live and the land which they inhabit.

A third meaning has been posited in recent decades by authors who observed for a long time that demands for improved living conditions were limited to socio-economic questions, relating therefore only to the redistribution aspect of happiness. In response, they emphasized the importance of cultural injustices rooted in social models of representation, interpretation and communication; the remedy for which was in cultural change (Fraser, 1996). This third meaning is the one that enables us to capture a third sense of happiness. This third alternative is mainly related to the field of symbolism: recognition of happiness as subjective enjoyment of life (Ovalle and Martínez, 2006). This meaning stresses that a human being's living situation in society is ultimately defined by his or her own personal references.

These three currents are generally shown as being contradictory, and research is more focused on taking one side or another rather than looking at the contributions that each one makes. Thus, there is more reason to believe that these three meanings are complementary and enable the development of a "trivalent conception" of happiness. This trivalent conception of happiness results in three fields of analysis: (i) participation in public decisions; (ii) redistribution of wealth produced; and (ii) recognition of different types of knowledge and subjectivities.

The first two meanings describe the conditions needed to achieve happiness, whether as an individual by belonging to and participating in a community, or in the well-being provided by the state, but they do not describe its meaning as such. It is the life experience, the individual's or group's mediation with

their surroundings, which provides the result of either their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life.

Of course, belonging to a community and the assurance of a certain level of well-being for its members in terms of their living situation and subjective enjoyment of life are elements of happiness, but separately they are insufficient for achieving "happiness."[2] These require bridging vessels to stimulate improvements in living situations and not just to enable a "temporary happiness"[3] (Heylighen, 1992). To build happiness that is more than just temporary requires developing the capacities of human beings to enable their lives to be bearable in difficult situations as well as fulfilling in the broadest sense of the word. As Amartya Sen teaches us, satisfying needs and possession of material goods are necessary elements, but they aren't sufficient when it comes to understanding a quality of life and personal satisfaction.

This question about happiness becomes more complex with regards to public policies. It is not only important to ensure that a minimum level is guaranteed to all, but also to focus on how families develop their capacities in order to obtain these guarantees. In this sense, the problem of many current public policies is their focus on providing a good or service, as if simple access could ensure the possibilities for human satisfaction. Instead, they should be designed to install and build capacities for the well-being of and for families over time.

Consequently, we should think about happiness as something more lasting than the joy that overcomes us when we achieve something wanted or needed and which is interrupted when the system invents a new goal for us. According to Vennhoven (1984), happiness is the universal valuing of the life that you live, which in practice is visible when a person likes their life and considers themselves happy, despite dissatisfaction with specific aspects of their reality. We would say that we achieve *buen vivir* in the moment in which a feeling of plenitude exceeds the lack of satisfaction felt about some parts of life; when we build a lasting happiness with the life we live (Veenhoven, 1984; Tatarkiewiez 1976:16).

Thus, being happy depends on individual action, surrounding environmental conditions, subjective enjoyment and the development of capacities that link them together. On this path, we all have the right to count on these conditions for defining the place where we want to live.

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2   We use quotation marks because, as will be shown, more than an objective to be achieved, happiness is an experience to be lived. Thus, the idea of achieving it as if it were a goal is, strictly speaking, a mistake and we use it only for explanatory purposes.

3   The author differentiates between temporary happiness, which is a pleasant feeling of well-being, and lasting happiness, which is the dominance of overall feelings of well-being over a prolonged period of time, or a general satisfaction with life (Heylighen, 1992).

Studies on Happiness in Latin America

In Latin America, limits on neo-liberal economic reforms are generating intense questioning of the premises of many paths taken by governments in the region. In particular, attention has been placed on the effects produced when thinking about development strategies and public policies only in terms of economic growth and indicators such as per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Along these lines, interest in human development as an alternative paradigm to conventional economic thinking became increasingly influential in the early 1990s. This new paradigm rejects the automatic link between increased income and a greater extension of choices for people (Ul Haq: 1995) and proposes a new conceptualization of development in which not only are increasing economic growth and coverage of basic needs important, but so are the quality of guaranteed social rights, opportunities generated by society and capacities installed within families. A window through which this idea can be viewed is the Human Development Index (HDI)[4] which has been presented in annual reports since 1990.

Thus, since the 1980s at a global level and the 1990s in Latin America, we have recorded the following research results that we consider relevant for studying happiness:

World Values survey (WVS), 1990: None of the countries in Latin America show negative variations compared to previous years, but the disaggregated data by country shows a high degree of differentiation within the region.

Latinobarómetro, 1996-2008: Since the late 1990s, Latin Americans say they are happier. This does not contradict the fact that Latin Americans are increasingly critical of the societies in which they live.

Cimagroup, 2006: Happiness is not related to wealth or a country's level of economic development. On the one hand, the wealthiest country and the poorest country (Chile and Bolivia, respectively) have similar levels of happiness, and on the other hand, the happiest and unhappiest countries (Venezuela and Peru, respectively) have similar income levels.

Happy Planet Index (HPI), 2006: Happiness cannot be reduced to and associated only with wealth measurements in terms of GDP. Instead, other kinds of wealth should be considered as key factors for happiness, such as people's respect and appreciation of the nature of their country. Consequently, the results of the report show that, of the 178 countries in which happiness was measured, many of the OECD countries appear at the bottom of the ranking.

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4   The HDI contains three variables: life expectancy at birth, educational achievement (adult literacy and the combined primary, secondary and higher education gross enrolment ratio) and real per capita GDP (purchasing power parity (PPP) in dollars).

University of Leicester (SWLS), 2007: This is a geographic representation that provides a global projection of subjective well-being, marking the definitive transition towards other types of studies on happiness, focused on analyzing the population's perceptions according to their economic well-being and including variables on health and education.

Ecosocial, 2007: According to this survey, 65% of Latin Americans say they are somewhat or very happy in general, while taking into account all aspects of their lives. However, there is a low correlation between levels of happiness and a country's wealth.

Inter-American Development Bank (IBD), 2008: This report shows that people from countries that have grown little or not at all in economic terms in recent years are more satisfied with their lives than those from countries that have experienced the most growth. In the words of the IBD report (2008), we are faced with an "unhappy growth paradox": to the extent that economic growth increases, people's aspirations to a better lifestyle grow even more, confronting the crude reality of many countries in the region.

As the synthesis table shows, despite the increase in countries' wealth, there is no correlation between economic indicators and a satisfaction with life or with stated levels of happiness. In countries with greater GDP, with high Purchasing Power Parity values (PPP) or which have experienced rapid growth in recent years such as Chile and Peru, people are less satisfied with their lives and more unhappy than those countries whose GDP is lower and which have experienced little or no growth, such as Colombia.

The Path Taken by Governments: Coverage Strategies and Targeted Subsidies

We believe that the reason for these variable results by country is that Latin American governments have focused solely on economic growth. After the fiscal rationalization and economic liberalization process of the structural adjustment in the 1980s, and the installation of the flexible accumulation regime known as neo-liberalism, governments have mainly used quantitative coverage strategies focused on unsatisfied basic needs using targeted social policies, programs and subsidy plans. As a result of this strategy, there has been significant progress in the region through indicators such as life expectancy and infant mortality rates, increased literacy, increased years of education and greater access to basic services. As a result, there have been significant percentage reductions in families living in poverty and increases in per capita income. Despite these results, we believe that achieving happiness is not much of a concern for the type of strategies which are predominant in the region. Thus, after a long process of orthodox implementation, these polices have generated negative impacts on levels of happiness among Latin American families. The reason is that the formation of

Chart Showing Synthesis of Happiness Results in Latin America

LA Ran-king	HDI 2008	GDP per capita	WVS	Latin-obaró-metro	Cima-gro-up	HPI	SWLS	Eco-soc-ial	IBD
1	Chile (0,874)	Chile (12,997)	Vene-zuela (86,3%)	Brazil (86%)	Venezue-la (84%)	Co-lombia (67,20)	Vene-zuela (247)	Brazil (74%)	Vene-zuela (6.5)
2	Argentina (0,860)	Argen-tina (11,985)	Co-lombia (84,3%)	Vene-zuela (80%)	Colombia (78%)	Vene-zuela (57,5)	Co-lombia (240)	Co-lombia (68%)	Colom-bia (6.2)
3	Venezue-la (0,826)	Vene-zuela (11,115)	Brazil (82,9%)	Argen-tina (80%)	Ecuador (73%)	Perú (55,10)	Argen-tina (227)	Argen-tina (67%)	Brazil (6.2)
4	Brazil (0,807)	Brazil (8,949)	Argenti-na (82%)	Colombia (79%)	Bolivia (68%)	Argen-tina (52,20)	Chile (217)	Chile (62%)	Argenti-na (6.0)
5	Ecuador (0,807)	Ecuador (7,145)	Chile (80,3%)	Chile (74%)	Chile (66%)	Chile (51,30)	Brasil (210)	Perú (48%)	Chile (5.8)
6	Perú (0,788)	Perú (7,088)	Perú (66,2%)	Ecuador (55%)	Perú (61%)	Ecuador (49,3)	Ecua-dor (187)		Bolivia (5.4)
7	Colombia (0,787)	Co-lombia (6,381)		Perú (49%)		Brasil (48,6)	Perú (187)		Perú (5.3)
8	Bolivia (0,723)	Bolivia (3,989)		Bolivia (44%)		Bolivia (46,2)	Bolivia (183)		Ecuador (4.9)

Source: Developed by the authors based on the information cited above

these public policies is based on measuring the degree of targeting resources which, in the structural framework of a subsidizing state, is defined by the number of subsidies provided, without considering the impact of redistribution, the necessary cultural recognition, and linking the participation of families.

Along with these results which are considered "successful" are the less visible, negative impacts caused by government action itself. For many families in Latin America, these results are reflected in, and actually are the cause of, the lack of satisfaction with their lives. Parallel to the reduction in the number of families living in poverty, patterns of exclusion are reproduced and social inequality deepens; along with the increase in primary and secondary school enrolment, there are high drop-out rates; and together with the increase in the coverage of basic services, marginal neighbourhoods through the region remain the same and have grown in some cases.

The Result: Deficits of Participation, Redistribution, Recognition

On this long road travelled by many governments behind the backs of Latin American families, we find at least three critical nodes in the social policies, programs and plans carried out under these development strategies. These critical nodes are the deficits, or debts, that governments owe with respect to the happiness of their populations. At the same time, these enable us to make inferences as to varying results in happiness levels in each of the countries, based on each of the meanings of happiness. In other words, the deficit of participation refers to the sense of belonging to a community; the deficit of redistribution refers to good living conditions; and the deficit of recognition refers to happiness as a subjective enjoyment of life. The deficits identified are:

Participation deficit: This is the loss of legitimacy and reduction in effectiveness of public policies because they are too far removed from direct participation by the people. The public policy formation process has become closed. Therefore, the same policy attempts to revitalize participation not only have marginal effects but have reinforced social depoliticization and greater corporatization of the state apparatus (Cunill, 1997).

Redistribution deficit: Despite obtaining significant reductions in poverty levels, this has not been accompanied by integrated and redistributive public policies aimed at social protection. In the words of Hopenhayn (2006), structural factors persist in the region's societies and economies. These include segmentation caused by productive insertion and territorial factors, and the sharp inequalities in access to assets and inheritances, all of which perpetuate and reinforce inequalities.

Recognition deficit: If the previous deficit has to do with material well-being, this one concerns the world of family references. Exclusion as a process that re gulates difference as a condition of non-inclusion (Fleury, 1998) is evidenced by social programs that, for the most part, do not take into account the subjectivity of their beneficiaries and are disconnected from the symbolic content which public policies must contain.

It is our belief that given the profound conditions of inequality in Latin America in terms of redistribution, recognition, and participation, alternatives aimed at opening up public policies to include a human rights approach are necessary but not sufficient in resolving gaps between a country's development strategy and the welfare of its inhabitants. To close these gaps, it is necessary for a society to form an ethical-political project based on the *buen vivir* of its families; that is, that happiness is the end goal of public policies.

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Rights in Cities and the Right to the City?

Peter Marcuse

"Rights" and the Right to the City

There is a difference between rights in cities (in the plural) and the right to the city (in the singular); a difference between the ways the right to the city is used in various charters of the right to the city and the radical sense in which Henri Lefebvre used it at the time of its birth, in the streets of Paris in 1968 in a vein of critical urban theory which has continued until today. The difference between the plural and the singular is significant, both as to rights and as to cities. It reflects a political and strategic difference that reflects the extent of the ambitions and the nature of the visions — and of the strategic situation in which it is used — by various users.

In Lefebvre's usage, the right to the city is a cry, a demand, a claim. It was a political slogan, intended to broaden the scope of demands for social change to encompass a vision of a different society, for which "the urban" was often a synonym in his writing.

> "[t]he right to the city is like a cry and a demand… .[it] cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life as long as the 'urban' place of encounter, priority of use value, inscription in a space of a time promoted to the rank of a supreme resource among all resources."[1]

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1 Lefebvre, Henri. The Right to the City." In Writings on Cities, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, London: Blackwell, P. 158. 1996 [1967].

Lefebvre even says, at one point:

> "…from this point on I will no longer refer and to the city but to the urban."[2]

The right to the city, then, for Lefebvre means the right to live in a society in which all persons are similarly free to fulfill their own desires and in which all are supported in doing so. David Harvey's adopted phrase, "the city of the heart's desire," has a similar sense: "The city" is short-hand for that society — particularly appropriate for Lefebvre because it incorporates his vision of urbanity, of the social, physical, and economic relations among people in a fully developed humanly oriented society, the possibility for which is approached in its thus far highest form in the cities of contemporary life.

However, Lefebvre does not see these contemporary cities as "the city" to which he claimed the right. He uses the singular "the city"; he is not looking for inclusion in the plural cities of today, but a new city yet to be created, if based on seeds in the cities of today. So, this is a right to the city, not to cities.

Critical urban theory — as developed notably by David Harvey but also in a broad tradition in geography, political economy, urban planning, and sociology — has pursued this outlook very productively. That usage can be contrasted to other formulations which are rather plural. Many charters, manifestos and platforms list rights that are demanded: a right to housing; to potable water; to an ecologically sustainable environment; to participate in decision-making; to employment; to education to entertainment and to free speech and assembly. These are plural rights, and they are certainly consistent with the demand for a right to "the" city in the unitary sense in which Lefebvre meant it. However they are partial; Lefebvre's demand is for something unitary. One can be an important step to the other, but they are different with distinct formulations.[3]

The distinction has three political consequences. The first is an organisational one: it has to do with the nature of the forces, groups and organisations that have a common interest in pursuing the right and the idea that it is not one separate right that is being demanded, but in effect, one right that includes them all and can be a basis for bringing their separate advocates together. The landless demand land; the homeless demand housing; the unemployed demand decent employment with fulfilling work; the creative demand artistic freedom; the differently abled demand adaptation to their needs; all demand beauty in their

2   Lefebvre, Henri. .The Urban Revolution. Foreword by Neil Smith. Translated by Robert Bononno. University of Minnesota Press, p. 45. 2003 (1970)

3   For a cogent statement of the possible dangers of the plural formulation see Mayer, Margit. 2009. "The 'Right to the City' in the Context of Shifting Mottos of Urban Social Movements," City: Analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action, Volume 13, no. 2-3, June-September 2009.

environment, access to nature and health care. However, these are not separate demands in a unitary view — they are essentially linked, not only in the vision of a city that can provide for them, but also in the analysis of why they do not exist today, what forces impede their realization, and what forces, groups and individuals have a common interest in achieving their multiple goals. So the first implication of the distinction is the strategic importance of linking separate rights into a movement for a single right that encompasses them all; an implication that begins as coalition-building but is in effect a movement bringing together those with fundamentally common interests. Coalitions consist of groups that agree each will support the other's separate interests for their mutual strategic advantage. A movement for right to the city brings together those with a common interest, if although initially with different practical priorities.

The second importance of the distinction is an analytical one: the unitary vision further pushes the analysis to an understanding of the system as a whole. This is the second political implication of the distinction between the unitary and the plural view of the demand. It leads to an examination of what makes the system tick, what produces the pain and what produces the benefits it achieves, what its weaknesses and its strengths are — beyond what a simple analysis of the causes of individual problems and subsystems produces. The danger of cooptation of separated campaigns for separate rights has often been pointed out: artists who oppose gentrification, advance it when they themselves benefit from it, workers want jobs in plants that pollute, the elderly support health care programs that tilt resources in their favour, individual minority groups are happy to accept inclusion in political structures that exclude other groups, and the unemployed resist immigration reforms that they see as not in their interests. Yet a unitary view of the system helps to clarify that these are only superficially conflicting interests, and that all sides have a deep interest in working together to achieve a single city that will meet all of their needs.

The third importance of the distinction is that the unitary view raises the stakes and holds out the hope for a greater benefit and a brighter future, one that not only avoids a particular problem but that leads to a whole other and better world. It gives meaning to the slogan "Another World is Possible," and calls for its creation. It can provide a motivation, an inspiration, and a justification for a commitment that extends beyond the remedy of individual wrongs. Changing the vision to a whole new one may seem utopian on a day-to-day basis, but it should be a constant presence in the background if an ongoing affirmative perspective is to be maintained.

The language of "charter" and "rights" is perhaps unfortunate. If one could start from the beginning, one might use the terms "Declaration of Rights" and "Charter for a New City" to differentiate a document that addresses the rights

that are claimed in the present city from one that speaks of the nature of the city ultimately desired. Such a usage would parallel the conventional use of the terms: "declarations" are to have immediate effect; "charters" are what are used in the founding of something new. Lefebvre's coinage of "The right to the city" in its context combines the two; he is concerned with both rights in the present city and the shape of a new alternate city (as in "Another World is Possible"). We should be clear that these are two distinct if mutually reinforcing meanings.

In day-to-day usage in the United States, the claim to the right to the city is seen as an immediate claim, although looking forward to a more general goal. It is not seen as a claim needing to be fought for all people at present. Some people already have all of the rights that the plural formulations claim; it is those that are derived of them that need to obtain them. Ultimately, indeed, all will have them in a new and alternative city, but on the road to that city one can specify what groups need to be mobilized to obtain them. One should always be conscious that obtaining rights will be a struggle between those that do not yet have them but demand them and those that already have them and are likely to see them threatened. The right to the city for all, the unitary right, is one that will be achieved in a different city, a new and human city, and one whose charter will include all the plural rights. In the meantime, the declaration that all of these plural rights are demanded is a way of opening the path leading to their implementation for all in the city that is yet to be created — the city of Lefebvre's vision.

All the many rights in the city must be demanded, fought for, and protected. They will finally be realized in their entirety when *the* right to the city is achieved.

The Right to the City Movement as Critical Urban Theory in Action

Moving beyond the use of the right to the city in theory, in charters, and as slogans, it is vital to look at how it has been used in practice by organisations directly calling for its implementation as their purpose. The question of the agents of change is one that has occupied radicals since the early 19th century. Marx and Engels held it to be the revolutionary proletariat. Others were less inclined to give the proletariat such a unique role, and changing economic formations have reduced its likely impact steadily to the point where Andre Gorz wrote "Adieu au Prolétariat" in 1980. Today the working class is seen to varying extents as necessary in efforts towards social change, but the extent of its role is widely debated. Most agree it is necessary, but not sufficient.

The right to the city movement does not see itself as a replacement for an organisation of the proletariat, but it does put a different source of support for structural change at centre stage. In the words of one of its supporters: "The

Right to the City [Alliance in the U.S.] sees neighborhood and citywide politics and policies as important while recognizing that these alone are not enough to attack the structural underpinnings of inequality and [in] justice."[4]

The right to the city movement is one product of a relatively recent trend in critical theory which has placed urbanization on the central stage of social conflict and change. Just what role "the urban" will take on that stage is not so clear. Henri Lefebvre often used "urban" and "the city" as stand-ins for society as a whole that emphasized the importance of everyday life and the terrain on which it played itself out. The Right to the City Alliance sees its own role as focused on conflicts in cities, but it has not been explicit as to the relationship between those conflicts and the movements for broader social change. Writings closely linked to the Alliance have used somewhat inconsistent formulations: "[the Alliance was] a means of…reframing the central scale of social struggle from the global to the urban…The city is becoming a primary terrain of social conflict…Our goal is to build a national urban movement…" The city is a site of conflict, and one of the parties is rooted in that site. Yet they add: "For many organisations, the concept of the right to the city reveals the limitations of small-scale struggles, places the focus on the colonization of entire communities, and highlights the national and international dimensions of local challenges." [5] Both the specifically urban and the necessarily national and global are involved in practice, but the interplay between them is not always so easy.

I have argued, in an earlier article[6], that the protagonists in the struggle for a better world, for the other world that is possible, will consist of both those materially injured and deprived today, and of those alienated by restrictions their present society imposes on individual development and freedom. To that group must undoubtedly be added the ranks of the insecure, growing in numbers and in depth of concern in a period of economic crisis. On the verge of deprivation and fundamentally alienated for reasons systematically concealed from them, they are led to conservative and fundamentalist positions in response, but their own interests are allied with those of the materially deprived and alienated. "Urban" is to a large extent a characteristic of all groups, but many who are not urban in the classic sense are joined with them.

Many struggles lie somewhere between today and the achievement of the better world; the cities for people and not for profit. If and when all those suffering the

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4   Leavitt, Jacqueline. "Right to the City Builds Alliance, Confronts Mayors." Progressive Planning, no. 180, Summer, p. 19. 2009.

5   Leavitt, Jacqueline, Tony Samara, and Marnie Brady. "Right to the City: Social Movement and Theory." <u>Poverty and Race</u>, Vol 18, No. 5. September/October, p. 3-4. 2009.

6   Marcuse, Peter. "From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City," CITY: Analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action." Vo. 13, no. 2-3, June-September, pp. 185-197. 2009.

slings and arrows of outrageous social arrangements unite in action against them, fortune may indeed turn and those other possible cities may come into being.

The National Right to the City Alliance in the United States

Among the implications of Critical Theory applied to urban issues, five stand out:

- Urban problems are not a set of isolated and unrelated problems, but arise from the fundamental economic, political, and social structures of cities and the societies in which they exist.
- On each separate issue, immediate, organized, and radical action is needed.
- Such action must be publicly linked to the structural causes and integrated into a comprehensive strategy for structural change.
- In order to effectively change those structures and combat the forces supporting them, the combined efforts of all those individuals and groups harmed by them — from the deprived to the alienated to the insecure— need to be marshalled in a common effort towards a single, common goal.
- That common effort must rely on the full democratic participation and leadership of those whose material interests are necessarily aligned with the demand for structural change.

The right to the city movement in the urban arena is currently as close as possible to an organisation that adopts that perspective, implementing it in concrete actions (the World Urban Forum may be something of a parallel on the international scale). While there are parallel movements in many other countries and other organisations following a similar path, some substantially preceding the right to the city movement, I concentrate below on the experience in the United States.

The concept of the right to the city in fact comes directly from the leading theorist, perhaps the founder, of Critical Urban Theory, Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre was a French sociology professor who wrote extensively about cities, space, everyday life, and the claims to a better city and a better life. The above three implications of Critical Urban Theory are based on his theoretical work, which was strongly influenced by the events of Paris in 1968, in which students and workers together came close to creating a national revolution, and have inspired countless subsequent movements and actions. What follows is based on the experience in the United States, and most specifically the Right to the City Alliance in New York City, because it is most familiar to me, and is not intended to suggest that any experience described is more important than many other actions taken in various places during the same period.

The national Right to the City Alliance in the United States[7] was founded at a meeting of some 30 organisations and 14 "resource people" in Los Angeles in January, 2007[8]. It began with a clear forthright commitment to the 5th principle mentioned above, formulated as:

> Core members: Organisations within right to the city regions/cities that are building a base of grassroots leaders in low-income, working class communities of colour to strategically challenge neo-liberal economic policies.[9]

In explicating the policy, Gihan Perrera, a co-founder of the Alliance, implicitly broadened the range of organisations, which meant that:

> All of the groups that assembled are facing huge pressures of displacement and gentrification of their communities. We explored the ways that neo-liberalism and the privatization of land use have turned our cities over to developers. We discussed how we're fighting struggles for housing, use of traditional space, and against predatory development. We discovered how putting forward a proactive and simple assertion of our rights made a huge difference in how we understood our ongoing work. And we quickly recognized that so many of the issues we're fighting for in our cities: housing; transportation; education; LGBT [Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, and Transgender]; rights to space; and rights of culture, are inextricably interrelated. We just need a common way to talk about it, strategize, and develop our power in common terms. Toward that end, the Right to the City Alliance was initiated so that we can build local power toward a national agenda for our cities. So that, one day, we can build enough power to stand with our brothers and sisters in the global South and demand global justice for humanity. [10]

Others are welcomed, but grassroots leadership of core members is insisted on. Other supporters may be:

> Resource/Allied Members: Individuals and organisations actively supporting base-building organisations through technical assistance, support on legal, research and media matters, and fundraising.

> General Members: Individuals or organisations that are committed to the right to the city principles of unity.

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7   Some of the information presented below, and a large part of the incentive to write this discussion and its focus, comes from conversations with and reading the writings of Jacqueline Leavitt, a "resource/ally" of the Los Angeles group.

8   www.tidesfoundation.org/fileadmin/tf_pdfs/TheRightToTheCity.pdf

9   www.righttothecity.org/WhoWeAre.html.

10 www.urbanhabitat.org/node/1806

In its initial Principles of Unity, the Right to the City Alliance includes reference to the rights of those I have elsewhere described[11], for lack of a better term, as the deprived: working class communities of colour; women; queer and transgender people; indigenous peoples; rural residents; immigrants; tenants; and people living with HIV / AIDS.

The Alliance's statements regularly demand rights relating to non-displacement from gentrification, education, housing, decent wages, full democratic participation, environmental quality, and health care.

It is clear what interests are involved, and on which side of a fundamental divide of power they stand. The right to the city is for those without power; those with power already have the rights, and often use them to deny the same rights to others.

The Alliance sees itself, in effect, as more than an alliance:

> But I feel like we are at the end of being able to operate at that low level of self-interest because if we don't adopt each other on a higher plane, the coalition is going to be limited to that self interest.[12]

That higher plane is the theoretical framework provided by the right to the city, an analysis founded on the application of critical urban theory.

The New York City Example

To take the Right to the City Alliance in New York City [13] as one example at the local level, and focusing on how their actions and policies have or have not reflected the contributions of critical theory, local member organisations in New York reflect the range of groups and interests at the national level. The groups are:[14]

Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAAV): The organization was founded in 1986 as one of the first groups in the U.S. to mobilize Asian communities to fight police and other forms of racially motivated violence. Over time, CAAAV has broadened our focus to address the wide array of needs, challenges, and

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11   Marcuse, Peter, supra. 2009.

12   The Right to the City: a publication of the Tides Foundation, n.d, .p. 24.

13   Jacqueline Leavitt, in Progressive Plannning, Summer 2009, supra, has made available a more detailed and more fully researched description of the Los Angeles Alliance based on both participatory research and extensive interviews. See also Jacqueline Leavitt, Tony Roshan Samara and Marnie Brady, "The Right to the City Alliance: Time to Democratize Urban Governance," Progressive Planning, Fall 2009, pp. 4-10, for a capsule description of the Los Angeles and New York City alliances.

14   All descriptions are taken from the printed literature and websites of the respective organisations, mildly edited for brevity.

injustices faced by low and no-income New York Asian communities including gentrification, worker exploitation, poverty, the detention and deportation of immigrants, and the criminalization of youth. [15]

Community Voices Heard (CVH): CVH is an organisation of low-income people, many with experience with public welfare systems, working to build power in New York city and state to improve the lives of families and communities. CVH is currently working on welfare reform, workforce development, job creation, public housing preservation and improvement, affordable low-income housing, and other economic justice issues that affect low-income people, particularly low-income women of colour.[16] [17]

Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment (FIERCE): This group works to build the power of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of colour in New York City. FIERCE is dedicated to cultivating the next generation of social justice movement leaders who are dedicated to ending all forms of oppression. Through one of its current campaigns for an LGBTQ youth centre on Pier 40, it has successfully helped to build a broad-based West Village community coalition that stopped the privatization of public land and resources.[18]

Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE): This is a Brooklyn-based, multi-racial organisation made up almost exclusively of women of colour. FUREE empowers low-income families to change the system so that work is valued and all people "have the right and economic means to decide and live out their own destinies."[19]

Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES): GOLES is a 30-year-old neighborhood housing and preservation organisation dedicated to tenants' rights, homelessness prevention, economic development and community revitalization. GOLES works to build the power of low-income residents on the Lower East Side to address displacement and gentrification, preserve and expand the affordable housing stock, and assert community self-determination over the development of the neighborhood.[20]

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15 www.caaav.org

16 www.cvhaction.org.

17 Historically, organisations of welfare recipients, such as the National Welfare Rights Organization, have been among the most militant advocates for social welfare recipients and are among the poorest of the poor in the cities. The horizon of CVH includes such older approaches, but has extended substantially beyond it.

18 www.fiercenyc.org/

19 www.furee.org/

20 www.goles.org/

Make the Road New York: This group promotes economic justice, equity and opportunity for New Yorkers through community and electoral organising, strategic policy advocacy, leadership development, youth and adult education, and high quality legal and support services.[21]

Mothers on the Move / *Madres en Movimiento* (MOM): MOM was founded in 1992 by mothers seeking educational equality for their children. It currently hosts committees for housing, youth, and environmental justice. MOM is a member-led organisation in the South Bronx area. It campaigns to win immediate victories, even while addressing the policies and root causes of inequality. MOM is a movement catalyst, constructing and participating in alliances that leverage expanded power for social justice organisations. [22]

New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN): This is a membership organisation led by low-income people living with HIV / AIDS, working with the agencies that serve them, and is dedicated to addressing the root causes of the epidemic through community organising and direct action.[23]

Picture the Homeless: The organisation was founded and is led by homeless people who refuse to accept being neglected and demand that their voices and expertise are heard. Picture the Homeless works to change these laws and policies as well as to challenge the root causes of homelessness.[24]

WE ACT for Environmental Justice /West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.: This is a non-profit, community-based, environmental justice organisation dedicated to building community power to fight environmental racism and improve environmental health, protection and policy in communities of colour.[25]

What generalizations can be made about these groups, their programs, and their relationship to the theoretical framework of the right to the city?

> Almost all of the groups have a strong base in identities with ascribed negative characteristics, and include overcoming those negatives in their work. They give prominence to the pride in their identities, and insist that greater familiarity will produce positive results: "Picture the Homeless," let "Community Voices [be] Heard."
>
> All of the groups seek to avoid separatism in identity politics, "participating in alliances, "building broad-based… coalitions," "building a … social justice movement."

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21 www.maketheroadny.org/
22 www.mothersonthemove.org
23 www.nycahn.org/
24   www.picturethehomeless.org/
25   www.weact.org/

All of the groups are dedicated to those in a particular economic position, "low-income" being the most generally used term.

All of the groups assert their goals as serving "social justice," "equity," and "inequality."

All of the groups view their work as challenging power, "changing laws," "expanding power," and "building power."

Almost all of the groups see militant, "direct" action as the means to their end.

Almost all of the groups formulate, in general terms, a view of their goals as the path of a more general program that they share with other groups. That goal is most often expressed in general terms such as "ending all forms of oppression" or addressing "the root causes" of the particular problems on which they focus. Of course their membership in an alliance dedicated to achieving "the right to the city" is a further commitment to such goals.

All the many rights in the city must be demanded, fought for, and protected. They will finally be realized in their entirety when the right to the city is achieved. Perhaps simply adding to any recitation of the separate rights that are sought in the city in various declarations or charters, a simple statement would help:

We recognize that each of these rights is integrally linked to each of the other rights. As we hold another world to be possible, we hold another form of urban life is possible, both within cities and outside cities. Some, a minority, already have a panoply of rights in the city, often at the expense of the rights of others, of the majority of the people. In that tension, we see this call for rights in the city to be on behalf of those now deprived of those rights. We consider a position squarely supporting the rights of the majority, and necessarily limiting the "rights" of others to exploit and dominate them and limit their rights, to be just and to be in the ultimate benefit of all.

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A New Alliance for the City? Opportunities and Challenges of a (Globalizing) Right to the City Movement

Giuseppe Caruso

Introduction

In the next pages I ask some of the questions that resonate in the right to the city as a vision, a movement and a potentially global alliance. I will also contribute some ideas developed in the creative exchange between social movement activists and scholars. These ideas and experiences will in particular refer to the contribution to practice and theory (practice 'as' theory and vice versa) provided by the World Social Forum (WSF), arguably the most important initiative of global social movements and civil society organisations in the past decade. I anticipate here that the experience collectively created, shared, and performed in the space facilitated by WSF events and processes can be of crucial relevance to the right to the city movement as it is an ever-globalising platform. This experience refers, among other things: to strategies and problematizations of differences and conflicts; to the ability to move beyond or live with profound and at times threatening cleavages, such as those created among urban activists between radical and moderate struggles; and to campaigns, between really transformative and merely palliative actions. It also refers to the wish to make the path while walking it; and to try to enact in the daily practices of its participants the dynamics that would eventually contribute to create the world they envision. These points indicate not a set of lessons learnt but rather a space of common engagement, like the one in which they were first developed. A common space of engagement was indeed created and is expanding within the WSF for the right to the city movement. That space is a space of opportunities and challenges that encourage activists who have their freedom at heart to live in peace and dignity in increasingly exclusive global cities.

The Burning Questions

The first question vibrating along the broad network of urban activists and scholars inquires about the actual existence of such a thing as a global movement for the right to the city. Activists repeatedly question themselves about the necessary conditions that a collection of movements — which broadly address issues of access, inclusion, citizenship and rights — need to consider in order to form a right to the city movement. Further, some question the use of the word 'movement' while suggesting that lacking a central leadership or coordination and a shared agenda does indeed challenge the idea of the right to the city as a coherent movement but at the same time opens up both analytical and activist opportunities. In this sense, concepts like 'network' are suggested to best describe the dispersed nature of the actors. Beyond the at-times abstruse debates on what theoretical frameworks to use to understand the origins, nature and potential implications of the daily activism of, for example, slum or pavement dwellers across the planet, is there a convergent desire by activists to create a shared platform, a common political alliance, or a space of encounter? Is there, in other words, a desire by activists to facilitate the potential formation of global actor for the right to the city? If such a convergence of intents does exist, what are the necessary conditions for the generation of such a process? What would the shared values be of such a movement and what would be the process through which a convergence of values and practices be negotiated? A growing number of questions are generated at each step of this exercise showing the complexities of the opportunities for analysis and indeed the dynamics of struggle, campaign and organisation currently taking place.

In the following pages I will address these questions and will offer a recount of the experiences that have been accumulated in the context of the WSF, in regards to spaces of convergence and alliance-building for networks and movements. I find this exercise both legitimate and relevant due to the fact that a deliberate mobilisation for the right to the city has taken place from within the WSF since 2003. Even more important is the centrality of the reflection and practice facilitated by the WSF on issues of movement-building and its spatial alternatives (networks and open spaces) and the conditions for the creation of such assertive convergences. In this sense, WSF activists have engaged in a sophisticated manner (if not always immediately or evidently successful) issues of difference negotiation as a shared heritage of their cultural and political practices and those of the growing right to the city movement. I suggest that this shared heritage and the more recent experience of difference negotiation and alliance-building in the WSF constitute a potentially very useful contribution to the efforts of building a strong movement for the right to the city.

A Global Right to the City 'Movement'?

Let me start by addressing the most pressing question: is there such a thing as a global right to the city movement? It would be difficult to answer with certainty. However, there are several circles of connected organisations and networks that use the right to the city slogan to mobilise and describe the goals of their actions and campaigns. These circles also express a 'political ideal' according to which excluded city dwellers can participate in a common emancipatory project (Harvey, 2008). They form a vast network that captures large areas of the world, although the different actors involved are not connected globally.

The issue of defining the movement is not by any means a tedious 'academic' question as it involves not only the theoretical categorizations of the analysts but also the self-perception of those directly involved in the movement. Moreover, the discussion over the nature and identity of convergences has always generated heated debates inside movements and has created tensions, conflicts, and ruptures when not carefully negotiated. Currently, debates on the nature of world movements, among them the WSF, are delving deeply into the souls of activists, if often hidden behind rational and even shrewd strategic and instrumental thinking. This debate is perhaps still one of the most interesting among those raised by activists as it refers to issues of self-perception and identity closely related to their core values, understanding of their needs, opportunities to address those needs and mobilising strategies. Moreover, it engages issues of conflict and differences and, more broadly, the practices aimed at negotiating and transforming those conflicts. What are then the main stances of current transformative activism? What could their implications be for the convergence, for its members and for the processes of change for which they advocate? How is this at all relevant when discussing the opportunities and challenges of a global convergence for the right to the city?

A crucial debate within the WSF has become the space/actor debate, both in activism and scholarly environments. Since its inception, members of the WSF have questioned their initiative: is it a space of convergence where activists and movements engage with each other, learning together and providing support to each other while considering common actions; or is it instead a platform in which movements should converge to generate a clear agenda to be coordinated and undertaken by the WSF as a whole? Initiators of the WSF were clear on the need to experiment with a new formula of global activism that would consider the experiences of decades of activism to avoid repeating the mistakes that resulted from unsuccessful movements in May, 1968[1] . That debate is indeed relevant for the right to the city.

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1   It was in the context of the 1968 movement that Lefebvre created the right to the city movement literature and rallying call.

In the words of one of its initiators, the original idea of the WSF — an idea which has generated the widest convergence ever of social movements and civil society organisations — was to constitute itself as an "open space" where activists could meet in safety and discuss the issues they deemed most important (Whitaker, 2005). The organisers and facilitators of that space would in no way direct or manipulate those conversations or their outcomes, would not provide an agenda or mobilizing slogans, and most importantly would not constitute a global leadership or a vanguard of the world movement. Moreover, calls to actions and manifestos would be products of the engagement of activists and movements in the open space. This idea was based on two realisations: the strategic weakness of the global Left (especially after 1989) was due to a fundamental inability of party cadres to express the needs and desires of the people they claimed to represent, and on the other hand, the world was expressing a variety of struggles producing an extraordinary wealth of social, cultural and political creativity. That creativity and the emancipatory energy that it generated had to be brought to the attention of the public and as many activists as possible, to allow them to move away from local self-absorption in their daily struggles, and to provide them with inspiration, recognition and support (material and emotional).

It was the atmosphere of celebration and convivial encounter that immediately made the WSF a successful experiment and still draws hundreds of thousands of people to its events. While these processes were taking place, some activists impatiently observed the urgency of effective campaigns and actions to defeat the perceived common enemy[2], global capitalism and Western (or U.S.) imperialism. According to those activists, meeting and discussing in the open space was a useful activity only if the WSF could guide all this energy towards strategically chosen targets. Such coordinated and concentrated effort could indeed constitute the only way to topple dictatorships, defeat empires and eventually surpass capitalism. While the proponents and advocates of the "open space" would consider such reversal to old practices anachronistic and already proven an outright failure, the advocates of the WSF as an actor would consider the other as mild activists co-opted by the language of reform and playing into the hands of the neoliberal political hegemony. Whereas this debate is not going to recede in the foreseeable future, some have suggested that it can potentially fracture the WSF, proving its original experiment to be itself a failure. The attempt to bring activists to meet in a safe space, where differences are respected and valued and where dynamics of open or unconscious oppression reproduced even among activists can be exposed and transformed in actively creating another world that is claimed possible by the WSF slogan is the most ambitious call that a social movement has so far produced. The new world will not simply be imagined and

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2   This is not a consensual perception within the WSF.

strategized in endless debates or by a restricted politburo, and the other world the WSF calls for would instead be practiced daily in the encounter. The path to another world will then be made by walking together rather than imposed by a pre-designed blueprint. To be sure, this is of course not a perfect and fully emancipatory process for all in the WSF or for those who the WSF wishes to attract in the future. This debate, and the tension it represents and generates, is of great interest in the present context for two related reasons; because of the tensions traversing and constituting the right to the city and because the paths of the two initiatives have crossed and are now intertwined to a certain extent. The call for a global movement for the right to the city was made in the WSF space for the first time in 2003 and since then it has been renovated in later editions while growing and facilitating a degree of convergence among a growing number of activists. For reasons that are unique of course to the articulations of movements struggling on urban issues of rights and justice, but also because by generating new articulations within the WSF space, the initiatives developed have absorbed both creative energies and contradictions of this space. Surprisingly coterminous in both initiatives are the debates, urgent rallying calls, and criticism of producing co-opted actors who are, perhaps unwillingly, functional to the reproduction of capitalism while betraying the initial ideals of radicalism and change.

A Global Alliance for the Right to the City?

Given the nature of the debates on structure, organisation and identity in the WSF — in particular in its International Council — the question remains if it is possible to create a global alliance for the right to the city. What are the challenges and opportunities faced by those who wish to facilitate the convergence of such an alliance?

Trying to generate a force that could resist the sweeping changes brought about by neoliberalism and the crises they have generated is undoubtedly an interesting political attempt, as has been thoroughly investigated[3]. During the WSF in Belem, a meeting took place on February 1, 2009 where international participants gathered under the right to the city banner and acknowledged the unique opportunity provided by the WSF for alliance-building on pressing urban issues. The participants of that meeting formulated a common agenda by producing a statement called "Urban Movements Building Convergences at the World Social Forum, WSF 2009"[4] which centred on promoting the right to the city, urban reform and on countering evictions. The most important joint objective set was to participate in the World Urban Forum (WUF) in Rio de Janeiro in March

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3   See Brenner and Marcuse 2009, Brenner et al. 2009, Harvey 2008, and Mayer 2009 among others.
4   See http://www.hic-net.org/articles.php?pid=3033

2010, in order to democratise its institution and its work. In the statement's words "social movements and activists may participate fully and effectively with UN-Habitat and the hosts in the organisation, preparation and staging of this event." However this is not all. The signatories of this shared agenda want to ensure that their participation in the WUF is not merely a cosmetic addition to a pre-established agenda. They also want their activism to promote their vision of the right to the city and against evictions in the organisational phase of the WUF. Their aim is to reclaim this slogan from the normalizing use made within the institutional framework of UN-Habitat and its partner organisations. The risk perceived by many is that the cooption of the right to the city discourse into the agenda of the mainstream international organisations will dilute its meaning, depriving it of its original transformative energy.

Further, on the practical aspects of the organisational and political convergence, the participants aim to promote the realisation of local, national and regional forums. Strategically, the agenda indicates a crucial outreach towards rural and indigenous movements in order to strengthen common campaigns to promote human rights and build new solidarities across the globe. The signatories included the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), Enda Tiers-Monde, Forum Local Authorities (FAL), International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI), Local Communities Organisations in Asia (LOCOA), and the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) among several others.

The process produced further convergences at regional levels such as the meeting of Latin American urban social organisations on the right to the city that took place in Quito, Ecuador in September 2009. In this sense, facilitating a space for movements to congregate and make their demands resonate while exchanging views in a convivial atmosphere is what the WSF has provided these movements with. This has also continued outside the framework of the WSF itself into autonomous campaigns proving how its "formula" can indeed be successful in generating self-determined political activities which are not controlled or lead by the WSF itself. However, the same damning debates on the political insignificance of the WSF for an incisive transformative process resonate in the context of the right to the city as well and in very similar forms as stated above.

Reflecting on the nature of the demands and of the (often contrasting) views of what the convergence in the WSF can produce, some critics articulate interrogatory arguments that give voice to feelings of discomfort from a section of the movements mobilizing under the banner of the right to the city. These critiques run along the following lines: the agenda created in Belem is only marginally radical and indeed may contribute to expand the area of influence of those institutional actors that administer human rights, in this case the right to the

city, without challenging the systemic marginalization that generates exclusion from those rights. Insurgent practices and radical challenges to the institutional framework of "good [urban] governance" and neoliberalism are instrumental to generate the fundamental challenges that will change the current system to a more equitable and just one that does not create exclusion and marginalisation in the first place (Mayer 2009).

Not only issues of moderation, radicalism, incisiveness of action and cooption are debated among movements for the right to the city. There are also geographical imbalances that need to be addressed in order to facilitate a truly global alliance. Centred in a political tradition that is mainly European, North American, and Latin American, the right to the city movement has still to make a breakthrough in vast regions of Asia[5], Africa and the Middle East (Salah Fahmi, 2009).

However, this is not only a geographical issue of inclusion that could be solved with careful and thorough outreach and mobilisation from those leading the different regional chapters of the forming alliance. The issues that have so far prevented activists, especially from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, to become active partners, may be more complex. The right to the city banner as an analytical or mobilising tool or as a transformative space is widely used by organisations and activists to generate a global alliance, even in areas that are not as yet included in the efforts taking place within the WSF. The reasons range from practical networking to more complex factors relating to cultural, social, political, economic, organisational and personal issues involving the neurons of the network and their innumerable relations with the contexts that surround them. In practical terms, extraordinary attention needs to be paid to the contextual reasons that may either facilitate or indeed hinder the extension of a network towards a new node or the maintenance of the relation between nodes already connected.

Common Values, Vision, Analysis and Strategies?

Another crucial question that resonates in the wider debate on the right to the city is the grounds on which a global alliance could be formed and what the shared values, vision, analysis and strategies would be to constitute the foundations of the new alliance. There is a profound difference among activists that use the label (the brand some would say) of the right to the city as far as their approach to rights is concerned.

In its original formulation, the right to the city derives from the work of the

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5   Although see the recent declaration of activists and campaigners from India, China, Indonesia and Philippines in "The Struggle for the City: The New Character, Approaches and Agenda of Urban Poor."

French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Therefore it seems pertinent to ask: what is the relationship between the right to the city movements and Lefebvre's theory? This is a topic of contention and tension between activists: on the one hand, some activists define the movement as the re-conceptualisation of urban space in order to change those conditions that generate marginalisation, exclusion and exploitation; on the other hand, some activists and campaigners see it as an actor that could help recast the current urban governance in more favourable terms to those excluded using negotiated strategies alongside direct confrontation in their daily practices. Even in this case, in the debate there seems to be a rather unsatisfying over simplification of the nuances represented among actors. What right, then, is the right to the city?

The activists and the organisations that loosely recognise themselves as actors of a forming global platform for the right to the city, centre their actions on different and at times contrasting conceptions of rights. According to the World Charter for the Right to the City, such a right is defined as "the equitable use of the cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice" (2005). In strictly legal terms the right to the city may be considered as a comprehensive right that includes all or most of the following rights to: life and livelihood; adequate standard of living; adequate housing; choice of residence; freedom of movement; freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or social class; privacy; work; popular participation; clean environment; health; and the special rights of women, children and indigenous people.

Campaigners and activists for the right to the city expose in their daily practices the systematic violation of one or more of these rights. The previous list belongs to those rights that already have a legal base in human rights law. So it might be asked why it is necessary to define a new human right, for which there is no legal provision in the human rights jurisprudence. The compendium of rights into a new right to the city is advocated to ensure that the rights of all citizens — especially squatters, homeless, and slum dwellers — are recognised and their full fruition of the city is protected. One further question generates supplementary complexity and draws additional tension to the potential global right to the city alliance: is the right to the city an individual or a collective right?

The link of the right to the city to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the institutional apparatus that it has generated is not necessarily, in the eyes of the more radical activists, ensuring that a campaign has an emancipatory nature. Indeed, the close link between some sections of the movement and established institutional partners, local governments, and UN-funded NGOs, risks to achieve precisely the opposite of what the movement supposedly stands for. This would not provide the most marginalised and deprived citizens with an opportunity to reclaim their rights and the space within the segregated global

city. Instead such campaigners would at best help them scratch the bottom of the wealth barrel generated by the neoliberal mechanisms of accumulation by dispossession, without presenting a viable opportunity to escape the vicious cycle of exclusion and exploitation.

The right to the city as a collective right — as in Lefebvre's formulation or in the more recent reflections by Harvey — would fully unleash its emancipatory power. As summarised by Harvey:

> "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights." (2008:23)

In this passage, the tensions of the potentially global alliance for the right to the city are fully exposed. The right to the city, although involving the freedom of all to "make and remake our cities and ourselves," is subordinate to the realisation that the right to the city is a "common rather than an individual right." This is so because the transformation of the city *depends* upon the exercise of a collective power" (stress added). Faithful to Lefebvre's suggestions, Harvey formulates that the dynamics of change and transformation are therefore "dependent" on the exercise of collective power (2008).

What is too often cast as a dual opposition is a much more complex issue that has to do with the formulation of creative possibilities to imagine the right to the city as, at the same time, an individual and a collective right. This approach describes a radically divided world in which one approach is subordinate and has to be subordinate to the other, as the individual is "dependent" on the collective. The creation of a radically dual analytical framework prevents understanding however it may indeed contribute to consolidate a constrained environment for emancipatory activism.

Cleavages or Complex Territories of Difference?

In several conceptual and practical contexts of the right to the city, a process of over-simplification seems to be taking place in cleavages between radicals and moderates, revolutionary and reformist, and transformative practices and ultimately enslaving status quo maintaining actions. Old as this debate may be, it seems to still animate discussions both among activists and analysts (Mayer, 2009). But what is the real content of this contrast, and what is the nature of the

relations that it draws on the globalizing map of the activists for the right to the city? Santos questions, will the new elaboration of an "open space" in the WSF for groups to meet in full respect of their differences provide world activists with the opportunity to move beyond conflictual positioning and eventually mediate their visions, missions and strategies? The right to the city, like the WSF, can contribute to creating spaces of transversal convergence among activists with different political agendas, visions and values. Their convergence itself is a challenge to a fragmented world view based on conceptions of radical and incommensurable difference like the one between revolutionary and reformist or between those who believe human rights constitute an instrument for the creation of a tamed subject and those who believe that human rights are a tool of potential emancipation.

If it is true that the right to the city might be used as an instrument of control and co-option, it is just as true that it can facilitate transformative and emancipatory processes. The difference may depend on the awareness with which activists will engage the negotiations that will take place within the forming alliance. It also may depend on the ability of the alliance to include new members from diverse cultural, social and political realities, to expand the range of difference that can generate creative transformative debate beyond oppositional ideological politics. The complexity represented in the right to the city is such that any simplifications can only betray specific strategic, instrumental, and political intentions. Reducing difference is not of interest for activists, as the convergence in the WSF open space has proven time and time again. That baggage of experience and the shortcomings exposed in the ten years since its inception can constitute both a case for the convergence of different, even radically different, actors within the alliance for the right to the city and an indication of some of the challenges that such a convergence could generate.

Valuing and further expanding difference, being aware of power imbalances, being proactive in fostering inclusion and in exposing marginalisation, and exploring conscious strategies of conflict negotiation and transformation are some of the experiences developed within the current globalising movement against neoliberalism. The consideration of the above stated factors in the new alliance for the right to the city may prove conducive to its aim at creating an emancipatory movement away from the exploiting and excluding neoliberal city. In the process, new values and experiences will be generated daily on the stages of the myriad of contextual struggles and engagements. Those practices could constitute the fertile ground on which new cosmopolitan values can be built. These values should not be constructed on an *a priori* set of universal ideas but on a kind of *a posterior* set of universal of ideas. Whereas *a priori* values may result in ethnocentric, colonial and ultimately enslaving practices, openness and recognition of difference could prove empowering and emancipatory. A

globalising right to the city movement could indeed constitute itself as one such space of open and empowering engagement among world activists.

Conclusion

The convergence of movements working on urban issues within the WSF open space and advocating for the creation of a wider network for the right to the city is indeed both symptomatic of what the WSF can offer and what its activists are using it for. Since 2001, the WSF has been experimenting with ways of engaging differences without reducing them, while facilitating the creation of new cultural forms of politics. While not always successful, its experience constitutes an endowment that other movements of that scope and scale might wish to engage with, sharing the vision of creating a better world.

The right to the city can be considered a globalising environment in which instances are indeed connected but mostly act in a space broadly defined by their context and engaged on the basis of their values. The right to the city ecosystem is populated by rather different organisations and movements whose actions, values and engagements design profoundly different natures, visions and strategies. Some may be considered to provide activists with profoundly transformative and emancipatory opportunities while others may indeed be conservative and eventually enslaving.

As other transnational movements like the environmental, feminist, and labour movements, the right to the city space is defined by a set of recognisable features. However these features are not agreed to by all of the actors engaging within that space, and indeed the inflections of the issues at stake are very different and at times even contrasting. To paraphrase the Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein, among the movements populating that space it is easy to recognise a certain "family resemblance" that may be impossible to convincingly explain in linguistic terms. What is to be made of the difference of the actors in the right to the city "environment"? Will this difference be adopted into the convergence of a strategic alliance, loose networking, or the construction of a platform? The political and strategic language of movement organising is widely discussed. The family resemblance metaphor can be reinforced, even in conflict, by shared practices informed by awareness of potentially mutual transformative recognition and empowerment. Let me stress here that in the sense discussed so far, coalition-building is more important than the coalition itself, which changes continuously assuming various shapes in different local contexts. Coalition-building takes place through processes of difference- and conflict-negotiation as well as in dynamics of deliberation in the public sphere. The exclusive focus on the strategic aspect of front/alliance-building for political struggle tends to become short-sighted as

it does not deal with the value of difference in movement transformation (and indeed in global transformation).

A focus on the path rather than the end could prove coherent with the initial vision of the WSF and with those in the global movement who wish to highlight what transformative movements are, through a teleological (over-oriented on goals) vision. This could force leaders towards strategies without an obliteration of difference for the purpose of efficiency, for instance to achieve a specific organisational goal or to strengthen the political bloc. Santos has suggested that the WSF's main role and its most ambitious task could be represented by its role as translator or space of translations between different movements from the four corners of the world that converge in it. However, translation could be a rather limited process if centred only on its linguistic dimension. Experience shows that intelligibility is often misrepresented as inclusion or organisational and social horizontality, and is therefore considered fully emancipatory. Although a thorough attention to practices of communication is necessary at the linguistic level, other non-linguistic engagements may be necessary to kick start or deepen the transformative process between the movements of the WSF and of the forming right to the city alliance. The leadership of such initiatives could explore ways to engage conflict and to facilitate processes of mediation between movements, as opposed to intermediaries or mere translators. Unfortunately, translation has often proven to be further tools of hegemony. It has also reproduced dynamics that the WSF and other global alliances tried to move beyond because it has been used by contemporary vanguards and authoritarian leaderships. However transformative processes of difference recognition and conflict mediation could ignite emancipatory dynamics for all the actors involved (Caruso, 2004 and 2010).

A global movement for the right to the city is not as yet a reality. However, it is possible that a group of leading activists and organisations may succeed in facilitating a growing alliance centred on crucial issues of exclusions and violations of rights as generated by the current hegemonic institutional framework of urban governance. The history of an embryonic process towards such facilitation should make us feel optimistic that such a momentum will indeed be generated for a new global(izing) alliance for the right to the city.

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The Construction Process towards the Right to the City: Progress made and challenges pending[1]

Enrique Ortiz

The right to the city — whose earliest roots date to the writings of Henry Lefebvre in the 1960s — has been taken up and given new impetus by civil society networks, movements, and organisations, generating multiple and diverse initiatives. A most noteworthy example of these is the progressive development of a "World Charter for the Right to the City" through a process that originally emerged and received its first impulse through the plural framework of the World Social Forum.

It is important to highlight the fact that this initiative emerges directly from organised civil society, and has entailed a long process of discussion to enrich and strengthen the proposal.

The process that sparked this initiative began within the preparatory activities leading to the second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as the "Earth Summit," held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. Brazil's National Forum for Urban Reform (FNRU), Habitat International Coalition (HIC), and the Continental Front of Communal Organisations (FCOC) joined forces to draft and sign the treaty on urbanization titled "For Just, Democratic and Sustainable Cities, Towns and Villages."

As part of the preparatory process toward the Earth Summit, that same year HIC organised the International Forum on Environment, Poverty, and the Right to the City, held in Tunis. That event would mark the first time the theme was debated among members of our coalition from diverse regions of the world.

A few years later, in October 1995, several HIC members participated in an event titled "Toward the City of Solidarity and Citizenship," organised by UNESCO. That occasion inaugurated the participation of UNESCO in the theme of urban rights. That same year, Brazilian organisations promoted the Charter of Human Rights in the City, the civilian precursor of the City Statute promulgated several years later by the Brazilian government.

Another important milestone in the path leading to the initiative to formulate a World Charter for the Right to the City was constituted by the First World Assembly of Urban Inhabitants, held in Mexico in 2000, with the participation of some 300 delegates from social organisations and movements from 35 countries. Within the theme of "rethinking the city from the people," participants debated the conceptualization of a collective ideal that would provide the foundation for proposals oriented to construction of democratic, inclusive, sustainable, productive, educative, livable, healthy, safe, and enjoyable cities.

One year later, now in the framework of the first World Social Forum, the Charter formulation process was opened. Since then, and in conjunction with the annual World Social Forums and the regional Social Forums, work has been ongoing on specific contents and dissemination and promotion strategies of the Charter.

Within the Charter process driven by civil society networks and organisations, two events in particular included thorough review of the original text and the dissemination and negotiation process.

The first took place in 2004 in Quito, Ecuador, in conjunction with the first Social Forum of the Americas. Representatives from diverse social movements joined the Charter promotion group to debate the need for two instruments: one basic human rights tool, and a distinct political tool through which to broaden and activate social mobilization around this new right.

Participants in the second event, held in Barcelona in September 2005, critically addressed the structure, contents, scope, and contradictions posed by a charter that leaves aside rural habitat issues, and employs terms originating from the Latin American and European contexts that fail to reflect priority concepts and issues for Asian, African, and Middle Eastern countries.

Parallel to these civil society initiatives, some governments at the regional, national and local levels have been generating instruments in order to legislate human rights in the urban context. The most progressive of these, which have been signed by local and national governments and are now in force, include the European Charter to Safeguard Human Rights in the City, (Saint Denis, France, 2000); the already-mentioned City Statute of Brazil (July 2001); and the Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities (Canada, 2006). There has also been a series of declarations and proposals put forth by civil society that has served

as a foundation for this initiative, such as the Charter for the Right to the City (first version 2003, followed by revised versions in 2004 and 2005); the Charter for Women's Right to the City (Barcelona, Spain, 2004); the National Declaration for Urban Reform (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2005, and later versions); and the Declaration presented to MINURVI (San Salvador, El Salvador, 2008).

In the framework of the fourth World Social Forum held in January 2009 in Belém do Pará, Brazil, a seminar was held — convoked by a group of twenty organisations and networks and bringing together more than 800 people — in which debate was developed on the theme of urban reform and the right to the city as an alternative to neoliberalism. In addition to that meeting, several of those present gathered to work on updating the contents of the World Charter and to construct an agenda for mobilization and networking in 2009 and 2010.

More recently, a seminar/workshop was held in Quito, Ecuador, titled *Toward the Implementation of the Right to the City in Latin America,* fostering an expansion of the circuit of actors involved in the field and producing a fruitful exchange of reflections, experiences and proposals from very distinct points of view and trajectories.

The UN-Habitat decision to organise the fifth World Urban Forum in 2010 around the theme of the right to the city, strongly contributes to propel the topic to the worldwide arena. This occasion provides an opportunity for the international networks, organisations, and social movements actively involved in the promotion of this right to articulate efforts to achieve its official recognition by the United Nations as a new collective human right.

Motivations

The high potential of human development which is characteristic of life in cities — as spaces of encounter, exchange and complementation; of enormous economic, environmental and political diversity; and of important concentration of production, service, distribution and educational activities — is today faced with multiple and complex processes posing immense challenges and problems for social coexistence.

> " … the development models implemented in the majority of impoverished countries are characterized by the tendency to concentrate income and power, generating poverty and exclusion, contributing to environmental degradation, and accelerating migration and urbanization processes, social and spatial segregation, and privatization of common goods and public spaces. These processes favour proliferation of vast urban areas marked by poverty, precarious conditions, and vulnerability to natural disasters.

> Today's cities are far from offering equitable conditions and opportunities to their inhabitants. The majority of the urban population is deprived or limited — in virtue of their economic, social, cultural, ethnic, gender or age characteristics — in the satisfaction of their most elemental needs and rights. Public policies that contribute to this by ignoring the contributions of popular inhabiting processes to the construction of the city and citizenship, are only detrimental to urban life." [2]

The concrete problems faced by city inhabitants are multifold, especially in the case of those whose economic or migratory condition or vulnerability or minority status relegate them to bear the greatest burden of insecurity and discrimination. That is, difficult access to land and dignified housing, massive and aggressive forced evictions, planned urban segregation, real estate speculation pressures, privatization of social housing, real estate violence (mobbing) against poor tenants, and even criminalization of the self-managed housing and popular urbanization production processes, among other assaults and obstacles of all types.

The initiative to formulate this Charter is oriented, first of all, to fight against all the causes and manifestations of exclusion: economic, social, territorial, cultural, political, and psychological. It is proposed as a social response, as counterpoint to city-as-merchandise, and as expression of collective interest.

It is a complex approach that requires articulation of the human rights theme in its integral conceptualization (civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights) to that of democracy in its diverse dimensions (representative, distributive, and participative).

The Charter defines this right as "the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity, and social justice." It is a collective right of the inhabitants of cities, which confers upon them legitimacy of action and organisation, based on respect for their differences, expressions, and cultural practices, with the objective to achieve full exercise of the right to free determination and an adequate standard of living. Our proposal is therefore not limited to a declaration of *human rights in the city,* but rather is conceived as an instrument capable of promoting and guaranteeing the *right of all people to the city,* in its multiple dimensions and components.

Aware of the postures denying the existence of collective human rights, we nevertheless affirm this right as a new human right of collective character.

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2   Preamble of the current version of the *World Charter for the Right to the City,* September 2005.

Nature and scope

Formulation and promotion of a World Charter for the Right to the City has the end purpose to build an instrument both universal and compact which may be adopted by the United Nations system, regional human rights systems, and governments, as a legal instrument or at least basic reference in the definition and adoption of the right to the city as a new human right. The Charter is therefore conceived as a human rights instrument and as a guide for its translation into plans, programs and guidelines for action.

However, the world-wide promotion and dissemination of this initiative, initially originating from Latin American civil society, first conceived of the Charter as a political document that would serve to mobilize broad social sectors potentially interested in the theme. It was primarily oriented to civil organisations and social movements, and has gradually expanded to incorporate local authorities, international bodies, and other public, private and social actors.

The broadening of the debate to other regions of the planet and broader and more diverse social sectors has posed the need to develop different and complementary texts, which facilitate the consolidation of, on one hand, a consistent human rights document and, on the other, one or several documents designed to disseminate the initiative, advance broad social awareness-building on the relevance of the topic, and activate social and political participation in the formulation and promotion of the Charter and the positioning of the right to the city within international bodies, governments, and public opinion. Work is currently being developed in both directions.

All human rights alongside democracy in their diverse modalities and expressions are inextricably intertwined in the city, as the most elevated, complex, and plural expression of human interaction in territory.

Democracy will not exist in its most profound sense while poverty, inequality, exclusion, and injustice prevail. There is no city without citizens capable of freely shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

Contents

The right to the city is interdependent on all recognized rights, integrally conceived, and open to the incorporation of new rights. Among the first of these, it includes the right to work in equitable and satisfactory conditions, to form and belong to a union, and to social security. It implies the right to build and create the city; the right to a place, to remain there, and to mobility; the right to water, food, housing, public services, and democratic use of public spaces; the right to health, education and culture; to development and a healthy environment; to consumer

protection; assistance for persons with special needs; and the right to physical security. It also implies the right to public information and political participation, including the right to gather, rally, organise, and deliberate, directly and through representatives, as well as respect for minorities and ethnic, racial, sexual and cultural plurality.

In addition to these rights — recognized and regulated in the principle human rights pacts and conventions established and monitored by the United Nations system and regional human rights mechanisms — the Charter also calls for recognition of other rights particularly relevant to urban life: the right to land, sanitation, adequate transportation, and energy.

One may also foresee subsequent incorporation of new rights developed in response to current urban challenges and the need to shape a political culture capable of more effectively responding to the new and more complex conditions in which social coexistence takes place in cities.

To offer a few examples: in the large urban conglomerates, it is no longer enough to recognize the right to availability of public transportation; one also needs to be able to move from place to place easily and quickly. The right to public spaces is not sufficient; rather, these spaces require symbolic elements which give them collective identity, and accessible and nearby facilities to give the different urban areas a value of centrality. These spaces should be dedicated to host activities destined for free time and creative expression, and guarantee the right to enjoy walkable and beautiful urban spaces, free of excessive visual and noise pollution. One could also envision the right to maintain and publicly express the cultural identity of the different communities that make up the city, guaranteeing respect for differences and equality of citizen rights for all residents, including migrants. Another expanded right might refer to the right not only to be consulted, but to decisively intervene in the planning, budgeting, design, operation, monitoring and evaluation of urban development policies and programs.

The right to the city, within this complex vision, is not limited to partially defend the human rights destined to improve the conditions in which we inhabit the city, but also implies rights to influence the production, development, management and enjoyment of the city, and to participate in the creation of public policies that foster the respect, protection, and implementation of these rights.

In this regard, the formation process of the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City presents an interesting case. The Charter draws upon and systematizes the most relevant elements of the debates developed around the World Charter in Barcelona in 2005, the contributions of multiple actors involved in the 18-month consultations process toward the Charter, and new concepts which emerged from collective reflection (see the book *Mexico City Charter: The right to build the city we dream about).*

Issues under debate

The formulation and promotion of the Charter is a participative, complex, and long-term process, which debates the conceptualization of the Charter itself as well as its structure, contents, and language.

Everything from the title itself to the global scope of this instrument is open for discussion. Is it a charter or a manifesto? The first term has been preferred considering that what is most fundamental is an instrument of rights and obligations, and not simply a manifesto of intentions, or a list of policies subject to the will of the government of the day. It is proposed as a charter of defendable rights, not dependent on particular political circumstances. At the political and educational level, other types of documents are evidently needed to be oriented to social mobilization in support of the Charter's promotion and adoption process.

Why a World Charter? The diversity of cultures and specific situations among and within regions and countries pose the need for specific instruments. Nevertheless, beyond this and given the universal character of human rights, the need also exists to regulate the right to the city at the global level.

The charter initiative emerged through the framework of the World Social Forum, and its recognition and regulation as a new human right should take place within bodies of the United Nations.

Based on the universal contents of the Charter, the formulation of local, national and regional instruments will not only be possible but also necessary to address the specificities of the different cultural and territorial spheres.

Why is it focused only on the city? This is the question that has stimulated a more vigorous debate. In particular because the concept of the city in some regions of the world refers to the formal territorial space in which the middle and upper classes live, but not to the area inhabited by workers.

In several Asian countries, *city* means rejection of popular settlements and massive eviction processes, reason for which the term is rejected by the social sectors in those areas toward which the Charter focuses its priorities. This is why people in some countries prefer concepts such as the right to land or to community.

In completely urbanized European countries, the term *city* allows no distinctions. Alternative concepts emerge such as *community* and *the right to a place in which to live*. The first works in English to refer equally to a city or to a village, but it does not work in Spanish, in which community refers to a collective that shares common purposes, far removed from the complexity and diversity of cultures and interests that characterize cities. The second concept does not reflect the wealth of content and reach that the right to the city carries, nor does it express its collective character or make any distinction between city and countryside. A

third concept circulating in debates is that of human rights habitat, but this term lacks symbolic and mobilizing force.

This leads us to the centre of the debate: Why limit the Charter to the urban sphere, when there are countries, especially in Asia and Africa, in which the still-predominant form of habitat is rural, and where in many places the most grave habitat-related rights violations occur in the countryside?

Or, might we be playing into the hands of the large interests that command the economic globalization process in the world? These interests promote the city as the "motor of development" and instigate competition between cities to their own benefit, ignoring rural communities and even obviating national governments.

The city, more than a factor of stimulation for the countryside, has been the centre from which its devastation is orchestrated. In this sense, does limiting the Charter to the city imply continuing to strengthen those processes? Would it not be contributing to fragment and confront the respective social movements of the poor from the countryside and the city?

This debate has led us to approach rural movements, such as Vía Campesina, with the objective to find a way to articulate a shared strategy without denying the need for specific instruments for both the rural and urban spheres. This will also foster enrichment and reinforcement of the social processes struggling against exclusion in both contexts.

There are principles and lines of action directed to respect human dignity in both the countryside and the city that guarantee the articulation between them, but there are also specificities that demand instruments adequate to each need and context.

Finally, it is clear that the right to the city does not refer to the city as we know and suffer in it today, but to the other possible city, inclusive in all aspects of life (economic, social, cultural, political, spatial); sustainable and responsible; space of diversity, solidarity, and peaceful coexistence; democratic, participative, vibrant and creative. A city that does not grow at the cost of its surroundings, the countryside, and other cities.

The Concept and Implementation of the Right to the City in Anglophone Africa

Mobola Fajemirokun

"What makes urban governance and development in Africa a largely disordered and dysfunctional field is the perpetuation of the misassumption that Africa is primarily a rural continent. While demographically, the majority of Africans may remain rural, everyday life throughout the region is so dominated by largely urban concerns and sensibilities that urbanization is, de facto, the name of the game."[1]

Context

In common with developing countries in other global regions, Anglophone African countries[2] are becoming urbanized with major implications for sustainable human development on the continent.[3]   UN-Habitat captures our emergent urbanized world by its description of the 21st century as the Century of the City.[4] The major characteristics of urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa are urban primacy, which has resulted in the concentration of people and investments in their single largest cities and slum formation.[5] The prediction is that sub-Saharan

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1   From UN-Habitat, *Principles and Realities of Urban Governance in Africa,* 65 Nairobi: UN-Habitat, 2002.
2   These are the Member States of the African Union (AU) that have adopted English as an official language within their territories, namely, Botswana; Cameroon; Gambia; Ghana; Kenya; Lesotho; Liberia; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Namibia; Nigeria; Rwanda; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; South Africa; Sudan; Swaziland; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.
3   See, annual rate of population change in urban and rural areas in *Annex 1*, which shows that the annual rate of population change is higher in the urban areas. In four countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Seychelles and South Africa), the annual rate of population change in rural areas has even been negative.
4   In UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2008/2009: Harmonious Cities*, London & Sterling, VA: UN-Habitat, 2008.
5   Idem pp. xi, pp.17 & 19.

Africa's slum population will reach 249,885,000 by 2010 and 393,104,000 by 2020.[6] The portents for Anglophone African countries, which are mainly within Sub-Saharan Africa, could not be clearer. The imperative for an effective response to the growth of slums can be found in Target 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.[7] This paper is not an issue-based analysis of the causes or experiences of urban change in Anglophone African countries. Rather, it presents a broad overview of the right to the city and its relevance to a heterogeneous group of countries in Africa that share a common language by reason of their colonial heritage or conscious choice.

A New City Paradigm

Emergence of Novel Legal Entitlements

Essentially, the right to the city embraces the adoption of values and the implementation of rules and practices aimed at bringing about social inclusion through democratic participation in city life; accountability in city governance; equal treatment of city inhabitants;[8] and poverty reduction. There are ongoing efforts to concretize a normative regime that will be distinct from but also complement the existing global and regional human rights systems in order to enshrine the legal entitlements of all city inhabitants.[9] Equally, it has been stated that the right to the city should not be regarded in a formalistic sense as a regime of specific rights although it evidently draws from some of the human rights systems that have codified civil and political rights[10] and economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights.[11] Regardless of the different opinions about its intrinsic

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6   From UN-Habitat, Slum Population Projection 1990-2020 based on the annual growth rate 1990-2001, available from www.unhabitat.org.

7   All 22 Anglophone African countries adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000.

8   For the purpose of this paper, the term "inhabitant" does not connote permanent domicile or residence in a city.

9   E.g. the World Charter on the Right to the City, which was developed by civil society groups and social organizations and elaborated at several international fora including the Social Forum for the Americas held at Quito, Ecuador, in July, 2004, and the World Urban Forum held at Barcelona, Spain, in September, 2004.

10   E.g. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was adopted on 16 December 1966.

11   A. *Brown & A. Kristiansen, Urban Policies and the Right to the City: Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenships, 36-37 (Nairobi: UN-Habitat, March 2009). On ESC rights, see ,* International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which was adopted on 16 December 1966 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted on 18 December 1979.

nature or ultimate objectives, what merits attention is that the right to the city represents a paradigm shift in planning and managing cities because it has crystallized for all city inhabitants the social functions of the city and property and access entitlements relating to publicly-held information, participatory decision making (for example, in connection with budgeting and public finances) and legal remedies.

Benefits of the Right to the City

However, one fundamental question arises: if many of the rights included in the Charter already exist in international human rights standards, is there a need to draw up a new declaration on the right to the city? Several NGOs including the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) are of the view that the Charter has the potential to introduce several new and important elements to international human rights protection mechanisms. These include the right to participatory and transparent management by local government, good governance, participatory budgeting, increasing regulation that calls for clarity regarding housing and environmental rights in cities, promotion of the social function of property, access to public services, and other matters related to urban space such as community policing. [12]

Focus on Equal Treatment, Access and Opportunities

To a large extent, the components of the right to the city dealing with equal treatment, access and opportunities, are embedded in the human rights systems that have been introduced at the regional level by the African Union (AU) and which all or some of the Anglophone African countries have committed to implement.[13] For example, 100% of Anglophone African countries have ratified or acceded to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.[14] This means that they are bound under international law to take all necessary steps to ensure that the relevant human rights obligations are implemented within their territories. Similarly, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has been

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12　*Source: Centre for Housing Rights and Eviction (COHRE).*

13　Some of the regional instruments draw on the provision of international treaties. See notes 10 and 11. Also, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was adopted on 20 November 1989 and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), which was adopted on 10 December 1984.

14　Ratification means that the State formally signed the treaty when it was adopted and has subsequently agreed in writing to be legally bound by its terms. On the other hand, accession means that the State has agreed in writing to be legally bound by the terms of a treaty without signing the instrument when it was formally adopted. Mere signature of a treaty does not create any binding legal obligation.

ratified by 95% of Anglophone African countries (Swaziland being the exception as it has only signed it). In the case of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, 64% have ratified or acceded to it. But this result is not determinative of the level of legal protections available to women in the countries that have neither ratified nor acceded to the Protocol. On the contrary, seven of these countries (Botswana; Cameroon; Kenya; Madagascar; Mauritius; Swaziland; and Uganda), have anti-gender discrimination protection in their national Constitutions.[15] In addition, some of countries in this group such as Mauritius, Madagascar, Botswana, and Kenya have favourable rankings in an analysis of gender discrimination that was conducted in 102 non-OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries worldwide.[16]

Present Realities

Constitutional and Other Legal Requirements

Actualizing the right to the city in Anglophone African countries will need to take into account local circumstances particularly the constitutional and other legal requirements on the allocation of responsibilities between the national government and sub-national units variously described as states, regions, provinces or municipalities. Consequently, although Brazil's City Statute of 2001, a national-level instrument, has been employed to implement the right to the city in that country, this implementation approach may not be possible in other countries, see, Box 2.

Nigeria: Sub-National Competence in the Planning of the City

Nigeria's federal constitution divides legislative powers between the Federal Government on the one hand and the 36 State Governments on the other. Some of these legislative powers are exclusively vested in the Federal Government by virtue of the Exclusive Legislative List and others are shared between the Federal and States Governments in accordance with the Concurrent Legislative List. Until 2003, it had been widely accepted that the Federal Government could legislate for the States on urban planning and the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act (NURPA) was introduced for this purpose. However, after a legal challenge that was filed before Nigeria's highest court, the Supreme Court, by the Lagos State Government, it was finally settled beyond any shadow of a doubt

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15 The exception is Sudan. Regarding anti-discrimination protection in national Constitutions, see further, http://www.genderindex.org

16 Lesotho and the Seychelles were not included in the assessments for the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), http://www.genderindex.org.

that the Federal Government cannot legislate for any of the 36 States on urban planning and to the extent that NURPA claimed to do so, its provisions were void although they would still continue to apply to the Federal Capital Territory, which is under the direct administration of the Federal Government. The Supreme Court decision effectively displaced any centralized national planning of cities and has led to the entrenchment of local planning autonomy even in respect of Federal Government-owned land. Many States have further devolved their planning powers to local governments through the establishment of Local Planning Offices. [17]

Weak Governance and Public Institutions

More than two years after the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) was adopted, only two non-Anglophone African countries have signed it. It may be too early at this stage to make any definitive conclusions about the national responses to this new treaty. But the fact that its adoption has been deemed necessary is a pointer to the economic, social and political governance gaps that exist within African countries as a whole and not just within the Anglophone African sub-group. ACDEG is not exclusively city-focused given its emphasis on the obligations of national governments. Nonetheless, its guiding principles and the actions that it promotes covers subjects that the right to the city seeks to advance within cities such as human rights protection, equal treatment, democratic participation and accountability, and transparency in matters of public finance and public institutions, see Box 3. However, it is noted that with regards to access to information, ACDEG provisions are not as robust as they could have been. This subject is only treated in Articles 2(10) and 19(2). Article 2(10) merely provides that it shall be the objective of ACDEG to "promote ... access to information ... and accountability in the management of public affairs." In contrast, Article 19(2), states that each "each State Party shall *guarantee* free access to information but this is only in the case of electoral observer missions (*emphasis supplied*)."

Guiding Principles for Democracy, Elections and Governance in Africa[18]
1. Respect for human rights and democratic principles.
2. Access to and exercise of state power in accordance with the constitution of the State Party and the principle of the rule of law.
3. Promotion of a system of government that is representative.

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17 B. Fajemirokun, "Policy and Legal Perspectives on Actualizing the Right to the City in Nigeria," 22 June 2009, being an occasional paper for the Habitat International Coalition (HIC).
18 Article 3, ACDEG.

4. Holding of regular, transparent, free and fair elections.
5. Separation of powers.
6. Promotion of gender equality in public and private institutions.
7. Effective participation of citizens in democratic and development processes and in governance of public affairs.
8. Transparency and fairness in the management of public affairs.
9. Condemnation and rejection of acts of corruption, related offenses and impunity.
10. Condemnation and total rejection of unconstitutional changes of government.
11. Strengthening political pluralism and recognising the role, rights and responsibilities of legally constituted political parties, including opposition political parties, which should be given a status under national law.

Forced Evictions and Other Acts of Dispossession

In its Violations Database, the Housing and Land Rights Network of HIC documents cases of forced evictions, dispossessions and privatization of social housing. The information is collated from reliable sources including HIC members and it confirms the widespread practice and scale of forced evictions and other acts of land or housing dispossession in Anglophone African countries.[19] The right to the city affirms the rights of all city inhabitants to land and housing regardless of tenure status. Therefore, it challenges the dominant approach within Anglophone Africa to dealing with the urban poor and landless, for example, squatters by repeated forced ejections and demolitions, which do not conform with practices that advance the right to adequate housing.[20] These interventions, which are typically undertaken by government authorities (but not only by them), only perpetuate a vicious cycle as the dispossessed are moved on only to start afresh in a different location and facing a future of more forced evictions and demolitions.

Therefore, the right to the city potentially opens the vista of a unifying set of principles and practices for urban-focused grassroots movements in Anglophone African countries.[21] In this regard, it is worth pointing out that the aim of the World

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19 See, http://www.hlrn.org.
20 For example through public consultations, adequate notice and the payment of compensation.
21 The term 'grassroots movements' describes loosely organised groups of persons that are adversely affected by urban changes , for example, forced evictions and other acts of dispossession, as opposed to those who represent or advocate for them, see further on this distinction, S. Batliwala, ''Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors: Implications for Global Civil Society,' Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, Vol. 13, No. 4, December 2002, pp. 395-396,

Class Cities for All (WCCA) campaign, which was launched in South Africa in 2006, is to create a more inclusive concept of cities with the participation of street vendors and other groups of the urban poor who are not only the first to lose their livelihoods but also the most invisible in the preparations for high profile events including the World Cup 2010 and the African Cup of Nations.[22] More of these types of campaigns need to be launched and sustained in order to coalesce ground-level stakeholder support for the right to the city. Such a development will mirror the precedents established in Central and South America where the inclusive city concept has received widespread political and popular support as a direct result of effective advocacy by grassroots movements. There are popular education and networking interventions that will be required in order to achieve analogous results in Anglophone Africa. These can be undertaken by representatives and other advocates of grassroots movements such as housing and land rights NGOs and their related networks. Basically, through these collaborative efforts to widen and deepen support for the right to the city, it is possible to create a bridge across continents and link the local (city) to the global and vice versa.

Concluding Remarks

What does the right to the city mean to Anglophone African countries? It is certainly a concept that needs to be taken more seriously given the grave human development consequences of slum formation and high poverty levels within the region as a whole. It should not be viewed in a formalistic sense as a rigid body of rules or procedures but as an elastic and dynamic approach to sustainable human development within cities. Its implementation will obviously depend on the prevailing constitutional and legal order in each country. But this paper has shown that broadly speaking, four substantive issues are paramount in this new city paradigm. These are human rights protection for all city inhabitants including the landless, squatters, migrants, refugees and other vulnerable groups; access entitlements in respect of publicly-held information, decision making and legal remedies; effective city governance and public institutions based on improved transparency and accountability; and a reversal of current attitudes and practices towards slums or informal/illegal settlements. The existing regional human rights systems may lack a specific city focus and the comprehensive treatment of issues related to the social production of the city and property. But regardless of these gaps, these instruments provide useful building blocks in several respects for actualizing the right to the city in Anglophone Africa.

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22 See, www.streetnet.org.za/WCCA.htm. Other urban-focused grassroots movements include the various federations of shack/slum dwellers in countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

Estimates of Total National Population and Urban Indicators for Anglophone Africa

N°.	Country	Estimated Total National Population[1]	Population Distribution (%) 2009[2]		Annual Rate of Population Change (%) (2005-2010)[3]		Slum Population in Urban Areas (thousands)[4]	Slum Population as Percentage of Urban Population[5]
			Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural		
1.	Botswana	1.776.283	60	40	2,5	-0,6	-	-
2.	Cameroon	10.493.655	58	42	3,5	0-1	4.224.000	47,4
3.	Gambia	1.364.507	57	43	4,2	0,7	371.000	45,4
4.	Ghana	18.912.079	51	49	3,5	0,5	4.805.000	45,4
5.	Kenya	37.183.923	22	78	4,0	2,3	3.897.000	54,8
6.	Lesotho	1.880.661	26	74	3,5	-0,3	118.000	35,1
7.	Liberia	3.489.072	61	39	5,6	2,8	-	-
8.	Madagascar	18.820.000	30	70	3,8	2,2	4.022.000	80,6
9.	Malawi	13.630.164	19	81	5,2	2.0	1.468.000	66,4
10.	Mauritius	1.268.565	42	58	0,9	0,7	-	-
11.	Namibia	2.065.226	37	63	2,9	0,4	242.000	33,9
12.	Nigeria	140.003.542	49	51	3,8	0,9	41.664.000	65,8
13.	Rwanda	8.128.553	19	81	4,2	2,4	1.251.000	71,6
14.	Seychelles	86.956	55	45	1,4	-0,6	-	-
15.	Sierra Leone	4.976.871	38	62	2,9	1,5	2.180.000	97,0
16.	South Africa	48.687.000	61	39	1,4	-0,7	8.077.000	28,7
17.	Sudan	39.154.490	44	56	4,3	0,7	13.914.000	94,2
18.	Swaziland	953.524	25	75	1,7	0,3	-	-
19.	Tanzania	40.600.000	26	74	4,2	1,9	6.157.000	66,4
20.	Uganda	28.247.300	13	87	4,4	3,1	2.420.000	66,7
21.	Zambia	12.525.791	36	64	2,3	1,7	2.336.000	57,2
22.	Zimbabwe	11.631.657	38	62	2,2	0,2	835.000	17,9

1   Based on the latest available census and estimates from the United Nations Statistics Division's Population and Vital Statistics Report on 29 September 2009, and downloaded from http://www.unstats.un.org.
2   From UN-Habitat, Slum Population Projection 1990-2020 based on the annual growth rate 1990-2001, available from www.unhabitat.org.
3   Idem.
4   UN-Habitat, State of the World's Cities 2008/2009: Harmonious Cities, London & Sterling, VA: UN-Habitat, p. 248. 2008
5   From UN-Habitat, Slum Population Projection 1990-2020 based on the annual growth rate 1990-2001, available from www.unhabitat.org.

Part Two

Experiences of the Right to the City

People's struggles against marginalization and forced eviction

Abahlali baseMjondolo & the Popular Struggle for the Right to the City in Durban, South Africa

Richard Pithouse

> [I]f their cause be so good, why will they not suffer us to speak and let reason and equity, the foundation of righteous laws, judge them and us?
>
> - Gerrard Winstanley[1]

Apartheid conflated modernity with a specifically white urbanism. This racial paranoia produced a tremendous white hostility to the black presence in the cities. Unsurprisingly both the elite and popular strands in the struggles against apartheid often put the demand for an equal right to an urban life at the centre of their politics.[2] In parts of some cities, and especially in Durban, land occupations, particularly during the late 1970s and the 1980s, achieved a decisive break with the racialisation of space.[3] In its latter years, the apartheid state made various concessions in response to popular agitation for the right to the city. These ranged from legal reforms, to trade offs in which an autonomous but precarious presence in the cities was exchanged for a subordinate but formal place in the cities, and some degree of state recognition for urban land occupations.[4]

After apartheid, the right to housing was guaranteed in the Constitution and laws were passed to protect squatters from arbitrary eviction and to prevent any

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1   *Gerrard Winstanley: His Thoughts and Works* edited by Subrata Mukherjee & Sushila Ramaswamy Deep & Deep Publications: New Delhi, p. 44. 1998.

2   See for instance, *Holding Their Ground* edited by Philip Bonner, Isabel Hofmeyer, Deborah James & Tom Lodge (Raven Press: Johannesburg), 1989 & *The People's City: African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban* edited by Paul Maylam & Iain Edwards University of Natal Press: Pietermaritzburg, 1996

3   Richard Pithouse 'Shacks in Durban Till the End of Apartheid', *The Commoner*, December 2009 http://www.thecommoner.org.uk.

4   For an interesting case study of the Crossroads settlement in Cape Town see *Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression 1976-1986* by Josette Cole Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1987.

eviction that would leave people homeless.[5] Housing policy was developed from engagement with World Bank models and was based on the allocation of a fixed government housing subsidy per household to be awarded to private contractors who must take their profit from building within the subsidy limit.[6]

Although it had not been long since the mass mobilization against apartheid in the 1980s — a mobilization that was often driven by popular organisations acting with a considerable degree of autonomy from centralised party control[7], and which often confronted the urban question directly [8]— the state and its allied NGOs were able to move very quickly to reduce the political question of the right to the city to a technical question of building houses. The reduction of a deeply political set of questions to the technocratic language that reserved urban planning as a state and NGO function and measured success in terms of "units delivered" became largely dominant in civil society. Houses were built in impressive numbers but they were often very small, of extremely poor quality and located in peripheral ghettos.[9] Moreover, housing projects were routinely captured by local political elites and, at every level from the awarding of construction contracts to the allocation of individual houses, were used to support the personal and political interests of those local elites. This was often undertaken ruthlessly, and on occasion violently, by local party structures.[10]

A decade after apartheid, progressive planners in and allied to the democratic state recognised the failings of the subsidy system and in 2004 a new policy, *Breaking New Ground*, was adopted. It declared a shift from "conflict and neglect" to the integration of settlements "into the broader urban fabric to overcome spatial, social and economic exclusion" via "a phased *in-situ* upgrading approach."[11] However the policy had no real political support and has not been implemented.[12] The state has instead turned to revanchism via a return to the apartheid language of "slum clearance."[13] Shack

5   Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions, Business as Usual? "Housing Rights & 'Slum Eradication' in Durban, South Africa" (Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions: Geneva), 2008 http://www.cohre/org/southafrica

6   Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions, "Business as Usual?"

7   Michael Neocosmos 'Civil Society, Citizenship & the Politics of the (Im)Possible: Rethinking Militancy in Africa Today' "Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements," No.2, 2009 http://interface-articles.googlegroups.com/web/neocosmos.pdf?pli=1

8   Marie Huchzermeyer, "Unlawful Occupation: Informal Settlements and Urban Policy in South Africa and Brazil" (Africa World Press: Trenton, New Jersey), 2004.

9   Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions, B*usiness as Usual?*

10 I base this claim on five years of research on the housing question in Durban and will develop it further in forthcoming work.

11 Department of Housing, "Breaking New Ground", 2004, p. 12.

12 Richard Pithouse "A Progressive Policy Without Progressive Politics: Lessons from the failure to implement Breaking New Ground", *Town Planning Journal*, No. 54, 2009, pp.1-14.

13 Richard Pithouse "A Progressive Policy Without Progressive Politics: Lessons from the failure to implement 'Breaking New Ground".

settlements are now slums to be eradicated from the cities rather than communities to be fully integrated into the cities. Once again shack settlements are being presented as a threat to aspirations for an elite modernity.

Three primary strategies are being deployed to eradicate shacks. The first is to withdraw or limit services such as water, electricity, refuse removal and so on to the point where conditions in the settlements become life threatening. The second is the use of various forms of surveillance and state violence to prevent the expansion of settlements or new occupations. The third is the destruction of established settlements. When established settlements are destroyed some residents are allocated houses, often in peripheral settlements, while others are coerced into state-built shacks, known as transit camps, and others are left homeless.[14]

The state's actions towards shack dwellers are systemically unlawful and, indeed, criminal. Mahendra Chetty, Director of the Durban office of the Legal Resources Centre attests that:

> The City, as a matter of regular and consistent practice, acts in flagrant breach of the law... A recurrent theme with these evictions is the simple callousness with which they are carried out. They are carried out in an extremely authoritarian and high handed manner against the most vulnerable people in our society — poor black women, old people and the unemployed."[15]

A popular challenge to the resegregation of the cities, this time on the basis of class, began to emerge with the beginnings of some important social movements from around 2001.[16] Since 2004, South African cities have been convulsed by thousands of municipal revolts, largely, although not always, organised from shack settlements.[17] Their primary tactics have been road blockades and vote strikes. Despite rapidly increasing repression resulting in regular arrests and police violence, a violence that has occasionally been fatal, these protests have continued to gather intensity.[18]

A key demand has been for people to be able to make their own decisions about where they would like to live. Sometimes this has been generalised into a collective demand for the right to the city. In many instances, protesters have demanded to be able to stay in their centrally located shacks rather than to be moved to new housing projects on the periphery of the cities, showing that the

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14 Richard Pithouse, "Business as Usual?".
15 Richard Pithouse, "Business as Usual?", p. 52.
16 Richard Pithouse "Abahlali baseMjondolo & the Struggle for the City in Durban, South Africa", Cidades, Vol. 6, No. 9, pp.241-272.
17 Richard Pithouse "Abahlali baseMjondolo & the Struggle for the City in Durban, South Africa"
18 Richard Pithouse "Burning Message to the State in the Fire of the Poor's Rebellion", Business Day, http://www.businessday.co.za./articles/content.aspx?id=76611

question of housing is not reducible to being formally housed by the state. A second key demand has been the right to co-determine 'development.' This includes both a demand to recognise grassroots urban planning[19] that has already occurred by, for example, formally recognising past land occupations, and a demand that future planning, such as the building of houses or the provision of services, be jointly undertaken by communities and the state.

In Durban, an organised shack dweller's movement emerged out of the general ferment. In March, 2005, a road was blockaded by residents of the Kennedy Road settlement. Kennedy Road is the inner suburban core of the city and had been marked for eradication. In the months after the road blockade there were intense discussions with people from twelve nearby settlements, all in the inner suburban core, and in October that year a decision was taken to form the *Abahlali baseMjondolo* (shack dwellers) movement (AbM) and to pursue a politics of the poor, by and for the poor.[20]

The movement was not founded by an NGO or a political organisation nor had it donor funding. It was, in the sense developed by Marcelo Lopes de Souza, an autonomous political project.[21] It drew on the traditional language of the dignity of each person, reworked into a cosmopolitan form appropriate for urban life. From the beginning, the movement had something of a feeling of the warmth and mutual care of a congregation[22], a slow, deliberative and deeply democratic political culture[23] and an impressive diversity in terms of ethnicity, race and nationality.[24]

Since then, the movement's experience with the state has swung from outright repression to a cautious but productive engagement and then back to an even more ruthless mode of repression. From the founding road blockade in March, 2005, until September, 2007, when a legal and peaceful march aimed at the city's mayor was violently attacked by the police[25], the state had refused to accept AbM as a legitimate organisation.

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19 I am using the phrase 'grassroots urban planning' in the sense developed by Marcelo Lopez de Souza. In his paper 'Together with the state, despite the state, against the state: Social movements as 'critical urban planning' agents', City, Vol. 10, no. 3, 2006, pp. 327-342.

20 Richard Pithouse 'Struggle is a School: The rise of a shack dwellers' movement in Durban, South Africa' Monthly Review, Vol. 57, No. 9, 2006. http://www.monthlyreview.org/0206pithouse.htm

21 See Marcelo Lopes de Souza 'Urban Development on the Basis of Autonomy: a Politico-philosophical and Ethical Framework for Urban Planning and Management' Ethics, Place and Environment, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2000, pp. 187-201, 2000.

22 Richard Pithouse 'Coffin for the Councillor', Journal of Asian & African Studies, Vol. 41, Nos 1-2, 2006, pages

23 Raj Patel 'A Short Course in Politics at the University of Abahlali baseMjondolo', Journal of Asian and African Studies, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 95-118, 2008.

24 Richard Pithouse, Abahlali baseMjondolo & the Struggle for the City in Durban, South Africa

25 See Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions Open Letter to Obed Mlaba & Michael Sutcliffe, 2007, http://abahlali.org/node/2664 and Human Rights Watch World Report 2009, http://www.hrw.org/en/node/79205

In some respects settlements that had collectively been affiliated to the movement were treated as dissident territories by the police and there were instances where settlements were occupied by the military at times of heightened tension. AbM protests were unlawfully banned and then attacked when they went ahead in defiance of bans. Well known supporters of the movement were forced out of their jobs and there were more than 200 arrests and all kinds of other forms of police harassment, including the use of police violence to physically prevent the movement from taking up invitations to debate politicians on radio and television.[26] During this period of repression, the movement was subject to virulent slander from the state, much of it alleging a political conspiracy by a white agent of a foreign government tasked with destabilizing the country.[27]

Despite the difficulties faced by the movement from October, 2005, until September, 2007, a considerable amount was achieved. The movement declared a *University of Abahlali baseMjondolo* and, in the discussions of that university, resolved to protect its autonomy by refusing party politics. It was decided to only engage with NGOs if and when they were prepared to work with the movement on the basis of mutuality[28] and useful connections were made with the churches. A key slogan in what came to be called the movement's "living politics"[29] became "talk to us, not for us." In the words of the movement's chairperson, S'bu Zikode:

> [T]he time has come for poor people all over the world to define themselves, before someone else defines them, before someone else thinks for them, and acts for them. Do not allow others to define you. I'm pleading to intellectuals and NGOs to give us a chance to have a platform for our own creativity, for our own politics. Our politics is not a politics that originates from institutions of higher learning. It originates from our lives and from our experiences. We are asking the intellectuals and the NGOs to work with us to create a space where we can think and discuss together. We don't want them to think and to speak for us. We are not prepared to hear from anyone on the point of order. Not government, not NGOs, no one. Because we are prepared to talk to anyone.[30]

26 Stephanie Lynch & Zodwa Nsibande, The Police and Abahlali baseMjondolo: A List of Key Incidents of Police Harassment Suffered by Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2008 http://abahlali.org/node/3245

27 For an example of this sort of paranoid state discourse see Lennox Mabaso and Harry Mchunu, Shackdwellers 'under the sway of an agent provocateur', Sunday Tribune, 24 September 2007, http://www.sundaytribune.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=3451568. For a response to this sort of discourse by AbM President S'bu Zikode see We Are the Third Force, November 2005 http://www.abahlali.org/node/17

28 For reflections on this by movement activists see Living Learning edited by Mark Butler (Church Land Programme: Pietermaritzburg), 2009 http://www.abahlali.org/node/5843

29 For an insider's reflections on the politics of Abahlali baseMjondolo see Richard Pithouse, 'To resist all degradations and divisions: an interview with S'bu Zikode', Interface: A Journal for and About Social Movements, No. 2, 2009 http://interface-articles.googlegroups.com/web/zikode.pdf

30 This statement was given to Richard Pithouse by S'bu Zikode and was read during a talk about

During this time the movement continued to grow and was able to achieve a remarkable degree of unmediated access to elite public platforms. In practical terms, AbM had been able to: reach a point of being able to successfully resist evictions in all the settlements where they were strong; build and defend new shacks; openly undertake and successfully defended their expansion of existing shack settlements; win access to various state services outside of party patronage; set up crèches and various mutual support projects; (illegally) safely connect thousands of people to electricity and many to water; vigorously contest police oppression; democratise the governance of a number of settlements to win sustained unmediated access to voice in the popular media; defend the right to dissent against local party elites; contest the withholding of welfare as a punishment for dissent; and fight a high-profile battle for land and housing in the towns and cities.

AbM has been able to call meetings and initiate campaigns in which those NGOs, academics and lawyers willing to work with a grassroots movement on the basis of mutual respect, and on the terrain where the movement is strong, rather than, as is more typical, on the basis of an assumed right to lead, could work with the movement. The first campaign developed in this way was against the Slums Act. The Slums Act was first proposed and passed in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in 2007 and was meant to be replicated in other provinces. The Act essentially criminalised the unlawful occupation of land, resistance to evictions and any form of shack dwellers' organisation that occupied land unlawfully and raised money via a membership fee.[31] The process of resistance to the Slums Act included mass mobilisation, public debate and an ongoing legal battle to have the act declared unconstitutional.

It slowly became clear that the movement had entered a second phase after the attack on the march in September, 2007. This attack was witnessed by the local bishops who strongly condemned[32] it and it was also condemned by international human rights organisations.[33] Unlawful police repression stopped, the state recognised AbM as the legitimate representative of fourteen settlements in Durban and negotiations began with city officials.[34] In the beginning, there were explicit attempts to persuade AbM to shift from a political discourse to a development discourse. This was refused.

the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement, held at the Soho Theatre in London on June 5, 2007. http://blip.tv/file/636398

31 Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions, "Business as Usual?".

32 "Police Violence in Sydenham", 28 September, 2007: A Testimony by Church Leaders http://abahlali.org/node/2661

33 See Centre on Housing Rights & Evictions "Open Letter to Obed Mlaba & Michael Sutcliffe", 2007, http://abahlali.org/node/2664 and Human Rights Watch World Report 2009, http://www.hrw.org/en/node/79205

34 Richard Pithouse, "Abahlali baseMjondolo & the Struggle for the City in Durban, South Africa"

For a while there was something of a standoff but once AbM had secured the right to remain political in and outside of the negotiations,[35] the negotiations could continue.

In May, 2008, African migrants were attacked and hounded out of shack settlements across the country in a wave of xenophobic pogroms.[36] AbM took a decision to shelter and defend all people born in foreign countries[37] and were able to ensure that there was not a single attack in any of the settlements affiliated to the movement and to stop two in-progress attacks in settlements not affiliated to the movement.[38]

In February, 2009, AbM and the Durban Municipality announced a deal which committed both parties to the *in-situ* participatory upgrading of three settlements, including Kennedy Road, and the provision of some basic services to fourteen settlements.[39] It marked a number of major victories including a decisive break with the spatial logic of apartheid (the settlements to be upgraded are in the inner suburban core), which signifies an acknowledgment that settlements need decent access to services and a recognition that development can be a collaborative process between communities and the state.

However, in September, 2009, AbM leaders were attacked in the Kennedy Road settlement by an armed mob chanting ethnic slogans.[40] The police refused to come to the aid of AbM and only stepped in to disable spontaneous resistance to the mob. Lives were lost during the attempt to mount a defence against the mob and the homes of more than 30 AbM leaders were destroyed and looted following which local leaders of the ruling party seized control of the settlement. Party leaders in the city and the province attacked the movement in extremely strong language in the days following the attack, excoriating it for taking the government to court to have the Slums Act declared unconstitutional and accusing the movement of being "anti-development." Police officers, state

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35 For example there was a serious attempt on the part of the movement to politicise shack fires. See "A Big Devil in the Jondolos" Matt Birkinshaw, 2008 http://abahlali.org/node/4013

36 Richard Pithouse "The May 2008 Pogroms: xenophobia, evictions, liberalism, and democratic grassroots militancy in South Africa", Sanhati, 16 June 2008, http://sanhati.com/articles/843/

37 Abahlali baseMjondolo, "Abahlali baseMjondolo Statement on the Xenophobic Attacks in Johannesburg", 21 May 2008 http://www.abahlali.org/node/3582

38 Nigel Gibson "Upright and free: Fanon in South Africa, from Biko to the shackdwellers movement (Abahlali baseMjondolo)" Social Identities, Vol. 14, No. 6., pp. 683-715.. 2008.

39 Malavika Vartak "Experiences of Abahlali baseMjondolo and the Kennedy Road Settlement, Durban, South Africa: A report for the Development Planning Unit of University College London", December 2009, http://www.abahlali.org/taxonomy/term/1495

40 See Amnesty International, South Africa: Failure to conduct impartial investigation into Kennedy Road violence is leading to further human rights abuses, 16 December 2009, http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR53/011/2009/en/53fce922-d49e-4537-b3bb-84060cf84c85/afr530112009en.html and Michael Neocosmos, Attacks on shack dwellers a failure of citizenship, *Pambazuka News*, 10 December 2009, http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/60925

officials and journalists have all been told that foreign NGOs are funding the movement in order to stop development so that they can keep Africans poor and sustain their access to donor funds.

Three weeks after the attacks, AbM succeeded in having the Slums Act declared unconstitutional in the Constitutional Court. It was a remarkable victory.[41] But supporters of the ruling party are openly issuing public death threats against the movement's leadership in the context of intense hostility to the movement from local party leaders and police officers, as well as patently unlawful conduct towards the movement by a local magistrate.[42] The state-backed attack on the movement is happening amidst a general turn towards authoritarian ethnic politics and the future of the movement, and, indeed, of any popular affirmation of the right to the city in South Africa, is not at all clear.

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41 Marie Huchzermeyer, "Ruling in Abahlali case lays solid foundation to build on", *Business Day*, 4 November 2009, http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=85924

42 See Bishop Rubin Phillip, "Grave Concerns about the Detention without Trial of the Kennedy Thirteen: This Travesty Must End", 18 November 2009 http://www.abahlali.org/node/6073

Pavement Dwellers' Movements in Mumbai, India

Maria Cristina Harris

Since 1986, pavement dwellers in Mumbai have struggled to achieve recognition in public policy as opposed to being considered temporary and invaluable urban citizens. Although it has been a continuous process, three organisations have managed to achieve significant improvements in defining their status as active citizens wanting to secure their right not only to adequate housing but to the city as well.

Mumbai, India's largest city and the country's financial and commercial capital, is home to approximately 12 million inhabitants, of which 50 percent are slum dwellers and another 10 percent pavement dwellers[1]. In contrast to slum dwellers, who inhabit vacant pieces of land, pavement dwellers literally reside on the pavements or sidewalks of the city and build their homes depending on the width of sidewalk they occupy. People settle on sidewalks not because of a desire to live on them but because of the lack of choice they have to gain access to adequate land and housing in close proximity to their workplaces. Although slum and pavement dwellers make up more than half of Mumbai's population, they are often not recognized as formal inhabitants who contribute to the city, but are rather thought of as transitory and of little value to the economy.

Community-based organisations Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), alongside the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), have been working together since the mid-1980s to improve the housing situation of pavement dwellers in Byculla, an area in central Mumbai. When these three organisations came together to form what is known as the Alliance, pavement dwellers were amongst the worst off inhabitants in the city. Although physically quite visible on the streets, pavement dwellers were entirely invisible in public policy. They could not obtain ration cards, which are

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1   Knudsen, 2007. This population data is taken from the 2001 census.

identity cards that grant citizens the right to schooling and access to subsidized food, nor could they gain access to basic services like water, sanitation, and electricity. Pavement dwellers, unlike slum dwellers, were also excluded from electoral rolls and any official census taken in the city and throughout the country.

The social exclusion faced by Byculla's pavement dwellers and the constant fear of having their pavement homes demolished by the municipality, prompted them to take their own measures to claim both their right to the city and their status as formal citizens. In 1985, SPARC and the Byculla pavement dwellers conducted their own census to demonstrate their presence in the city. It turned out that 60 percent of pavement households had been in Mumbai for over a decade, far too much time to still be considered intruders and excluded from public policy.

In 1986, a housing exhibition, initiated by the Alliance, displayed life-size models of houses designed by and for pavement dwellers. Today, these housing exhibitions continue and have been replicated in cities throughout India as well as in other Asian and African countries. The housing exhibitions are a way for pavement dwellers to be involved in the design of their houses in accordance with their economic and spatial needs. They are also a way to show city and state officials that the poor can and should play an important role in the production of their habitat and be active participants in the construction and design of the city.

By 1995, pavement dwellers were finally given the opportunity to register on electoral roles and at that point started being recognized by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority, the body which supports citizens when they have to resettle or redevelop their homes. Once pavement dwellers began gaining more recognition, the women of Mahila Milan decided to apply to the Bombay Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST), the electricity supplier for the city of Mumbai, as they no longer wanted to depend on illegal electricity supplies often obtained through middlemen at high costs. After two years of consultations with BEST officials and much resistance from BEST to grant the pavement dwellers access, Mahila Milan, with the help of NSDF and SPARC, managed to obtain electricity in one sector of Byculla. By 1999, 125 households had formal access to electricity and this has only increased throughout the years.

The achievements accomplished by the Byculla pavement dwellers and the Alliance throughout the past 23 years is quite significant; they have made themselves visible in urban policy, begun to participate in how urban space is shaped, and have made considerable progress in claiming their right to the city. It is quite clear that through determination and cooperation, local initiatives like those taken on by the Alliance and the Byculla inhabitants can be successful in influencing how citizenship is defined and in enabling cities to be more inclusive spaces for all of their inhabitants.

Today's cities have become increasingly exclusive for the poor who do not have sufficient resources to enter the dominant market economy. The recently launched Mumbai City Development Plan (CDP),, which strives to transform Mumbai into a world-class city by 2025, has the potential to further exclude pavement dwellers from urban space. The CDP promises to dramatically increase low-income housing availability and affordability, and improve housing stock. However, world-class status and improved housing stock implies a city free of slums and informal dwellings, and thus a city where pavement dwellers are no longer physically visible. For a city to be "attractive" at the international scale, it must be appealing to the public eye, have a thriving economy, and must invest in large infrastructure projects such as transportation, conference centres, and tourist attractions. Where then do pavement dwellers fall on the list of priorities when governments are striving for world-class status?

Governments must acknowledge the potential that citizens have to positively shape urban spaces. The Byculla pavement dwellers and the Alliance have demonstrated that when supported by the municipal government and other institutional bodies such as the Slum Rehabilitation Authority and BEST, they can be drivers of community improvements and can shape urban space in a way that meets the needs of the most impoverished in the city. If Mumbai aims to become a world-class city, it must ensure the equal treatment of all of its citizens and acknowledge pavement dwellers as active citizens rather than intruders. The city belongs to people such as the Byculla pavement dwellers just as much as it does to its rich inhabitants. Therefore, if Mumbai wants to achieve world-class status it should work with citizens to give them adequate housing and allow them to participate in decision making. A world-class city must be inclusive, it must value the local and its own citizens before placing international interests as top priorities, and thus it must enable the poor, such as Byculla's pavement dwellers, to continue claiming their right to the city.

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Villa Los Cóndores, Temuco, Chile
Against Eviction and for the Right to the City

Ana Sugranyes

Housing policies in Chile have managed to provide shelter for the poor and reduce the housing deficit, stabilizing construction activity within the national economy. From the mid-1980s until 2000, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MINVU) funded the construction of some 600,000 homes, although of very low quality and standards. The Villa Los Cóndores housing development in Temuco, Chile, is a complex of 900 basic homes, built in the mid-90s at the height of MINVU's housing subsidy, when it pressed its regional executors in the Department for Housing and Urban Services (SERVIU) to meet their set budgetary targets by any means possible. Ten units per 1,000 inhabitants were being constructed at that time in Chile, the same soaring annual rate as in Germany after the Second World War.

Villa Los Cóndores is part of the Pedro Valdivia Norte sector lying on the edge of Temuco, which holds a population of 240,000 inhabitants and is the capital city of the Araucanía Region. Construction was funded by MINVU's housing subsidy and the resulting homes were about 40 square meters in size, within three-storey buildings with metal staircases descending into a central courtyard.

Unlike other complexes in the sector, Villa Los Cóndores was a technological pilot project constructed on uneven terrain containing areas where water gushes freely. Seeking to lower costs as much as possible, SERVIU allowed a construction company to build housing blocks with flimsy metal structures and lacking seismic reinforcement. Since the completion of the complex, columns have given way due to insufficient protection from ground moisture, and fragile walls made from thin, cheap drywall have damaged easily.

Life has been difficult and complicated for the 900 households that reside in Villa Los Cóndores since the development of the complex in 1996. Even though not required to do so, SERVIU forgave the credit debts of the complex's

residents, which amounted to 40 percent of the value of their homes. As such, they became the owners of homes in very poor condition, and SERVIU managed to shed all responsibility for their inadequate living conditions as these residents became private homeowners. Complaints of these living conditions made by the residents of Villa Los Cóndores reached as far as Chile's parliament in 2004. To preserve the safety of the residents, the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress ordered the destruction of Los Cóndores, executed through legislative power with which MINVU was forced to comply.

To proceed with the dismantling of the housing complex, SERVIU offered residents a compensation of 280 UF (approximately €7,000 or US$9,700), an insignificant amount compared to the value of their homes at the time of construction. Out of fear and ignorance, residents, who at this point had lived in the housing complex's substandard conditions for ten years, began to sign deeds with SERVIU for the resale of their homes. With the compensation they received from by SERVIU, residents had to look for housing even farther away from the city centre of Temuco. Due to the increased land value in Temuco, these households ended up in San Ramon, more than 20 kilometres away from the city centre. To supposedly offset the poor conditions of the resale of the homes in Villa Los Cóndores, SERVIU authorized residents to take everything with them, which they did. They took installations, windows, and doors, and before leaving they tore down the walls. Little by little, the Villa Los Cóndores neighbourhood became a no man's land, seized by gangs and drug addicts.

Not all residents of Villa Los Condóres accepted the resale of their homes. A group of 122 households — comprised of homeowners, tenants, and others — organized themselves into two housing committees. These households demanded the reconstruction of their homes and claimed their right to remain in their neighbourhood where they had over the years developed their lives and social networks as well as connections to schools, health centres, and transportation to their sources of income.

The first big fight for the committees was to ensure the protection of their lives in a violent environment. From 2005 onwards, life in Villa Los Cóndores became impossible. Residents who attempted to remain in semi-abandoned buildings were assaulted day and night, suffering all kinds of physical violence, diseases due to stress, and loss of property. Initially the committees were unsuccessful at gaining protection from SERVIU; however little by little, with support from the municipality, they managed to acquire police protection and they had SERVIU build fences and gates surrounding their homes. In addition, residents established surveillance and alarm systems to be better able to respond to new attacks.

Responding to the safety concerns of these 122 households has required a great deal of work and a strong organizing capacity. Despite the struggles in

dealing with these turbulent living conditions, the committees never lost sight of the main objective of their fight: the reconstruction of adequate and decent housing in their neighbourhood. It was through their persistent fight that community leaders began to construct a support base; initially through the Bishopric Department for Social Action, and later they discovered the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) through an internet search which then brought them into contact with other Chilean organizations, namely Corporación SUR, the College for Architects and the Universidad Mayor.

The committtees of Villa Los Condores are now negotiating the following principles and implementation details with MINVU (as cited by Luis Álvarez, President of the Villa Los Cóndores Committee, Sector 4):

1. The implementation of our right to continue living at Villa Los Cóndores where we are the legal and formal owners of property and urban land, even though we technically live outside of the urban area.
2. Participation in the creation of a development plan for the Villa Los Cóndores sector to specify where we will rebuild our homes and where the parks that MINVU wishes to implement in the sector should be placed. In other words, a proposed pan for our neighbourhood.
3. The design of housing and of the neighbourhood in a collaborative effort which will facilitate, from now onwards, decent living conditions in "La Nueva Cóndores" (the *new* Villa Los Cóndores).
4. Transparent mechanisms for the allocation of land where our homes will be built.
5. The basis for the temporary relocation of tenants and property owners for the time during which the execution of new housing in the sector will take place.
6. All necessary subsidies for the development of housing and neighbourhood structures from the federal, provincial and municipal governments.
7. The development of a small business to support our self-management capabilities in the construction of our housing.
8. The creation of a police checkpoint in the neighbourhood; to this end, we have made a lot of progress in our safety plan which has been informed by our living experience as well as our expertise which has developed over the years through our organizing efforts.

This statement of claims is an example of the implementation of the right to the city which crosses the scope of civil rights, of economic, social, cultural and political rights, and a political strategy of equitable and just local development.

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Homeless People Fight for the Right to Housing in Mar del Plata, Argentina

Ana Nuñez

Introduction

The city of Mar del Plata is located in the southeast of the province of Buenos Aires in Argentina and holds a population of approximately 700,000 inhabitants. The city is unique in that it was founded on private property in 1874, thereby violating the law. This illegal foundation led to a unique urban development where the manner in which land was distributed — and to whom it was distributed — depended on a small number of land owners. Historically, the most underprivileged social groups were evicted from central areas and relocated to areas that were inadequate for housing (very rocky, susceptible to flooding, lacking public transportation and infrastructure, etc.). This violence, physical and symbolic, practiced by the dominant social groups, was compounded by the historic absence of urban land and housing policies from successive local governments.

Currently, between fifteen and twenty percent of the population of Mar del Plata inhabit 219 precarious settlements and *villas*[1] dispersed throughout the city in situations of extreme poverty. Official sources estimate that approximately 11,000 households are in need of emergency housing. In the midst of Argentina's severe economic crisis in 2002, a dialogue group was formed by various social actors to address the necessity of emergency housing as a form of political and economic restructuring and social re-composition. The product of this meeting was the creation of the Plan Federal de Construcción de Viviendas (Federal Housing Construction Plan) which would finance the construction of housing for low-income social groups through different programs to be implemented by the Institutos Provinciales de Vivienda (Provincial Housing Institutes) with federal government funds.

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1   A *villa* may be defined as an occupation of vacant urban land that produces irregular urban plots through which vehicles can generally not pass through. Originally, occupants built single story dwellings with precarious material, making improvements of different sizes and quality over time. Later, with variations depending on the localization and urban integration, a process of densification began which included the occupation of vacant areas (in ditches, edges of railway tracks, etc.) as well as second-storey additions to existing housing structures.

Based on this initiative, the sub-program Bonaerense IX-Dignidad (IX-Dignity of Buenos Aires) was formed in 2005 in the province of Buenos Aires, aimed at "eliminating inadequate housing and overcrowding." In Mar del Plata, the program was charged with building 500 houses in order to remove the inhabitants of Villa Paso, a proposal which dated back to 1999. Paradoxically, Villa Paso was located in an urban area with decent living conditions and high social and economic value. At the same time, the municipal government created a registry of emergency housing to allocate 2,018 homes that would be constructed under the framework of the Plan Federal de Viviendas (Federal Housing Plan) (, financed by the national government.

The "Dignity" Sub-program

> "The poor are needed for their hands, as workers, but the city dominated by the market was not built to provide them shelter," –Oscar Pagni, former Technical and Legal Secretary of the Gral. Pueyrredon Municipality and author of the Villa Paso relocation project, March 1999.

> "It means changing the look of Mar del Plata and changing the urban development of important neighbourhoods," –Councillor Eduardo Salas; Debate on the Villa Paso relocation project, Minutes from the Meeting of the Honourable Deliberating Council, 16/07/99.

These two statements illustrate the denial of the right to the city in the terms set out by Henri Lefebvre, through an authoritative and alienating eradication-relocation policy, which produces social inequality and vulnerability. One of the objectives of the sub-program was effectively to "break certain social ties," which resulted in the 500 houses being distributed in three different locations: the neighbourhoods of Las Heras; El Martillo; and Don Emilio. All three of these neighbourhoods were lacking in basic infrastructure services and a means of social consumption, had limited means of public transportation, and were subject to flooding, etc. This in turn affected residents' socio-cultural identity, created tension, uncertainty, social disconnection and deterioration of living conditions, all due to the forced uprooting. Also, the resulting conflicts in the inhabitants' new neighbourhoods compelled the then-mayor to issue orders that inhabitants of those neighbourhoods would be obliged to carry a "certificate of good conduct and police record," according to those interviewed.

A high percentage of the homes were allocated even before they were finished and with serious construction problems:

> "There is no hot water, the toilets are loose, and there are leaks and moisture. The water heaters have major problems and the sceptic tank isn't working. Some had to damage their houses to install pipes."

> "They took people out of the Villa without giving them anything. Now they want to do the same thing to those who are left…" — Personal interviews

However, the main component of the program was suspended in 2007 in two of the neighbourhoods (Las Heras and El Martillo) when the two construction companies stopped work after building had barely begun, claiming that costs were higher than projected.

On March 23, 2008, more than 200 households living in extreme poverty and emergency housing situations collectively decided to take back the land, along with more than 40 semi-constructed houses abandoned by the construction company. This occurred after several years of fruitless waiting and after having after registering with the aforementioned Emergency Housing Registry.

> "I tried to get housing through the municipal government: I have the paper, like the majority of people here...Supposedly they were going to give me a house because my situation is very urgent, but it has already been a year now and I'm still here waiting for a response…"

> "Between everyone a case was filed ... for the chance to get a housing facility that can be paid for per month. It's already been almost three years since the note was sent and I still haven't received a reply…" —Personal interviews

> "…no water, no sewage… it rains and everything is flooded because it's right beside the bridge… we're living below the bridge…"

However, brutal police repression forced people to return to their original neighbourhoods that same day. Nevertheless, the Junta Vecinal Sin Techo (Homeless Residents' Committee) began to reorganize with protests, petitions, filing of complaints and other initiatives in the search of a concrete solution to their housing problem.

A year later, on January 15, 2009, 54 of these households returned to the site with a great deal of support from a solidarity network and backed by a legal injunction. However on the same day, the construction company in charge of building the complex filed usurpation charges, and thus justifying their inability to continue work on the project which had been abandoned in 2006 for the previously mentioned financial reasons.

The land occupation was not limited to the demand for housing. It included a much broader self-managed project as demonstrated by the development of community gardens and relationships with cultural groups, artists' groups, university students, teachers, workers, social organisations and residents of the area who supported the homeless' initiatives with workshops on literacy, academic support, and sexuality, as well as periodic protests throughout the city. In other words, recovering this space transcended the immediate right to housing and involved the right to the city in the sense that the value of the use of space was recaptured; appropriation took precedence over domination,

as Lefebvre proposes. It represented the reconstitution of a series of inalienable rights: housing; health and education.

The Eviction

On April 10, 2009, the court ruled in favour of imminent eviction from the recovered site and scheduled it for the 17th of that month. Starting on the 16th, the "camp for dignity" and resistance to the eviction were organised, bringing together different social organisations, students, professionals, artists, etc.

On April 17, 2009, eviction from the site was carried out with heavy-handed repression from various police forces. The eviction was unconstitutional as only one of the conditions of all those stipulated by the judge for carrying out the eviction had been met: it was not raining. Insufficient conditions included, among other things: the prosecutor who gave the eviction order left before the eviction was carried out; there was an insufficient number of ambulances present; there were far more police officers than persons being evicted; and these officers were not properly identified.

During five long hours, representatives of the homeless, their defense lawyers, and the author of this paper —as the person responsible for presenting social housing reports to the court— attempted to speak with the various prosecutors about the unconstitutional nature of the eviction. However all of the forces that enforce urban order fired their weapons of repression in an act meant to instruct and discipline society:

> "…the police were so brutal, they treated us like animals, and unfortunately we had to abandon our neighbourhood, we ran for fifteen blocks. At that point it wasn't just about the houses… they didn't care about human life. They wanted to kill us like dogs, destroy our houses, they broke down the doors that we made with our own hands. The construction company is just another example of all of this shitty corruption. They want to come and kill us like rats and that's what they do." — Interview with Adriana

Families went where they could. Some went to neighbours' or relatives' homes, but most went to the Centro Cultural America Libre, an area recovered in 2006 but which did not contain enough structures to house as many people as were seeking housing there. The site of their former housing was left unoccupied.

> "First they ask you for your identification, and if you don't have an address where you can leave your things, they don't let you go inside to get them. And if you don't have a way to transport your things, they won't let you in either. That's what was said there…" —Personal interview, speaking of police restricting residents' access to gather their belongings after the eviction

Starting the next day, direct action was organised throughout the following week: protests; mobilizations; various artistic activities, etc., demanding an immediate solution. After fifteen days they achieved their goal: a working group was formed composed of representatives of the homeless, the political bureaucracy, councillors from the various blocs, and the author of this paper, to analyze the long-term and short-term proposals for the households.

Four months after the eviction, they succeeded in obtaining: 41 sites bordering the recovered land; five Federal Plan housing units for households with the appropriate socio-housing scores, as per the Emergency Housing Registry; a subsidy for nineteen households to aid in possible temporary rental housing; and financing from the national government for the construction of 41 housing units of two or three bedrooms, to be built by various cooperatives in the city. As of September 15, 2009, the construction process had not yet begun.

Closing Reflections

According to Lefebvre, the right to the city is not a natural right, nor a contractual one. It symbolizes the right of all citizens to be a part of all networks and circuits for communication, information and exchange, all of which depends on an essential quality of urban space: centrality. This right therefore signifies the inevitable crisis of city centres based on segregation; it signifies the reconstitution of a unit of space and time and of a social union.

To that end, it becomes essential to recover the voices of inhabitants, their practices and representations, and the social relationships that weave with and throughout the neighbourhood. A relational and historical perspective is needed to position the experiences of inhabiting rather than the urban illusion of the habitat. The space of inhabiting is represented by gestures, movements, body and memory, symbols and feelings, contradictions and conflicts between wants and needs.

The most important social practice in the processes described here was the appropriation of a useful good, displacing the tension between legality and legitimacy. However it was criminalized by the hegemonic order, sustained by the authority of private property. And it was a right which expresses domination and which contradicts the social right to decent housing, but whose cracks allow us to resist and struggle until we achieve a just and egalitarian city.

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Photograph archive Ana Nuñez, Mar del Plata, February, 2009

Park Dwellers' Fight in Osaka, Japan: Homeless Demanding the Right to the City

Marie Bailloux

Background and context

Foreigners believe that Japan has no urban slums, but modern capitalism depends ultimately on the exploitation of the poor that lives and works in awful conditions.

Four years ago, a Japanese government survey discovered that Japan had 25,296 homeless people, living in city parks, along riverbanks, near train stations, in internet cafés, and on other public land. Of this group, more than 40% lived in parks. Osaka's prefecture has the largest homeless population in Japan — 7,700 by official figures, and more than 15,000 unofficially. Since the 1990s, there has been a great shift towards park-dwelling, when the economic crisis saw unemployment rapidly increase. Recession and unemployment are the single greatest causes of homelessness.

When socially vulnerable, unsheltered people collectivize and create safe communities in public parks, it represents a factor of protection for their physical and mental health and a great capacity to organize their survival skills and civil resistance. But the authorities violently evict park residents, remove and destroy their personal belongings to "cleanse" parks of the homeless and ensure "nice public spaces," forcing park dwellers to try to survive on the streets.. As symbolized by the words of the Governor "[Because of the homeless] young girls are no longer able to do gymnastic training or any exercises in the parks in the afternoons;" poor people are victims of physical violence but also of prejudices and deep social exclusion.

Furthermore, a citizen without a registered address is denied many other rights, including the right to vote, receive national health insurance, and obtain a driver's license or passport. Day laborers chronically out of work cannot receive

unemployment benefits; nor can they apply for welfare assistance, which requires recipients to maintain a permanent address. Social welfare administrations are not providing Japanese citizens even the minimal level of subsistence as guaranteed in the country's constitution. Once one becomes homeless, not having an address makes it nearly impossible to find work, and, thus, to ensure his livelihood.

Networks and Alliances: a specific perspective

Since the 1990s, as the Asian economy went downhill and led to the rapid increase in street-sleepers, some 30 organisations have formed a national network to help people on the street formulate their grievances and become more self-reliant.

For activists, the homeless should not be treated as in need of protection, but, instead, are encouraged to build healthy social relationships inside their own communities and fight against social exclusion. At the same time, they learn to struggle in an organised way for their right to a decent existence and against human rights violations. They struggle for the right to decent shelter but also for the right to not be evicted.

Yoji Yamauchi's resistance

Since 1998, Yoji Yamauchi has been homeless. His shelter is a blue, removable, lightweight, tarpaulin tent in a park in the industrial city of Osaka.

He has begun a singular struggle against the gross violation of Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Japan is a signatory (essentially, the universal right to housing), in alliance with homeless people's associations. Together, they fight the authorities against forced eviction and to be recognized as homeless with the right to the city by having an official address in the street.

In June, 2001, sponsored by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Yamauchi was part of a homeless group delegation that visited Hong Kong to evaluate the life conditions of local homeless and exchange experiences.

Then, in March, 2004, the Kita Ward (Tokyo north; a local entity directly controlled by the municipal government) refused to register the park as his address.

In April, 2005, an international solidarity campaign by "Koen-no-Kai" (The Park Collective) sent postcards to Yamauchi's "illegal" postal address in the Ogimachi Park. The campaign was supported by Habitat International Coalition (HIC) as a lobbying tactic in order to validate it before the authorities.

Determined to fulfill his human right to housing, he filed a lawsuit with the

Osaka District Court and won the case in January, 2007, as the district court backed his claim ruling a person's residence is the place where that person lives, regardless of whether one has the right to live at the location.

The city appealed against the original ruling, arguing that a tent is not a permanent structure and sent the case to Osaka High Court that then overturned it in 2007. It declared that it was illegal to use a park for his address, arguing that the tent, being removable, does not meet the standards of a residence by "conventional wisdom" and that the approval of the previous verdict would encourage other people to move into the park.

Yamauchi and his lawyer then appealed to the Supreme Court. Finally, in October, 2008, after a year and a half of silence, the Supreme Court dismissed the case. It finished without true resolution.

Similar to other "developed" capitalist societies, Japan has its share of urban slums, where the marginalized groups congregate in search of work and a decent place to live. In a modern capitalist country— model of production and organization — unsheltered people are not even authorized to sleep in a removable tent in the street and are systematically victims of evictions.

The right to the city includes the full benefits for all citizens to enjoy the use of the public spaces and provides them access to income, opportunities, land and housing, water and sanitation, education and health care. The World Charter for the Right to the City lists some of its principles as: full exercise of citizenship; democratic management of the city; social function of the city and of urban property; equality and no discrimination; special protection of groups and persons in vulnerable situations; social commitment of the private sector; promotion of the solidarity economy; and progressive taxation policies. But none of these aspects of the right to the city have been recognized or respected in the case presented here.

Since 2005, Habitat International Coalition has supported various calls to help Japanese homeless and to prevent forced evictions. In the various initiatives advocating for the right to the city, the most persistent actor is Yoji Yamauchi, who has shown a long–term commitment to the struggle as well as the skills to inspire solidarity from groups all over the world.

The Postcards campaign launched in 2005 was pragmatic, simple and had a good impact. Its success depended on the participation of people, raising international awareness about the pathetic conditions of Japan homeless in 2005 to2006. It eventually contributed to win Yamauchi's case with the Osaka District Court in early 2007 and gave him hope and energy to keep on fighting to break out of this vicious circle.

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(Re)claiming Citizenship Rights in Accra, Ghana*

Afia Afenah

Hundreds of thousands of urban dwellers in Sub-Saharan Africa face the threat of forced evictions every year. According to the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) over two million forced evictions occurred in nineteen African countries between 2003 and 2006 alone (COHRE 2006). What is most alarming is that Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have all forcefully evicted residents to make way for urban regeneration projects, despite having ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that enshrines the right to housing and protection from forced evictions.

This case study of the attempted illegal forced eviction of residents in Old Fadama, Accra's largest informal settlement, seeks to contribute to the limited body of knowledge regarding the development of urban social movements in West Africa. It exposes the circumstances, in which the municipal government sought to evict the community, and presents and analyzes the subsequent local urban movement that formed as part of a larger international housing rights movement in order to contest the eviction and find alternative solutions.

Old Fadama's residents appealed against the eviction order to Ghana's High Court, without success. In response, the community sought international support from Shack Dwellers International (SDI)[1] with which it succeeded in halting the unlawful forced eviction and created a constructive dialogue with the local authorities. During this process, Accra's urban poor built a progressive network of community-based and non-governmental organisations that have moved beyond the prevention of the Old Fadama eviction to address broader issues of social exclusion faced by Ghana's urban poor.

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* Community mobilization against the illegal forced eviction of residents in the Old Fadama settlement

1 Shack Dwellers International is a transnational network of local slum dweller organisations that have come together at the local and national level to form federations of the urban poor.

The Old Fadama case supports the notion that the negative externalities and detrimental social costs of the globalization of capital and the neoliberalization of cities are creating "new forms of translocal political solidarity and consciousness amongst those marginalized and excluded from the city they inhabit. The globalization of the neoliberal project has therefore been tendentially…associated with the partial globalization of networks of resistance," (Peck and Tickel 2002, p.399).

In contesting the Old Fadama forced eviction, the causes of which were clearly rooted in the municipal authority's neoliberal urban planning approach, the community opened up the political space for the renegotiation of existing power relations. Although this process has encountered numerous hurdles along the way, it has strengthened the capacity of Ghana's urban poor to reclaim their full citizenship and human rights. This is done by demanding to participate in the use and production of the urban space they inhabit through participatory urban planning and by ensuring democratic governance and a more equal distribution of resources, including vital urban infrastructure and services.

Case Study Background

Chapter 5 of the Ghanaian Constitution stipulates the protection of all citizens' human rights and freedoms, including the right of non-interference with the privacy of one's home and the protection from the deprivation of one's property. In addition, the Government of Ghana has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; however international housing rights legislation has not been adopted in Ghana's Constitution, which results in a lack of national legal mechanisms Ghanaians can use to claim their right to housing and protection from forced eviction.

Furthermore, in recent years, Ghanaian authorities have increased large-scale illegal forced evictions in the name of public benefit. Between 2003 and 2006 alone, 7,000 people were evicted from Lake Volta in Digya National Park to free up the area for the implementation of alternative land use plans; another 800 people were evicted from Legion Village by Ghanaian armed forces, and 2,000 traders were evicted from Accra's Kantanamo market resulting in the loss of their livelihoods.

Old Fadama

The settlement of Old Fadama stretches across 146 hectares and houses an estimated 25,000 to 40,000 residents, making it the largest informal settlement in Accra and perhaps within Ghana as a whole. The slum is located in the heart of the city, to the

northwest of the Central Business District, and hosts a mix of informal residential and commercial structures, with many hawker and niche food markets and small businesses. An estimated ten thousand local residents earn their living from business activities within the slum. The settlement grew significantly throughout the 1990s when it became a popular area for housing and work activities for many Ghanaians due to its low-cost rent, close proximity to the city centre, and central markets that provide ample income-generating opportunities.

Present day Old Fadama is a high-density area primarily made up of self-built wooden kiosks and shacks that lack adequate water and sanitation facilities. Flooding is a frequent problem due to the area's location between the Korle Lagoon and the Odaw River. Although the Accra Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) implicitly recognised the settlement by providing basic infrastructure and services in the 1990s, residents live in precarious living conditions and have been facing the threat of illegal forced eviction since 2002 when the AMA served them with eviction notices without providing alternative land or housing.

A study on the Old Fadama settlement produced by COHRE suggests that the Government of Ghana had three reasons for the eviction order: the illegal occupation of government land; the physical location of the settlement within the zone of an ecological restoration project (the Korle Lagoon Environmental Restoration Project, KLERP); and potential health risks posed by the recurring flooding of the lagoon as well as the soil quality of the land the settlement is built on. However, the recommendations of the COHRE report as well as a second independent study on urban waste pollution in the Korle Lagoon[2] suggest that Old Fadama's residents are minor contributors of pollution to the Lagoon and that an upgraded settlement with adequate sanitation facilities could both mitigate the government's health concerns and co-exist with KLERP (COHRE 2004, Boadi and Kuitunen 2002).

Further investigations into the alleged reasons for the eviction notice reveal that Ghanaian authorities are under pressure due to the tight loan conditions attached to the KLERP project —funded by the OPEC Fund for International Development, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development — which require the removal of settlers living in Old Fadama.

Also, the Ghanaian government believes that the settlement's existence impedes urban planning efforts around the Central Business District. In line with the dominant neoliberal urban planning approach applied in cities across the globe, Accra's Minister for Tourism and Modernisation of the Capital City

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2   This second study was conducted by the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences at the University of Jyvaskyla in Finland.

points out that a modern capital city should be focused around a Central Business District and must be secure, safe and well-structured through adequate zoning laws. It should boast historical monuments and tourist sites, provide adequate social amenities and public open space to its residents and must have sufficient sanitation and waste management facilities (Obetsebi-Lamptey).

If we apply this rationale, Old Fadama becomes the antipode of the modern capital city, but its location right in the heart of Accra, adjacent to the Central Business District, provides the government with opportunities for gentrification through regeneration. The entire area is designated as green space for future recreational use on the city's current strategic planning map. Accra's local authorities as well as much of the country's press have officially adopted derogative language and attitudes toward Old Fadama, diminishing the social status of the settlement and its inhabitants to that of the sinner and outlaw.

The AMA officially calls Old Fadama "Sodom and Gomorrah," the two ancient cities near the Dead Sea described in the Old Testament as cities destroyed by God because of inhabitants' indecent and perverse practices. In depicting the settlement as Sodom and Gomorrah, the government is openly portraying its limited lifespan, as destruction is both forthcoming and rightful. Legitimizing the eviction of outlaws from a place that even God would ultimately destroy due to the vices occurring within is easily justifiable to a constituency, especially if the accompanying propaganda has marked the settlement as a no man's land for other residents due to fear for their safety.

Halting the Old Fadama Eviction through Community Mobilization

The Old Fadama settlement has been socially and politically well-organised since the time when settlement formations began. The settlement certainly resembles any other political group with the existence of power struggles, but residents successfully mobilized politically to contest the threat of forced eviction. The community sought support from COHRE and the Centre for Public Interest Law (CEPIL), a Ghanaian NGO that provides free legal representation to informal settlers threatened with forced eviction, to contest the eviction through official legal procedures. The first step was a joint letter of contestation from COHRE and others, which highlighted the four main transgression points of the eviction order from Ghana's legal obligations before international law:

- The residents were not consulted prior to the eviction order
- The government had failed to consider reasonable alternatives to the eviction
- The advanced eviction warning period of two weeks was too short
- The authorities failed to provide alternative accommodation or other forms of compensation to the residents

Following the letter of complaint, CEPIL appealed to the High Court on the basis of these violations. However, the court rejected the appeal with a response that presents a number of grave errors in international law. As the failure of the Ghanaian authorities to adopt international housing rights legislation in their national constitution resulted in a lack of national legal mechanisms available to adequately fight the case, the residents of Old Fadama investigated alternative methods of contestation which led to a collaboration with SDI.

SDI began as a local grassroots organisation named National Slum Dwellers Federation in Mumbai in the mid-1970s. It gradually expanded through relationship-building with federations in South Africa and Thailand. The organisation was officially founded as SDI in 1996, encompassing federations in fourteen countries across four continents, and is now a global network of local urban activist movements. The core task of SDI is to "organize and unite the poor to influence the way governments, international non-governmental organizations, and TNCs discharge their obligations to the urban poor," (Shack Dwellers International, 2005). The crucial strategies and instruments used by SDI include group exchanges, savings and loan schemes, local upgrading projects, settlement profiling and collaborative efforts with NGOs to create dialogues with government officials and other formal institutions to increase substantive citizenship rights of those marginalized within society.

The publicity around the Old Fadama case and the residents' contacts with COHRE led to the involvement of the South African branch of SDI, with two coordinators visiting Old Fadama in 2003, while in Ghana for an international housing conference. At the time of the visit, residents had already set up various savings groups to improve the physical environment of the settlement. As a result, the visiting team concluded that Old Fadama inhabitants were sufficiently organised and willing to form a local NGO that would be responsible for providing the necessary professional, technical and administrative support to create local community-based organisations (CBOs). These CBOs in turn would provide support to residents in informal settlements to create savings and loan schemes and ultimately build and support a federation of the urban poor in Ghana.

For SDI, the eviction note was merely a symptom of the effects of poverty, marginalization and the lack of democratic governance facing the residents of Old Fadama as well as many other informal settlements in Ghanaian cities. Rather than focusing specifically on halting the forced eviction, SDI sought to develop the socio-political and socio-economic strength of the community to enable them to claim their right to the city they inhabit.

The NGO People's Dialogue on Human Settlements (PD) was created in 2003, in order to assist the communities to set up a national federation, formally known as the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP). In turn, the federation

provided official representation for the Old Fadama community before the Government of Ghana.

Within the first three years of inception, PD and the federation saw a number of political achievements for the Old Fadama community and Ghana's slum dwellers. They had created a constructive dialogue with the Ghanaian authorities in order to stall the eviction and develop alternatives, and began addressing broader issues of the marginalization of Ghana's urban poor.

The SDI model that began in Old Fadama in November, 2003, spread to the adjacent Agbogbloshie settlement a year later and has since been replicated in many informal settlements across the country. By 2005, the combined federations had fifty-two savings and housing schemes in 82 communities with a total membership of over 6,000 families. Organisations also expanded operations to four of Ghana's largest urban localities: Accra; Kumasi; Sekondi-Takoradi and Ashaiman.

The activities of PD are expanding to include the upgrading of informal settlements, the development of adequate resettlement programmes, and setting up a special fund to finance community-driven development approaches.

In 2005, around twelve federation members attended the Cooperative Housing Foundation Conference in Accra without invitation and were encouraged to join the discussion table with representatives of various ministries as well as national and international planning consultants. During the event, a large number of conference delegates acknowledged the need for greater community involvement in solving the countries' housing crisis and welcomed the formation of PD and GHAFUP, as well as the international collaboration with SDI.

Furthermore, the founding of PD and GHAFUP, and the involvement of SDI, has secured collaborative efforts and support from international organisations. Homeless International, a UK-based charity that supports community-led housing and infrastructure projects, is providing financial support with grants from the UK Department for International Development and the Waterloo Housing Association, in a quest "to enable Ghana's urban poor to realise rights to adequate housing, safe settlements, secure tenure and affordable infrastructure," (Homeless International). In addition, talks at the 2004 World Urban Forum in Barcelona resulted in a UN-AGFE (Advisory Group on Forced Evictions) mission to Old Fadama in collaboration with Ghana's Department of Local Government and Rural Development. A meeting of relevant Ghanaian ministries in 2005 resulted in the initial development of a relocation plan for Old Fadama's residents and the Government of Ghana requested UN Habitat and AGFE support to further develop the plan.

Despite these initial successes, Ghana's urban poor have encountered numerous hurdles in their quest to claim full citizenship rights, and it remains

to be seen if the resulting shifts in power-relations are real and long-lasting. One of the latest setbacks for Old Fadama residents occurred as a result of violent clashes between supporters of different political parties within the settlement during the summer of 2009. Accra's local authorities, under the city's new mayor, immediately took the opportunity to label the settlement as a "risk to national security" and re-ordered the eviction that had been on hold since 2002. The threat of illegal forced eviction had once again returned to the community.

However this time around, relationships between residents and the Ghanaian branches of COHRE and Amnesty International prompted an immediately successful campaign against the AMA's renewed eviction plans. Furthermore, Ghana's central government, the media, and the general public have all drastically changed their opinions about the community and now support the residents' requests for alternatives to the illegal forced eviction.

Reporting on the latest developments in the Old Fadama case, Farouk Braimah from PD highlights that within three weeks, the anti-eviction campaign has managed to renew dialogue with the municipal authorities, as the new mayor is now open to discussions and partnerships with representatives of the Old Fadama community. Although the renewed eviction attempt poses questions regarding changes to power-relations the Ghanaian urban movement has been able to achieve, the speed of the collective response and support from the central government, the media and Accra's wider community are clear signs that Ghana's urban poor have come a long way in the process of claiming their right to the city.

Concluding Remarks: Transcending Local Peculiarities

The emerging Ghanaian urban movement, formalized through PD and GHAFUP and supported by SDI, supports the argument that the negative effects of neoliberal urban policies have encouraged the development of globalized resistance networks as suggested by critical theorists such as Appadurai (2001), Smith (2002), Peck and Tickel (2002), among others. However, still lacking is an understanding of how these individual political movements can transcend their distinct local particularities and consolidate their quest for specific rights into one large global coherent right to the city movement in order to gain momentum and change the existing inequitable global economic system that lies at the heart of much of the marginalization felt in those different localities.

Being comprised of many horizontally-aligned movements, David Harvey suggests that most of these activist groups are extremely place-based and hence express a "militant particularism." He calls for the militant ideas developed out of a particular place-based experience to "get generalized and universalized as a working model for a new form of society that will benefit all humanity — what

[Harvey] terms 'global ambition' " (Routledge 2003, p.337). In order to develop successful global networks of resistance, movements need to achieve a balance between their "militant particularism" and learn to understand the ambiguities that are intrinsic to transnational collaborations (e.g. different gender or race relations of participating movements) in order to create "a more transcendent and universal politics, combining social and environmental justice, that transcends the narrow solidarities and particular affinities shaped in particular places," (Routledge 2003, p.339).

The case of Old Fadama clearly demonstrates that there is scope for international urban movements to fight for citizens' rights and encourage change, but it also raises the question of how these movements can be consolidated and scaled-up. There seems to be ample scope for urban movements fighting against the practice of forced evictions to play a key role in scaling up efforts to create a momentum for the right to the city movement. The severity of large-scale forced evictions, the publicity they receive from the media and international organizations such as the UN, Amnesty International, Witness and others, and the fact that the practice violates various different human rights, offers a platform for consolidated and supported action. Human rights violations that occur during forced evictions are much more pertinent than the more concealed effects of market-based evictions. The main task at hand may be to further highlight the underlying reasons for forced evictions and to promote the understanding that their occurrence in such a diverse range of localities is the result of global processes rather than a country specific issue. Although there are always locally specific socio-cultural and political factors involved in the process of displacement, there is an urgent need to continue drawing links between the low-income families that have been forced to move away from Brooklyn, New York, London's East End, or Berlin Kreuzberg due to increasing costs of rent and services that are the epitome of gentrification, and those that are evicted from informal settlements in cities like Accra, Lagos, Johannesburg and Kigali.

Only once we understand the global forces that contribute to the issues communities around the globe are facing can we turn to the militant particularism that Harvey speaks of as a global ambition for the right to the city. The World Social Forum may be an excellent platform for up-scaling this process.

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The 2008 Beijing Olympics

Maria Cristina Harris

The 2008 summer Olympic Games signified great changes for the city of Beijing and its residents. The city needed to be fit to host an international mega-event, which brought on the modernization, beautification, and construction of all aspects that would make Beijing "attractive" to the world. This paper will focus on the historical Qianmen district in Beijing, a commercial and residential area located in the city centre since the 1600s, and the effects that the Olympics had not only on the physical aspects of the area but also on its residents. The right to the city is exemplified in this case through citizens' actions in response to the many violations committed by developers, government officials and municipal authorities during the re-development of Qianmen.

In 2002, the Beijing Municipal Planning Commission enacted a conservation plan to protect 25 historic areas in Beijing's Old City, one of these being Qianmen. The conservation plan outlined five main principles:

1) To preserve the traditional cityscape and *hutongs* (small alleyways lined by traditional courtyard homes);
2) To ensure the authenticity of the preserved heritage;
3) To implement preservation using a gradual and measured method;
4) To improve the infrastructure and living conditions of the local residents;
5) To encourage public participation.

The conservation plan also stated that renovations must not result in large scale demolition, special attention must be paid to historic continuity, and valuable historic architecture, *hutongs*, and old trees must be preserved. These guidelines integrated some of the primary ideas of the right to the city by valuing local participation and placing the improvement of resident's lives as a priority. As David Harvey notes, the right to the city involves citizens having an active right to make the city different and being able to shape it in a way that meets

their needs. However, with the Olympics on the way, the Beijing government was faced with a deadline, following these guidelines would have placed limits on developers' plans to remake Qianmen into a modern version of the old; appealing to tourists, spacious for Olympic marathon runners to pass through, and attractive to people who could afford Qianmen's new and elegant homes.

In 2005, the Beijing government began offering residents of Qianmen's residential neighbourhoods compensation for houses it planned to demolish. However, compensation rates did not account for additions or specific aspects of each particular home that would have naturally added value to it and therefore compensation rates were much less than the real value of homes (COHRE, 2008). If residents refused compensation, they underwent a mediation process with the government in which houses were valued individually. Often, compensation rates did increase after mediation but they were still insufficient to provide residents the same quality of life they enjoyed in Qianmen elsewhere in the city. Constant harassment from developers and constructors attempting to push residents out did eventually lead to many of them accepting low rates and leaving the neighbourhood. Resistance became too much of an inconvenience for the daily life of many families, also prompting them to unwillingly accept inadequate compensation.

Others, however, remained with hopes of claiming their right to the city and to the urban space of Qianmen they had lived in for decades. In the spring of 2006, Sun Ruoyu, whose family business had been situated in Qianmen since the 1840s, began receiving eviction notices from the government stating the family would have to leave their home in the name of slum clearance and that the city had the right to begin demolishing after a certain date. The city offered the family 1.6 million Yuan for the house (approximately US200,000), much too little for what was to become one of the city's most expensive districts and not even enough to give the family the opportunity to remain in Qianmen by purchasing one of the newly renovated or constructed houses. The family refused the compensation offered because they wanted to belong to the re-development of Qianmen and not be pushed to the outskirts of the city. Despite the family's resistance, the city did not willingly accept their presence. It was more important to make space for Qianmen's new multinational "residents," which included Rolex, Prada, Starbucks, Nike, Adidas, and Apple computers, than to respect Beijing's own citizens and their right to remain in the place they had lived in for years. However, by July, 2008, a month before the start of the Olympics, Sun was still there. Her restaurant was still standing, although somewhat dilapidated, but was covered with a green plastic netting in order to keep it out of sight and out of mind for the thousands of Olympic spectators that would be passing by throughout the month of August.

For the many residents of Qianmen that were evicted, they faced very limited choices when deciding where to settle next. The little money they received in compensation was not enough to allow them to stay in the city centre. Many residents thus moved to the outskirts of the city past Fifth Ring Road, an expressway that encircles the city located about ten kilometers from downtown. In one family's case, it now takes both adults a total of four hours to get to and from work each day using public transportation. Before, when living in Qianmen it would only take them five minutes by bicycle. The quality of education obtained outside of the city is much less compared to what this family's child once received downtown. Therefore their daughter has remained at the same school in downtown Beijing, implying that one parent must accompany her to and from school each day, having to leave the house at 5 a.m. to make it in time for the start of the school day at 7 a.m. This is a daily reality for many of the families evicted from Qianmen. For the elderly that were evicted it has also implied a struggle to maintain easy access to the doctors and healthcare facilities they have attended for years in the city centre. This once again means long distances to travel whenever they have a medical concern.

The outcomes of the eviction notices varied for the residents of Qianmen. Some experienced harassment, others accepted compensation after some time, and a minority managed to resist and remain. In their struggles to stay in their place of residence, the people of Qianmen who either faced, accepted, and/or resisted eviction all attempted to secure their right to the city. The right to the city is about citizens being involved in the decisions that affect where they reside and having the opportunity to participate in the transformation of the urban spaces they live in. When it came to the re-development of Qianmen, the guidelines that had been outlined to protect this area as a heritage site were almost entirely ignored by the municipal government and developers. These guidelines, which value aspects of the right to the city such as improving the living conditions of local residents and enabling them to participate in the decisions affecting their neighbourhood, were disregarded and unenforced while modernization and beautification took precedence prior to the Olympics. Furthermore, if the right to the city is respected, citizens should be allowed to remain in the city and not be pushed to its outskirts. The Qianmen evictions violated the right of citizens to remain in the city when it was not their choice to leave. The inconveniences faced by the residents now living past Beijing's Fifth Ring Road are many. Their access to health services, high quality education, and commercial and shopping areas has been reduced, as well as their overall quality of life since they must now invest a lot of time commuting to and from work, valuable time they could be using to spend with their families or for their own personal activities.

As much as we saw the right to the city violated by Beijing city officials and developers, we also saw it represented through citizen's struggles to remain in

Qianmen and claim their right to housing and urban space. Many residents did not accept the compensation rates that were first offered to them and only left after being harassed in both their workplaces and homes. Sun and her family managed to resist the city's efforts to remove their restaurant from Qianmen and though their house was physically concealed from the view of others by green netting, their house was still standing and present in the middle of the modernized Qianmen. This demonstrates that citizens do have the capacity to stand up for what they want and demand that their rights be recognized and that they cannot be disregarded to give priority to an international mega-event like the Olympics. If a city such as Beijing wants to impress the world it must value the local, be inclusive, and treat its people, especially the poor, as citizens with rights, rather than solely as objects that can be mistreated, pushed away, and forgotten.

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On Defeats and Triumphs in Exercising the Right to the City: Reflections Based on Recent Experiences in Argentine Cities[1]

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This research paper analyzes three experiences in Argentina's largest cities (Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Mar del Plata) where the dispute over the right to the city is being carried out. Emphasis is placed on what Borja (2004) considers as one of the key dimensions of this process: the political-institutional structure, which provides the conditions towards the formalization, consolidation, and development of policies for their concretion. Temporary setbacks, defeats and triumphs demonstrate that the right to the city is essentially an arena of political conflict.

Urban Policies and Urban Exclusion

Since the beginning of the 1990s in Argentina, governments at various levels have played an important role in promoting the necessary conditions to implement changes on an urban scale as the first effort towards valuation processes (Herzer: 2008). With the rise of neoliberalism, the largest world cities have developed according to an urban policy model that Arantes (2003) calls the third *urbanistic* generation, which includes the *art and science of management* and a lexicon which is explicitly commercial, linked to a specific resurrection of urban planning which is strategic and flexible, conducted per fragment and per project. Thus, policy, government, and public capacities have been oriented towards making markets more dynamic, markets for which the city has provided raw material and support — starting with urban land — and now the city has itself also become an object of

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branding. This has been made possible by the adjustment, modification and even the transgression of various legal frameworks.

In Buenos Aires, for example, there have been major modifications to urban planning and building codes, the creation of national and municipal government corporations (Puerto Madero and Puerto del Sur), guidance on decisions regarding investment in infrastructure and revaluation of public space, and an urban environmental plan (Plan Urbano Ambiental) that legally supports the changes that preceded it (Rodríguez, Bañuelos and Mera: 2008).

In Córdoba, these efforts have included the creation of the Corporación Inmobiliaria Provincial (Provincial Real Estate Corporation), the transfer of public lands for "brand" projects, changes in building codes, a plan to recover the shoreline and areas near the Suquia River, interventions in the central core of the city and an emphasis on public-private cooperation.

In Mar del Plata, a strategic plan was advanced by a promotional group made up of business and professional interests, and the municipality was invited to participate only after the fact. That assessment led to the design of a land-use plan focused on the value of the coastal zone — made possible by the increasing privatization of public spaces such as the Bristol and del Sur beaches — and of commercial centres, in an effort to reposition the city as the main tourism destination in the country (the *amardelplata*[2] brand).

Amid the dynamics of restructuring of urban centres, older *villas*[3] like *Villa La Maternidad* (Córdoba), *Villa de Paso* (Mar del Plata) and the *Ex AU3* (Buenos Aires) have been the focus of policies that challenge the continued residence of their low-income inhabitants.

The Ex AU3, Villa La Maternidad and Villa de Paso: Amid Forced Displacement and Resistance

The Ex AU3 is a large area of buildings in Buenos Aires that was expropriated by the regional government during the latest military government (1976-1983) for a highway that was never built. The occupation began in the early 1980s. It involved fifteen city blocks (approximately 1,113 buildings) in a middle- and upper-middle-class residential area (Colegiales, Cohglan, Villa

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2   *Amardelplata* is a play on words: *Amar*, meaning 'love', *plata*, meaning 'money'.

3   A *villa* may be defined as an occupation of vacant urban land that produces irregular urban plots through which vehicles can generally not pass through. Originally, occupants built single story dwellings with precarious material, making improvements of different sizes and quality over time. Later, with variations depending on the localization and urban integration, a process of densification began which included the occupation of vacant areas (in ditches, edges of railway tracks, etc.) as well as second-story additions to existing housing structures.

Ortuzar, Saavedra), where the price per square meter was around US$1,500[4].

A 2000 census registered 942 households who had been living there since before 1996, but by 2003, the delegates' committee estimated that there were a total of 1,500 households[5]. In the 1980s, the local government allowed the occupation and began to sign gratuitous property loans that provided the appearance of legal occupation to residents but that did not allow the development of ownership expectations (Rodríguez: 2005).

In 1990, the highway project was reactivated[6] and in 1991 the Deliberative Council approved By-law No. 45520 which sought to achieve a comprehensive and collaborative project, however which did not succeed[7]. In 1997, the equivalent of twenty blocks of expressway were built, while hundreds of eviction notices issued by the Attorney General's office were defied through actions taken by organised occupants supported by grassroots resident associations. In 1998, within the framework of political autonomy, Law No. 8 was sanctioned, institutionalizing the participation of the delegates' committee and resulting in the census that established a register of recognized beneficiaries. In 1999, the *Programa de recuperación de la traza de la Ex-AU3 (Ex-AU3 Urban Structure Recovery Program)* was created and charged with developing an urban recovery plan for the area, an asset recovery plan (which conceives of public property as a real estate asset to be used for self-financing the project) and a housing solutions plan for the occupants.

In relation to the housing issue, from 2002 to 2007, a flexible plan with four alternatives was designed: construction of low-income housing on unoccupied sites of the urban grid (self-construction); the sale to the occupants of those buildings which could be adapted for families; granting of individual or joint loans (moving them toward self-management housing *Law No. 341* [8]); and the

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4   From 2001 to 2006 there was a 54% increase in land values in the northern area. Source: Geographic Information Systems Unit (Unidad de Sistemas de Información Geográfica), DGEyC. GCBA.
5   In socioeconomic terms, the population of this area is heterogeneous. It includes self-employed people with equipment (furniture restoration workshops, mechanics, bicycle repair shops); household services (gas technicians, plumbers, gardeners), municipal government workers, wage-earning employees in the private sector (construction, nearby foodstuffs factories), low-skilled or temporary workers (domestic workers, handymen) and the unemployed.
6   Business stakeholders involved in developing urban infrastructure sign agreements with national agencies, particularly the Ministry of Economy and Public Works (where the routes are predetermined).
7   This project included road-building companies, potential public housing construction on remaining land along the highway route, occupant organisations, other gratuitous property loan holders, grassroots resident organisations.
8   This law, in the same period, was the product of the struggle of cooperative self-managed urban movements (initially the MOI-CTA and the Mutual de Desalojados de la Boca and later dozens of social and political actors in the context of the 2001 crisis). In contrast with neoliberal urban policy, they gave rise to a form of operation that enabled the self-management of resources and set up a bank of 100 centrally located buildings owned by the cooperatives, some of which were

incorporation of subsidized projects for low-income families (including lifelong gratuitous loans for poor heads of households over 65 years of age). In six years, up until December 2007, only 27% of the population included in the census (259 households) had found some kind of solution. By that time, the conflict over the inclusion of public land in the real estate market had already begun in the Legislature.

The Macri government (current city administration) emphasized rezoning and urban renewal of these fifteen city blocks, valued at more than US$100 million[9]. For the families residing there — estimated between 450 and 700, including both registered and non-registered — the local government violated the current legal framework and began arbitrary evictions and pressure tactics with ad hoc subsidies[10], given on a case-by-case basis. Those who resisted faced administrative eviction.

Towards the end of 2008, the wave of evictions slowed. The courts intervened and in April 2009, a ruling put a stop to the evictions and the delegates sought a legal injunction from the courts[11]. The conflict continued from courtroom to courtroom throughout the territory.

Villa La Maternidad is one of the oldest *villas* in Córdoba, of about 70 years old[12]. It grew alongside the expansion of the railroad and economic activities in the Barrio San Vicente[13], where it is located. It is located ten blocks from the city centre and five blocks from the bus terminal. In mid-2004, when it was the subject of a violent eviction by the provincial government, it was inhabited by around 350 households who worked in activities related to the area's accessibility: construction; domestic services; waste collection and storage; sidewalk vending; and work in nearby hospitals.

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emblematic complexes in terms of quality and cost, and a group of 500 cooperatives that currently maintain this type of self-management as part of the struggle for the right to the city.

9   Real estate and construction businessmen are working on the future sale of the land (LPO on line).

10   $96,000 pesos for the beneficiaries of Law No. 324 and up to $25,000 pesos for other occupants.

11   Fifty-four people participated in the injunction action. Previously, another 30 families had presented a request for injunction which is currently in process in Courtroom II of the Administrative and Tax Dispute Tribunal.

12   The survey by Agencia Córdoba Ambiente states its age as 70 years; the article "Evolution of Emergency Villas in Córdoba 2001-2007: Location and population estimate" ("Evolución de Villas de Emergencias en Córdoba 2001-2007, localización y estimación de población", SEHAS 2007), estimates its age at 65; and the web site www.argentina.indymedia.org/news/2005/03/2700600. php states it is 100 years old.

13   The San Vicente neighbourhood, founded in 1870, is one of the more traditional neighbourhoods in Córdoba. Initially, it was an area of summer homes which later became the location of various production activities, such as mills, slaughterhouses, an ice factory, a brick factory and a brewery, attracting labour and becoming a working-class neighbourhood. Gradually it became more connected to the centre of the city through the development of urban infrastructure.

The ownership of the land is a point of conflict. On the one hand, the provincial government claims it owns the land, as part of a historic urban development project[14]. On the other hand, there are survey maps from 1943 that show the villa's current lots. Based on those maps, some residents claim ownership rights due to having lived on the site peacefully for more than ten years.

In 2001, as a result of the floods in March 2000, the provincial government declared a housing emergency, establishing the bases for the *Mi Casa, Mi Vida* (My House, My Life) program[15], the implementation of which implied a massive relocation of residents from central or semi-central areas to new housing complexes known as neighbourhoods or *city-neighbourhoods*[16], located on the periphery of the city. To do this, the city modified the zoning.

Villa la Maternidad, along with others *villas*[17] was relocated to *Ciudad de Mis Sueños* (City of My Dreams), fourteen kilometers from downtown (next to the Ituzaingó Anexo neighbourhood, nationally known for conflicts over agricultural toxins and their carcinogenic effects). The complex, which opened in 2004, consists of 565 housing units.

The provincial government used persuasion and blackmail tactics to carry out this forced relocation, through a survey by social workers and the actions of *punteros locales*[18], in addition to a subsidy of 300 pesos per household to pay for moving costs.

Only 32 households resisted the move on the basis of their having been born there, health problems related to the new location, worsening of labour conditions, increase in transportation costs and the breaking down of subsistence strategies.

A forced relocation occurred by very violent means in June 2004. A bulldozer was used— which is similar to the eradication of *villas* which occurred during the last military government — and also mistakenly destroyed parts of housing belonging to families that had not agreed to move, causing panic. Some residents sought outside help and the resistance was accompanied by professionals, human

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14 The Crisol Project, Law No. 1040/11886, by which the land was expropriated from a private owner (Garzón) for such purposes.

15 The original name is Emergency Project for the Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Groups Affected by Floods (Proyecto de Emergencia para la Rehabilitación de los Grupos Vulnerables afectados por las inundaciones (1287-OC-AR)), part of the Program for Government Modernization in the province of Córdoba financed with a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank.

16 *City-neighbourhoods* is the name given to housing complexes that have more than 250 housing units and community services such as a medical clinics, schools, and police stations.

17 Including Mandrake, Los 40 Guasos, Vagones de la Estación Mitre, Guiñazú, in addition to Villa La Maternidad.

18 *Punteros locales* are political party actors that establish customer relations as a structuring mechanism to build their political-territorial strategy.

rights organisations and other groups[19]. Residents formed the Commission Against the Eviction of Villa La Maternidad, which implemented a defence strategy including raising awareness and filing a request for an injunction. The provincial government, for its part, filed lawsuits claiming usurpation of the land[20].

Tense and complex negotiations with those who resisted resulted in the signing of successive agreements regarding the urbanization of the area; however they did not produce any concrete results[21]. The *villa's* internal organisation progressed with the building of a community centre, designed to provide educational support, a soup kitchen, recreational activities and a community garden.

In 2008, the municipal government, along with the provincial government and private companies, released a management plan that includes the construction of a civic and convention centre adjacent to Villa La Maternidad, demonstrating the persistence of the conflict over appropriation of the land. Currently, the 32 households have obtained an injunction and are involved in usurpation trials. Other households have returned from *Ciudad de Mis Sueños* and new ones have joined. The provincial government has tried to negotiate with each household individually, case by case.

Villa de Paso was founded around 1940, and was one of the first *villas* in Mar del Plata, located on private land in one of the highest elevated areas in the city — the San Carlos neighbourhood — but lacking infrastructure. Due to its location, it had one of the highest growth rates[22], and currently occupies some of the highest-valued land, estimated to be worth US$200 per square meter in 2006.

In 2005, a population survey by the municipality identified 430 households (1,782 people)[23], of which around 70% lived below the poverty line. With respect to the issue of ownership, the first census conducted in 1998 identified diverse situations: owners (7.7%); concession-holders who had signed agreements with owners or third-parties (13.7%); renters (1.8%); de facto occupants (68.2%) and others (8.6%). But in 2005, these variables were omitted from the census.

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19 These include CUBa Mbs (Coordinadora de Unidad Barrial), Agrupación Otro Cantar, MTR (Movimiento Teresa Rodríguez), La Comuna, Indymedia (Centro de Medios Independientes), CEPRODH (Centro de Profesionales por los Derechos Humanos), SERPAJ (Servicio de Paz y Justicia de Córdoba), independent professionals and students, contacts in the city of Buenos Aires, the MOI-CTA, the Movimiento por la Reforma Urbana, etc.

20 The government claims ownership of the land based on the cancellation of the Crisol Project (Law No. 1254).

21 The most recent agreement between the residents of the *villa* and the Ministry of Social Development was signed on January 2, 2009.

22 As in the case of La Maternidad, the land conflict is also linked to employment access (fishing, restaurants or construction) for residents who are mostly migrants from other provinces.

23 There is seasonal fluctuation, increasing during the summer and when summer ends, many workers return to the cities where they live permanently. As a result, the number of jobs also varies, and only 9% had formal employment.

In 1970, the first attempt at relocation was made, however it was unsuccessful. The issue arose again during the Aprile administration. In 1997, a city council member and former president of the neighbourhood Asociación Vecinal de Fomento (Residents' Development Association or AVF), proposed a rezoning and recognition of ownership rights of some of the inhabitants, but this proposal was also not further pursued. In 1999, the *Programa de Relocalización Asentamiento Precario Poblacional Paso* (Villa de Paso Precarious Settlement Relocation Program) was approved, however did not include recognition of ownership rights and transferred the government's responsibility along with the right to housing in peripheral areas, which lacked service infrastructure.

To do this, the municipality promoted expropriation for its own benefit, reversing the ownership regularization processes carried out in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area in the 1990s, which had resulted in the transfer of ownership and regularization for the benefit of occupants. Such projects were supported by the development of land-use organisations.

Originally, the excuse given was that the city needed to finance the relocation and cover the costs of compensation to owners. The time period was extended and housing financing came from the provincial government through the *Programa Bonaerense IX – Dignidad* (Buenos Aires IX - Dignity Program). However, the expropriation moved ahead, as very few original owners went to the municipality to agree with the terms of compensation for their land[24].

In 2003, residents near the *villa* formed the *Comisión Administradora Mixta Municipalidad–Vecinos para la Erradicación del Asentamiento Paso* (Municipal-Residents Mixed Administration Commission for the Eradication of the Paso Settlement), to pressure authorities to relocate them. However this relocation was resisted in the destination neighbourhoods through mobilization, presentations before the Deliberative Council, and lawsuits, usually led by their respective AVFs. When residents of the *villa* protested, seeking compensation for leaving their land and the ability to choose where to live, these AVF provided them with tactical support. However within the *villa*, resistance against the relocation was limited to the *compensation-choice* slogan.

The time periods of 240 days passed and this prolongation brought new conflicts. The first relocation of eighteen households occurred in November 2006 and subsequently activities occurring in the construction sites were stopped.

In early 2008, 145 houses under construction in the El Martillo neighbourhood (which were part of the relocation) were occupied by some 300 residents of the Pueyrredón neighbourhood who were also in critical need of housing. Due to

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24   This included about fifteen lots; the rest were declared as unclaimed inheritances. Without a doubt, the conditions existed for an alternative solution, such as the urbanization of the *villa*.

complaints from the construction companies and the municipality's intervention, the eviction was carried out in less than 24 hours.

The next twenty families were relocated in November 2008 and February 2009 in Barrio Las Heras, along with a bid to contract water and sewer works. In this context, 54 families from Pueyrredón reoccupied El Martillo in January 2009, using various self-management practices and supported by a network of organisations. On April 17, the local courts ordered their eviction, which resulted in severe repression by the police.

Currently, only about 60% of the population of the *villa* has been relocated, while those left homeless, evicted from El Martillo, have maintained a self-managed organising process to fight to guarantee their right to housing.

The Right to the City as an Area of Conflict

The comparative analysis shows how urban space is restructured dynamically, and acts as a medium for the deployment of social, economic, cultural and political processes[25]. This conflictive dynamic around the use of urban centres is indicative of antagonisms which are characteristic of capitalist societies and have been developing in socio-political democratic contexts.

A central location becomes an increasingly exclusive and excluding good, undermining the possibility of constituting the right to the city as a universal integrator by replicating foreign models that repeatedly include the restructuring of centrally-located areas for the benefit of valuation dynamics.

Local governments — with differing levels of autonomy, considering that the city of Buenos Aires is a quasi-province — tend to act as facilitators of these processes, which highly benefit public and private actors. Likewise in democratic contexts, these same local governments and particularly legislative entities have created areas of negotiation/confrontation that made it possible to include the participation and strategies of low-income sectors. The judicial power has also played a role in the same sense, opening up spaces for the inclusion of more perspectives in the conflict.

Institutionally, the conflict unfolds between different rights as part of an antagonistic social dynamic: on the one hand, those that support the establishment of criteria linked to recognition of the historical and organisational process of settlement and use by inhabitants, independent of the relationship between their income and the value of the land they inhabit; and on the other hand, institutional frameworks which favour market interests supported by the unlimited right to private property, which tend to erase histories of arbitrary formation through expropriation.

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25   Following the type of orientation proposed by Henry Lefevbre in "The Urban Revolution" 1970

In this context, policies of privatization of public land are naturalized based on social redistribution purposes, which could very well be achieved through other instruments, for example through the sale of Villa de Paso in order to build housing or infrastructure.

These conflicts of appropriation of central urban land involve networks of stakeholders which are evidence of the porous borders between the government and civil society: there are stakeholders and class interests on both sides of the dispute, and their rationales are made viable through the linking of networks whose privileged level of analysis is vague and diachronic. These networks channel conflict and shape the institutional framework depending on the correlations of strengths that regulate structural pressures.

Finally, the rights of low-income sectors are only defended when their organisation is established and political strategies are developed to transform social relations and bring such strategies to fruition.

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Inhabitants Gazirat al-Dhahab Island, Cairo, of Face Eviction

Maria Cristina Harris

Introduction

Since 2001, the inhabitants of the Gazirat al-Dhahab Island in Cairo, Egypt, have been pressured by the government to leave their homes in order to give way to development projects that the government states will serve the "public good." The inhabitants of the island however want to remain on the land their families have lived on for more than 100 years.

Located alongside the Nile River, the Gazirat al-Dhahab Island, or *Gold Island* in English, has a population of more than 20,000 people and is highly fertile land used for agriculture. Despite the island's population, the only means of travelling to and from the island is by *felucca*, a small sailboat that is typically used on the Nile River and Mediterranean Sea. Adequate water and sanitation services are not available on the island, nor are schools or health centres.

Development Plans for the Island

Under Cairo's intended urban master plan for 2050, the government strives to beautify the city, create new green spaces throughout, and make Cairo more appealing on the world stage. Gazirat al-Dhahab Island is one urban space that the government wishes to put into "better use." Although this "better use" remains to be clearly defined by the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities, one option has been to sell the land to a non-Egyptian Arab investor that would use this space to build tourism facilities.

The government justifies the eviction of these families by stating that the island is government-owned land and that it is not being used for "public benefit." It also promises to provide residents with adequate compensation packages. Yet, residents find it difficult to trust the government's promises since many families

who gave up their land in prior negotiations never received full compensation.

The Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities' lack of clarity on its plans to develop Gazirat al-Dhahab Island has led to the emergence of a diversity of statements on what is to be done. The construction of tourist facilities, the creation of a public park, and even a park with a resort are all ideas that have emerged for the island's development. One could view the establishment of a public park as a positive use for the island's land. The Gazirat al-Dhahab Island is a very large piece of land not very densely populated and with Cairo's growing population and the city's expansion, a plan for a public park that would enable the island's current inhabitants to remain and continue cultivating the land could be a solution that might satisfy both the government and citizens. The government, however, has been proposing the expansion of green spaces throughout Cairo for a long time now but planned projects to build public parks always seem to fail as private and foreign investments for large-scale developments are favoured instead. The lack of trust in the Cairo government's promises is one of the central reasons why Gazirat al-Dhahab's residents have not acceded to the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities' demands to leave the island.

Opening the Debate on the Right to the City

The situation the inhabitants of Gazirat al-Dhahab Island currently face places them in a vulnerable position because of their lack of tenure security and their constant fear of being displaced.

The government's declaration of the island as a protected area and its denial of public service provision on the island has been a way to assert its control over Gazirat al-Dhahab and pressure families to leave. As a "protected area," officially, people should not reside on the island, buildings and houses cannot be constructed or repaired, and the government has no obligation to provide water supply and sanitation services.

Families have grown and the expansion of households has become a necessity. Since the government has made it illegal to bring construction materials onto the land, families either experience overcrowding within their households or they choose to smuggle materials onto the island. This implies increased costs due to the small amounts of construction material they can bring over or the confiscation of these materials by city officials and government lawsuits against those citizens who build or repair.

Children also receive inadequate education because there is no formal schooling on the island. The time it takes parents to accompany their children to and from schools on the mainland each day has resulted in many children not attending school and instead remaining at home on the island. Lack of access to

a clean water supply and proper sanitation services, in addition to the lack of immediate medical care, has led to many preventable deaths, particularly for children who are the most vulnerable.

The majority of the families living on the Gazirat al-Dhahab Island have been there for more than 100 years and yet the government still denies their right to remain on the land they have inhabited for so long. Where will 20,000 people go once they are displaced from the island if adequate re-settlement and compensation terms are not provided?

This case provides an opportunity to reflect on the concept of the right to the city. The right to the city constitutes a process that involves dialogue and debate between urban governments and citizens. Urban governments must value citizens' needs and desires instead of applying different tactics to displace people from their land. As citizens of Cairo, the inhabitants of Gazirat al-Dhahab Island should not be denied access to clean water, sanitation services, proper education for children, quality healthcare, and adequate housing. The Cairo government needs to listen to its citizens' demands and give them the opportunity to participate in the planning of their city, especially when both the land they have lived on for more than a century and their future are at stake.

Eight years after its initial declaration[1], the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities has yet to appropriate the land on Gazirat al-Dhahab Island. It therefore still has the opportunity to create an urban plan that takes into account all citizens' rights, including the poor, to remain within the city and to be involved in the processes that affect their livelihoods.

If the government is so eager to increase green space in Cairo why not allow the people of Gazirat al-Dhahab to remain? They currently practice urban agriculture and produce high quality vegetables and other food products with which they sustain themselves. Cultivation of the land forms part of the people's identity and livelihood. The Cairo government is placing its tourist-oriented beautification scheme, and thus private interests, before the best interest of its poorest citizens.

Habitat International Coalition (HIC) member, the Egyptian Centre for Housing Rights (ECHR) based in Cairo, has met with government officials to discuss Cairo's master plan and to emphasize the importance of citizen and civil society participation in urban planning processes. After attending a conference held by the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities, ECHR felt it was treated antagonistically because of its interference with the plan and believes it has been black listed by the government since it is the only NGO bringing attention to this issue.

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1   See The Egyptian Centre for Housing Rights. 2001

ECHR has also contacted the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank (WB) since both institutions are involved in the design and execution of the Cairo master plan. During a workshop organized between ECHR and the government, UNDP refused to provide any information of its involvement. The WB, however, has been more open to discussion. A workshop on government accountability in urban planning projects held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in July, 2009, hopefully provided the WB and ECHR representatives an opportunity to discuss Cairo's urban development plans.

The attitudes and reluctance to collaborate expressed by some of the principal actors involved in the urban master plan for Cairo demonstrates that ECHR's work must be supported by local and international NGOs, as well as by the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, so that effective strategies can be created to better deal with the planned development projects for Gazirat al-Dhahab Island. This is why in May, 2009, HIC members and ECHR representatives visited the Gazirat al-Dhahab community to witness the conditions being faced by the island's inhabitants and to hear testimonies of their struggles. The 50 housing rights defenders, community leaders, and social movement representatives from 23 different countries were troubled by the impoverished conditions Gazirat al-Dhahab's residents are living in and shocked to hear what they have been facing as a result of the government's plans to appropriate the island. An Open Letter[2] submitted to President Hosni Mubarak has been redacted by HIC to express concern about the urban projects being planned in Cairo and to entice the government to change its destructive policies that have violated and will continue to violate housing and land rights, denying citizens their right to the city.

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2   See Habitat International Coalition website http://www.hic-net.org/articles.php?pid=3214

From Protest, to Proposal, to Project in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Steffen Lajoie

Poverty emanates from more than an empty pocket book, a bad job, poor health, and a dodgy neighborhood. Definitions these days tend to bounce around a multiplicity of issues ranging through social, economic, physical, human, and natural dimensions, taking in factors such as exclusion, disempowerment and voicelessness. Effective poverty reduction or elimination strategies must take these into consideration. Properly approaching housing and habitat issues with a focus on poverty elimination can affect such issues as: reducing the health care burden; increasing an asset base; creating stability and security; recognizing difficulties of employment creation; and increasing possibilities for successful action in housing and basic services (Anzorena et al: 1998).

The right to the city calls for five strong tenants: liberty, freedom and the benefit of the city for all; transparency, equity and efficiency in city administration; participation and respect in local democratic decision-making; recognition of diversity in economic social and cultural life; and reducing poverty, social exclusion and urban violence (Brown and Kristansen: 2009).

Calling for the right to the city focuses on changing the policies, structures, and practices that hinder the urban poor from accessing what their richer neighbours take for granted: having a say in the planning, building, maintenance, service provision, and creation of their cities.

Going a step further, the case will look to how social movements can take action to build the partnerships and power necessary to remove the obstacles hindering their livelihood strategies.

Residents of Villa Esfuerzo were forcibly evicted twice over two years by private companies. In July, 2009, the International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI) announced multilateral funding to rebuild the community in collaboration with the national housing institute (INVI), the private owners, local community groups

and civil society organizations, and the residents of Villa Esfuerzo (IAI: 2009). This paper will analyze how this social movement was able leverage enough power to remove the obstacles to reducing poverty, social and physical exclusion, increase participation, and win the right to the city.

The Poverty Context of Villa Esfuerzo

The Dominican Republic covers two thirds of the island of Santo Domingo on which it shares a 388-kilometres long border with Haiti. It has a population of over 8.5 million; over 60% reside in cities and the rest in the National District and the Province of Santo Domingo. The statistics are grim: 32% of the population lives below the poverty line; 35% of the population has inadequate access to drinking water, 22% has no access to sanitation, and the infant mortality rate is higher than the regional average (AGFE: 2005).

Of the housing in the country, 75% is self-built, and 50% of citizens have no title to the land which they occupy. . This fact, coupled with tenure and land insecurity have facilitated the high number of forced evictions not only in the capital city, but also throughout the country.

Villa Esfuerzo is in the East Santo Domingo Municipality and occupies land owned by the Porcella family, which was rented to the State Council of Sugar in 1958. As public companies were privatized, the land was returned to the owners with no tenure security for the residents despite state issued deeds (AGFE: 2005; IAI: 2009).

I first visited Villa Esfuerzo in January, 2007, at which point residents had been violently and forcibly evicted twice. On March 9, 2005, the second eviction took place while the UN-Habitat's Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (AGFE) was in the country on a special mission. The incident took place just, after a meeting with the State Attorney (AGFE: 2005). Of the 600 families originally evicted, 60 remained on the site. They lived in temporary self-built shacks, water was piped in by the city and electricity came in from nearby towers.

After the second eviction, the AGFE mission in collaboration with the People's Network received a promise from the Governor of the Santo Domingo Province to repair damages to the homes of those residents holding deeds to their properties, giving rise to the Reconstruccion de Villa Esfuerzo campaign. This would later lead to a commitment made in 2007 to fund reconstruction of the community in 2009 (IAI: 2009).

Building Partnerships and Power to Gain the Right to the City

On the nights of the evictions, when the private company arrived with clubs and petrol and lit the shacks on fire to chase out the residents in order to bulldoze the neighborhoods, the residents of Villa Esfuerzo felt vulnerable and stripped of all rights. But the community was not devoid of social or political assets. Many neighborhoods in the Dominican Republic will elect a *Junta de Vecinos* (Neighborhood Committee) which will have different levels of communication with the local government.

The *Junta de Vecinos* was already affiliated with *Red de Coordinación Urbano Popular por* la *Defensa del Territorio* (Popular Urban Coordination Network in the Defense of Territory) an association of over 60 organisations, community-based and within civil society, working together to build a stronger voice in defense of land, housing and habitat security. By 2005, the network was already in communication with AGFE, and the municipality of Boca Chica had sent an invitation to help with the increasing threat of forced evictions (AGFE: 2005).

By 2007, Villa Esfuerzo had heard enough promises, and had even seen an architectural model for the reconstruction of their community. However, no action had been taken. To build pressure on state agencies, Villa Esfuerzo joined the People's Network in affiliation with the IAI Zero Evictions Campaign, which they subsequently launched in 2007 by marching to the National Palace (IAI: 2009).

In March, 2007, the residents of Villa Esfuerzo held a protest outside of the INVI offices and with support of the former Governor of Santo Domingo won a meeting with the Director of INVI renewing talks of reconstruction. With the increased pressure from the community, the AGFE, the People's Network, Coop Habitat, and the IAI were able to negotiate a tentative agreement between the landowner, INVI, Coop Habitat, and Villa Esfuerzo.

The Porcella family would donate the land to Co-op Habitat, only if INVI would agree to build something esthetically pleasing. INVI agreed to build for 77 families, but only on a rent-to-own scheme organised through Coop Habitat; all that was needed was the money. Through much lobbying and networking, Villa Esfuerzo's allies were able to leverage multi-lateral funding not only for Villa Esfuerzo, but also two other communities in August, 2009 (IAI: 2009).

Victories

At the time of writing, the residents of Villa Esfuerzo had yet to witness reconstruction. But what has occurred in this case study is far more powerful. A small neighborhood of low income families was able to move local, national and international authorities and organisations to fight for their rights.

Villa Esfuerzo also serves as a pilot project setting a precedent where new partnerships were formed where there had never been dialogue before. Thanks to the right kind of international support, the community was able to lobby for and win an innovative solution to their housing problems.

As a result of the reconstruction initiative, Villa Esfuerzo gained an international voice through the Zero Evictions campaign, won meetings and negotiations with INVI and the local governor. Subsequently, the programme won multi-party support on the presidential level. Through the building of partnerships, the community has won increased land security and housing rights, access to government and international institutions, a stronger voice and access to decision-making in the planning of their neighborhood and their families' future.

Conclusion

By protesting their treatment, the residents of Villa Esfuerzo made significant gains in rights. They were able to fight for and win access to government institutions capable of deciding their future. In turn, they have set a precedent for other projects in similar situations, transforming institutional structures and processes, which formerly hindered the betterment of livelihoods and the security and quality of housing and habitat.

Without organising at the community level and then, through the People's Network, at the regional and international level, the international community may not have noticed. Further, through protest, proposals, networking, meeting, and negotiating, these actors were able to get to the table with politicians, the housing ministry, and federal bodies. They reduced poverty, social exclusion, and increased participation and respect in local democratic decision-making. The result is significant and it took significant power to get there. But this is how social movements can win the right to the city.

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People's Initiatives of Empowerment

Building Cities for and by the People:
The Right to the City in Africa

Joseph Fumtim

The right to the city is an emerging concept in activist discussions which questions the failing, ultra-liberal urban policies implemented throughout the world. It has arisen on the basis of a pleonasm: that citizens, simply by existing as such, should have the freedom to exercise their citizenship, without fulfilling any other conditions. However, history has been accelerated by many different conjectures, distancing the citizen from their dignity, to the point that new methods and logics must be developed in order to allow citizens to exercise their urban citizenship. In other words, adaptive devices must be created to allow them to take ownership of their city and to transform it as they see fit in order to benefit equally from its resources. The city is not just a chaotic, monstrous, life-crushing machine with a will of its own. It is and should be overflowing with potential, where wealth is expressed in terms of infrastructure, social networks and economy: opportunities for integration and self realization that should be within reach of every citizen, thanks to the correct functioning of institutions.

From this point of view, raising the issue of the right to the city also means discussing the right to life. In effect, beyond its purely speculative and regulatory aspect, the right to the city aims to ensure that every citizen is able to exercise their basic biological functions such as eating, drinking, breathing, and defecating all with the utmost dignity, and that they have the freedom to inhabit and become one with the city.

In the following essay, we strive to explore the conditions of articulation and emergence of the right to the city and to present the challenges and issues that it raises in the global context of urban governance in African cities. While the discussion is intended for Africa in general, most of the examples will be provided from Cameroon.

An Urbanization Split into Fractions, Foreclosures[1] and Exclusions

In observing the urbanization of a number of African states, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, what jumps out is the exponential development of areas of foreclosure: places, practices and processes that legally and psychologically condition citizens towards a certain discomfort. A convivial atmosphere is no longer the norm. The psychological security that once eased relationships between citizens and their city has been shattered. This materializes not only in the risk of forced evacuations and demolitions but also by red tape indicating no parking zones, reserved or paid parking lots, etc. In other words, we are experiencing a proliferation of forbidden zones which threaten to place conditions on or endanger the satisfaction of the abovementioned biological functions.

This signage highlighting communal bans indicates the spatial shrinking and the urban confiscation that African citizens are experiencing, particularly the poorest of them. In a city like Yaoundé, it is shocking to observe the contrast between on the one hand, the construction of paid parking lots and the expansion of roads and highways, and on the other hand, the prosperity of capitalist centres of accumulation and exchanges compared with less-marketable areas (poor neighborhoods). These are marginalized spaces where the living conditions do not interest neoliberal capitalists, because of the predominance of knowledge-based activity (social networking) over marketable wealth.

We must note that this urban planning is accompanied by a repressive system equaling the one seen in South Africa during the time of the apartheid.

This dynamic, largely supported at the highest level of the state, sets the stage to generate and reinforce urban fragmentation between increasingly radicalized groups confronting situations with a high potential of violence and conflict. For example, during the "hunger riots" in February of 2008, we observed that the urban fractions that were attacked the most were the rich neighborhoods. The very famous play "Le Don du Propriétaire" ("The Landowner's gift", 2003) by Cameroonian filmmaker Wakeu Fogaing, recently produced for the screen by fellow Cameroonian director Serge Alain Noah, had already foreshadowed such a vision. In the play, Mr. Vartan, a rich man in a contemporary African capital city, catches his neighbor's son at his wife's window in the middle of the night. He thinks his wife is cheating on him. The robber then confesses that he was only trying to carve himself out a share of the arrogant wealth allowing the rich to live handsomely while those around them starve to death. The poor's struggle for survival is intimately linked to the hatred of the rich, to the desire to dispossess

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1   'Foreclosure' (from the French term, *forclusion*) is used here as the Lacanian term for a specific mechanism of psychosis, referring to the rejection of a fundamental significant element outside of the symbolic order of the subject, just as if it had never existed.

them of their wealth through robbery, whether real or symbolic. In this way, certain acts of vandalism must be considered not as acts of dispossession, but as a way of challenging the social order.

In addition to this progressive fragmentation, a fringe group of the population is growing that could be considered as "urban scum," specifically, those that hold no interest from the point of view of the capitalist system. For several years in Yaoundé, the government delegate to the urban community has been overseeing construction with the explicit objective of "modernizing" the city by improving traffic lanes and "cleaning up" the neighborhoods deemed unfit to inhabit. A closer look at these projects nonetheless shows that they are denying access to the city to its poorest residents. Thus ostracized, these inhabitants are pushed further and further towards the margins where they survive, barely getting by, in often inhumane conditions. Reclaiming the right to the city and reclaiming the right to life are therefore the same issue.

This process of derivation is such that many inhabitants of African cities live in their own cities like passengers in transit or even as if in refugee camps. They are there, without being truly present. The many frustrations, the insecurity in regards to access to land, the acceleration of history[2], reinforced by the development of technology, the long strides made by capitalism and mass consumption have little by little deprived them of a space of their own, echoing French architect and philosopher Paul Virilio's concept of the "insecurity of territories." These city dwellers have lost notions of proportions, dimensions and size and now live in an uncomfortable network of human and environmental relationships, in a trap blocked in by claustrophobia on one side and by agoraphobia on the other.

Urban Predators: Are our Cities for Sale?

This question was raised by a group of researchers[3] in light of the observation of substantial collusion between local authorities and the business world in African cities. Indeed, bus stations, popular markets and water conveyance — all spaces and resources that help the poorest sections of the population endure urban hardship and austerity — are progressively being privatized. This gradual withdrawal of the state corresponds to a weakening in the imposition of public authority, which is skillfully and maliciously turned into a weakening of public responsibility for the fate of its citizens. Yet this seems to be what the near future

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2   Mass consumption and the development of technology have clouded reference points to the extent that citizens lose touch with reality: "The real time of the immediate, of the instantaneous and ubiquities that construct history have made real space and geography disappear", Paul Virilio on Radio France Internationale (Radio Show « Idées », May 17, 2009).

3   Bredeloup, Sylvie & Bertoncello, Brigitte and Lombard, Jerôme (Dir.) Dakar, Abidjan: des villes à vendre? Éditions l'Harmattan, Paris, 2008.

holds for urban societies of black African cities, where public-private collusion tends to favour private over public interests. This corruption or enslavement of the local authorities in regard to capitalism has generated a reversal of values and reference points, modifying and re-defining the relations between cities and villages, with consequences in terms of perception and managing of social itineraries.

In the 1960s in Cameroon, as in a number of central African countries, contentions between urban and rural areas and lifestyles translated in migratory trends focused on symbolic as well as economic accumulation of goods. Therefore, for many tribes such as the Bamilékés of Cameroon, the village was the quintessential place for valuing wealth and distinction whereas the city was considered as a type of secondary zone in the background, or a non-bourgeois space[4] for the collection and conquest of accumulated goods. The village could therefore be considered the centre and the city the periphery. This was the pattern our cities fit into before the emergence of total capitalism.

The introduction of capitalism into all relations of production has currently led to the opposite situation, thereby radicalizing the divides that the previous social systems constantly sought to bridge. It boils down to cities for the rich and villages for the poor.[5] Although it sounds like a slogan, this phrase is an accurate description of reality. Since the structural adjustment programs were implemented with the support of the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank), the wave of privatization of public services has turned states into predators preying on their own citizens, especially the poorest. In fact, people's access to justice and safety are constantly strained by bottlenecks that create great opportunity for corruption and political patronage. In Cameroon, for example, the case of access to economic rights for poor people is burdened by a prohibitive fiscal chain. In such a mechanical system, the poor become an element of the capitalist system, where they can be consumers and consumed at the same time. Consumers, because the "just-in-time, zero stock"[6] method must be maintained, favouring mass consumption even at the risk of using incentive measures like sales or lower bidding. Consumed, because fiscal capitalization which has been developed around these initiatives does not work for them, but against

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4   *Bourgeois* is used here in the sense of distinction, in other words, the practices and spaces of valuing wealth (ostentatious or not). Among the Bamilékés, for example, funerals take place in the village and not in the city where the deceased lived. Material and symbolic goods are displayed by all participants and very often generate waste and chaos.

5   The divide between the city and the countryside effectively intersects with the wealth/poverty duality. With the rise of capitalism, this tendency has been radicalizing.

6   According to Paul Virilio, this is the slogan of mass distribution. In other words, everything is for sale and everything can be bought. Social actors exist only to the extent that they are capable of fitting into the circuits of production and mass consumption.

them. Consumed, because all of these initiatives are sucked up or swallowed by the capitalist octopus, whose tentacles penetrate even the most inconceivable spheres. All of these procedures and maneuvers combined, these plots and insults as a whole, are what we call urban predators. It is a kind of political sorcery and vampirism. How else could we interpret, for example, the dismantling of trade activities in the street under the pretext of cleaning up public spaces, while these informal trade activities represent close to 10% of urban tax collection?

Megapolization: A Trap for Urbanization in Africa

African megacities such as Lagos, Cairo and many others growing rapidly, pose a real challenge for the African citizens of tomorrow: how do we live, or rather how do we face living on such a giant scale? Nigerian novels in the 1970s and 80s (Buchi Emecheta's "The Bride Price," Nkem Nwanko's "My Mercedes is Bigger than Yours"), as well as songs by Fela Anikulapo Kuti, provide an utterly relevant illustration of the tangles and turmoil with which citizens have faced, in that time, this great urban phenomenon that is the megacity. In these texts, Lagos is depicted as a "cruel city": a jungle instead of a city, where culture and everything related to a civilized lifestyle looked more like a Hobbesian state of nature. It represents a situation where the culture of urgency is preeminent and where resourcefulness and approximation characterize all of citizens' daily tasks.

For many African countries, megacities are a pathological symptom rather than a sign of the success of urbanism. They certainly bring in enormous resources on an economic level, but this is only profitable to the ultra-liberal capitalist system. Multinational corporations are interested in them only to have their capital flourish and to make the most profit possible. What about the inequalities and the environmental damages this causes? What is most concerning in this case is the gradual contraction of humans on their own surroundings, as human relations grow increasingly tense due to capitalist mediation. Inhabitants are in the process of falling behind the pace of their own city. They are becoming less and less sensitive to the heartbeat of their own city, caught up in a relentless and ever-growing urban trauma. Capitalist interference and free trade culture has made them lose control of their reality. The past and the future have been severed, leaving people trapped in a tumultuous present. The pace should be set by people and not by technology, by human values such as solidarity and not by capitalist will.

Building African Cities for and by the People

Reflections on the right to the city in Africa cannot ignore the necessity of conceiving the African city for and by people themselves. If this postulate is

disregarded, the African city will eventually become a city of structures (capitalist, technological, etc.) and not a city of people[7]. This is the perspective contained in the current evolution of urbanization on the continent.

This reflection is based on the idea of redistributing roles among the actors involved in urban development. It is in this respect that "many voices call for a development model based on the dynamics of the population and not on the long and costly urban planning processes decided on by international agencies or governments. In many countries, giving the responsibility to poor communities for developing collective savings systems and microcredit has proven to be effective."[8]

In envisioning urban evolution in a perspective of co-production, the city becomes a shared value, as do its methods of production and appropriation. In the same way, the right to the city in Africa calls for a new socialization of African city dwellers in regards to themselves and their environment. How can we make the city inhabitable for its inhabitants? How do we let inhabitants find fulfillment in their own city, without being obligated to migrate elsewhere, where city living could be even more restrictive or compromising?

This habitability demanded by poor urban populations needs to progress from being solely a desire to being a categorical imperative. An entire international legal structure outlines the opportunity[9], and what remains is its revival using our creative capacities. We have an obligation to imagine, all we need to do now is put it into action.

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7   Architect and professor Teolinda Bolívar Barreto and her team from Caracas Central University, published a report entitled "Ciudades de la gente" (Cities of People) in the years 1990-2000. It is obvious therefore that these truisms are still necessary!

8   Grégoire Allix, L'urbanisation comme moteur du développement ?, Le Monde | 22.07.09

9   Among which the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and "The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights", and the majority of national constitutions in Francophone Africa.

El Movimiento de Pobladores en Lucha[1]
Santiago, Chile

Charlotte Mathivet and Claudio Pulgar

The resurgence of the *poblador* movement in Santiago, Chile

In Chile, the *poblador* movements of the beginning of the 21st century are rooted in the long history of these movements' struggle during the 20th century: there are therefore many similarities in their demands and actions. However there are three important differences from the movements of the '60s, '70s, and '80s[2]: the fragmentation of the identity of the *poblador*; the aspiration to equality; and the fragmented action.

The fragmentation of the identity of the "*poblador* being" is the result of the political changes which have occurred in Chile since the military dictatorship (1973-1990) with the installation of a neoliberal economic, social and cultural model which has left its mark on the social fabric of the country. During the years of the dictatorship, which brought a lot of violence and poverty to the lives of *pobladores*, the enemy was visible and the struggle was clear. Now, with the return of democracy, it is not as easy to define what the *pobladores* are struggling for or against.

The identity of the *poblador* has become more complex due to the individualism generated by the neoliberal reforms introduced by the dictatorship as well as by the democracy, which have created a *población* resident who might not recognise themselves as a "*poblador*," and who does not identify with their marginalized and poorly perceived local area. Today's *pobladores* are "doubly disinherited: of

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1 Movement of *Pobladores in struggle*: *Poblador* (pl. *pobladores*) is a term that transcends the meaning of 'inhabitant' and is also attributed with a social and political connotation meaning those who fight for the rights of the poor majority living in large cities.

2 Márquez, Francisca, Resistencia y sumisión en sociedades urbanas y desiguales: poblaciones, villas y barrios populares en Chile, (Resistance and submission in unequal urban societies: *poblaciones, villas* and popular class neighbourhoods and housing estates in Chile), Santiago, 2008

their ancestors' heritage and of the promises of contemporary modernity."[3] One of the causes of this loss of identity may be explained by the housing policy which began under the dictatorship and which has been continued under democracy by the various governments of the Concertación[4] which translated, among other things, into the eradication of precarious settlements (slums, land seizures).

Indeed, transferring families from slums to *poblaciones* of social housing which are very small and of poor quality, has in many cases caused the loss of strong social links which had been formed in the struggle to survive in the slum. This loss of strong networks, which were a support in day-to-day living, is felt by families when they first move into the *población* as a sensation even stronger than their poverty. Although they are pleased with the new comforts which they find in the low-income housing, they experience an atmosphere of "distrust, fear and insecurity."[5]

It stems from situations of over-crowded households and a lack of decent housing that *pobladores* begin to organise themselves. This translates into struggles to recover public space through community organising, building a bridge between the old *poblador* movements and the current situation with the aspiration of recovering and strengthening social links between *pobladores*.

The History of the *Movimiento de Pobladores en Lucha*: Brotherhood meetings to obtain adequate housing

In the indigenous Mapuche language Mapudungun, Peñilolén means "brotherhood meeting" which gave rise to the current name of Peñalolén, a district within Santiago, Chile. In the nineteenth century, the land in Peñalolén was divided into various estates of powerful landowning families. Since the 1960s, land seizures — illegal land occupations — have taken place in response to the lack of housing in Santiago and have contributed to a large part of the self-constructed development of Peñalolén.

The last land occupation in Peñalolén occurred in 1999 when 1,700 households seized an area of 26 hectares. This act was notable not only for its scale (in terms of the number of households and the size of the occupied lot), but also because of its historical significance, occurring ten years into what was considered a successful housing policy by the Chilean government during the transition to democracy and during a period of poverty reduction in the country. This seizure is framed within a different political and economic context of the seizures that

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3   Márquez, op. Cit, p 349

4   The Concertación is an alliance of centre and centre-left parties which formed after the dictatorship and which governed Chile since the return to democracy in 1989 up until 2010.

5   Márquez, op. Cit, p 351

took place in the 1960s and '70s when *pobladores* fought for housing largely to begin building the city.

However, the seizure in 1999 was similar to the original and more emblematic seizures in Santiago, and resulted in the effective organisation of *pobladores* who demonstrated their will to be integrated into a city that had excluded them. They managed to prove themselves as indispensable actors and protagonists in the construction of the city, in contrast to what the subsidiary housing policy of the last 30 years has demonstrated, recognizing only the state and the market as actors. *Pobladores* managed to find different solutions to their demands for a life with dignity, freedom and solidarity through their struggles, determination, and work during the land seizure. It should be noted here that the *población* of Peñalolén still exists in 2010, eleven years after the initial land seizure, encompassing more than 400 households living in very poor conditions and constantly under police surveillance, pressuring them to abandon their homes and vacate the land.

Lucha y Vivienda (Fight for Housing)

Even after the land seizure in 1999, *pobladores* of Peñalolén continued in their fight for adequate housing in the city. The organisation Lucha y Vivienda (Fight for Housing) was formed in 2003, made up of neighbourhood assemblies and delegate councils to decentralize decision-making power within the organisation. Despite the official discourse of a successful housing policy in the 1990s, groups like Lucha y Vivienda organised themselves to demand their right to adequate housing and to the city, in an area where they feel a sense of belonging and where they have established social ties. In short, these *pobladores* demand their rights to housing and to the city in Peñalolén, which is significantly the same place where many of them were born.

El Movimiento de Pobladores en Lucha: new name, same fight

El Movimiento de Pobladores en Lucha, MPL, emerged in Peñalolén in 2006 stemming from Lucha y Vivienda, as a new reference to the fight for the right to adequate housing and to the city. In the past few years, MPL *pobladores* have made many accomplishments at different levels towards the realization of their rights to adequate housing and their right to the city within their neighbourhood. Their efforts stem from desires to regain an active role in decision-making and participation thereby restoring the social fabric that was lost during the military dictatorship's neoliberal policies. This idea of active citizenship was also lost even after the return to democracy through the various governments formed by the Concertación (1990-2010) and their subsidiary housing policy which produced effects of individualization and limited participation on behalf of the *pobladores*.

The ideological basis: from beneficiary to "new *poblador*"

Many public policies and academic investigations are conditioned by the idea that the *poblaciones* of poor peripheral urban areas are anomalies, problems to be solved by social, urban and housing policies, etc. However, they are seldom considered to be spaces with emancipatory potential, local areas where the *pobladores* can exercise power "from below."

One way forward in this respect would be to adopt a rights perspective in public policies, and base their design and implementation on the participation of excluded sectors. It is a question of treating *pobladores* not as mere objects of public policy but as subjects of rights — actors and protagonists in the social construction processes of local areas and in the creation of habitat. Specifically, the proposal of the right to the city provides us with a framework for the design of urban-housing public policy from a rights perspective.

The result of the subsidized housing policies followed in Chile over the last 30 years has been to convert the poor — considered to be marginalized, vulnerable and excluded — into simple beneficiaries receiving assistance from social programmes and focal objects of public policy.

The idea is to recover the historical role of *pobladores* as the people who build the city, together with their participation in political processes, specifically public policies. It is to understand them as a political and productive force, as subjects of rights, who are positioned through the conquest of new physical, cultural, social, economic and political territories. This will thus change the logic which brands them as beneficiaries or in need of assistance, to give them a new status in relation to the State, changing its practices, making it their own, redistributing surplus value and exercising citizenship, not with the hope of conquering power in its entirety — which was the paradigm in the 20th century — but of exercising it from their own local area.

The negative view held by the state towards areas of urban poverty has been a fertile ground for fostering the physical and symbolic segregation which hangs over them. We propose a different way of looking at peripheral urban areas, one which also coincides with a rights perspective in public policy which focuses on the resident, as we understand that "the suburbs of third world cities form the decisive geo-political scenario of today."[6]

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6   Davis, 2007 in Zibechi: 175 "Los suburbios de las ciudades del tercer mundo son el nuevo escenario geopolítico" ("The suburbs of third world cities form the geo-political scenario of today") Zibechi, Raúl. Autonomías y emancipaciones. América Latina en movimiento. (Autonomy and emancipation. Latin America in movement.) Editorial Quimantú. Santiago, Chile. 2008.

Urban alienation from the subsidising state and collective disalienation of local areas

It is in fact perhaps the action of the subsidising state which has been the greatest cause of social problems in cities. One has only to look at the crisis generated by housing policies which have created "ghettos" of urban poverty among *pobladores* "with a roof"[7] over their heads, who cease to be subjects of rights and are reduced to being the beneficiaries or targets of focused social programmes. "The world of marginalization is in fact constructed by the state, in a process of social integration and political mobilization, in exchange for goods and services which it alone can procure."[8]

We make reference to the concept of alienation, introduced by subsidized housing policy, from a new perspective of alienation in work, now understood as a type of alienation which results from subsidized housing policy. We understand the concept of alienation as the situation "imposed on all facets of the daily life of an individual by institutions and organisations which do not permit their participation in the provision of services."[9]

Turner blames this alienation on heteronomous, centrally administered systems which are dependent on great pyramidal structures of continuous growth, based on centralizing technologies[10]. He refers to the reduction of day-to-day freedom, derived from a feudal attitude by the state towards the social classes. He states that it is not only politicians or leaders who are responsible for this attitude, but also professionals and employees who implement the policy, who consider citizens to be "ordinary" people, and for *pobladores* to be dependent on them and their decisions as "extraordinary" citizens, or experts. All of them, politicians and professionals, carry out the "administration of services for dependent beneficiaries, whose ignorance and incapacity are taken for granted," imposing a dependent, paternal kind of relationship between the state and *pobladores*[11].

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7   Rodríguez, A. y Sugranyes, A. Los con techo: Un desafío para la política de vivienda social. Ediciones SUR. Santiago, 2005.

8   Castells, 1986: 266 in Zibechi: 181 Castells, Manuel. La ciudad y las masas (The city and the masses), Alianza, Madrid. 1986 / Zibechi, Raúl.Op.Cit.

9   (Ruiperez, 29). Ruiperez, Rafael. ¿quién teme a los pobladores? Vigencia y actualización del Housing by People de John Turner frente a la problemática actual de hábitat popular en América Latina. (Who's afraid of the *Pobladores*? Validating and updating of John Turner's 'Housing by People' facing the current problem of low income housing in Latin America). National University of Colombia. Faculty of Arts, Bogotá. 2006.

10   (Turner: 31). Turner, John. Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments, Marion Boyars publishers, London, 1976.

11   (Ruiperez: 30). Ruiperez, Rafael. ¿Quién teme a los pobladores? Vigencia y actualización del Housing by People de John Turner frente a la problemática actual de hábitat popular en América Latina. (Who's afraid of the *Pobladores*? Validity and updating of John Turner's 'Housing by People' in the face of the current problem in low income housing in Latin America). National University of Colombia. Faculty of Arts, Bogotá. 2006.

It is neither a question of denying the existence of the state, nor of blaming it for being the root of all evil, but of considering that it is necessary for the existence of certain institutions, structures, regulations and types of financing. We insist that the responsibility lies with the paradigm adopted by the "experts," the professionals who execute policy and who do not allow *pobladores* room for participation. Therefore, to implement a policy from the rights perspective, a large paradigm shift is required which will embrace politicians, policy makers and policy implementors, as well as *pobladores* themselves, assuming that these fixed roles begin to "mobilize" themselves. A greater degree of participation and empowerment on the way to the right to the city is the fundamental basis for action of *poblador* movements.

The territorial practices of social movements, in this case MPL, may finally become emancipatory processes. According to Zibechi's (2008) idea of "collective disalienation," which for the present purpose is understood to be the process of empowerment from the rights perspective, this is a starting point from the prisms of the right to housing. Secondly at a more incipient stage, it is the starting point of the right to the city, from the early phase of an urban social movement. As long as *pobladores*, in other words the working class, "do not learn to deal with this bourgeois ability to dominate and produce space, to shape a new geography of production and social relationships, they will always be playing from a position of weakness and not of strength."[12]

The actions of MPL towards the right to the city

MPL presents itself as a local organisation, a fact which analyzes the social movement from another perspective: no longer the forms of organisation or the repertories of mobilization, but of the social relationships in local areas. "There is a battle for the decolonization of thought to which the recovery of the concept of territory may be able to contribute."[13]

MPL does not limit itself to presenting demands in front of the state, through logic of welfarist demands; it also criticises existing policies and proposes alternatives from a specific local area — the *población* — to the hegemonic model, demanding the territorial conquest of spaces of autonomy and self-management. These demand-actions have required a creative process which is at the same time both "internal and external" with respect to current

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12 (Harvey, 2003, Zibechi: 178). Harvey, David. Spaces of Hope, California Studies in Critical Human Geography, 2000

13 (Porto, 2006: 161 – Zibechi: 186). Porto, Carlos. "A reinvencao dos territorios: a experiencia latino-americana e caribenha", en Ana Esther Ceceña, Los desafíos de las emancipaciones en un contexto militarizado, Clacso, Buenos Aires, 2006.

institutionalization, and operates in the interstices left by that institutionality.[14] MPL uses these spaces as instruments to gain a say in policy and to achieve its more long term objectives, which have to do with exercising rights rather than simply satisfying needs, assuming the rights perspective in public policies. These long-term objectives are also based on the autonomous exercise of power from local areas.

The transfer of state power to local organisations goes hand-in-hand with the strategic foundations of the right to the city — as a framework for designing public policies from the rights perspective — which proposes, among other things, the social function of the city and the prevalence of collective interests over individual interests. Likewise, it proposes the democratic management of the city, for example through spaces for the formulation and participatory implementation of public policies, as well as the democratic production of the city, including the social production of habitat. In the case of the history of MPL, all of these principles coincide and are coherent with its actions within the local area.

The exercise of power from local areas, from below, also implies pointing out the contradictions which occur in the city, especially in a segregated city like Santiago, where inequality is evident in its territorial distribution. The right to the city proposes the fair use of what the city offers, something which in the housing field means — as the leaders of MPL point out — the "conflict in terms of class, like a class struggle; at the root, this struggle for housing is a fight for the control of surplus value, for the control of wealth, and it comes down to which class finally obtains the greatest number of conquests."[15]

The proposal of MPL with respect to the transfer of power from the state to local areas is based on the housing-production field, with an initiative for the social production of habitat which "adapts" to the existing framework of housing policy in order to subvert it "*managing an embryonic popular power which responds to the need for control over a complete branch of production, namely the construction of low-income housing.*"[16] In this exercise of rights through the social production of habitat, there is also an obvious pragmatism which has to do with the need to respond urgently to the demands of *pobladores* for rights, and not simply wait for the subsidising state to turn itself into a welfare state. Likewise, this action is based on the historical fact that the city was constructed by *pobladores*.

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14 Guzmán, Romina, Renna, Henry, Sandoval, Alejandra, Silva, Camila Movimiento de Pobladores en Lucha, A tomarse Peñalolén para conquistar la ciudad, Cuadernos SUR, Ediciones SUR, Santiago de Chile, 2009.

15 Guanca, Lautaro, in Aravena, Susana, Sandoval, Alejandra, edit. Política habitacional y actores urbanos, Seminario del Observatorio de Vivienda y Ciudad, (Housing Policy and Urban Actors, Seminar of the Observatory of Housing and the City), Ediciones SUR, Santiago, Chile, 2008, p100

16 Guanca, Lautaro, Op. Cit. p 103

MPL action towards a rights perspective

While it is true that this movement recognizes itself as continuing the long tradition of Chilean *poblador* movements, using tools such as seizing land and confrontation with the authorities, MPL has from the outset affirmed its originality within the scenario of *poblador* movements, starting with its slogan "*Our dream is bigger than the house.*" This slogan adopted by the organisation clearly articulates MPL's project. *Pobladores* demand not only a house, as a private good which can be achieved with the help of the state. Their struggle is more broad and global, declaring a will to be part of the city, to remain in the neighbourhood or district of their choice, the will to be part of the decision-making process, and to have a say in the decisions which will affect their lives.

MPL's actions are thus founded in "the territorial conquest of spaces of autonomy and popular self-management."[17] The aim of this is to reconquer a district which has been constructed by the *pobladores* themselves, but in which they find themselves dispossessed from the possibility of deciding their own destiny. The will to remain in a place where a person has their history, where they have constructed their own identity, the desire to be able to participate in the decisions which affect that place and thus the life of each inhabitant and their community, are central elements of the right to the city, the proposal which is being appropriated by social movements.

Strategies to achieve their objectives

From the demands of MPL's *pobladores*, it is helpful to outline their strategies to obtain their demands and drive the generation of an urban housing policy from a rights perspective. We can discern five major objectives that MPL has built over the years[18]:

1. To obtain the right to remain in the district. 2. To become an autonomous productive force. 3. To build self-managed strategies for popular action. 4. To gain spaces for representation within political institutions. 5. To have a say in the urban planning of the district.

In the case of housing policy, the innovative creation of the first EGIS *(Entidad de Gestión Inmobiliaria Social* — Social Property Management Body) and the first *poblador* construction company will allow MPL to gain access to current policy, within its framework and regulations. This will include the co-ordinating and integrating of *pobladores* into the process of housing management and production. The inclusion of *pobladores* had not been contemplated in the design of public

17 Op. cit
18 Guzman, Renna, et. al., op.cit.

policy but through the action of the social movement, they will be brought into contact — almost by force — with public policy from a rights perspective and with the social production of habitat, thus coming closer to the principles of the right to the city.

As a result of their struggles, MPL celebrates the adoption and advancement of their self-managed urban housing projects with the inauguration of EGIS and the *poblador* construction company. Its aim is to move towards the self-management of the production apparatus, thereby moving away from the housing and construction solutions put forward by the state and the market.

This movement is known for the dynamism and vitality of its members. One of them is Lautaro Guanca, a *poblador* of Lo Hermida, a historical *población* in Peñalolén. On December 6, 2008 Guanca ran as a councillor candidate for the municipal election in Peñalolén, as a representative of MPL. As such, the movement positioned itself on the political stage to deliver the demands of *pobladores* to the local municipal administration. In addition, Guanca together with other *poblador* leaders like Ivan Carrasco have recently formed a new party: Equality Party- Tool for the People.

In the case of urban planning, MPL along with other organisations from the district of Peñalolén, have co-ordinated their actions in the design of a new district master plan[19], in order to construct an alternative proposal. This new proposal intends to satisfy the aspirations and demands of the *pobladores* and inhabitants of the district and not merely to accept the proposals of the technocrats who, through the original design of the plan, alienate the inhabitants from participation with their cryptic and technical language, and leave room only for pseudo-participation which in fact are merely spaces to divulge informative.

Action for adequate housing in Peñalolén: From housing subsidies to the social production of habitat

It is true that MPL's demands are not, for now, based on a desire to abolish the housing subsidy. *Pobladores* are aware that in the current economic and political panorama, they need state subsidies. However MPL has generated a critique of Chilean housing policy, declaring in particular that providing subsidies is not sufficient to respect the right to housing.

This helps us to understand that the demands of MPL are constructed within the institutional framework determined by the subsidising state, in a neoliberal economic context using traditional political strategies (such as the election of an MPL leader as councillor in the municipal council), strategies of self-managed

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19 Plan Regulador Comunal (PRC) (District Regulatory Plan)

production or housing co-operatives (such as the construction company EMEPEELE Ltda), and the management of the housing process (EGIS).

The concept of "conquest" demonstrates that lower-middle class *pobladores* feel that they have been robbed of their local areas and of the place where they were born and raised, many of them over several generations. Indeed, the south-east sector of the district is where most of the expensive homes have been built, inhabited by wealthy families with large houses and big plots of land, especially in gated neighbourhoods. The result of this has been an increase in the value of urban land in the district of Peñalolén, that is to say that the price of land has risen significantly, especially due to gentrification processes[20] with the appearance of these gated neighbourhoods. The district master plan for 2010-2020 validates these urban inequalities, acting as an indicator of the municipality's desire to orient the district towards a certain social type of inhabitant.

Protagonists of the current housing model in Chile

It is important to note that MPL, even before it created EGIS and its own construction company, was already working together with existing private organisations and operated like committees of households living in situations of over-crowding or inadequate housing conditions. In other words, MPL was only one of the five principal actors in the current housing process, namely:

-   Families organised into committees of households living in situations of over-crowding or inadequate housing conditions;
-   The EGIS, private organisations responsible for managing the demands of the committees, designing projects, applying for subsidies jointly with the committees, monitoring the progress of work and taking care of all the legal and social habilitation processes involved. The state pays for the technical assistance provided by the EGIS, from a fund different than that of the subsidies;
-   The state, through SERVIU (Servicio de Vivienda y Urbanismo - Service of Housing and Urbanism), supervises the projects and finally provides the financing;
-   The construction companies, who use the subsidy money for the construction and of course to make a profit;
-   The municipalities, which play a double role: on the one hand, they support and direct the activities of the *pobladores* through their housing

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20 Definition of gentrification: a term derived from the English: "gentry" who are the untitled British aristocracy. By extension, gentrification means becoming bourgeois, Ruffin, François, Pensar la ciudad para que los ricos vivan felices en ella, in Urbanismo, Arquitectura y Globalización, Le Monde Diplomatique, Ed. Aún Creemos en los sueños, Santiago, Chile, 2008, p15.

departments (indeed some municipalities have their own EGIS); on the other hand, they issue the building permits and the final reception of the constructions through their Direcciones de Obras Municipales (DOM) (Municipal Directories of Works).

Based on the need to overcome the barriers raised by private companies against *pobladores*, the proposal of MPL is therefore not merely to assume the role of a committee but to embrace, using its own *pobladores*, apart from the work done by professionals, two more of these five roles — precisely those financed by the state, those of the construction company and the EGIS.

In MPL's first housing projects, the actors — in the case of the EGIS and the construction companies — were from the private sector, with whom the working relations and the management process were not easy.

The solution to the barriers involved in neoliberal housing policies is for pobladores to take their destiny into their own hands, to manage and construct their houses, because if "the state is not able and the private sector is not willing, then it is [the pobladores] who will construct the new *población*."[21] The EGIS and the construction company are mechanisms to capture the power exercised traditionally by the state, and today in large part by the market.

With the participation of pobladores themselves in the management and construction of their own local areas, MPL wishes to stress the fact that historically Chile has always been a country of builders and that "today it is [the pobladores] turn to gradually take over the management of production and the product."[22] The project is slow and must overcome a number of barriers, which explains why to date the construction company EMEPEELE Ltda. has not yet constructed any low-income housing from the plans for the houses and apartments which it has among its projects. Currently, in 2010, a housing project managed by MPL is being constructed, but the execution is in the hands of a private construction company.

In addition to the struggle for adequate housing, MPL aims to restore and promote a sense of identity and belonging within the district and to the *población*, and to feel part of the city which is a fundamental element of the right to the city. Many of MPL's actions work along these lines, through the creation of urban gardens, neighbourhood headquarters, where the community can congregate to share their problems and solutions, community cultural centres, and local community media. In this sense, MPL represents an example of the process of

21 Guanca, Lautaro, in varios autores. "El derecho a la vivienda en Chile, aportes de la Primera Escuela Nacional para Dirigentes Sociales", Observatorio de Vivienda y ciudad (Observatory of Housing and the City), Santiago, Chile, 2009, p34

22 Guanca, Lautaro, op cit, p35

achieving the right to the city through various acts to defend and promote this right. Stemming from an instinctual reaction of resistance to the welfarist and subsidiary state, *pobladores* stood up to organise themselves and move beyond simply demanding their rights, by creating their own solutions and actions based on their unique situations.

The important aspects of these experiences of participation and self-management is that they give a new angle to the panorama of the city inhabitant, who can move from being an assisted individual, waiting for a subsidy to buy a house, to a protagonist actor, involved in the decisions affecting their lives and that of their neighbours.

This is what is meant by the social production of habitat, on the path to achieving the right to the city.

Peñalolen, Santiago, Mural by MPL

Involving Children in Urban Planning, Chile

Alejandra Elgueta and Felipe Morales

A problem that transcends all of the current conflicts in the city of Santiago is the lack of citizen participation, both in decision-making processes and in the use of the city. Considering that ownership of one's surroundings and communication between neighbours are fundamental to constructing public places, the San Judas Tadeo area of the Peñalolén municipality decided to offer urban environmental education workshops for children as a way of exploring the neighbourhood and its history, using the public space, and to promote awareness among children who live in the area. The workshop was also designed as a research strategy to investigate how children see and interpret the city, how well they know the city, what they look for in public spaces, as well as to design some type of proposal that could be useful in urban planning and in recognizing the demands of the right to the city from a child's perspective.

The following is a summary of the ideas used to plan the workshop and an assessment of the experience as an effective method for citizen participation.

The Social Character of the City

The concept of the social construction of space proposes that the city is also a social construction. According to Henri Lefebvre, this construction is based on the production of space. The city adapts itself to the capital production process, destroying old buildings to build new urban structures, a concept that David Harvey defines as *creative destruction* (Harvey, 1980).

In other words, the configuration of a city arises from the tension between social groups over control and organisation of space, each representing their own interests. These forms may not be initially defined geographically, but they eventually acquire a certain territorial expression (Santos, 1986).

Urban Planning in Chile

The right to the city is defined by the World Charter for the Right to the City as the equitable usufruct of cities within the principals of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice. It is the collective right of urban inhabitants, particularly those in vulnerable and marginalized groups, that gives them legitimacy in action and organisation based on their uses and customs, with the objective of fully exercising of the right to self-determination and a decent standard of living.[1]

This vision guides the political debates on urban development issues in Chilean cities, for example within the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning whose vision is guided by integration, sustainability and competitiveness. Even though these three topics are given the same weight in political debates, competitiveness is given top priority in practice, even when attaining it means neglecting sustainability and integration.

In practice, city planning responds to the interests of a minority group whose privileged positions of power in political and economic networks gives them a much stronger voice. Indeed, city planning does not take the opinions of the majority of citizens into account. Evidence of this lack of participation is the constant discontent and conflict among the city's inhabitants, and the little weight that this carries in decisions made by mayors and city planners. The following statement confirms this to be true: "Today, the same people who have been in government for decades continue to confuse urban development with real estate growth. Their formula is that inhabitants should be tailored to fit the city, and not that the city should be tailored to fit its inhabitants".[2]

Peñalolén: 'The Best Municipality in Chile'

In the municipality of Peñalolén, within the city of Santiago, residents were informed about the proposed Municipal Land Use Plan in June 2009, as developed by the consulting firm URBE at the request of the municipality. It appears that the municipality is seeking real estate investments oriented more towards affluent groups of the population than towards the residents who have traditionally lived there. This could result in the silent expulsion of the area's poorest residents to other municipalities.

The citizen participation process carried out in Peñolalén has been characterized by the planners' fear of allowing the residents to have a voice. The process has also been hampered by the incompetence of most municipal authorities who hold all the decision-making power. The planning proposal has

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1   World Charter for the Right to the City. Revision prior to Barcelona – September 2005
2   Newspaper editorial, "El Nuevo Poblador" (The New Dweller). Peñalolén. Year 1, N° 4, August 2009

already been prepared, planned and designed by the consulting office and is ready to be applied. It could then be said that these government channels for citizen participation are merely symbolic and not realistic.

How Can We Build a More Equitable City?

The Image of Children as Inspiration for Urban Planning

When we think about how to make a city a welcoming place for all of its residents, where all have free access to space and are able to move about comfortably and enjoy recreation without obstacles or limits, we are first faced with a problem: from what perspective should we consider the city?

Based on the ideas and experiences of Italian educator Francesco Tonucci, thinking about the city from a child's perspective is a strategy for integrating citizens in their city, as a way of recuperating public spaces. Concerned about the loneliness of children living in wealthy cities, Tonucci began to research and experiment with ways of planning a city from a child's perspective. But why choose this group of the population and not another?

Regardless of their socioeconomic position (for example ethnicity, and so on), children are excluded from the city solely because of their age. They do not form part of the voting population, they live under the supervision of adults who decide what is good or bad for them, and no one asks them what they would like their city to be. This highlights the image of the child as a primary point of reference, since children's exclusion from the city is a problem which spans all levels of s ociety. There are children of all social classes, religions, ethnicities and immigrant children of all nationalities.

A child is also a very strong symbol, capable of raising awareness throughout society as they represent the past, present and future. "Children are our past, a past that is often forgotten, but one that will help us live better with our children and make fewer mistakes if we're able to keep it alive and present. Children are our present because it is to them that we dedicate most of our strength and sacrifices. Children are our future, the society of tomorrow, who will carry on or abandon our decisions and expectations" (Tonucci, 1996).

Environmental Education as a Tool for Citizen Participation:

The Workshop Experience

The workshop experience has enabled an evaluation of environmental education as a tool for citizen participation. The idea of holding a workshop rather than carrying out surveys or interviews was based on workshops being an opportunity to meet and organise. Workshops enable the exploration and interpretation of a

group opinion rather than a collection of individual opinions. Participants, in this case children, give their opinions and know the opinions of the other participants, which stimulates discussion and understanding.

Environmental education enables the development of spatial thinking. In this case, human beings are viewed as part of their surroundings and therefore as protagonists of the space in which they live. The workshop emphasized that facts and events in the environment are not isolated, but follow a certain logic and affect one another.

Because the workshops were for children, it was assumed that their principal motivation is to play. For children, playing is not simple recreation, but exploration and learning as well. Children learn about the world through playing. However because of its objectives, the workshop had to facilitate critical thinking about the city as well as knowledge and ownership of the neighbourhood. One of the main methodological challenges was on how to develop a workshop through play-like activities for children that stimulate learning, understanding and evaluation of their surroundings.

It was necessary to plan activities that take into account the diversity of the children attending the workshop. In Peñalolén, the range of ages was also important. In the first sessions, we worked with written guides and many children who did not know how to write well were excluded, became bored and began to do other things, distracting those who were working. Later in the workshop, we decided to work with "secretaries." The children had many different interests and personalities. There were children who could not stay quiet and others who were too shy to speak. For an activity to be successful, we had to allow all of the children to participate according to their comfort level.

This was achieved by engaging the children in making a film that reconstructed the history of the neighbourhood. The children had to plan and carry out all of the activities (including the actual filming). The children had to feel a certain level of trust in order to share their opinions. The workshop monitor can't be an authority figure and even more importantly cannot be the expert, since the workshop is a group exercise that includes the monitor. The desires expressed have to be carried out in a way that the children are able to see the results of the workshop and be motivated to keep participating.

There are activities that require time to prepare and it is important to have the capacity and resources to be able to carry them out in full.[3]

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3   In the workshop we considered creating a mural but the activity was not completed in the way we had hoped due to the fact that we did not teach techniques such as stencilling or dedicate more time and thought to the design of the mural. The result was a mural that the children were barely able participate in and which no longer exists.

Recommendations

The workshop should aim to:

1. Resemble school as little as possible
2. Take ownership of the neighbourhood through direct observation and field activities
3. Include activities that take into account the diversity of the group (age, personality)
4. Satisfy the desires and needs agreed upon in the workshop

Conclusion

Environmental education workshops are clearly a useful tool that can be incorporated into citizen participation processes. These processes facilitate much more citizenship participation than through governmental channels, by enabling people to give their opinions on urban development. Participation also has to do with encouraging the use of public space and exercising citizenship. In this sense, an urban environmental education workshop facilitates the use and understanding of the city (or in this case the neighbourhood), and uses the city as an educational resource through the understanding that the city's problems can be resolved within neighbourhoods.

The workshop allows children to think about and understand their surroundings as something that belongs to them, through a critical and conscious group evaluation. This way of exploring the neighbourhood can be used in city planning to understand inhabitants' desires and needs. However, the reality is that government authorities have no desire to create real opportunities for citizen participation in planning.

In the meantime, the workshop should be incorporated into a kind of citizen organisation, for example through the creation of a children's assembly, whose opinion — expressed through games, explorations and discussions — would be taken into account and supported by its host organisation.

These types of incentives as well as previous ones enable us to reflect on the role that inhabitants play in the construction of their own city. Why are children not allowed to participate in the construction of their neighbourhoods? Will residents continue to wait for authorities to solve problems related to their public spaces?

If we wait for a response, the most likely outcome is that the quality of life in cities will become a vague memory. Perhaps it is time for organised people to take ownership of these places, exercising their right to the city in order to build an urban reality that truly represents the identity of each area, to counteract plans and interventions which do not fit with a neighbourhood's logic.

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Photograph archive Felipe Morales, Santiago

The OUR Waterfront Coalition: Defending the Right to the City in New York

Shelley Buckingham

Gentrification in Manhattan's Chinatown

Manhattan's Chinatown is home to over 84,000 people and has been the cultural centre of the Chinese immigrant community in New York City for generations. Low-income Chinese immigrants have resided and worked in the area, which is sandwiched between the Lower East Side and the Financial District and stretches along the East River waterfront. Considering its location, this area of land also represents prime real estate, attracting young professionals and developers eager to gentrify the land, which would consequently displace these low-income Chinese residents and their businesses. There is a growing reality of gentrification occurring throughout New York, resulting in what David Harvey calls an accumulation by dispossession. That is, the accumulation of high-market value land by dispossessing low-income inhabitants from their homes and communities which they have spent years establishing.

Chinatown residents are concerned about current city plans to redevelop a two-mile stretch of land along the East River waterfront. These plans, while not physically displacing the inhabitants of Chinatown, intend to fill the redeveloped space with high-cost shops, restaurants and cafes geared towards high-income earners and tourists, and which are unaffordable for the current low-income residents. Residents fear this will put increased pressure on their affordable housing stock, leading to further gentrification and displacement of their community. The plans also represent a step away from a collective right to the city for those low-income residents, who currently inhabit the area, to make way for the economic pursuits, profits and interests of a select privileged few.

The Right to the City

The right to the city is a collective right for all people who live in, access, and use the city and it entails not only the right to use what already exists in urban spaces, but also the right to create and define what should exist in order to meet the need to live a decent life in urban environments (Harvey, 2003). In brief, it includes the right to use the city and to participate in the creation or re-creation of the city. The realization of the right to the city has been carried out through collaborative processes between civil society groups and organisations, governments, and international agencies. Their roles are particularly crucial to realize this collective right to the city, as it is their experiences that inform the adequate and inadequate structures in which they live.

Community Organizing

The Chinese community along Manhattan's waterfront is fighting back against the city's plans to redevelop their neighbourhood in order to remain where they are and not to be forced out by the profit-seeking economic interests of others. The Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAAV – also known as CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities) has been an active player in this fight, organising diverse, low-wage, and poor Asian communities across New York City since 1986. CAAAV works through coalitions to build a unified strategy for a multi-racial and multi-issue movement for social change and is led by members of low-income Asian immigrant communities in New York City. One of the coalitions they are affiliated with is the Right to the City Alliance, which mobilizes community-based organisations against gentrification occurring across the United States, cases similar to that of Manhattan's Chinatown.

The OUR Waterfront Coalition Defends the Right to the City

One of CAAAV's largest campaigns currently underway is against gentrification caused by the City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) plans to redevelop the East River waterfront, along which Chinatown is situated. The redevelopment plans include the construction of a walkway, high-end cafes, and other commercial spaces likely to provide goods and services geared more towards higher-income people and tourists than to local low-income residents.

CAAAV has responded by joining forces with other community groups to collectively create the OUR (Organizing and Uniting Residents) Waterfront Coalition, which includes nine other community-based, multi-racial, and multi-issue groups. These groups would all be affected by the East River waterfront redevelopment plans. The overall goal of the campaign is to ensure

that the redevelopment meets the needs of local, low-income residents and to limit the impact these plans could have on the ongoing gentrification in their neighbourhoods.

The OUR Waterfront Coalition has taken urgent actions to participate in the planning process of the redevelopment so that they may stake a claim in the creation of their neighbourhood. Since the summer of 2008, the coalition has been working through a comprehensive community visioning process which will culminate with the creation of a community-based redevelopment plan, known as the People's Plan. Through this process, residents concerns and hopes for the redevelopment of the waterfront have been collected through surveys and a series of workshops. Participating residents have called for free uses of the waterfront including open green space, recreational facilities such as basketball and handball courts, educational activities for youth, and social services such as translation and legal services. They also prioritized small vendors and low-cost businesses such as food carts and fruits and vegetable stands which are more accessible given their low-incomes.

The OUR Waterfront Coalition is doing exactly what Harvey notes as exercising the right to the city. Harvey sees the answer to the demands made by communities like Manhattan's Chinatown as a unified demand for greater democratic control over high-value land which is usually seized by capitalist developers in search of making profits. In other words, this example represents a call for increased control over the making and use of the city and its structures.

A major problem in realizing the collective right to the city is that the individual rights of those pertaining to a certain privileged group take precedence in a society where profit may be sought. It is this conflict of rights — individual versus collective — where tensions arise between the privileged, eagerly anticipating another profit-run, and the less privileged hoping to hold on to what they have and to remain in the area where they have lived, simply because they were there first. Essentially, individual rights can jeopardize and override collective rights. It should be considered absolutely unacceptable to displace a whole community for the benefit of a select few who are able to do so because they have greater wealth. What of the cultural rights of a community where people have developed over decades a place to call home, where they find comfort, familiarity, community, services and livelihood? It should speak loudly that although their housing conditions are less than adequate, they fight for their right to remain where they live because they are connected to the community. Finding a home is not a question of having four walls and a roof over one's head. It is about planting your seeds and watching them grow, which takes far more work, time and care than it does to construct a building.

The OUR Waterfront Coalition is not fighting against the implementation

of a redevelopment of the East River waterfront. It welcomes the prospect of improving its neighbourhoods, but its focus is to ensure that these upgrades compliment and not hinder the rich cultural and community life residents have spent years building. This is the challenge the coalition faces. To make developers and entrepreneurs understand that by seeking to make a profit in the high-value market buried under the surface of a long-standing community, they risk destroying this community's right to stay as it is and where it is.

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Urban Land Committees, Venezuela

Hector Madera, CTU

We, the Urban Land Committees (*Comités de Tierra Urbana*, or CTU), form a movement of *pobladores*[1] focused on three central themes: tenants; superintendents and pioneers, as well as on building socialism as a cross-cutting element to these themes. Our movement was acknowledged by the Venezuelan Revolutionary Government on February 4, 2002, but our fight for the right to the city began decades earlier.

Our work "as made evident by the decree on the Special Project for Regularization of Land Ownership in Popular Urban Settlements, and its subsequent developments, seeks to define a plan for the transformation and democratization of the city, dismantling the dynamics of spatial segregation which have meant that more than 60% of the country's population live in precarious settlements. This is done through comprehensive regularization of neighbourhoods, which includes the following tasks:

1. Legal regularization, thereby democratizing property ownership and providing legal security to pobladores of low-income communities, converting into assets the sole possessions of millions of families.

2. Urban regularization, establishing regulations and standards for coexistence based on the recognition of idiosyncrasies of each community — while also taking into account each community's relationship to the rest of the city — as part of a constituent process and community self-management. The fundamental instrument in this process is the Neighbourhood Charter.

3. Physical regularization, which goes beyond basic infrastructure and also

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1 *Poblador* (pl. *pobladores*) is a term that transcends the meaning of 'inhabitant' and is also attributed with a social and political connotation meaning those who fight for the rights of the poor majority living in large cities.

applies to improving living conditions in neighbourhoods, ensuring availability of services, resources and equipment. It also implies achieving sustainable and integral development, promoting productive re-evaluation, health, education, supplies etc." [2]

To put these tasks into action, our organization consists of over 7,000 CTUs nationwide, including 1,200 CTUs in the metropolitan area of Caracas, which are organized into three different levels: district, municipal and state. Each of these organizations includes 150 to 300 families in our areas. As mentioned above, we are a bastion of the Bolivarian Revolution and several other grassroots organizations have been established as a result of our organized communities.

We founded a rigorous community and popular cadastre as our neighbourhoods were not included in the government cadastre carried out by the traditional Fourth Republican government. The registration of property in our country is the responsibility of the National Cartography Agency which delegates responsibility to the municipal mayors who are entitled by law to register property. Before the Fourth Republic (the political era prior to Chavez), no self-established neighbourhood could become regulated, as the entire bourgeois structure was constructed so that we do not exist in official property cadastre. This is why organized communities, with the consent of Hugo Chávez's central government, were able to put forth a proposal at the beginning of Chavez' second term in 2007. Government entities are beginning to take the first steps towards incorporating community knowledge with the support of the National Cartography Agency. However municipal governments, with a few exceptions, still do not recognize the community property registry developed by the communities.

The Three Central Themes

The Tenants Movement: We have created an anti-eviction network throughout the country, including in Caracas where it is the most effective, which has already been able to prevent many evictions. However in certain cases we were unsuccessful because the network was not yet active in the area where the eviction was taking place.

Based on our experience and with support from struggles in other areas, we have presented the mayor of Caracas with a proposal to develop a decree or ordinance bill that prohibits forced evictions. However, the oligarchy through the courts has nevertheless continued to carry out evictions. In Venezuela, the branches of government are separate and autonomous but the judiciary is

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2   Taken from the *Cuaderno democratización de la ciudad y transformación urbana* (notebook on democratization of the city and urban transformation), November 2004, page 3, of the CTU.

largely in the hands of the oligarchy or responds to its power. By increasing the number of forced evictions in Caracas, the oligarchy forced the radicalization of the people towards the government. The mayor of the city — who is part of the revolutionary process — subsequently accepted a proposal that we made together with the movement of *pobladores*: an anti-eviction decree in the city of Caracas. The decree is very clear that evictions are prohibited in Caracas however contradictions exist in this process of change. The oligarchs sometimes ignore the decree and when the network is not functioning, members of the community do not work in solidarity. It is only through organization that we feel peace and tranquillity in the face of abuse from cultural oppressors, and our self-organizing protects us against political segregation and economic exploitation.

The Superintendents Movement: This movement represents a two-fold vulnerability, because if a superintendent loses his or her job, they also lose their home. This is almost slavery, as the level of exploitation superintendents are subjected to is inhumane. Some have to work more than twelve hours a day and others up to fifteen hours. This abuse violates the current legislation of the country, however it is capitalist logic that applies here; if someone says something or reports something, then they are excluded from the job market. However, the movement has focused attention on this problem, proposing to add a chapter or proposal to reform the labour law in order to change this situation. The problem is not a legal one but a political one, and for this reason we are fighting for this issue everywhere, seeking coordination with the movement of *pobladores*.

The Pioneers Movement: The movement focuses on three goals:

a) Recovering unused and empty sites or sites with abandoned buildings, to make and obtain housing and build a new city and new towns.

b) Education and training for the entire pioneer movement.

c) Development of proposals and internships with other organizations and with the *Secretaría Latinoamericana para la Vivienda Popular (SELVIP)*.

It has been an uphill struggle, due to the legacy of a society divided into classes and because of the prejudices inherent in this society. It is difficult to make changes, but we can achieve them, as we are already living in a time of change. In Venezuela and in many other countries people are beginning to understand the failure of the capitalist system. Capitalism has denied humanity because its core purpose is to accumulate wealth, while neglecting to consider those who do not have any or those who die in the process of trying to guarantee the huge profits and obvious reproduction of the system. The only antidote is to live in communion and harmony with Mother Nature.

Members of CTU in an urban reabilitation project, Caracas, Venezuela

Organizing, Power, and Political Support in Caracas, Venezuela

Steffen Lajoie

The constraints and obstacles of living in mega-slums and the need to win back the city

The charter for the right to the city, articulated by Habitat International Coalition and supported by a large international network, pushes for recognition of the role and participation of residents, community groups, and social movements (Brown and Kristensan 2009). In 1999, Venezuela adopted the constitutional right to the city including the right to safe and decent housing, the right to participation in democratic processes, and, more interestingly, the right to form local planning units and control local decision-making in development and planning. This article will look at the context of urban slums and social movements before winning constitutional and legislative rights. Then, it will analyze the catalyzing effect of the constitutional changes and how they led specifically to the formation of the *Comités de Tierra Urbana* (Urban Land Committees or CTU). Finally, the paper will analyze the multiplier effects the level of government support had on local community organizations and on the reduction of poverty.

Context: Realities on the ground — The informal city and the struggle for inclusion

As in so many cities in lower income countries, walking the streets of Caracas bears witness to a myriad of constructions, and huge varieties in contexts. Estimates suggest some 60 to 70 percent of households live in informal neighborhoods, often in high-risk areas (flooding, landslides, and crime), in conditions well below what is considered safe and adequate by the people living there (Antillano 2005: 207-208; Nunez n.d).

The 'formal' or planned area of the city stretches along a narrow valley.

Neighborhoods in this area range from wealthy to quite poor. It is spotted with cramped and illegal settlements wherever there is space: along irrigation canals; in abandoned buildings; and in empty derelict urban spaces.

More noticeable is what surrounds the city. While planners and architects strove to create an interesting national district, massive informal settlements grew up along the steep hills surrounding the city, creating some of Latin America's oldest and largest slums (Nunez n.d.; Ellner 2004: 120-130). The contrast is stark, impressive and not uncommon. The contrast also questions who is really building today's cities.

How and why planners, designers and political visionaries managed to exclude the city's poor and a majority of its population is a long and interesting story (see Ellner 2004). Suffice to say, slums in and around Caracas are defined by socio-economic and physical exclusion from the actual city (Antillano 2005: 206; Cariola et al 2005b: 22-25; Lajoie 2006: 5-6). The slums of Caracas are hyper-organic mini-cities: houses piled one on top of the other prior to any pedestrian or car access, water, sanitation, electricity or drainage. These settlements continue to appear and to grow all around the urban areas of Caracas.

Antillano (2005) describes the building of the social movement in the twenty years prior to the 1999 constitution as fractious, unorganized. Due to the many institutionalized and cultural obstacles, community groups had what seemed as insurmountable obstacles placed in front of them. However, it would be these same groups and activists who would eventually pick up the banner of the CTU and build off of their experience.

Change: Transforming Laws and Processes — Gaining Access

The 1999 Constitution set into motion major developments throughout Venezuela. In particular, it described housing as a human right. Considering the realities of the country, it seemed a bold and unrealistic statement. However, the constitution also promoted popular participation through article 26, and local planning councils through article 182 (Cariola and LaCabana 2005b: 27-29).[1]

These two articles were then supported by what is now the very famous Decree 1666, which recognized the *Comités de Tierra Urbana* (CTU) as the responsible organizations for streamlining land regularization, tenure allocation, and community participation and organization.

Fundamental to the decree was the development of the *Oficina Técnica Nacional* (National Technical Office, OTN), which provides technical support to land

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[1]   The articles also supported the formation of various 'missions' at the barrio (slum) level, including electricity, health, water and sanitation, and nutrition (Holland 2006, Cariola et al 2005)

regularization in the form of land surveying, regularization, and the development of cadastral maps. The OTN is also the gateway between the Ministry of Housing and Habitat (MVH), a central government body, and the CTU. This functions not only for policy and programming, but also for financing. All of these elements formed the ingredients of the dish. The development, mobilization and organization created the recipe for integrated urban transformation (Holland 2006).

Victories: Tenure security, housing improvements, organization, and political clout

The *Barrio* movement before the presidential election of Hugo Chavez and the 1999 constitution in many ways laid the groundwork for what now consists of a housing revolution (Antillano 2005: 207-208). The legislation developed within and to support the constitution provided the necessary legitimacy and mechanisms to create access to the processes and structures within the formal framework of the city. As a result, community groups were able to form into CTU groups, regularize the land they lived on and acquire legal tenure for their properties. Building this level of organization is no small achievement. However accessing land tenure as a community creates a level of participation and potential for future community planning. In the first six years of work, the OTN claims having given out 350,000 land titles affecting some 520,000 families according the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE 2008: 3-5).

The top-down support developed in Venezuela served as the catalyst for the CTU to organize on borough (parroquia), regional and metropolitan, and national levels.   These assemblies led to new proposals such as education

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Transformation of Law and Process

1. **The Constitution:** Passed after a national referendum in 1999, it includes decent shelter as a human right
2. **Article 26:** promotes popular participation for development in the municipalities
3. **Article 182:** provides for local planning councils to act as intermediates between citizens and public institutions
4. **Decree 1666:** streamlines land regularization, community participation and tenure allocation via the CTU(Cariola et al, 2005a: p.113)
5. **The CTU:** Groups of 100 to 200 households registered together with elected leaders and organized at local, parroquial, metropolitan, and national levels. They work towards facilitating the tenure and regularization process; push for legal changes; community organization
6. **The OTN:** Provide technical and professional assistance to the CTU; funded by the Central Government
7. **The MVH:** Ministry of Housing and Habitat; fund CTU and independent projects (Holland, 2006; taken from Lajoie 2006: 29)

and training workshops for CTU members and representatives; the creation of the *Centros de Participación para la Transformación del Hábitat* (Participatory centres for the transformation of habitat, or CPTH) and Pioneros;[2] as well as the development of new proposals for the MVH to move towards an integrated housing policy.[3] The CPTH are involved in creating new settlements, working with the government to facilitate new land development, building homes, and acting as the primary partner for disbursing funds. The *Pioneros* were developed by the CTU to deal with land acquisition and new and existing design and building projects (Holland, 2006; OTN 2004). Most recently the CTU proposed a law on the land tenure for urban settlements, *Ley Especial de Regularizacion Integral de la Tenencia de la Tierra de los Asentamientos Urbanos Populares*. This would be a major step in dealing with institutional conflicts, increasing bureaucracy, accelerating the regularization process and creating new instruments such as the *Banco de Tierra Urbana (*Urban Land Bank) (COHRE 2008:4).

The final outcome points not only to new processes and the transformation of housing rights and policy, but also to new ways a city can be built, from its personal space (homes) to the public and private sphere (streets, parks, open and public spaces). The question remains to what scale the CTU will be able to

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2   The articles also supported the formation of various 'missions' at the barrio (slum) level, including electricity, health, water and sanitation, and nutrition (Holland 2006, Cariola et al 2005).
     Proposal for a document to the Ministry
     - To signal the fiasco of the housing politic: not a human problem but a political one caused by:
       o Quantitative approaches ignoring habitat
       o Concentration solely on building new units
       o Focus on mass production of housing
       o Alliances with the construction industry rather than civil society
     - General elements of a revolutionary and popular housing policy
       o Access to Land
       o National System of technical assistance
     - Local consultation services
     - CPTH
       o Actions aimed at supporting community self-management
     - Immediate agreements:
       o To define project continuity, evaluation and technical assistance
       o To continue relationships between the CTU and MVH and to promote and finance CPTH projects
       o To define, by the MVH, a mechanism to deal with evictions
       o To assign land and credit to Pioneros groups
       o To create a transitional group and define new institutional structures
       o To participate in developing law
       o To install 'mesas tecnicas parroquiales'
       o To create a mechanism linking directly and permanently to the ministry.
       (translated from CTU meeting minutes, CTU 2006)
3   See above: Héctor Madera: Los CTU

push their influence over the city, and what will be the outcome of the debate on socialism and the city.

Observations: Launching community struggles to new heights constitutional recognition of the right to the city

- The housing movement is an example of good practice in its efficacy to reach institutional levels through civil mobilization. Civic housing movements in Caracas have managed to influence the city on many levels:
- new definitions of the needs of the poor;
- innovative approaches to urban regeneration and design; integration of the *Barrios* into the housing process;
- state reforms and decentralization of housing, tenure, and land regularization;
- multi-sectoral and participative bottom-up decision-making and project control;
- new public-private partnerships;
- and as a result, a level of scale which reaches throughout the entire country of Venezuela.

The case further illustrates the importance of top-down policy to facilitate and support the needs and demands of a mobilized community. In this respect, creating a mechanism for giving land tenure to CTUs became the catalyst, which built on the social capital of the community groups and allowed for such livelihood strategies and outcomes to push the movement significantly. Huge informal slums are directly gaining ownership of their city and actively participating in the creation of their own neighborhoods and on a national scale. The CTU is at the forefront of the policy and the social movements that affect them. They are setting constant precedents and are mobilized and organized at sophisticated levels. If they were setting the standard, they would be doing a good job. The struggle for the CTU is far from over, but they have taken several steps towards winning the right to the city.

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We are Making a City, Bolivia

Rose Mary Irusta Pérez

How many important agreements have been signed throughout the years in an effort to improve people's quality of life? How much have we had to struggle to try to ensure that every human right is recognized? We each have fought for our own side, when in reality all of us together are like the human body: by separating one right from another, we mutilate ourselves.

Right now we are concerned about the right to the city, the magnitude of which is almost incomprehensible because it combines all human rights. With the great mass of vehicles in circulation, we have lost the right to move freely, the right to a healthy environment, and the right to spaces for recreation. We lost that right, and we have lost sight of the fact that many children and youth have lost their right to be loved, cared for and protected by their parents, the authorities and society in general. Public spaces cannot be used without concern, because we are all looking out for our backs. There is no right to security.

The streets have become spaces for commerce, not for transit. The transport and commerce sectors have forgotten that they must respect all public spaces. Political favours and corruption prevent better city planning and social pressure makes it difficult to get around the city, due to the traffic jams, large crowds, signs and garbage. Every minute one spends in the street is stressful — irresponsible drivers do not respect traffic laws, store owners take over the sidewalks and irresponsible pedestrians throw garbage everywhere except in the almost non-existent trash bins.

In many cities, there are few recreational spaces because no plans were made to include them. City governments have not paid attention to the continued growth of the population and thus did not foresee the demographic explosion. So many consultancies have been carried out, and yet even in this era of advanced

technology, urban problems are left unsolved. Moreover, people's quality of life is not improving. Every day, individualism pits us against one another and the fast-moving economy further alienates us from what is human.

How can we understand what is human from the perspective of human rights? Or how can human rights be understood by the authorities who believe that the mere fact of their authority means that we should be blindly obedient when they ignore laws and even the constitution? Their quest for power denigrates them as people. As there are no urban planning proposals for our cities, nor is there a common goal of improving people's quality of life, every day new settlements appear without regard for the environment and basic services, and which lack infrastructure and safe streets.

Many families have suffered both economic and legal damage as a result of falling into the hands of developers who sell land at outrageous prices as part of uncontrolled speculation. These families have to pay for the lack of open space and infrastructure, while others have been swindled when buying safety buffer zones on the shores of rivers or open spaces which have already been planned for urbanization. Those who do not care about the right to housing and the right to the city are not concerned about the harsh reality of those families who meet this fate.

It would be good if there were at least some agreement between the authorities and city dwellers. By joining forces and walking together, we would advance and make wonderful cities. We would have fewer poor people, children and youth in the streets, and less violence and crime.

We should have public servants, not authorities. Public servants are dedicated to what they truly love to do, and that is because only honesty generates commitment.

It is important to have the will to achieve what we want. If one needs to live in peace, I will do what I can so that others can live in peace as well. If I do not want others to make me feel bad, I will do everything possible to make others feel better as well. The solutions for a better life are in our hands, but it seems as if we let them fall through our fingers simply because we are used to waiting. The message we get from the media is that there is nothing more for us to do except wait.

What will happen? Why think? In the end, it is the same…*being poor is my fate and I cannot do anything about it*, they tell me, and try to convince me of it.

At times, there is talk of hopes, dreams and illusions. But what are they? They also say I have rights; but to what? To die of hunger or to not be able to read or write? To suffer for a long time because of illness or to not have a well-paid job? To privacy, security, a healthy environment, basic services, a first and last name, to participate, to be taken into account, and to feel as if I exist? It seems like a joke

because now there is only war, death and suffering, and we have learned to exist, simply to exist.

Faced with this scenario, we dream of a better world. We long to be protected by that great agreement among nations in support of human rights. We aspire to a full life and to developing and refining the conception of those rights. We seek to integrate them into complementary and convergent concepts such as the right to decent housing and habitat, and the right to the city; rights to enjoy spaces for living. Would all human rights be respected if we placed people inside a crystal bubble, completely protected and isolated? Spaces and the interaction of spaces are essential to personal development. The necessary environmental and infrastructure conditions must be generated so that human beings can fully demonstrate their qualities, so they can freely interact with other human beings without feeling coerced or intimidated, just as peasants often feel when faced with urban practices which are very different from what they are used to. So they can receive education and educate their children without discrimination or fear, so they will have equal and equitable access to basic health and education services, and so they can move freely wherever their freedom to act takes them.

This apparently hypothetical panorama is not just the responsibility of national leaders, but also of local authorities, who use their initiative to confront the complex network of economic challenges, social conflicts and political disputes.

There is a community in the city of Cochabamba which was founded ten years ago. Someone who lives there told us about it:

"They say that there is a small place called "María Auxiliadora Community Habitat for Women[1]," where 265 families live and build their community together. They open their streets with community work, they help each other build their houses, they organise festivals and what they earn is used for health care or for whatever they need to build their homes. There are no bars or other stores selling alcoholic drinks. For me that is good because my husband drinks a lot and hits me, but he can't hit me there because they say there is a family support committee.

If he hits me once or twice, they talk to him and they help us reflect on it, but if there is a third time they ask him to leave. I think I would feel safe there, most of all for my children, because we wouldn't have to give up the house if we got divorced. I would never again have to beg any one to rent me a house. I thought that I had to put up with my husband hitting me, because I wouldn't to be able to support my seven children. But there, they support us and help us get ahead, to look for work. We learn to make handicrafts, to read and write, and there is a youth centre and tutoring for our children. Since it is a community, I can ask my neighbour to watch my children while I am at work. And no one breaks into

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1   Hábitat para la Mujer Comunidad María Auxiliadora

our houses to steal, because everyone knows each other. There are no strangers around and everyone looks out each other. When someone shouts, everyone goes out to help them.

They are well organised and work like little ants every Sunday. They have a board of directors that changes every two years, and the two top positions are always held by women. That must be why they have water, sewers, telephone services, electricity, a playground and two sports fields where all the kids play and hold tournaments.

It's so important to know your rights! I recently found out that I have the right to a house, but it's so hard. Rights seem like something for people with money, but I don't have any.

The right to health: if you have a house you will also have the right to health, but it's difficult, I told myself. If I get sick, I have to go to the hospital, not to my house. But besides colds, I get sick because of other things, because of worries. Since it is my house, I don't have to worry about being thrown out because I can't pay the rent and because my babies make too much noise. The worst thing is when landlords and even fathers and brothers rape children, because they live in such crowded spaces together and they leave their daughters locked up at home.

The right to education: because you have to teach children from a very young to have values, order, discipline, to help with chores in the house, etc.

The right to work: lately, if you are a renter, people don't trust you enough to give you a job. But if you have a house it is like a guarantee. They know where you live and neighbours can vouch for you. Since it is a community, everybody knows each other and they know how we all behave.

The right to live without violence: since there is a family support committee in the community that helps families make positive changes. The practice of reflection helps men stop drinking and mistreating both women and children.

The right to security: we all know each other, and if a stranger comes walking through here, we ask, and if someone shouts, a whistle is blown and we all come out. We have a good conduct agreement with the board of directors that requires us to address every problem, to ask for forgiveness and to reconcile with one another. It's so important for us to relate well to one another and to not be enemies.

The right to food security: we have a little garden which provides us with some vegetables and we learn to maintain a balanced nutrition.

The women who have attended seminars, workshops and courses have learned how to defend their rights. The women who organised María Auxiliadora Community Habitat for Women have been learning about the human right to housing for twelve years through the national Habitat Network (Red Hábitat) and they belong to the Cochabamba Initiative Centre (Centro de Iniciativa

Cochabamba). In ten years, they have made progress through a lot of work, and they still have much to do.

Solidarity is within all of us, even though it seems like it's asleep. But when there is a need, it comes out to help people who are suffering."

We could recount more experiences of women who came to this community to build their house through great efforts. Most of them saved cent by cent to be able to buy everything from a brick to a bag of nails.

As a community, we exercise our right to housing, but not with all of its components because the city government does not understand what the right to collective ownership is, nor does it understand the way in which we are organised. This is so, even though the human right to housing is clearly established in the Constitution (Article 56, paragraph I, Article 21), and it is the government's obligation to facilitate the fulfilment of this right. The least it should do is facilitate and propose solutions to the problem without discriminating against us and without saying that we are illegal, since the land has been obtained through purchase and the constitution respects ownership rights, whether individual or collective. The lot and the house are for the family to live in, not to profit from, and they cannot be sold, rented or used for profit in any other way.

Unfortunately, over these ten years there have been eight divorces or separations, three of which were forced because violent men were asked to leave the community while the others left on their own accord. In all cases, they asked to partition and divide the house, but these requests were rejected because of conditions imposed by the community. We are a community where the human right to housing is accessible for low-income people, particularly female heads of households. The principle of the human right to housing cuts across and is related to education, because that is where daughters and sons learn to nurture values, order, communication and human relationships. It is also related to health, because a well-ventilated and spacious house satisfies basic needs and is conducive to rest, which prevents illness. Finally, it is also related to work, because the home is the point of reference needed to obtain the trust of employers and banks. The community guarantees security because families are not alone and everyone cares about what happens to others in the community.

It is a community forged from the effort and commitment of each of its residents who clearly understands the rules. This is a community that has learned how to generate, facilitate and maximize economic and human resources, creating small loans for the self-construction of housing, as well as to help with health emergencies and economic enterprises. The small loans are supported by solidarity partnerships with Habitat for Humanity and the Pro-Habitat Foundation (Fundación Pro Hábitat), which support families with loans for new homes or for refurbishment.

María Auxiliadora Community Habitat for Women is a project in which the main principle is family. It is made up of more than 320 family groups and more than 600 others are in the process of paying for a lot on which to build their house. It is a community space that ensures the accessibility of its members to infrastructure and recreational spaces, to citizen security and care for the environment. It is far from the stress created by loud noise and pollution, with safe streets and recreational spaces that promote social integration with people from other neighbourhoods.

Comunal work; another pilar of the city. Cochabamba, Bolivia

Community Organizing, Building Power, and Winning a Right to the City in Toronto's Low Income Neighbourhoods*

Steffen Lajoie

Many cities will identify an absence of access and influence to the structures and institutions in charge of policy, programmes and projects which could or should improve the lives of citizens. As Brown (2009) puts forth, eliminating poverty demands rethinking approaches to cities, urban policies and rights and responsibilities. Democracies such as in Canada allow citizens to vote and select their representative candidates every four years. Yet in the lowest-income areas, voter turnout is also the lowest.

Satterthwaitte (2002: 10) points out seven aspects of urban poverty: inadequate income; inadequate unstable or risky asset base; inadequate shelter; inadequate provision of public infrastructure; inadequate provision for basic services; no safety nets; and inadequate protection of rights through law. Building the right to the city means taking control of democratic processes and building inclusive participatory processes to increase social and political assets and power which in turn allow for people to fight for their basic needs and rights.[1] The obstacles to this road are many and rarely accidental. ACORN Canada is a not-for-profit organisation which follows a community organising model which aims and succeeds to do just that (ACORN Canada: 2009a).

The organisation brings people together to gain the leverage necessary to win changes for the community on local, city, provincial, and national level. In doing so, it is also building social and political power and transforming the way cities are being run. This is the multiplier effect so often sought in effective participatory processes.

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*   Toronto ACORN's Landlord Licensing Campaign 2005-2010
1   In Brown and Kristansen (2009: 4), we find five implications for an inclusive city: Liberty, freedom and the benefit of the city life for all; transparency, equity and efficiency in city administrations; participation and respect in local democratic decision making; recognition of diversity in economic, social and cultural life; and reducing poverty, social exclusion and urban violence.

This article will look at how members built on local actions to develop a city-wide campaign and to threaten to increase tenant voter turnout by 25% in 2010 in target wards— turning tenant issues into a hot election topic (ACORN Canada, 2009b). In doing so, ACORN Toronto's members built power for themselves and their organisation; developed social and political assets; gained access to politicians, media, and public authorities; improved their lives; and fought and won rights to their city.

Context: Planning and Development in Toronto, A Blueprint for Social and Economic Exclusion

Poverty and Community Organising in Toronto, Canada

Despite its booming economy and low unemployment rate, Canada has received increasing criticism from its citizens due to an absence of any housing strategy on the national level, crippling the provinces' and cities' ability to assure safe and decent housing for all. Toronto Community Housing boasts over 200,000 units most of which are decayed and unsafe structures needing hundreds of millions of dollars in repairs. Many of the buildings violate the city's own codes for safety standards. There is an estimated waiting list of 70,000 families, mostly those who cannot get into social housing and cannot buy or qualify for a mortgage rent (ACORN Canada 2008). There are 6,385 multi-residential apartment buildings (MRABs) throughout Toronto. Around 80% of these buildings are over 40 years old in desperate need of major repairs; 95% of them are over 25 years old. The worst of these buildings are found in the lowest income areas outside the city. To add to the problem, household incomes have been decreasing in comparison to market rents. (City of Toronto, 2008 a & b).

Toronto has a population upward of 2.6 million people, sprawling through 44 wards (City of Toronto 2008a). ACORN Canada opened its first office in Toronto five years ago in order to organise low-income communities to better address the issues they face. (ACORN Canada 2009a). ACORN Canada follows a community organising strategy first developed by Saul Alinsky in Chicago and further developed by ACORN in the United States. The approach is simple: there is power in numbers. ACORN Canada is a member-based organization; members own and represent the entire group. At the core of its structure is the neighbourhood chapter (Miller et al 1995). ACORN Canada currently has four city offices (Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto, and Vancouver). ACORN Toronto boasts over 12,000 members and eleven neighbourhood chapters, covering close to ten of Toronto's lowest income wards. Members take direct action to protest against strategic targets to address the issues they face. With every victory they build credibility and power for their respective, local organisation. By organising and winning against one bad landlord, a chapter gives strength to other members living on the other side of the city.

From Fighting for Tenant Rights to Mobilizing around a City Election

ACORN Canada builds its local neighbourhood chapters by sending community organisers into target low-income areas to go door-to-door to talk to residents about local issues and build its membership on a daily basis (Miller et al 1995). Tenant issues emerged quickly as a big topic in all priority neighbourhoods. Members organised independent actions throughout the city targeting ineffective building management companies and slumlords. Members won elevator repairs, bug cleanups, garbage removal, improved security, playgrounds and rent subsidies. But they were only scratching the surface (ACORN Canada 2009a).

In 2006, an underdog candidate in Ward 8 won a seat on city council championing tenant issues and landlord licensing. ACORN Toronto developed the Landlord Licensing Campaign based largely on the experience of Los Angeles and some other cities. Licensing would include a nominal fee and standards and also call for an escrow account to lock rents away from landlords not achieving standards and code (City of Toronto 2008b). The success of the campaign surprised opposition and allies alike and effectively put the issue on the city map. The campaign linked local issues to the city level and culminated two years later with the production of a report and recommendations which was then presented to city council. Despite intense lobbying, action, member participation and speakers at the council meeting, the report offered a weak solution to the problem.[2]

The city launched the MRAB audit program, inspecting four buildings in each ward (without giving priority to wards where the highest density of problem buildings could be found). Though the outcome was disappointing the change launched a new focus for the campaign and members won a collaborative role within the city's Municipal Licensing and Standards (ML&S) Division after showing a strong and aggressive presence at the first inspection. ACORN Toronto was given priority in choosing problem buildings and by the spring of 2009, members were holding regular meetings with ML&S to help streamline and improve the MRAB program. Targeted buildings quickly began to see improvements as problem landlords began preparing for inspections. Though landlord licensing was still an important campaign, ACORN Toronto's focus was moving to the potential of the audit program.

The initial building inspections are considered a pilot project. ACORN Toronto is working to develop the program into something that could change the

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2   Much of the information in this paragraph was gleaned from my experience as a community organiser for ACORN Toronto at the time, key informants, and informal conversations. ACORN Canada's website is the best source for media coverage of ACORN Toronto's campaigns and actions.

scope and scale of how the city deals with problem landlords and could begin pushing for much needed and very expensive building repairs and maintenance. More importantly, in order to push the campaign a step further, the organisation looked to capitalize on its recent victories and role as partner and collaborator by launching its Tenants Vote 2010 campaign in July, 2009. By threatening to increase tenant voter turnout in target wards by up to 25% (ACORN Canada 2009b), the campaign is a sure-fire way to get council's attention and to bring new allies into political power.

Victories

Winning Tangible Changes to Low-income Neighbourhoods

It must not be ignored that ACORN Toronto's campaigns began to win improvements of living conditions and much needed repairs to units and buildings. While residents attest to significant changes in buildings where ACORN Toronto has been fighting for years, it has yet to be seen if the MRAB audit program and Tenants Vote 2010 will have the desired impact and scale. Nevertheless, the campaigning and action thus far has led to significant changes in power and planning, decision-making and the physical living conditions of Torontonians.

ACORN members who had formerly been ignored by their own building management are seeing significant tangible improvements such as removal of pests (rats, bedbugs, and cockroaches), fixed windows and ceilings, repairs to heating (a serious issue for Canadians in the winter), fixed elevators and many other infractions of city code. Prior to the MRAB program, ACORN Toronto would take direct action on managers to pressure them to hold to their responsibilities. With the 188 inspections across the city, their influence was greatly expanded. Furthermore, the campaign allowed for members to work directly with councillors and city workers to provide necessary measurement and evaluation.[3]

Building Social and Political Assets and Power

ACORN Canada works on a daily basis to build its membership, strengthen its chapters and take action to make real improvements for low- and moderate-income neighbourhoods. As such, the social network that is developed between members reduces isolation and powerlessness. With city councillors working

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3   ACORN Toronto members designed a multi-lingual complaints forms to report problems in their buildings and apartments which is now used by MRAB.

directly with tenants in target buildings, ACORN members gain access to democratic processes. In the beginning, ML&S was a body reluctant to work with ACORN members. Through the direct action of its campaign, members were able to bring the body on as an ally connecting them to planning structures of the city. Gaining the ability to take action against building management and landlords empowers members and provides a voice that was once easily ignored.

Members get together to plan actions and campaigns, and pressure the decision-makers affecting their lives. Victories and press attention builds confidence for the members and helps bring in more members. Building partners and allies in political power, as well as actively changing, creating and influencing old and new policy also build strength and credibility to the membership and organisation. As a result, exclusion from the structures and processes of the city is reduced.

Transforming the Structures and Processes of the City

The campaign was built off of small groups of ACORN Toronto members taking direct action in their neighbourhoods. Targets moved from single managers and landlords to management companies and landlord development lobby groups. By winning political allies, ACORN Toronto was able to organise on a city level to influence the report on the MRABs. Though the report was not satisfactory, the discussion of landlord licensing in the press and the report that followed were victories of sorts and recognition of the salient role ACORN members held in pushing the report through.

ML&S was once considered a target by members — a public body whose representatives seldom returned calls or showed up to community events and actions, let alone responded to complaints. Suddenly members were receiving calls from ML&S staff concerning their buildings and MRABs. Excluded low-income tenants were now walking into city hall to hold meetings and plan the new auditing program. Things have changed.

Conclusion: Reducing Exclusion, Gaining Housing Security and Building the Right to the City

The physical layout of the city of Toronto shows how strong the influence of developers is in the city. The result of the influence has been the physical, economic and social exclusion of low- and moderate-income families, forcing them into deteriorating and violent living conditions. Through organising, protest, action, proposals, building partnerships and pressuring targets, ACORN Toronto members were able push for immediate improvements, influence public

policy, and transform the planning process to include them — low income tenants — in strategic city planning. By using the 2010 municipal elections, ACORN Toronto is openly posing a threat to any candidate not willing to support tenant rights. They are also threatening to change the fabric and priority of city council. By using community organising strategies, ACORN members were able to build the necessary social and political power to pry their way into city hall and begin to take back the city which is rightfully theirs.

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Legal Framework of the Right to the City

The History of Urban Reform in Brazil

Nelson Saule Júnior and Karina Uzzo

The History of the National Urban Reform Movement

The struggle for urban reform began in the 1960s, when progressive sectors of Brazilian society demanded structural reforms to the legal regulation and use of public land. The main issue was agrarian reform in the countryside, which had already been included in the "Grassroots Reform" plan under the government of President João Goulart. The urban reform proposal for Brazil's cities was initially drawn up by Congress in 1963, and was promoted by the Brazilian Institute of Architects. However the military coup of 1964 gave rise to an authoritarian political system (lasting until 1984) which did not allow these reforms to be carried out.

Urban reform issues reappeared in the 1970s and 1980s during a period of slow and gradual political openness in which social movements slowly gained greater visibility and political weight, and were able to construct an autonomous discourse and social practice. The movement's demands were presented as rights in an effort to reverse social inequalities on the basis of a new social ethic. An important dimension of this new social ethic was the politicization of urban problems, understood as a fundamental element of the democratization process of Brazilian society. During this period, the Catholic Church made a major contribution with the launch of "Pastoral Action and Urban Land," in which it defended the social role of urban property. This proved to be a very important text in the struggle for urban reform.

At the time, Brazil's urban landscape had undergone significant changes. Marked by a high rate of rural-urban migration between 1940 and 1991 during which time the urban population increased from 31.2% to 75% of the country's total population, Brazilian cities grew without basic infrastructure. Major

consequences resulted, especially the spatial segregation of neighbourhoods which were largely neglected, lacked the basic conditions for adequacy and developed with the complicity of the public authorities. In 1988, the struggle for urban reform was taken up again. The National Constituent Assembly was a grand arena of political struggle, in which popular forces worked hard, articulating their demands while also coming into conflict with powerful interest groups from the conservative forces. Amid the post-1964 movement which culminated in the Constituent Assembly of 1988, the National Urban Reform Movement was created in January, 1985. Its story is the history of a struggle that unified and linked diverse social actors. In the beginning, the movement's struggle was focused on local issues, such as demands for housing. However by the end of the military regime, it had begun to incorporate ideas of the right to a more social life: the idea of the city, the city of all people, a home beyond one's house, a home accessed by paved roads, public services, schools, and transportation.

The National Urban Reform Movement was formed by a heterogeneous group of people, with participants who worked in different aspects of urbanism, and worked to link popular participation throughout Brazil, through the Constituent Assembly of 1988. Numerous civil society organisations, social movements, professional associations, non-governmental organisations and unions came together, including: the National Federation of Architects; the National Federation of Engineers; the Federation of Social Assistance and Educational Bodies (FASE); the National Urban Land Link (ANSUR); the Favela Movement; the Association of Mortgage Holders; the Institute of Architects; the Federation of Residents' Associations of Río de Janeiro (FAMERJ); and other social ministries and social movements struggling for housing.

These entities focused on preparing a bill to be included in the federal constitution, in order to change the exclusionary profile of Brazil's cities, which were until then characterized by the precariousness of public polices related to sanitation, housing, transportation and occupation of urban land. This precariousness had resulted from the omissions and negligence of government authorities. On the basis of the exchange between such diverse entities and the contributions of practical experience, a more advanced proposal was developed. This resulted not only from local struggles but also from participation in the preparation of public policies (although this had largely been for judicial purposes).

In 1986, the National Urban Reform Movement defined the concept of urban reform as a new social ethic which rejects the use of the city as a source of profit for a few while conversely subjecting many to poverty. Consequently, it assumes a critique and rejection of social inequality, keeping in mind the duality that exists in the same city: the city of the wealthy and the city of the

poor, the legal city and the illegal city. It condemns the exclusion of the majority of the city's inhabitants as caused by the logic of spatial segregation: the city as merchandise; the commoditization of urban land and real estate valuation; and the private appropriation of public investments in housing, public transport, urban infrastructure and public services. Thus, this new social ethic politicizes the debate about the city and creates a discourse and political platform for urban social movements, in which access to the city is the right of all its residents and not restricted to a few, or rather, the wealthiest.

Efforts towards urban reform solidified, not only through the linking of social movements supporting an urban platform that incorporated local and national issues, but also by criticizing spatial inequality in the dual city. With this, the country began an urban project based on the demand for a new city, proposing to eliminate access privileges in different areas of the city. What formed was a political matter that extended beyond urban issues and delved into the areas of social justice and equality. Its central point is the question of democratic participation in city management, which has been discriminated against by the exclusionary logic of technocratic plans of the 1960s and 1970s. This basis of technical knowledge assumed that the majority of the population was incapable of understanding, acting on, or deciding anything with regards to these urban plans. The right to the city was strengthened amid the struggle for urban reform and was characterized by democratic and participatory management of the city, fulfilment of the social function of the city, the guarantee of social justice and decent conditions for all inhabitants of the city, the superiority of the social function of property, and sanctions against property owners who disregard the social function of land.

The Popular Amendment for Urban Reform in the Brazilian Constituent Assembly

The participation process was galvanized by the establishment of an internal regulation in the Constituent Assembly which permitted the use of popular initiatives to present amendments to the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. As evidence of the efficacy of popular participation in the Constituent Assembly, more than 12 million signatures were gathered for popular amendments. Conservative forces argued that the principles of social justice were being used as a pretext to prevent the country's development (development was a term long used to disguise the issue of the inequality of urban space) and that intervening in urban policy would give the state too large of a role. They described the popular amendment as a usurpation law to be used as an instrument for social disorder and an incentive for illegal land occupations, among other retrograde concepts.

The popular amendment proposed by the National Urban Reform Movement was supported by 48 state and local entities and included the participation of six national groups: ANSUR; the National Federation of Architects (FNA); the National Federation of Engineers; the National Coordination Office of Mortgage Holders Associations; the Movement in Defense of Favelas and the Institute of Brazilian Architects. The social function of property was the greatest threat to conservative groups and to the right to private property.

In this world where cities were collective, urbanized spaces — or spaces about to be urbanized — progressive civil society forces began to demand public mechanisms to oversee the right to private property. With the popular amendment, Brazilian public rights began to guarantee not only private property and individual interest, but also the protection of collective interest above the various uses of individual property. As a result, property was no longer linked to a fundamentally private civil right, and began to be addressed by public rights. The right to property was separated from the right to build, a right of a different nature, and represents a concession of public power. Sanctions with regulatory attributions were established, based on a series of legal and urbanistic instruments which impose serious sanctions, including expropriation, on owners of urban land that is left unused for speculative reasons or owners who fail to utilize, underutilize or do not build on their property.

Other achievements at that time were the affirmation and establishment of effective municipal autonomy and the expansion of popular participation in city management, both through direct institutional mechanisms like plebiscites, referendums, popular initiatives and public consultation, as well as other forms of direct participation such as councils, conferences, forums and public hearings. This ensured the community's participation in the development of Master Plans, the main urban planning instrument for municipalities. Other actors, including organised sectors of the real estate market, mobilized to guarantee their interests in the urban and transport affairs subcommittees. Although the National Urban Reform Movement's proposal was not accepted in its entirety, it led to creation of the Popular Amendment for Urban Reform, backed by nearly 200,000 signatures.

 Although the achievements were finally reduced to two articles, for the first time in the country's history the constitution contained a chapter titled "Urban Policy," under the Economic and Financial Order section. Even though the 1988 Constitution did not address all of the National Urban Reform Movement's demands, it represented significant progress because for the first time it established a public policy on urban issues oriented towards meeting urban reform objectives.

National Forum on Urban Reform (FNRU)

After the Constituent Assembly, the National Forum on Urban Reform (FNRU) was organised with the immediate objective of pressuring Congress to regulate the chapter on urban policy in the 1988 Constitution. During 12 long years, this was one of FNRU´s main tasks until the enactment of the federal law known as the City Statute.

Starting with the 1988 Constitution, municipalities grouped together, gaining political and financial capacity to act in the field of public policy. In the early 1990s, with the process of drawing up municipal constitutions — which established municipal political and administrative structures and local public policy (Municipal Organic Laws) — local connections between entities and movements linked to FNRU played an important role in Brazil's largest cities. These constitutions were decisive in ensuring that the urban reform platform and the right to the city culture were included in urban and housing policies.

FNRU actively organised civil society in many international events, among them the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, where the treaty "Towards Just, Democratic and Sustainable Cities" was developed by consensus. In 1995, FNRU participated in the preparatory committee for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and organised, along with others, the Brazilian Civil Society Conference for Habitat II on the right to housing and to the city. In July 1996, FNRU participated in the official delegation representing Brazil at the Habitat II conference held in Istanbul, which established the right to adequate housing as a human right, as inscribed in the Habitat Agenda.

These conferences established various commitments concerning human rights and sustainable development of human settlements on behalf of government authorities. As a result of Habitat II and due to pressure from popular urban movements, the commitments made by the Brazilian government gave way to the recognition of the right to housing as a fundamental right in the Brazilian Constitution in 2000 and the approval of the City Statute in 2001. New forums began to appear in the 1990s, including the National Forum for Popular Participation and the National Environmental Sanitation Front, among others. Linked and interacting with FNRU, the new networks expanded the ways urban reform was treated, strengthening the discourse and actions of civil society. Issues began to be discussed in greater depth and contributed to an improvement of FNRU concepts.

Once it was understood that housing alone does not satisfy the right to the city, it was necessary to address the issue from the point of view of integration of rights and obligations that include the right to work, to sanitation services, to

transportation, and access to public facilities, among others. The right to the city stems from and is achieved through this broader concept.

The Aims and Structure of FNRU

FNRU is still working actively with civil society to ensure that urban reform is carried out in Brazil. FNRU's current concerns are focused on ways to ensure that all of the rights achieved are applied.

The fundamental principles that guide its actions are:

- the right to the city and to citizenship, understood as participation of urban inhabitants in determining their own destinies. It includes the right to land, livelihood, housing, environmental sanitation, healthcare, education, public transportation, food, work, leisure activities and information. It includes respect for minorities, ethnic, sexual and cultural diversity, and the right to enjoy a culturally rich and diverse space without discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, race, language or beliefs.
- the democratic management of the city, understood as a way of planning, generating, operating and governing cities, subject to social control and civil society participation.
- the social function of the city and property, with the common interest prevailing over individual property rights. It is the socially just use of urban space so that citizens take possession of land, democratizing its spheres of power, production and culture within the parameters of social justice and the creation of environmentally sustainable conditions.

FNRU periodically organizes a national meeting and thematic working groups, in a continuous process of evaluation and analysis of policies. The organisation has a coordination committee that meets regularly to discuss emerging demands, determine priorities and organise upcoming actions. To be better organised and to strengthen civil society in the area of urban reform, FNRU is currently divided into 15 interconnected state-level groups, as well as regional forums on urban reform (North, Northeast, Centre-West, Southeast and South). With this structure, it is able to stay connected to the diverse local issues and debate the issues specific to each region and support their demands, while raising visibility and organising around the urban reform struggle on a national level. Every two years, FNRU holds national meetings to debate the country's public policies and choose the priority issues and actions for the following years.

Some initial problems facing the urban reform movement have been overcome, such as understanding the institutional language used in public administration, learning to read laws, as well as understand, decode and write them, and the

ability to contribute arguments to technical and legal discussions. Taking the political struggle for urban reform to public and institutional spheres was one of FNRU's most important achievements. As a result, popular urban movements — within broader social struggles — have been able to assert a demand for the recognition of popular rights such as the right to the city and to housing. These rights have become institutionalized in urban laws through the demands of these organisations and grassroots movements, which have achieved policies, projects and channels for democratic participation within the political and legal-institutional structure of the Brazilian state.

Winning the City Statute

The City Statute (Federal Law No. 10.257/01) is the Brazilian development law that regulates the chapter on urban policy in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution. It sets the overall guidelines to promote urban policy that must be observed by the Union (federal government), the states (state governments) and municipalities (local governments). The objective of this process is to guarantee the full development of the social functions of urban property and the city, the right to sustainable cities and the development of the democratic management of cities. Based on the principles of the social function of property and democratic management of cities, the law contains regulations regarding public order and social interest which regulate the use of urban property to ensure security, and collective and individual well-being of citizens. The City Statute specifically addresses:

- instruments designed to ensure the fulfillment of the social function of property, progressive taxation over time on urban property and expropriation for urban reform purposes;
- criteria for municipalities to develop and apply Management Plans;
- regulatory instruments for the use of and access to urban lands occupied by low-income people;
- democratic city management instruments: public hearings; councils; and city conferences in national, state and municipal plans. Another of FNRU's many actions (not to take away from the importance of other actions) was the approval of the City Statute, which was a fundamental step towards urban reform in Brazil.

It took twelve years of social struggle to get the City Statute approved by Brazil's Congress, particularly in the Chamber of Deputies. This was because of opposition from business groups representing the real estate and civil construction sectors as well as planning and urban management technocrats.

There were numerous obstacles and strong resistance to a national law that sought to strengthen municipalities and civil society in urban land planning, which also requires social use of property and helps to plan the city through social control and popular participation.

With the approval of the City Statute, the struggle for urban reform ran into two major challenges. The first was training social actors on the importance and perspectives of the City Statute to promote public policies based on the urban reform platform in Brazilian cities. In this case, the social actors were defined broadly: popular leaders, professionals, academics, Members of Parliament, and public administration employees. In 2001 and 2002, different didactic materials regarding the City Statute were produced in accessible language and FNRU also organised two national trainer workshops, attended by 200 leaders of popular urban movements. The second challenge was to disseminate and popularize the City Statute so that it could be implemented in Brazilian cities. One way of approaching this challenge has been through the participation of FNRU's popular entities and organisations in the national campaign for a management plan which was developed by the National Council of Cities. The creation of the Ministry of Cities, and consequently the Council of Cities, initiated the start of an urban policy in which the various actors and legitimate representatives of civil society were included in the institutional sphere for the first time in the long history of urban reform in Brazil, in order to develop and apply urban policies.

The National Fund for Social Interest Housing

The National Fund for Social Interest Housing was born out of the first popular bill in the country, which was prepared by FNRU and presented to the National Congress in 1991. The trying times of the Collor government (1990 to 1992) presented an opportunity for civil society entities, which had been previously discredited by the government, to join FNRU in developing a bill to establish a public fund to meet popular demands for housing. The mobilization effort was enormous: thousands of signatures which were needed to accompany the proposal were presented in Brasilia. Aware of the difficulties, FNRU emphasized the importance of this popular bill process in demanding the necessary public funds in order to implement housing policies which subsidize the part of the population that is excluded from the formal housing production market.

The popular bill from the National Fund for Social Interest Housing was presented in Parliament on November 19, 1991, by popular urban organisations and movements affiliated with FNRU, including: the National Confederation of Resident Associations (CONAM); the Union of Grassroots Movements (CMP); the National Union for Low-Income Housing (UNMP) and the National Movement for the Fight for Housing (MNLM).

The popular bill was backed by more than 1 million signatures and was unanimously approved by all committees of the Chamber of Deputies between 1997 and 2001. As evidenced by the testimonies gathered for this research, thousands of signatures were carried to congress in Brasilia in wheelbarrows loaded by members of FNRU-affiliated movements and organisation. At the opening of the first National Conference of Cities in October 2003, President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva insisted on passing the bill to satisfy the demands of popular movements. In this sense, he reinforced the need to approve a key instrument for implementing a housing policy for low-income people; an instrument which was previously inexistent.

After thirteen years of debate in the National Congress, Law No. 11.124/05 of the National System of Social Interest Housing (SNHIS) created the National Fund for Social Interest Housing (FNHIS) and its executive council. The law presents objectives, principles and guidelines for the National System of Social Interest Housing and establishes the formation of the National Fund for Social Interest Housing and the competencies of the Ministry of Cities, the coordinating unit of the SNHIS, as well as the Federal Financial Fund, the operating entity of the FNHIS. The law defines the objectives and funding sources for the FNHIS and establishes the executive council and the way in which the fund's resources are to be applied.

FNRU's Participation in the Institutional Sphere

Since the beginning of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's government, some of the Movement's and FNRU's historic demands have been met. The first was the creation of the Ministry of Cities, which aims to integrate and link policies concerning urban development, housing, environmental health, mobility and urban transportation. The second was the start of a democratization process in the management of urban policies. In this sense, the first National Cities conference was held in 2003, bringing together more than 350,000 people. Members of the National Council of Cities were elected during the series of conferences, representing a percentage of each segment of society and including popular urban movements, non-governmental organisations and professional associations that work within FNRU. In 2005 the second conference was held with the objective of defining strategic actions for national and regional urban development policies. The National Council of Cities was renewed with 57% of voting members, as elected by civil society sectors, representing entities linked to FNRU. In the third conference, the formulations of the National Urban Development Policy were debated, members of the National Council of Cities were elected and 1,820 delegates and 410 observers participated, from all states in the federation. The National Council of Cities is made up of 83 members and 83 alternate members.

Of the total, 49 members are elected by civil society groups and the other 34 are elected by directors and managers of the public sector. Among the challenges for the coming years is the consolidation of democratic institutions, including the city conferences and councils, so that the Brazilian government respects and translates their decisions into concrete policies and actions in cities.

Maintaining and strengthening of the national land regulation policy, as a form of recognition of the right to housing and to the city for all social groups, is a strategic component towards achieving urban reform. One of FNRU's top priorities in the coming years will be to defend the use of public lands to meet the needs of poor populations, such as slum dwellers, indigenous peoples, fisherman and "quilombolas" (groups of descendents from villages founded by escaped slaves).

In cities, the mission of people working with popular organisations and movements linked to FNRU is to continue exercising their citizenship activities with the objective of creating cities places where people live with dignity, justice and solidarity in peaceful coexistence.

In 2009, a key result was the implementation of the national program "*Minha Casa, Minha Vida*" (My House, My Life), which sets rules and regulations for guaranteeing the regularization of informal settlements by declaring them as social settlements, while the major challenge remains creating a national urban development system.

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Members of the FNRU

National Urban Reform Forum (Coordination); Federation of Social Assistance and Education Organisms (FASE);
National Confederation of Residents' Associations (CONAM);
National Movement of Struggle for Housing (MNLM);
National Union for Low-income Housing (UNMP);
Union of Popular Movements (CMP);
National Federation of Associations of Federal Fund Employees (FENAE);
Inter-state Federation of Engineering Unions (FISENGE); PÓLIS (Institute of Study, Training and Consulting in Social Policies);
National Federation of Architects and Urban Planners (FNA);
Brazilian Institute of Municipal Administration (IBAM);
Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analysis (IBAM);
National Public Transport Association (ANTP);
COHRE Américas;
Center for the Right to Housing and Against Eviction;
Association of Brazilian Geographers (AGB);
National Federation of Brazilian Architecture and Urban Planning Students (FENEA);
Center for Consulting on Popular Self-management (CAAP);
Brazilian Association of Architecture and Urban Planning Education (ABEA);
Bento Rubião Center for Defense of Human Rights;
Observatory of the Metropolis (coordinated by the IPPUR / UFRJ and FASE);
ActionAid Brazil;
Federal Social Service Council.

Mexico City Charter:
The Right to Build the City We Dream About

María Lorena Zárate

With more than 20 million inhabitants, the Metropolitan Area of the Valley of Mexico[1] is one of the most populated regions on the planet and the primary economic, political, religious, historical and cultural nucleus of the country. The streets and plazas, of which more than five centuries ago comprised the great, ancient city of Tenochtitlán, have witnessed the most important manifestations of the Mexican people. Celebrations, events, protests, and popular mobilizations reveal an enormous collective character that has brought to light demands and proposals for greater democratic participation and the recognition, respect, and full realization of the human rights of its inhabitants.

There is no question that public policies in the city increasingly draw directly from citizen contributions and social struggles, to which much credit is due, according to both analysts and neighborhood leaders, to the strengthening of participation processes and the local democratic government itself. Initiatives for political reform and changes to legal status are currently underway in Mexico City to assure that progress continues in this direction, both to defend the rights of inhabitants and to strengthen the local government and delegations — as co-responsible autonomous entities — and to increase the capacities of metropolitan coordination.

Clearly inspired by the international debate and local documents that have already been developed and implemented, the *Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City* nevertheless has characteristics that make it unique in the world, both in its elaboration and promotion process, and in its contents and proposals.[2]

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1   Formed by sixteen delegations of the Federal District, better known as Mexico City, 40 municipalities of the State of Mexico, and one municipality of the State of Hidalgo.

2   For more details, see information, documents, and other materials at: http://derechoalaciudaddf. blogspot.com/ and www.hic-al.org

After originating among diverse social and civil organisations, the initiative was formally proposed to the Federal District Government (GDF) in early 2007. One year later, a Charter Promotion Committee was established, initially composed of representatives of the National Democratic Convention's Popular Urban Movement (MUP-CND), the GDF's General Office of Political Negotiation and Social and Citizen Attention, the Habitat International Coalition-Latin America (HIC-AL), and the federal district's Human Rights Commission (CDHDF). It was agreed to also incorporate the Espacio DESC (Coordination Space of Civil Organizations on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and the Federal District Social Attorney's Office (PROSOC).

Since then, a series of public events have been organized to promote the process of the charter and to coordinate activities and exchange experiences, including in other cities of the country. These activities have included hosting a tent on the right to the city and to habitat at the World Social Forum held in January, 2008, in Mexico City's central plaza known as the Zócalo. In July of that year, the municipal government officially inaugurated the formation process of the charter during an event attended by approximately 200 people and multiple local and national media outlets. At the event, the head of the Mexico City government emphasized that this effort "will have many positive consequences for the future of the city," and committed to listen to the proposals and invite the Legislative Assembly to construct "a legal instrument that will establish obligations, public policies, and new forms of management."

Some five months later, in December of 2008, a forum was held to bring together members of civil and social organizations, academics, professionals, officials, and other actors, and to gather their contributions within the six strategic bases around which the contents of the charter are organized. A few days later, interviews were conducted and opinions and images were documented from the general public in attendance at the human rights fair, organized each year by the CDHDF, including a large number of children and adolescents.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, the Charter Promotion Committee organized more than 35 meetings to coordinate, discuss, systematize, and draft the contents of the charter and to monitor and evaluate the process. Through this framework, substantive materials have been produced to feed and advance the debate and dissemination of the process (including pamphlets, a blog, leaflets, and a video specifically oriented to animate the process). Committee members have also participated in conferences, courses, workshops, radio programs, and interviews in diverse spheres to socialize the topic, stimulate reflection, and gather critiques of and contributions for the charter.

Once the charter's general structure was established and the mentioned contributions were systematized and incorporated, those areas that required

further development became clear. The *Diagnosis* document and the progress to date of the *Human Rights Program*[3] were then consulted to address those gaps. At the same time, certain proposals formulated through a citizens board for sustainable urban development (a citizen entity established to advise the formulation of the six-year governmental plan on the theme) were also integrated within the charter.

Around 3,000 people have participated so far in at least one of these activities that form part of an effort to broadly publicize the initiative and in particular to convoke citizens to debate and strengthen the movement with the active adherence of neighborhood organisations, youth collectives, unions, professionals, and the general public.

As a result of this broad process, a draft *Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City* has been completed and was presented for consideration to the head of the Mexico City government and all interested parties in early September, 2009, with contributions received until January, 2010, to enrich and fine tune its contents. The process will then move toward the signature of the charter and of course the definition and implementation of the strategy as specified in its short, medium and long-term plans.

This charter holds specific objectives: to contribute to the construction of an exclusive, habitable, just, democratic, sustainable and enjoyable city; to stimulate processes of social organization, strengthening of the social fabric, and construction of active and responsible citizenship; and to promote the construction of an equitable, inclusive and supportive urban economy that guarantees productive insertion and economic strengthening of popular sectors. In other words, the promoters of the charter believe that the right to the city can play a role in the social, economic, democratic and political strengthening of the population, and in support of sustainable territorial organisation and management.

In broader terms, it aims to confront the most profound causes of exclusion: economic; social; territorial; cultural; political; and psychological. It is explicitly posed as a social response, counter to the city-as-merchandise, and as an expression of the collective interest. It is without any doubt a complex approach that demands linking a human rights perspective in its integral conception (civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights) to that of democracy in its diverse dimensions (representative, distributive and participatory).

Inspired by the World Charter for the Right to the City, the Mexico City charter defines this right as the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice. It is of course

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3 The Diagnosis (*Diagnóstico)* and the Federal District Human Rights Program (*Programa de Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal*) are available in Spanish at: www.cdhdf.org.mx

interdependent with all integrally-conceived and internationally-recognized human rights, and therefore affirms as its guiding principles: self-determination; gender equality; social equity; priority attention for persons and collectives in vulnerable situations; solidarity and cooperation among peoples; participation, transparency, and accountability; co-responsibility; and distributive justice.

However, unlike other current instruments, the Mexico City charter also draws upon the results and proposals of the first World Assembly of Inhabitants held in Mexico City in October, 2000. This fundamental input, in which more than 300 delegates from social organisations from 35 countries participated, included debates on issues related to the ideals of a democratic, inclusive, sustainable, productive, educational, and livable city (in terms of being safe from disasters and violence, — healthy, convivial, and culturally diverse).

The contents of the charter are structured around the subtitle of "the city we want" and the following strategic foundations**:**

- **Full exercise of human rights in the city:** A city in which all persons (children, youth, the elderly, women and men) enjoy and realize all human rights and fundamental freedoms, through the construction of conditions for collective well-being with dignity, equality, and social justice.
- **The social function of the city, of land, and of property:** A city in which its inhabitants participate to ensure that the distribution of territory and the rules governing its use guarantee equitable usufruct of the goods, services and opportunities that the city has to offer. A city in which the collectively-defined public interest is prioritized, guaranteeing socially just and environmentally balanced use of the territory.
- **Democratic management of the city:** A city in which its inhabitants participate in all decision spaces, reaching to the highest level of public policy formulation and implementation, as well as in the planning, public budgeting, and control of urban processes.
- **Democratic production of the city and in the city:** A city in which the productive capacity of its inhabitants is recovered and reinforced, in particular of popular sectors, encouraging and supporting the social production of habitat and the development of supportive economic activities.
- **Sustainable and responsible management of natural, heritage, and energy resources of the city and its surroundings:** A city in which its inhabitants and authorities guarantee a responsible relation with the environment in a way that facilitates a life where individuals, communities, and peoples can live with dignity and in conditions of equality, without affecting natural areas, ecological reserves, other cities,

or future generations.

- **Democratic and equitable enjoyment of the city:** A city that strengthens social coexistence, the recovery, expansion and improvement of public space, and its use for community gathering, leisure activities, creativity, and critical expression of political ideas and positions.

As may be observed, and also in a way quite distinct from the previously prevailing approach, the charter conceives of the right to the city in a broad sense. It is not limited to the defense of individual human rights with the purpose of improving the living conditions of its inhabitants, but rather integrates rights and responsibilities that implicate them in the management, production, and responsible development of the city. Within this perspective, it not only incorporates the construction of conditions to assure that all people may access the goods, services and opportunities existing in the city without discrimination, but rather poses a more radical approach of profiling the city that we aspire to and want to construct for the future generations.

To be able to advance in the realization of each of these dreams / foundations, the charter proposes a series of public policy measures and commitments to be assumed by the diverse actors of society. Among the first, some of the most relevant measures include the following:

- Inhibiting real estate speculation and adopting urban norms for a just distribution of the burdens and benefits generated by the urbanization process. This is done by harnessing extraordinary profits (surplus value) generated by public investments, channeling them to social programs that guarantee the rights to land and housing and stimulating the social production of habitat.
- Developing administrative, financial and subsidy mechanisms that foster the generation of accessible and sufficient land so that the self-managed housing complexes may generate productive (shops, greenhouses, etc.) and social (cultural, sports, social-organizational) spaces.
- Recognizing the role played by the "informal" economy in combating social exclusion, granting it legal and fiscal status that considers the legitimate interests of those who comprise it and avoid their exploitation by third parties.
- Providing cooperative societies and other social enterprises that promote the popular and supportive economy with capacity and support from public resources and fiscal incentives.
- Locating productive activities and services that generate employment for the community around residential areas, to cut down on transportation, risks and costs, and the negative impacts on the economy and urban life.
- Preserving productive rural regions and conservation and forested

areas, strengthening the productive and economic capacity of communities and deterring speculation oriented to change land uses.

- Establishing norms that mandate the measurement of the environmental, economic and social impacts of macro-projects (prior to their implementation), taking into account the contributions of civil society and academia.
- Avoiding eviction processes, and in those cases where they cannot be avoided, guaranteeing that they respect the human rights of those affected in accordance with international instruments and standards: participatory programs for population relocation to nearby locations in the case of high risk soils or buildings, assuring conditions that substitute or compensate patrimonial losses and maintain social networks.
- Implement actions in support of alternative education projects and schools formed in settlements and neighborhoods through popular education perspectives.
- Taking advantage of the experience of the elderly (workers, craftspeople, teachers, etc.) in the vocational training of new generations and of apprentices.
- Preserving and promoting the knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples that inhabit the city in the management and preservation of natural and cultural resources, as well as community and alternative experiences in health issues.
- Generating instruments and programs that support the recovery of public space in its functional (social gathering and integration), social (community cohesion), cultural (symbolic, patrimonial, leisure, and coexistence) and political (of political expression, meetings, association and manifestation) aspects.

Regarding the second, the charter also outlines the commitments that should be assumed by the local government, the delegations, the Legislative Assembly, the Federal District Superior Court of Justice, autonomous public bodies, educational entities, civil society bodies, social bodies, social organisations, the private sector, and people in general. Among others, some of these actions include:

- Legal recognition of the right to the city;
- Maximum amount possible of budget allocation for available resources to progressively overcome conditions that impede equitable access to the goods and services required by the population and offered by the city;
- Training of public officials regarding the right to the city and the other human rights it includes;
- Establishment of indicators to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the right to the city;

- Promotion of support and co-investment schemes to encourage civil society activities in matters related to the right to the city;
- Follow-up with the implementation of the federal district human rights program from the perspective of the right to the city;
- Assure the inclusion of themes linked to the right to the city in formative, research, partnership, and dissemination programs and activities of universities and other educational centres;
- Broadly disseminate the contents of this charter and the good practices derived from its application;
- Document cases of violations or incompliance of progressivity;
- And promote awareness and consensus regarding the responsibilities that must be assumed by citizens to construct a city for all people.

As a complex right focused on a highly populated territory of multiple relevance for the country and with severe pressures on environmental conditions, the right to the city must propose a vision that surpasses the specialized approaches of distinct disciplines, professional practices, and the structure of public administration, as well as the individualistic and consumerist attitude prevailing among a large proportion of inhabitants.

At the same time, this proposal recognizes the urgency to revisit territorial planning as a public, collective, and participative function, placing it at the centre of its focus. Human rights and democracy are not abstract phenomena; they are attributions and processes of specific people in specific places. As we conceive it, the right to the city can and should also be a tool through which to territorialize the former and deepen the latter.

Finally, it must be emphasized loudly and firmly, that there will be no right to live with dignity in cities without the right to live with dignity in the countryside. For several decades now, alarms have been sounding regarding the urgency to look at our surroundings and our habitat in a more integral manner, and to review and radically modify our models of production, distribution and consumption, not only of things but also and perhaps most importantly of ideas, values, words, and symbols.

In short, the right to the city is proposed as a tool to support reflection, debate, formation, mobilization, articulation, and practice from a distinct point of view, through a renewed struggle for the redistribution of space, wealth, and decision-making regarding the present and the future of our communities.

Photos, HIC-Al

Policy and Legal Perspectives on Actualizing the Right to the City in Nigeria

Mobola Fajemirokun

In common with global trends, the number and size of cities in Nigeria have been growing with the result that the urban population is estimated to be at least 43% of the total national population of approximately 150 million. This may rise to 50% in 2010 and clearly represents a significant increase from 1952 when the urban population was less than 20%. The scale and rapidity of these metropolitan changes, both in spatial and demographic terms, has fuelled the high demand within cities for land, housing and services such as water and sanitation. However, the concept of a city government to address these metropolitan challenges is not one that has been adopted in Nigeria because the 1999 Constitution only recognizes three tiers of government: Federal; State; and the Local Government Area councils (LGAs), the former being the lowest level of government. This three-tier approach to defining levels of political governance has several consequences for Nigeria's cities. First, their boundaries are usually not congruent with those of the LGAs; and secondly, these cities will be comprised of more than one LGA. The right to the city embraces the adoption of values and the implementation of practices aimed at bringing about socially inclusive cities through democratic participation in city life; accountability in city governance; equal treatment of city dwellers; and poverty reduction. It represents a paradigm shift in planning and managing cities. However, the right to the city is not a regime of specific rights although it draws its inspiration from human rights systems that enshrine civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. In light of a number of promising developments since the inception of democratic governance in May, 1999, this paper assesses the policy and legal issues that arise in connection with actualizing the right to the city in Nigeria.

Introduction of new urban policy

In 2002, after extensive consultations nationwide, the Federal Government introduced the National Urban Development Policy (NUDP) with the goal of developing "a dynamic system of urban settlements, which will foster sustainable economic growth, promote efficient urban and regional development and ensure improved standard of living and well being of all Nigerians." The NUDP essentially prescribes strategies and actions to be implemented at all levels of government in the short, medium and long term. Crucially, it recommends the devolution of adequate powers to LGAs as well as improved revenue and financial arrangements. Furthermore, the NUDP recognizes that the present structure of LGAs is not conducive to "the practice of democracy and good urban governance" and that there is a need to "re-connect urban local government in Nigeria with the citizens which it is expected to serve." Consequently, the NUDP calls for a categorization of Nigeria's urban centres into towns, cities, metropolitan centres and mega cities, and the provision of appropriate powers, structures and resources for these various types of urban centres so they can meet the challenges that they are respectively faced with.

Support for social accountability mechanisms

The clamour for transparency in public institutions and public finances has intensified since the return of democratic governance. This has manifested in legal reforms in connection with government procurement and budget processes especially at the federal level with the passing in 2007 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act and the Public Procurement Act. On account of the division of legislative competences under the 1999 constitution, these federal laws do not automatically apply within states and it is for the individual states to pass equivalent legislation within their territories. Some states have taken the necessary steps. Essentially, fiscal responsibility legislation guarantees public participation in budget processes and access to budget documents. Public procurement legislation standardizes public procurement through the mandatory publication of contracts and tenders so as to present a level playing field for all interested parties. Equally important has been the advocacy by civil society for the introduction of freedom of information legislation at all levels of government. This has not yet been achieved at the federal level and only a few states have introduced or have committed to introducing this type of legislation.

Future Prospects

The introduction of the NUDP is a significant development although it neither specifically refers to the right to the city nor rights-based approaches in general. The NUDP is also not comprehensive by any stretch. This is evident in its failure to address environmental themes such as energy use, waste reduction and access to urban services. The NUDP further lacks measurable targets for evaluating progress in its implementation. As a result, its value is more descriptive than normative. Nevertheless, its recommendations on urban governance mirror some of the components of the right to the city. For example, the categorization of Nigerian urban settlements is long overdue and for the purposes of meaningful urban development, the re-alignment of LGAs needs to be congruent with urban centres. This is the responsibility of state governments but in the face of the high political stakes involved and the constitutional hurdles that have to be overcome, very few states have been willing to take up this challenge. The exception is Lagos State, which had introduced 37 LGAs to supplement the existing twenty LGAs recognized under the 1999 constitution. Following a face-off with the federal government on the constitutionality of the 37 LGAs, these were subsequently re-classified as Local Council Development Centres. In conclusion, actualizing the right to the city in Nigeria will need to take into cognizance the separation of powers between the federal and state governments. To some extent, some of the components of the right to the city are already emerging with the devolution of city planning powers and the growing support for social accountability but a lot still needs to be done. The responsibility to lead change mainly falls on state governments rather than the federal government in view of the legislative powers that the states enjoy under the 1999 constitution. For civil society, the focus should be on improved advocacy for the actualization of the right to the city as public awareness and understanding of this new city planning paradigm is still fairly limited within and outside policy and decision-making circles.

References

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The Path of the Right to the City in Bolivia

Uvaldo Romero Mamani

Since 1985, Bolivian governments have been implementing neoliberal economic reforms[1] which have deepened levels of poverty and migration from the countryside to the city. Figures from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (Bolivian National Statistics Institute, or INE) showed that in 2005, 65.98% of the country's population lived in urban areas while 34.02% lived in rural areas. The cities which form Bolivia's central axis, which include La Paz, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba, are collectively home to over 50% of the country's population. The demographic growth of these cities has increased the social, economic, political and spatial vulnerability of their inhabitants.

There are many remarkable experiences and processes which have been carried out by non-governmental institutions, organisation and human rights activists, which are linked through the *Red Nacional de Asentamientos Humanos* (National Network of Human Settlements, or RENASEH)[2]. These actors have successfully included the right to housing in the new state constitution, establishing a viable foundation for urban reform in the country.

Neglect of Land Suitable for Urban Development

In Bolivia, there have been two processes of agrarian reforms[3], which implemented few measures in relation to land for urban development. The few advances made

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1   Supreme Decree 21.060 of 1985, through which Víctor Paz Estensoro's government dismissed thousands of COMIBOL mine workers.
2   RENASEH was founded in 1995.
3   The first took place in 1953 after the rural revolution of 1952 and the second took place in 1996 with the enactment of the INRA Law by the *Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria* (National Institute of Agrarian Reform).

in urban legislation have occurred simply as a complement to the management of agricultural land.

In 1995, the Popular Participation Law established a new decentralized scheme for land distribution and administration and grassroots territorial organisations were created within municipal districts, giving municipalities new roles such as land use planning. This law increased the decentralization and autonomy of municipalities, and municipal governments quickly began to fill the legal vacuum in urban issues. They implemented standards for land administration, although these were enacted in a scattered manner without a national urban system to integrate them.

From the Right to Housing to the Right to the City: the Steering Committee for the Right to the City is Born

Struggles for the right to housing, secure access to land and a better quality of life in Cochabamba have been addressed through different facets and various associations. Until 2005, the *Comunidad María Auxiliadora* (María Auxiliadora Community) was at the forefront of the struggle for the recognition of collective ownership of land and housing as well as the mutual benefit offered through housing cooperatives, in cooperation with *Fundación Pro Hábitat* and *Procasha*. In addition, independent professionals and volunteer groups supported by Habitat for Humanity, along with families in need of housing, formed part of a new critical awareness of the social-housing reality in an urban context.

In 2000, Cochabamba was home to protests against water privatization, known as the "Water Wars" (*Guerra del Agua*). The city continued on its crusade which started with the expulsion of the transnational water company *Aguas del Tunari*, in an effort to maintain public control of water through a private company or community management, reviving the community water system model from the southern part of the city.

The issue of sustainable processing of waste, growing citizen insecurity and ongoing social conflicts between unionized and private forms of public transportation[4], revealed major flaws in Cochabamba city management.

In 2005, the *Fundación Pro Hábitat* brought together numerous actors affiliated with RENASEH for World Habitat Day. The wealth of exchange and coordination among organisations and institutions at the event prompted the first meeting of institutions and interested parties to address the right to the city. This is where

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4   Unionized transportation routes are recognized by the city, while private transportation means serve residential neighbourhoods which are not serviced by unionized means.

the Steering Committee of the City Statute was born, now called the Steering Committee for the Right to the City[5].

The Process Developed by the Steering Committee for the Right to the City in Cochabamba

First steps taken by the Steering Committee for the right to the city

The steering committee for the right to the city was founded as the Steering Committee for the City Statute following Brazil's "City Statute law" as a model. It was determined that there was a need for analysis of urban issues in order to create and propose technical and political tools that would ensure the viability of a true social function of property that would benefit the democratic management of the city of Cochabamba.

The cities of Bolivia, especially those belonging to the central axis, have similar urban problems. For this reason, the committee is drafting a proposal for the right to the city in Cochabamba, which will act as a pilot project model for promoting urban reform in Bolivia.

The complexity of the problem and the Decalogue proposal

Problems such as the lack of access to urbanized land, the lack of adequate housing and the patronage of institutional management, independent of the city and dispersed urban standards, generated long debates making this issue very complex. The causes and consequences of these problems are summarized in the following points:

- The overwhelming unplanned immigration from the countryside and other impoverished areas has led to endless growth of the city.
- The planning and organisation of a city which does not take into account the economic, political, social and cultural situations of its inhabitants, can lead to very expensive public investments on behalf of the state and for families.

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5   Members include the *Comunidad María Auxiliadora*, *La Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos* (The Standing Assembly of Human Rights), *Sistema de Agua de Alto Pagador y Barrios Unidos* (High Payer and United Neighbourhoods Water System), *SEMAPA*, *Fundación Pro Hábitat*, coordination of the RENASEH Network, *Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídico Políticas* (Legal-Political Research Institute, or IIJP), Habitat for Humanity, *Sociedad de Estudios de Vivienda* (Society of Housing Studies, or SEVIVE-CAC), *Procasha*, *Centro de Planificación y Gestión Ceplag* (Ceplag Planning and Management Center) and *Centro de Investigaciones de Sociología* (Sociology Research Center, or CISO).

- A city's land-use planning which excludes people with the least economic and political power, results in political patronage.
- A city which is planned from a technical and economic viewpoint and not in an integrated way can lead to the occupation of environmental and agricultural preservation zones and the development of human settlements in areas of high geographical risks.

In order to facilitate an approach to the complexity of the urban problem, different committees were organised. These committees together designed a proposal which included policies and principles for the city, and gave way to a Decalogue of Principles:

Decalogue of Principles for the City of Cochabamba

1. Cochabamba is a democratic, open, hospitable, social and spatially integrated city.
2. Collective rights are more important than individual rights.
3. The hybrid urban centre lacks an identity and must be revitalized to strengthen the sense of identity and belonging.
4. All districts have the right to social and spatially integration.
5. La Cancha[6] and surrounding areas, as the economic heart of the city, deserve the social and political recognition of citizenship.
6. Citizens are more important than vehicles.
7. Green spaces are more important than roads.
8. Streamline the water cycle.
9. Decent housing for the 49.37% of inhabitants who are not homeowners.
10. Use of protected, urban land that is apt for development.

The central themes of the right to the city in Cochabamba

All cities need to have their own vision and conception of the right to the city, based on the content and principles of the World Charter for the Right to the City. From this, a basic outline of central themes was created to develop groups of analysis and to design proposals.

After long debates, the central themes defined as the basis of many urban problems were the following:

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6   A popular market located in the centre of the city of Cochabamba representing 47% of the city's economy.

- **Basic services: water, sewage, electricity, and waste disposal**

In Cochabamba, access to basic services illustrates the deplorable conditions of the social segregation of the more than 100,000 people who live in the southern part of the city.

Only 53% of the population has access to running water. The sewage situation is even more serious, with only 49.4% of the population having access to this service.

- **Social services: education, health, citizen security, roads, facilities and infrastructure, recreation and leisure**

The majority of these services are concentrated in the more privileged areas of the city, further reinforcing the socioeconomic divide and differences in access to opportunities between the northern and southern zones of the city.

Currently, the amount of open space or green areas per inhabitant is less than 5 m². However, there is little citizen awareness of the maintenance and care of public infrastructure such as parks, plazas, gardens, etc.

- **Economy, production and supply: markets and industries**

In a cultural sense, markets are the most important areas of Cochambama. This is true of "La Cancha" and other areas known as peasant markets, which are strategic points of exchange between the country and the city. The operation of these spaces directly affects roads, communication systems, production and supply of Cochabamba, which does not have an organised network of markets that regulate and improve their operation.

- **Land and housing**

Urban growth and its planning have been a municipal responsibility since 1995 with the enactment of the Popular Participation Law. However, there are no municipal mechanisms for the incorporation of new land for urban use. Urban standards are limited to prohibiting urbanization of lands designated as agricultural or environmentally protected areas, without recognizing that many of these zones have already been urbanized since the 1960s. The migrant population that seeks access to a plot of land is not able to do so through a public social program or through a formal land market governed by urban standards. Instead, they can only go about doing this through an informal market.

- **Institutional policies: social management, political framework and information**

City administrative institutions are currently faced with the need to promote strategies, policies and regulatory instruments to address social exclusion and spatial segregation. A decentralized management model has been implemented which has not been able to include the vast majority of the urban population in planning and municipal management processes. For those on the periphery, there is a lack of access to public information, limiting the development of fundamental citizen capabilities.

Urban Bill for Access to land

Thus far, a campaign has been developed for the promotion, awareness, analysis and debate of the reason and necessity of using the right to the city as a new paradigm for building more just and sustainable cities.

In the need to understand the reason and the conceptual and legal implications of the right to the city, educational material was published with content from the World Charter for the Right to the City and a series of workshops was developed for grassroots organisations and interested institutions.

The concept of the "right to the city" has generated discussions which are indirectly related to the resurgence of indigenous groups which self-identify with the rural world and their conflict with the discrimination historically suffered in urban contexts. For this reason, other names have been used such as the "right to an adequate municipality," the "right to adequate habitat," and the "right to an urban-rural city."

A team of professionals from the street committee for the right to the city created a proposal for a bill for land access following these legal guidelines:

Reconfiguration of the concept of the right to urban property

- Definition of the right to urban property
- Social function of urban property
- Duties and rights of owners of developed land

Access to land

- Identification of empty sites through neighbourhood participation and supervision
- Reconceptualization of the term "fair compensation" in cases of expropriation
- Acquisition of land for the Land Bank
- System of ownership for Land Bank properties

Regularization of settlements

- Regularization of human settlements with social participation and supervision
- Mass usucaption
- Real Property (land) law
- Relocation of settlements located in high-risk areas

Urban discipline

- Criminal penalties for illegal division and/or partition of land

A new legal framework for sustainable urban reform

Since the beginning of Evo Morales's presidency, Bolivia has undergone a profound change which continues today. The country is being re-founded on the basis of participation of all sectors through the Constituent Assembly. This is the result of an ongoing struggle by the Bolivian people, mobilized since the historic "March for Land and Dignity" led by indigenous groups of the eastern part of the country in 1990 and reinforced by the Cochabamba Water Wars in 2000 and protests in February and October of 2003[7]. The Constituent Assembly was a very strong test for mediating the existing capabilities and impact achieved by all social actors in the country.

Before the opening of the constituent process, *Fundación Pro Hábitat*, together with several members of RENASEH and allied social groups, began a large-scale advocacy campaign, protests and used political influence to include the right to housing in the constitution, presenting a proposal formed by consensus. This was the cause, promotion and defence of the Constituent Assembly process which was rejected by the country's businesses and wealthy sectors. Protests and settlements took place in six major cities in Bolivia[8], which participated in territorial meetings organised by the Constituent Assembly with the goal of collecting proposals from every province in Bolivia. Signatures of support for the right to housing were submitted to the Constituent Assembly, and the details of

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7   In the Water Wars, the people of Cochabamba mobilized to drive out the largest multinational companies in the world, taking back the contract under which water service had been privatized for over 20 years.
   In Black February of 2003, the people of La Paz protested against and were able to reverse a government decree which taxed salaries of all the working class in the country. Thirty people died during the conflict.
   In Black October of 2003, the Bolivian people protested the expulsion of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, known as "Goñi," resulting in the death of more than 70 people.
8   La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija and Santa Cruz.

the proposal were presented and explained to several technical committees of the Assembly. As a result of these developments, the Constituent Assembly called upon RENASEH to draft the final article on the right to adequate housing for the new political constitution of Bolivia.

The new political constitution of Bolivia recognizes the human right to adequate housing along with all of its components in Article 19. It also includes housing as the primary responsibility of the national, provincial and municipal governments as well as indigenous groups (Articles 304, 299, 302, 298).

Until recently, the state did not recognize collective ownership of land, and therefore it was not protected. It was impossible to develop community or cooperative housing projects, and only projects involving individual ownership could be developed. Today, the state recognizes and protects the legal security of land tenure (Article 393) whether it is owned by an individual, a collective or a community.

Basic services were not considered to be human rights and furthermore they were susceptible to concession by national and transnational private companies. Today, the government recognizes the right to potable water, sewage services, electricity, household gas, telecommunications and transport (Article 20). The government also recognizes the right to a healthy, protected and balanced environment (Article 33).

Land and housing are goods which are subject to the laws of the speculative market. However, now, the state is now obligated to regulate the land market (Article 396) and to assign more economic resources specifically for housing (Article 321).

In this new scenario, the organised participation of civil society in designing public policies has been established as a constitutional duty (Article 241), or, in other words, the democratic management of cities.

With these important inclusions, the foundations for real urban reform have been established in Bolivia. Now we are addressing how to build autonomy[9] in every region of the country, which will incorporate the principles and vision of the right to the city. In this sense, the World Charter for the Right to the City, the visions and principles of the steering committee and the proposed bill for access to land will be important proposals for all of the autonomous entities. They will need to recognize that there are minority groups among them which disagree with this process of change who will seek to create obstacles for this great, unstoppable process.

The sleeping giant has awoken.

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9   The new political constitution of Bolivia establishes four autonomous entities: provincial, municipal, indigenous-native and regional.

The Social Contract for Housing, Ecuador

Silvana Ruiz Pozo and Vanessa Pinto

> Ecuador, a country of conflicts, is also the country of the "minga."[1] As the Social Contract for Housing Collective, we have confidence in the potential for dialogue, compromise and working together to solve the housing problem in our country.

The Housing Problem in Ecuador

In Ecuador, one out of three households live in precarious conditions and every year there are approximately 64,000 new households throughout the country. More than 25,000 of these households live below the poverty line, with a total family income below the cost of basic market products (Ruiz, 2008).

After several decades of "withdrawal" by the state in production and financing for low-income housing, the Ecuadorian government implemented a Housing Incentives System in 1998 through an agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank which was implemented by the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI). This program included a non-reimbursable subsidy for new urban housing, refurbishment of urban housing and refurbishment of rural housing, worth US$1,800, US$750 and US$500, respectively.

El Contrato Social por la Vivienda (The Social Contract for Housing, or CSV) was created in July, 2005, as a reaction to the elimination of grants to fund housing bonds for the 2006 budget, which would have meant the destruction of the housing subsidy system.

In order to fulfill a campaign promise, the government, led by economist Rafael Correa, has strengthened the Housing Incentives System, implementing a tiered

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1   Communal work performed for the common good, and which is characteristic of Andean villages.

bond ranging from US$2,400 to US$5,000 for new urban housing, US$5,000 for marginal urban housing and rural housing, US$1,500 for housing improvements and US$200 in bonds for titles to be used to formalize the transfer of property ownership to low-income families.

According to official statistics from MIDUVI, just over 147,000 bonds were given out in 2007 and 2008: 25,748 bonds for new housing in urban areas; 15,854 bonds for housing improvements; 9,772 bonds for marginal urban housing; 2,634 vouchers for improvements to marginal urban housing; 85,448 bonds for rural housing and 7,736 bonds for improvements to rural housing. There are no official statistics on the number of bonds for titles that were given out (Ruiz, 2009).

In spite of the resources allocated to Ecuadorian families to facilitate their access to housing through the basic Savings, Bonds and Credit formula, there were still problems with access to these benefits. More importantly, the Housing Incentives System did not constitute a housing policy in its entirety and was simply an element of one. It is not possible to address the housing and habitat problem solely by building housing while neglecting related issues and roles that should be assumed by other actors involved, such as:

- local governments and other public institutions in the provision of developed urban land; defining and updating regulatory frameworks, risk management mechanisms and incentives that promote logical use of vacant land; protection of important environmental areas; social redistribution of surplus value; the supply of social housing; and community organization;
- competent regional governments and public bodies involved in rural development, which enable the design and implementation of comprehensive responses to rural development and habitat issues as well as sustainable urban development;
- the financial sector in the expansion and improvement of credit supply for housing, particularly for middle- and low-income groups;
- the construction industry using housing products of a good construction and aesthetic quality for low-income families under the principle of social responsibility;
- academic sectors and research centres that contribute to the development of alternative technologies based on the sustainable use of local resources and that orient professional education towards social service;
- social organisations and other social actors such as NGOs, academic centres and professional groups that work on the definition, implementation, evaluation and lobbying of housing policies;
- institutions interacting among the different levels (national, local and community) which will need to create citizen and neighborhood councils to ensure the right to housing, the city and habitat.

Contrato Social por la Vivienda (The Social Contract for Housing, or CSV)

Contrato Social por la Vivienda (The Social Contract for Housing or CSV) is comprised of social organisations and institutions, NGOs, companies, academic organizations, as well as professional individuals and groups, whose work is linked to social housing and to the right to the city and habitat.

The CSV operates as a forum for independent discussion, with branches in the cities of Quito, Guayaquil and Pujilí. It proposes to contribute to the full exercise of the right to housing, the city and habitat, ensuring the necessary conditions are met so that all Ecuadorians have access to these rights.

It acts as a meeting space for common desires and concerted actions but it is not a legal entity and does not have a specific funding source. Regardless, the CSV has been developing a campaign since August, 2005, consisting of lobbying and making ongoing demands of the authorities, raising awareness in the media and providing information and training for the leaders and members of the collective.

The more than 160[2] activities organized by the CSV have gradually increased its social recognition and contributed towards a strengthened common agenda. Other institutions and organisations have been added to the six that initially undertook this initiative. Currently, the CSV is made up of 27 institutions and organisations. Starting with demands in defense of the subsidy system, a platform has been created that seeks to consolidate social participation, dialogue and agreements between the many different actors in order to develop a sustainable and equitable housing policy, with a corresponding legal framework.

The CSV is based on the premise that the sustainability of proposals, solutions and policies depends on collective efforts and agreements which are made on the basis of progressive consensus. For this reason, CSV promotes the participation of various actors in the reflection, action and attention to aspects related to the right to housing, the city and habitat.

The CSV agenda is structured around three interrelated action strategies:

The constitutionalization of the universal right to housing, the city and habitat

As a first strategy, the national constituent assembly represented a historic opportunity to strengthen and restore individual and social rights as well as the state's policies in relation to housing, the city and habitat. Among the advocacy activities carried out by the CSV during the constituent process, the "Citizens' Demand for the Right to Housing, the City and Habitat" was publicly announced

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2 Consisting of 14 public forums; 40 training courses and academic and political discussion workshops; 57 internal coordination meetings and 46 lobbying meetings with government authorities and cooperation bodies; protests; and media appearances.

for the first time to the elected assembly members in Quito on November 8, 2007, just a few days before the assembly was inaugurated.

The Citizens' Demand — the result of a six-month discussion process — involved the participation of more than 300 delegates from social organisations, private institutions, NGOs and academics, highlighting the cooperation between different actors in building an inclusive and sustainable habitat.

On February 8 and 9, 2008, representatives of CSV member organisations and institutions supported the protest in Montecristi — home of the assembly headquarters — promoted by the Urban Forum. Delegates of the mobilized grassroots organisations and members of CSV were welcomed by assembly members at Tables 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7, where they discussed the importance of the specific demands put forward by the CSV and reiterated civil society's commitment to the participatory construction of a new constitution. The majority of the proposals in the Citizens' Demand were included in a draft constitution which was approved by the Ecuadorian people in a vote on September 28, 2009.

The implementation and participatory design of public policies on housing and human settlements that ensure conditions for the exercise of universal rights to housing, the city and habitat

In the second strategy, the CSV seeks to influence the development and implementation of a state policy together with the participation of organized social groups, the private sector and local governments, in order to come up with institutional responses which are socially effective, responsible and equitable. These proposals aim to build a state policy that addresses families' immediate problems and urgent demands, without losing sight of proposals for improving housing conditions and the quality of life in the medium and long term. Toward this end, the CSV organized spaces to facilitate public dialogue and workshops to discuss and analyze problems related to housing, the city and habitat, and also prepared proposals for policy guidelines.

Along these lines, the CSV presented its proposals in July and August of 2009 as part of the update to the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (National Development Plan or PND) for 2009-2013, emphasizing the necessity of defining a coherent housing policy with rights recognized in the new constitution.

The enactment of a housing and human settlements law which includes institutional and financial support

Finally, the third strategy emphasizes the establishment of a general housing and human settlements law to ensure the right to housing, the city and habitat,

and to ensure the legal, institutional and financial means for its implementation.

Currently, as the Ministry for Urban Development and Housing prepares its own bill, the CSV has put forward the following points:

- The need to codify existing norms regarding housing and habitat.
- In accordance with the constitution, the law should address not only the issue of housing but also the issues of city and habitat.
- Within the law, define the leader of the sector and the necessary complementary skills between the central government and the autonomous decentralized governments.
- Implement a monitoring and evaluation system for policies and programs related to housing, the city and habitat based on citizen participation and supervision. Ensure accordance with the Ley de Participacion Ciudadana (Law of Civil Participation).
- Within the law, establish a definition of housing for social interests with the purpose of applying exemptions and incentives. These exemptions and incentives already exist in current legislation, but they need to be expanded. The definition would be based on a concept of adequate housing including accessibility, services, tenure security, good quality of housing, surroundings, and other aspects.
- Regulate and promote the use of alternative technologies through their inclusion in the building code. Implement incentives for research and restructuring of curricula in architecture and engineering schools, opening up possibilities for the use and application of alternative technologies.
- Through the law, encourage the production and use of local materials for construction as well as the intensive use of labour.
- Define guidelines for the resettlement of low-income groups living in high risk zones and for adequate urban planning to avoid creating such settlements.
- Create a unified system with respect to: regulations, national and local deficits, housing programs (the housing incentives system and other data), a database of key actors (housing organisations, technical entities, international financial institutions, NGOs).
- Link the principles of the law with other laws and related regulations to land use planning, the environment, energy efficiency, and rural-urban equality, among others.

El *Contrato Social por la Vivienda* member organisations and institutions, October 2009

Social organisations:

Asociación de Mujeres Luchando por la Vida (Association of Women Struggling for Life)

Asociación de Vivienda Alianza de Mujeres (Women's Association of Housing Alliance)

Asociación Vida Vivienda (Life Housing Association)

Paseos de Pichincha Housing Association

Confederación Nacional de Barrios del Ecuador (National Neighborhood Confederation)

Confederación Nacional Campesina "Eloy Alfaro" (Eloy Alfaro National Peasant Confederation)

Foro Urbano (Urban Forum)

Acción por la Vida (Action for Life Housing Network)

Women Sheltering Our Dreams

NGOs:

América España Solidaridad y Cooperación (AESCO-Ecuador)

Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (Christian Youth Association)

Asociación Solidaridad Acción (Solidarity Action Association)

Centro de Investigaciones CIUDAD (CITY Research Center – Paso a PasoProject)

Ecosur

Fundación Hogar de Cristo (Fundación Hogar de Cristo)

Fundación Mariana de Jesús

Fundación Ecuatoriana del Hábitat (FUNHABIT)

Grupo Social FEPP (FEPP Social Group)

Habitat for Humanity – Ecuador

We Are Ecuador

Private institutions:

Cooperativa FOND Vida (FOND Vida Savings and Credit Cooperative)

CoopCCQ Savings and Credit Cooperative

Eco & Arquitectos (Eco Architects and Associates)

Cámara de la Construcción de Quito (Quito Chamber of Construction)

University research institutes:

Urban and Regional Planning Institute, Universidad Santiago de Guayaquil

Cooperation organisms:

UN-HABITAT

Others:

Independent professionals

Some Conclusions

Through its actions, the CSV has gained considerable influence and legitimacy as a voice representing civil society. This is despite not having legal status, although individually almost all of its members are legal entities. They also lack permanent funding sources, and operate with the contributions received from members and international cooperation, through projects related to lobbying and the strengthening of actors.

Its most valuable elements are essentially summarized in the following points:

- The diversity of the actors involved which through different focuses, strategies and resources, all work towards a common goal: Building adequate responses to the housing demands of low-income groups.
- The social recognition and career path of the actors participating in the CSV.
- To be a space for dialogue with the national and local governments so that the collective interest can influence policies.
- The diversity of strategies that the CSV carries out: protests, raising awareness, elaborating proposals and intense lobbying.
- The opportunity to act in relation to particular political contexts.
- The growing geographic coverage that the CSV is pursuing and achieving and the development of actions in various cities throughout the country.

The reason for and relevance of the function of this "informal" arena of political influence and the dialogue of actors that has been defined as the "social contract," is based on:

- Social participation is the only guarantee of social sustainability for inclusive social proposals and policies.

- Social participation facilitates a process of fine-tuning policies and regulatory frameworks in order to respond to the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors as well as to their reality and changing contexts.

- Organized participation among actors strengthens interaction with the state and at the same time develops links of cooperation between different actors in society (from community and private sectors), contributing to improving the responsibility of society as a whole in the face of social problems.

- Good governance is only possible when there is opportunity for dialogue between civil society and the state, as well as within civil society. Governance is more than just private-public dialogue; it is a diverse society engaging in dialogue as a whole and building a consensus.

Photograph archive CSV

Planning and Public Policies

The World Class City Concept and its Repercussions on Urban Planning for Cities in the Asia Pacific Region[1]

Arif Hasan

(The contents of this paper are drawn from my personal experiences of working or being associated with programmes and projects in a number of Asian cities over the last two and a half decades and with their planners, academics, students, politicians and NGO and CBO representatives. Many of these programmes and projects were supported by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and bilateral development agencies and most of the references in the paper are from authors known personally by me.)

Introduction

The welfare state model in Europe was born out of an uneasy reconciliation between capitalism and its opponents. Its principles were adopted by most of the newly independent countries (who did not belong to the Soviet block) in the post-Second World War period. The ethos of the model survived because of the division of the world into socialist and capitalist entities and because of the presence of a revolutionary China and a militarily powerful Soviet Union in the Security Council of the United Nations (UN). In these circumstances a global market economy was simply not possible. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the repercussions of the failure of the Cultural Revolution in China changed all this and in political terms, capitalism came to dominate the world.

As a result, we are governed today by three global institutions. They determine global politics, culture, finance and development and as such most national development policies and concepts as well. These institutions are all undemocratic in nature and hence their decisions and policies cannot be

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changed through existing rules, regulations and procedures that determine their functioning. These institutions are: 1) the UN, which is controlled by five country-members of the Security Council who are considered to be the winners of the Second World War and who can individually veto any decision of the UN General Assembly; 2) the International Monitory Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which function on the basis of one dollar, one vote; and 3) the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which was born out of the G-7 green room negotiations that led to the creation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and is controlled by the G-8 group of nations.

Collectively these organisations have promoted what has come to be known as the "free market" economy, the most important aspect of which is the freedom of capital to move across national borders and seek investment wherever it can multiply. The structural adjustment process, which many poorer countries had to undergo in the decade of the 1990s, facilitated the growth of the free-market economy and helped in this process. Structural adjustment demanded from national governments the regulating of their balance of payment and returning loans taken from the IFIs. To make this possible countries undergoing structural adjustment agreed to remove subsidies on health, education and housing; increase taxation on utilities; sell their industrial and real assets to the private, national or international corporate sector; and remove restrictions on imports and exports. The resulting national economic crunch meant that the poorer countries could not invest in, and in many cases even subsidise, infrastructure projects which had to be built by the international or national corporate sector through international tendering. As a result, there has been a big boom of international companies bidding for these projects. The Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) and the Build-Operate-Own (BOO) processes were invented to make infrastructure development possible through this system. Both systems produce infrastructure at more than twice the cost of government-produced infrastructure and in addition national governments have to give sovereign guarantees for the investment made by the investors.

Entirely new terminology and concepts have been developed to support the market economy. Concepts such as "it is not the business of the state to do business," "cities are the engines of growth," and the linking of economic well-being with GDP growth have all had a major impact on the national policies of Asian countries. In search of growth and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), they have invested in a big way in the creation of industrial zones (instead of in their people) and accepted the concept of "corporate" farming. India is one of the emerging economic giants that have followed these policies since the mid-1990s. As a result, its economic growth in the last decade has varied between 7% and 9%. However, it is estimated that as a result of the creation of 500 Special Economic Zones for attracting FDI and corporate farming — both promoted by

the World Bank for GDP growth — about 400 million people would willingly or unwillingly be forced to move from rural to urban areas by 2015[2]. This is twice the population of the United Kingdom, France and Germany put together. This process is also being promoted in other Asian counties and is in many cases being resisted by the farmers[3]. It is replacing food crops with cash crops and in the process increasing the cost and shortage of food, thereby creating agricultural refugees and making the state vulnerable to corporate sector pressures and interests[4]**.**

To promote FDI, the UN, IMF and WTO have also promoted the decentralisation of governance systems, giving considerable power to local level institutions. Increasingly this power is being used for accessing FDI and identifying projects independently of the provincial or central governments.

IFI-influenced political reforms and deregulations have also had a major impact on property markets and have reshaped the politics of land development. Trading across borders in gold and contraband goods is no longer lucrative. As a result, the gangs and mafias involved in these underworld activities have become involved in the real estate business and linked up with their underworld partners abroad for this purpose. This has skewed the land market and promoted massive speculation[5]**.**The process has been further facilitated by regional conflicts, increasingly porous borders (both for capital and individuals) and the narcotics trade. All this has introduced an element of violence, targeted killings and kidnappings of opponents, rivals and social activists in the land and real estate sector[6].

The state in almost all cases has responded to these market pressures and made land available for development through land-use conversions, new development schemes and the bulldozing of informal settlements[7]. Apart from their own internal organisational weaknesses and culture, NGOs and CBOs who have challenged this process have faced two constraints: an unsympathetic international media and an absence of laws to prevent environmentally and socially inappropriate land conversions. Even where such laws do exist, rules, regulations, procedures, and institutions to implement them are often missing.

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2   Sharma Devinder; "Displacing Farmers: India Will have 400 Million Agricultural Refugees" www.dsharma.org

3   For details see, Ahmed Rafay Alam, "Leasing Out Land And Food Security"; The Daily News, Karachi, September 04, 2009

4   Sharma Devinder "Displacing Farmers: India Will have 400 Million Agricultural Refugees"; www.dsharma.org

5   Liza Weinstein; Mumbai's Development Mafias: Globalization, Organized Crime and Land Development; International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Volume 32.1, March 2008

6   Ibid. Also, planners in different Asian cities have voiced similar concerns to the author.

7   Hasan Arif, "Understanding Karachi: Planning and Reform for the Future", City Press, Karachi 2000

As a result, courts often deliver judgements that promote inequity, poverty and social fragmentation[8].

Poverty has increased in the countries that did not have the means to respond positively to the free market, and the rich-poor divide has increased in all cases. To rectify this increasing divide, IFIs have promoted the concept of safety nets for the poor for which loans are being provided and the role of NGOs in these programmes is being encouraged. Safety nets are serving a very small percentage of the affected population and NGO involvement with big funds available to them is adversely affecting NGO culture and its relationship with development policies and poor communities[9]. Loans for infrastructure projects have also increased, especially for road projects. There is an increasing questioning of these loans and of aid programmes and the projects promoted by civil society organisations in the South[10]. There is evidence that shows that most of the projects are unsustainable and expensive, and that much (in some cases most) of the loans are re-invested back in the north in the form of technical assistance, overheads, and contractors' profits promoted by the concept of international tenders[11].

What has been elaborated above has had a profound effect on the shape and politics of our cities. The shapes that our cities are taking and the reasons behind them are the results of a powerful nexus of developers and investors (many of dubious origins); and corrupted government institutions, bureaucrats and politicians seeking global capital for shaping their cities in the image of the "West" — an image that is promoted (implicitly or explicitly) by the UN, IMF and WTO. To promote this paradigm, which I call the neoliberal urban development paradigm, the concept of the world class or global city has also been promoted. It is a powerful concept and has almost universally been accepted by national government policy makers, the newly emerging middle classes, and academia, especially in the West.

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8   Lahiri, Tripti, "A Nightmare Grows on Ruins of India's Housing Shortage", Daily Dawn, Karachi, May 14, 2008

9   Hasan, Arif, Discussion Document for UN University Event on "Sustainable Urban Future in an Era of Globalisation and Environmental Change"; New York, July 09-10, 2007

10   These include the Independent People's Tribunal on the World Bank Group in India; People's Voice in Karachi; and Cambodia Development Resource Institute in Cambodia.

11   See Stephanie Gorson Fried and Shannom Lawrence with Regina Gregory: The Asian Development Bank: In its own Worlds; "An Analysis of Project Audit Reports for Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; ADB Watch, July 2003. Also, Arif Hasan; The Neo Urban Development Paradigm and the Changing Landscape of Asian Cities; International Society of City and Regional Planners Review No. 3, The Hague, 04 June 2007.

The World Class City Concept and its Repercussions

Karachi, Bombay, Hochiminh City, Seoul, and Delhi all aspire to become World Class cities. Some wish to become like Shanghai and others like Dubai[12]. The World Class city has been defined beautifully (also sympathetically) in a brilliant paper written by Mehbubur Rahman as well as in other literature[13]. According to the World Class city agenda, the city should have iconic architecture by which it should be recognised, such as the highest building or fountain in the world. It should be equipped to host an international mega event like the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup. It should have high-rise apartments as opposed to upgraded settlements and low-rise neighbourhoods. It should cater to tourism (which is often at the expense of local commerce). It should have malls as opposed to traditional markets. For solving its increasing traffic problem (the result of bank loans for the purchase of cars) it should build flyovers, underpasses and expressways rather than restrict the production and purchase of automobiles and manage traffic more efficiently. Accomplishing all of these conditions would require a very large budget for which a city would have to seek FDI and the support of IFIs. To access FDI, investment-friendly infrastructure and the image of the World Class city must be developed. To establish this image, poor populations are pushed out of the city to the periphery and already anti-poor bylaws (which are anti-street, anti-pedestrian, anti-mixed land use and anti-dissolved space) are made even more unfriendly by permitting environmentally and socially adverse land-use conversions. The most important repercussion of this agenda is that global capital increasingly determines the physical and social form of the city. In the process, projects have replaced planning and land use is now determined on the basis of land value alone and not on the basis of any social or environmental considerations. Land has unashamedly become a commodity.

The agenda for opting for high-rise redevelopment rather than the upgrading of settlements, relocating old informal settlements to the periphery of the city, and making room for mega projects and mega events has resulted in a massive increase in evictions all over Asia in the last five years. More than 500,000 people have been evicted in Delhi for the preparation of the 2010 Commonwealth Games

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12   See City District Government Karachi: *Karachi Strategic Development Plan 2020*; October 2008 and State of Maharashtra; *Transforming Mumbai into a World Class City*; Chief Minister's Task Force; 2004.

13   Rahman, Mahbubur, "Global City – Asian Aspirations; paper read at the DAP, NED University Karachi seminar on Planning in a Globalising World, Karachi, May 30, 2009

alone[14] [15]. All studies show that those evicted were not consulted prior to eviction, were subjected to subtle coercion and often brute force, and became poorer or incurred new debt in the eviction and/or relocation process[16]. Other effects produced by these evictions include the disruption of children's education, the loss of jobs, and increased travel time to and from work to over five or six hours in many cases, thus affecting family and social life, health, recreation, and entertainment activities[17]. The results of the above policies, along with an absence of adequate subsidises for land development and social housing, have produced a phenomenal increase in informal settlements.

Politicians and government planners justify the high-rise redevelopment approach by insisting that a modern city be composed of high-rise buildings with open areas in between. They also insist that high population densities, needed for a well-functioning city, cannot be achieved by upgrading existing structures and adding more people to existing neighbourhoods. The image of a city is governed by the perception of what it should be. However, a recent study of Karachi settlements and apartment complexes has conclusively established that the same densities as prescribed by the Karachi Building Control Authority (KBCA) can be achieved by building row houses of a ground floor level plus two stories (along with the required infrastructure) without damaging the environment or adversely affecting social life[18] [19].

The study of a resettlement and upgrading project in Hochiminh City (considered to be one of the better ones) illustrates the problems with the high-rise option as opposed to upgrading[20]. The average compensation given to apartment dwellers by the state in the project is about US$5,400 which does not include

14 Lahiri, Tripti, "A Nightmare Grows on Ruins of India's Housing Shortage"; Daily Dawn, Karachi, May 14, 2008

15 Publishers' note: ref. to the massive increase in evictions due to sportive mega-events is also presented in the same publication "2008 Beijing Olympics: Modernization and beautification pushes some residents to Beijing's outskirts, while others resist and claim their right to the city", María Cristina Harris.

16 For details see Tripti Lahiri; "A Nightmare Grows on Ruins of India's Housing Shortage"; Daily Dawn, Karachi, May 14, 2008 and Han Verschure, Arif Hasan and Somsook Boonyabancha; "Evaluation & Recommendations for Infrastructure & Resettlement Pilot Project Tan Hoa-Lo Gom Canal"; Ho Chi Minh City, 28 April 2006

17 Hasan, Arif, "Livelihood Substitution: The Case of the Lyari Expressway"; Ushba International Publishing, Karachi, 2006.

18 Study conducted by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and supported by the Urban Research and Design Cell at the Department of Architecture and Planning (DAP), NED University, Karachi.

19 Hasan, Arif, Asiya Sadiq, Suneela Ahmed; Density Study of Low and Lower Middle Income Settlements in Karachi; unpublished study prepared for the IIED, UK, 22 June 2009

20 Han Verschure, Arif Hasan and Somsook Boonyabancha; "Evaluation & Recommendations for Infrastructure & Resettlement Pilot Project Tan Hoa-Lo Gom Canal"; Ho Chi Minh City, 28 April 2006

the loan required to bridge the gap between the compensation and the actual price of the housing unit. It does not include the cost of external infrastructure either. The apartment option, given Vietnam's economy, is not sustainable except through massive IFI loans. The upgrading option on the other hand works out to US$325 per household and is manageable. Communities also prefer upgrading to apartments for they cannot perform economic activities in apartment blocks. Out of 72 households who had moved to apartments in the project, 50 were in debt as a result of moving, whereas previously none were in debt.

The World Class city has no place for informal businesses or hawkers except as organised tourist attractions. The link of these hawkers and businesses with low income people (for whom they make life affordable) and with commuters is not recognised and as such large scale evictions of informal businesses and hawkers have taken place without any compensation in all the major cities in the Asia-Pacific region. This has impoverished millions of families[21].

Several billion dollars of bank loans have increased the number of cars in many Asian mega and secondary cities in the last decade by over 80% to 100%. In Karachi alone, banks and leasing companies gave the equivalent of US$1.8 billion for the purchase of an average of 506 vehicles per day in the financial year 2006-2007[22]. Needless to say, traffic in the larger cities of the Asia-Pacific region has become a nightmare. To solve this problem, city planners have initiated a massive programme for the construction of signal-free roads, flyovers, underpasses and expressways which have aggravated the situation and in addition made life difficult for pedestrians and commuters. In addition to these traffic-related projects, non-motorised means of transport used mostly by the poor (such as cyclos, rickshaws, animal-drawn carts, etc.) have been banned in many cities or restricted to the periphery or in low income sectors[23]. Meanwhile, mass transit light rail projects have failed to provide an adequate or affordable alternative to the poor since they are essentially isolated projects and not part of a larger comprehensive transport plan.

As a result of the above and related processes, many Asian cities have become anti-poor, both for migrants (mainly agricultural refugees) and for communities who have lived in them for decades, if not for centuries. The costs of land, construction, and rent have increased in value well beyond any increases in the daily wages of unskilled labourers.

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21 For details see Arif Hasan, Asiya Sadiq Polak, Christophe Polak; The Hawkers of Saddar Bazaar; Ushba International Publishing, Karachi, 2008 and Bhowmik, S.; Social Security for Street Vendors: A Symposium on Extending Social Security to Unprotected Workers; Volume 568, December 2006 (quoted in Liza Weinstein; Mumbai's Development Mafias: Globalization, Organized Crime and Land Development; International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Volume 32.1, March 2008)

22 Hasan, Arif, "The Neo Urban Development Paradigm and the Changing Landscape of Asian Cities", International Society of City and Regional Planners Review No. 3, The Hague, 04 June 2007

23 Gurung Madhu, "Delhi's Graveyard of Rickshaws"; InfoChange News & Features, September 2006.

The Struggle Against the Negative Aspects of the World Class City

I do not know of any city or country in the Asia-Pacific region where the neoliberal urban development paradigm has been challenged or where an alternative vision for the city has been promoted. However, projects promoted under this paradigm have been successfully challenged in countries where there exists a populist political culture and strong civil society organisations and networks.

As stated earlier, global capital has desperately been looking for a home. Real estate development for the new rich and for tourism offers the best opportunities for investment especially in countries where regulatory frameworks are weak. Tourist resorts and condominiums along the beaches of Asian cities are prime locations for this development. Inner city informal settlements offer lucrative returns for commercial plazas, as long as inhabitants are evicted. National and newly empowered city governments have clandestinely sold or arranged to sell these assets to national and/or international companies without the knowledge of the residents of these settlements and without developing any procedures for resettlement of the evicted population. According to various reports, almost half of Cambodia has been sold to foreign investors between 2006 and 2008 — including seven islands off the coast and a large number of beaches — and the homes of residents bulldozed[24]. As a result, there was an increase of FDI of over 1500% in 2007 over the preceding four years. This investment has further impoverished the poor and made them jobless and homeless. It has benefited investors, their local partners and politicians[25]. Cambodia is a poor country, still recovering from years of devastation, genocide and war. As such, there is an almost non-existent civil society movement, making this clandestine sale possible with little or no organised resistance.

Pakistan is also a poor country but it has a comparatively strong civil society, nascent environmental laws and tribunals and a populist political culture born out of repeated struggles for the restoration of democracy. In 2007, the prime minister agreed to sell two islands off the Karachi coast to a Dubai-based company with an investment of US$43 billion. In addition, he agreed to provide about 33,000 hectares of coastal land to Limitless, another Dubai-based company, for a US$500 billion project with an initial investment of US$150 billion. In agreeing to sell the land and beaches, the prime minister bypassed existing laws and procedures. In addition, the projects (which were exclusively for upmarket condominiums, five-star hotels and marinas) were expected to adversely affect the livelihood of 200,000 fishermen, evict about 36 villages and prevent lower and lower-middle

24 Ardian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark; "Country for Sale"; The Guardian, April 26, 2008

25 Cambodia Development Resource Institute Technical Assistance and Capacity Development in an Aid-Dependent Economy; Working Paper 15, Year 2000; Tom Coghlan; Consultants Reap Wealth from Afghan Chaos; Daily Telegraph, 26 March 2008

income groups' access to the beach. Beach development projects have also tried to force lower income groups off the beach by preventing informal eating places and activities on the beach and replacing them with expensive formal food stalls[26].

Civil society organisations in Karachi formed a network to oppose the beach development and island sale projects. The network included fishermen's organisations, community organisations from low income settlements, schools, NGOs, academia, prominent citizens (including ex-judges of the Supreme Court) and the print media. As a result, the sale of the islands has been put on hold, the Limitless project cancelled. Earlier, through the same process, networks backed by organisations that work with low-income groups had objected to the 1994 Karachi mass transit project as a result of which modifications were made to it[27]. A US$100 million Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan was also cancelled for a waste water management project when an NGO, working with communities in informal settlements presented and lobbied through a network for a US$20 million alternative[28]. Professional bodies representing architects and planners were conspicuously absent throughout these processes although a number of architects did take part individually in the movements.

A similar process to that in Karachi has been followed in Bombay. The Maharastra state government, of which Bombay is the capital, put out an advertisement for an "expression of interest" for the redevelopment of Dharavi, an inner city informal settlement. The developer was to survey the settlement, carry out the urban design exercise and relocate and/or provide housing for the displaced population. Dharavi holds a population of over half a million people and its informal businesses and industry serve the formal market and generate the equivalent of well over US$500 million a year. In spite of this, the advertisement called Dharavi a goldmine and the developer asked the investor whether the prospect "turns you on."[29] Inhabitants and businesses in Dharavi were neither consulted or notified regarding this advertisement. Also, for such a huge undertaking, an Environmental Impact Assessment was required under Indian law yet was not carried out. What made the issue even more serious was that the developer was being asked to carry out the survey of the settlement when there were already major differences between government and NGO surveys of Dharavi[30].

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26 See "The Partitioning of Clifton Beach" in Arif Hasan; *Planning and Development Options for Karachi*; Sheher Saaz, Islamabad, 2009. See also, website of Fisherfolk Forum www.pff.org.pk

27 Urban Resource Centre website: www.urckarachi.org.

28 Orangi Pilot Project website: www.oppinstitutions.org

29 Society Promotion for Area Resource Centres (SPARC) website: www.sparcindia.org

30 Sheela Patel and Jockin Arputham; "Plans for Dharavi: Negotiating a Reconciliation Between a State-Driven Market Redevelopment and Residents' Aspiration"; Environment & Urbanization, Volume 20(1), 2008

A network consisting of the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), a national level organisation of 500,000 households; NGOs, working with low income groups such as the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC); and concerned citizens and organisations formed to oppose the government plan. International academics, artists, researchers and NGOs also expressed their concern. Meanwhile, the president of the NSDF offered a partnership with the state government for the development of Dharavi and also threatened agitation if the government plan went through. As a result of this movement, negotiations took place and an NGO, Mashal, has won the bid for carrying out a survey of Dharavi with the support of NSDF and SPARC[31].

All successful movements against insensitive projects have a number of things in common:1) the existence of a large network or organisation of poor communities; 2) the existence of organisations that support these communities with information and managerial and technical guidance but do not control or direct them; 3) research on social, technical and planning issues that question the project in an informal manner and present alternatives; 4) support from concerned and prominent citizens, professional bodies, academia and media; and 5) no one group owns the network or its successes. Another aspect that has emerged from a number of case studies is that violence, or the threat of it, is unfortunately the only form of dissent that is acknowledged and accommodated by officialdom[32].

The bleak picture above has to be supplemented with hope. An example may be taken from the Baan Mankong Collective Housing Program, a nation-wide slum-upgrading project launched by the Thai government in 2003 and implemented by the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI). Under the project, communities organised through a process of savings and credit programs identify and acquire land for the building or upgrading of housing using government subsidies and loans. To prevent speculation, the strategy of collective rather than individual ownership has been adopted. Local governments, professionals, universities and NGOs are involved with poor communities in the CODI program. Between January 2003 and March 2008, more than 53,976 households in 226 Thai cities had benefited from the programme[33].

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31 Ibid
32 This has been observed by the author in at least three cases in Karachi and the struggle of the tenant farmers in the Punjab. This has also been mentioned to the author by Sheela Patel of SPARC for Bombay and by Prof. Yves Cabannes for cases in Latin America.
33 See CODI website: www.codi.or.th

An Alternative to the World Class City Concept?

What is the alternative to the World Class city concept? Is it an inclusive, pedestrian- and commuter-friendly city based on the principles of justice and equality? By what process do you develop a vision for such an alternative and how can it be promoted? Could this alternative be born out of the processes that challenge (successfully and unsuccessfully) projects promoted by the neoliberal urban development paradigm? Maybe we need to discuss this but in the meantime, what should one do?

In the case of Karachi, I see projects replacing planning for the foreseeable future. I have tried to promote some principles on the basis of which projects should be judged and/or modified. Projects should not damage the ecology of the region in which the city is located, and as a priority, they should seek to serve the interests of the majority of inhabitants, who are, in the case of our cities, lower and lower-middle income groups. Projects should decide land use on the basis of social and environmental considerations and not on the basis of land values alone. Finally, projects should protect the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of communities. However without affection and respect for the natural environment and for the people who form the majority of inhabitants in cities, these principles cannot be effectively followed.

The question remains whether the megalomania and opportunism of politicians and planners will accept a new and more humane paradigm that curtails their profits and decommoditises land. This is doubtful unless they are pressured by city-wide networks armed with alternative research and an alternative vision. The key to bringing about change lies in the nature of professional education. I often think that it might help if graduating architects, planners and engineers take an oath similar to those of doctors and if they do not follow the terms of the oath, their names should be removed from the list of practising professionals. In 1983, after evaluating the environmental damage that some of my work had done, I promised in an article that,

> I will not do projects that will irreparably damage the ecology and environment of the area in which they are located; I will not do projects that increase poverty, dislocate people and destroy the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of communities that live in the city; I will not do projects that destroy multi-class public space and violate building bylaws and zoning regulations; and I will always object to insensitive projects that do all this, provided I can offer viable alternatives[34].

I have tried to keep that promise and I think I have succeeded.

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34   Hasan, Arif, "No to Socially and Environmentally Development Projects", The Review 1983,

Addressing Women's Urban Safety through the Right to the City
UN-Habitat's Women Safety Audit Pilot Project in Warsaw, Poland, August, 2007

Shelley Buckingham

Women and Urban Violence

Threats of crime and violence are highest in cities, particularly among groups of women, and increasing incidents in urban public spaces are becoming of greater concern, especially when considering the rapid expanse of urbanization which has been occurring around the world for decades. This phenomenon has progressed to the point where over half of the world's population currently lives in cities, thus shedding light on the pertinent importance of addressing women's safety in the city. Although international human rights standards set objectives to guarantee women's right to live free of violence, the particular urban environments where they experience violence need to be examined and action must be taken in local public spheres. If violence occurs in large part in the city, then action needs to be taken not only in the city, but through the creation of the city itself. While urban designs and planning do not directly create violence, they facilitate environments that can present greater or lesser opportunities for assault. Therefore, urban designs and plans must be examined in order to fully understand why women experience threats and actual incidences of violence. By understanding these threats, steps may then be taken to change the way women experience and live in the city without the threat of violence. All women have this right to the city, which must be understood as their collective right to safety and security in the spaces they inhabit.

The Collective Right to the City

Over the last few decades, neoliberal economic policies have caused an array of human rights violations and social inequalities. David Harvey articulates that this is in large part due to the fact that ideas of human rights under neoliberalism

have concentrated on a variety of individual rights, such as private property rights, while largely ignoring collective rights. In this sense, private property may be understood as infringing upon the right to the city, as a collective right. The right to the city is a collective right for all people who live in, access, and use the city and it entails not only the right to use what already exists in urban spaces, but also the right to create and define what should exist in order to meet the human needs to live a decent life in urban environments (Harvey, 2003). In short, it includes the right to use the city and to participate in the creation or re-creation of the city. The realization of the right to the city has been carried out through collaborative processes between civil society groups and organisations, governments, and international agencies. This role of civil society groups and organisations is particularly crucial to realize this collective right to the city, as it is their experiences that inform the adequate and inadequate structures in which they live. Even more important is that a variety of civil society actors inform the right to the city as not all of its inhabitants experience the same environment in the same way.

This is particularly true for groups of women. Tovi Fenster notes that "fear and safety can be seen as a social as well as a spatial issue connected in many cases to the design of urban spaces." It is this fear that prevents women from fully realizing their right to the city, as most policies which target ensuring women's safety in urban public spaces tend to focus on the social aspects, while neglecting physical constructions. Dead-end streets, inadequately lit roads, and public parks which are typically dominated by male activities, are a few of the circumstances where social and structural circumstances instigate feelings of fear for women in public spaces. Through the right to participate in decisions regarding the creation of urban spaces, women may actively take part in the prevention of potential violence against them.

Community Safety Audit

The Community Safety Audit Process was first developed in 1989 by the Metropolitan Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) from Toronto as a tool to evaluate urban environments from the perspective of those who feel most vulnerable to violence. The recommendations made by an audit's participants are later taken to urban planners and policy makers to make changes in the evaluated environments that will reduce opportunities for assault. As women face a greater risk of experiencing violence in urban environments, their involvement during the Community Safety Audits may be understood as exercising their ability to create a safer environment for themselves. By actively participating in making their urban environments safer for them to use, they are exercising their right to the city. It is the right to

participate in the creation of a city that meets their needs and to feel safe during the use of these spaces.

UN-Habitat's Women's Safety Audit

Under the UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Program, a women's safety audit pilot project was conducted by the local UN-Habitat Office in Warsaw, Poland, on August 25, 2007. The audit was carried out in the Srodmiescie district in Warsaw's city centre by eight female participants comprising women from the Warsaw municipality, police headquarters, UN-Habitat office, Chamber of Town Planners, a local NGO, and the media. UN-Habitat's Warsaw office adapted METRAC's Community Safety Audit tool to assess the safety concerns of women living in Warsaw. The audit's report acknowledges METRAC's audit process which considers a person's identity when contemplating their experiences of violence in the city, based on gender, race, age, religion, ability, and sexuality. However through the adaptation of the tool, the Warsaw office focused on gaining only women's perceptions and presumed that once an area is considered safe by women then it should be safe for all. This assumption neglects all other groups of inhabitants who are vulnerable to violence in urban public space which is especially important considering the fact that women often face multiple forms of discrimination, or in this case, violence based on intersecting identities[1]. Having said that, the audit should not be considered as irrelevant or not useful, but it must be understood that the results of an audit conducted with such an assumption are insufficient in assessing the safety concerns for all groups of inhabitants who use the environment.

The audit process entailed the female participants walking around the target neighbourhood at night with a questionnaire aimed at gathering their feelings of insecurity in relation to the urban design and structures in the environment. Later the Central District Hall hosted an evaluation session to gather the group's joint recommendations for policy makers and urban planners based on a summary of their findings. The participants identified priority concerns related to lighting, signage, getting emergency assistance, infrastructural maintenance, and urban amenities. They also suggested improvements to enhance the urban safety and design of the neighbourhood. Participants noticed that most of the adequate lighting, signage and well-maintained infrastructure were surrounding large office buildings. Ironically, many of these structures were being monitored by guards to ensure that the *buildings* were kept safe from *people*. Overall, there

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1   This is to say that women may experience discrimination or violence based on their gender, but also based on their race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, or ability. It is through the intersection of these identities that a person may experience multiple forms of discrimination.

was a sense that the city was more building-friendly than people-friendly, and therefore the participants recommended a diversification of the urban functions of the neighbourhood so as to attract a greater human presence. Other recommendations made to the city council and urban planners were to adapt urban designs to be focused more on making the city safe for pedestrians and less on buildings and structures.

Through the observations made by the participants of the women's safety audit, it is clearly visible that the focus on buildings and structures is in line with valuing the private property rights of the select few over the communal rights of all people to live in a safe city. It is not the intention here to criticize measures which ensure the protection of buildings from theft and vandalism. It is simply to point out that the same concerns should be taken seriously for people's well-being and personal safety and corrective measures should be implemented by city planners upon the advice of those affected by these concerns. Considering this case study, the fact that the concerns of a city's inhabitants are not taken into account when urban designs and plans are implemented is further evidence that economic interests take precedence within urban environments and city centres and this emphasizes the need to take up the ideals held within the right to the city. An urban design focused on making buildings safer contributes to the protection of private properties while neglecting people's collective right to live in a city that is also safe for them to use.

Unfortunately, in the two years since the audit took place in Warsaw, no progress has been made to date towards the implementation of the recommendations made by the safety audit's participants. Although local authorities praised these recommendations and promised to take them into consideration, the UN-Habitat Warsaw office has not yet been asked to participate in any type of follow-up action.

Forgiving the unfortunate reality that no practical or progressive local results have occurred as yet from the pilot project in Warsaw, the process of the women's safety audit is useful as an example of demonstrating the participatory planning process as essential to securing one's right to the city. As Harvey notes, we shape the city and the city shapes us. This begs us to question if the city lends itself to violence because the structures in which we live are conducive to such behaviour, or if it is rather the priorities of those in control and the higher value attributed to the economic interests of the few over the well-being of everyone that result in the lack of safety measures within urban environments. The responses of the female participants in the safety audit suggest that the latter is true. Dark corners tucked in doorways help conceal perpetrators wanting to attack their victims, and city planners and policy makers must be aware of these risks and compensate for these threats with better urban designs. Of course, violence in urban spheres

cannot be entirely attributed to the structures present in an environment, and comprehensive public policies must also address the social factors which make certain groups of people more vulnerable to threats and incidents of violence. When analyzing urban designs and environments through participatory planning processes as exercised through the right to the city, it is absolutely necessary to consider and include the people who use these spaces, which usually compose a very diverse mix of identities. Protection should be afforded to all who inhabit a city, and it should be the right of all people, especially those most vulnerable groups, to identify their concerns in the environments in which they live. This is the common call of the right to the city; the right to use and participate in the creation of safe cities for all inhabitants.

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Graz, or the right to a Human City in Europe?

Marie Bailloux

A Melting Pot

Graz, capital of Styria province, is situated in the South of Austria and borders Slovenia and Hungary; lying at the crossroads of many European cultures. Romanic, Slavic, Magyar and Alpine-Germanic influences make its identity culturally unique. It is also a place of international encounter and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. About 300,000 habitants live in Graz.

In September, 2000, Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner announced at the 55th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations that Graz will be the "First Human Rights City in Europe." In February, 2001, endorsed by the local government, the City Council of Graz took the unanimous decision to declare Graz as a Human Rights City and to commit itself to base every decision and act firmly on human rights theory so human rights standards would be respected in all decision-making. This commitment, implemented by a process of several years has been monitored by European Training and Research Centre on Human Rights and Democracy (ETC). In February, 2001, ETC and the most important institutions and organisations of Graz (NGOs, universities, political institutions, etc.) set up a Steering Committee (representing all sectors of society), assuming the task to guide the process. For this purpose, an analysis of the context, problems and good practices on human rights was conducted, followed by the development of a strategic plan of action, addressing all actors, state and the whole community involved in human rights issues, to define the future steps in the development of Graz as a Human Rights City.

A City Against Discrimination and for the Rights of the Vulnerable

An important list was created, naming social and humanitarian activities needed to qualify the city as a Human Rights City, for example, a search to provide accommodation and services to homeless people, as well as the minimum

social support to everybody in need. The city also supported several NGO projects concerned with the issue of violence in the city, drug abuse, peace and development.

Regarding its mission of welcoming refugees, in December, 2001, Graz was named the most refugee-friendly city in Austria by UNHCR for welcoming refugees from the ex-Yugoslavia, and more particularly Chechnya. Some NGOs are especially dedicated to support them, sponsored with private or public funds. In a joint action with International PEN[1], Graz also gives scholarships to writers in asylum, an initiative called "Cities of Refuge."

Consequently, rightwing movements have reacted with violence and extreme racism, rejecting foreigners and refugees.

As to fight against racism and discrimination, the city of Graz created a commission in charge of detecting human rights violations. It publically denounces all publications, documents or speeches that can be considered xenophobic in a monthly press conference. Other measures taken are the establishment of a council representing foreigners and migrants living in Graz and the holding of seminars with the participation of the EU Monitoring Centre against Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)[2].

In terms of religious acceptance, the city has given a platform to inter-religious dialogue, including hosting the Dalai Lama, a youth meeting in 2006, an international conference of Imams in 2003 and creating an inter-religious consultation council that meets several times a year.

A World Heritage Site

Since 1999, Graz has been included in UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites thanks to its old city centre and its well-preserved and unique architecture. The city enforces the   safeguarding and preservation of the historic centre by: regulating and controlling new works undertaken; leading rehabilitation projects and the Programme of Urban Renovation; , controlling overall vehicular traffic; defining pedestrian areas; monitoring the flow of the Mur River to prevent flooding; and monitoring tourism to protect the lives of inhabitants.

Graz is an example of town promoting a dynamic social life while maintaining over centuries the harmonious integration of old buildings built in successive

1   International Pen Club ("Poets, Essayists and Novelists") is an international institution created in 1921 to promote literature and fight for the freedom of expression http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_PEN

2   The EU Monitoring Centre against Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) is now called The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Fundamental_Rights_Agency)

architectural styles, with green public areas making it environmentally friendly. New modern constructions –symbols of dynamism and growth and created by renowned architects– are authorized with caution with the conservation of the historical city in mind.

Graz is also one of the two European cities on the list of seventeen to be integrated in the Human Rights Cities program of the People's Movement for Human Rights Education (PDHRE).

In 2003, Graz was named the "Cultural Capital of Europe" by the EU Ministries of Culture.

Human Rights Award

The City of Graz founded an award for extraordinary achievements for human rights at the local level to be won every two years. The award's goal is to encourage "the pursuit of more justice, as well as the realization of human rights in the eyes of the public as well as the active role that cities and local communities play in this." For instance, Federation Ombudsmen[3] won the award in 1997 by a unanimous decision for their human rights protection work in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 1995 to 1997.

An example of Good Practice for the Respect of Human Rights

Since 1997, the local sports stadium has been called the Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadium, as a nod to the once-poor farmer's son and international celebrity who was educated in Graz and had always identified it as his native place. But Schwarzenegger, after becoming governor of California, refused to commute the death sentence for Stanley Tookie Williams, the leader of a gang in Los Angeles and the man was executed in California in 2005. The reaction of the City Council of Graz, considering death penalty as a medieval and inhuman practice, was to remove Arnold Schwartzenegger's name from the 15,000-seat stadium.

Graz focuses on the implementation of many policies promoted in the guideline of the Charter for the right to the city: protection of the most vulnerable; democratic management of the urban properties; struggle against discrimination and social segregation; collective right to housing and access to service; and stimulation of good practices regarding human rights through awards.

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3 The safeguard of the rights of citizens (from old Swedish "*umbuðsmann* ", representative), refers to a state official appointed to provide a check on government activity in the interests of the citizen, and to oversee the investigation of complaints of improper government activity against the citizen, source http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ombudsman)

At a local level, the city of Graz has created legal instruments aimed at consolidating human rights in an urban context, focusing on the inclusion and the protection of the most vulnerable populations, promoting dialogue and coexistence between multiple communities, recognizing their dignity and respecting their cultural or religious differences. At the same time, the city struggles against environmental degradation, and also promotes the right to enjoy sustainable urban spaces. Its condemnation of unfair and xenophobic practices shows a clear intent to uphold human rights and promote the integration of justice in the daily life of the inhabitants of the city and its management.

In the main economic, social, cultural, political and spatial areas, Graz seems to promote the equitable usufruct of the city to all its inhabitants, regardless their ethnic origin, belief or social class. The city is making an effort to establish the basis of the right to the city in Europe as a way of living, allowing the inhabitants to own their city and monitor the decision-making regarding the construction or preservation of the city in which they want to live.

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Enjoying Slow Life: Let's Slow Down Cities!

Charlotte Mathivet

The Slow Food movement was founded in 1986 in Italy by Carlo Petrini to fight the uniformity of tastes, low quality fast food as a product of globalization and the McDonald's "culture." That same year in Paris, the movement was officially recognized with the creation of a manifesto signed by delegates from 15 different countries.

Later, in 1999, the Slow movement broadened its scope to include the quality of life in cities and urban issues. The movement's rallying cry praises living slowly, something which is often neglected nowadays, overshadowed by concepts such as efficiency, profitability and growth. The movement thus offers a new approach to cities. Instead of encouraging speed and strictly functional and most often commercial exchanges, a slow city would allow its inhabitants to take time to enjoy their living space, to create new spaces for human interaction, for reflection, for all different kinds of ideas and actions that cannot be pursued quickly or under time constraints and stress. The Slow movement, which started out as a concept for food, has spread not only to the city, but also to travelling, to education, culture and even sex!

The goal of this wide-ranging movement is to create a better quality of life for all and to (re)discover the idea of living well.

What is a Slow City?

The Cittaslow (slow city) Manifesto consists of seventy recommendations and obligations. Its main ideas are:

- Enhancing the conservation of urban heritage by avoiding the construction of new buildings.
- Reducing energy consumption.

- Promoting environment-friendly technology.
- Increasing the number of green areas and recreational space.
- Keeping the city clean.
- Prioritizing public transportation and other non-polluting forms of transportation.
- Reducing garbage and developing recycling programs.
- Increasing the number of pedestrian spaces.
- Developing local businesses.
- Developing collective infrastructure and facilities adapted for people of all ages and with physical disabilities.
- Developing a genuine participatory democracy.
- Preserving and developing local traditions and regional products.
- Restricting GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).

The central aspects of the manifesto demonstrate that, clearly, this movement is critical of the globalization of trade that has led to a growing global standardization of lifestyles and ways of thinking. However based on this observation and beyond criticism and the rejection of globalized, polluting cities that value speed above all else, the movement also proposes concrete solutions to create a new kind of city and a new way of living.

In order to achieve this, the Cittaslow movement's work is based at local levels. To confront globalization, slow city activists focus their efforts on local development, whether at the political level by working with municipalities or at the economic level by giving preference to local products.

The idea is based on the aspiration to create ways to coexist, to share, and to revive the worn-out social fabric in cities where neighbours do not even know each other and where social activities are reduced to almost obligatory relationships with storekeepers. The goal of the Cittaslow movement is to allow cities to reestablish their own identity, so that they are distinguishable from the outside and are recognized and appreciated from the inside by their own citizens.

In more concrete terms, the cities that take part in the Cittaslow movement promote the use of environment-friendly technologies that improve the quality of the urban fabric and that protect the production of local food and wine to promote the local identity of the region. In addition, Cittaslow seeks to promote dialogue and communication between producers and consumers. It also encourages the production of natural foods and the use of processes which do not harm the environment. Membership with the Cittaslow network means concrete improvements to inhabitants' quality of life, including the following examples:

- Environment: implementing air quality monitoring; environmental noise reduction programs; and new recycling technology.
- Infrastructure: developing green spaces; guaranteeing accessibility for people with disabilities; open access to public bathrooms; consistent hours of operation in city hall; developing bike paths.
- Urban Planning: renovation plans for historic buildings; using recyclable products; upgrading of historic urban centers.
- Supporting local products: creating "local product markets;" placing labels on food products that recognize the quality of its organic agriculture; improving the quality of food in school cafeterias; supporting traditional cultural events.
- Hospitality: installing internationally recognized road signs; guided city tours; improving availability of monitored parking lots close to downtown areas; controlling rates and prices charged by hotels and restaurants.
- Awareness: presence of the "Cittaslow" logo on all official documents; food taste education programs in schools; promoting programs such as recreational activities for families, or home visits to the elderly and the ill.

The following quote from the Cittaslow Manifesto summarizes the goals of the movement well: "We are looking for towns brought to life by people who make time to enjoy a quality of life. Towns blessed with quality public spaces, theatres, shops, cafes, inns, historic buildings and unspoiled landscapes. Towns where traditional craft skills are in daily use, and where the slow, beneficial succession of the seasons is reflected in the availability of local produce, in season. Towns where healthy eating, healthy living and enjoying life are central to the community."

How to Become a Slow City

Cittaslow membership is open to cities with less than 50,000 inhabitants. In order to be a member, a city must achieve a score of at least 50 percent on a self-assessment of Cittaslow goals. If accepted, the city must pay an annual contribution and apply the principles of the Cittaslow Charter. The city can then proudly display the Cittaslow logo: a snail carrying a colorful city on its back. The intention of creating networks of the cities participating in the project corresponds to the need to verify that the commitments made are actually being fulfilled. The network employs a team of inspectors who carry out periodic monitoring of these obligations.

Currently, there are Cittaslow networks in the following countries: Austria, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, South Korea, Norway, Spain, Poland, New Zealand and of course Italy, with a total of sixty-two Italian cities and approximately twenty others around the world.

Cittaslow: a Concrete Application of the Right to the City

One of the main actions that characterize a Slow City is the participation of its inhabitants. Each person is invited and expected to take part in the project in a spirit of openness and mutual tolerance. Of course this must be done while respecting the pace required for sharing ideas and collectively creating projects and new proposals — in other words, slowly. In this way, activists of the movement believe that both democracy and education just like collective decision-making require a slower tempo. Moreover, the environment, respect for nature and the relationship between human beings and nature are on a different scale than that of individual human beings. Therefore, valuing slowness also means allowing the indispensible time for reflection and deliberation. The fact that participation is an essential part of the creation of slow cities is a very interesting point in understanding the link between Cittaslow and the right to the city.

The Cittaslow movement may be understood as a successful experience of the right to the city. Participation, as we have seen in the Cittaslow Charter, is also one of the fundamental points in the World Charter of the Right to the City. It asserts that citizens must revitalize and re-conquer the city and not leave it in the hands of big companies, cars, polluting factories, and big housing companies. It proposes a different vision of the city; one that is shared, welcoming and full of public places where people can meet. Participation is not the only aspect of the right to the city that the Cittaslow network has developed and adopted: the desire to create an identity; to be happy and proud of the place where you live; and to have a feeling of belonging to a place are also very strong aspects of the right to the city.

Degrowth as Applied to the City

It is important here to show the relationship between the Cittaslow movement, the right to the city and degrowth. Degrowth, if it is possible to define this paradigm-movement-art of living in a few words, calls for immediate action to fight against the numerous harmful effects caused by the capitalist system, neoliberalism and economic growth. First of all, it challenges the dominant myth of the intellectual orthodoxy that aims to make growth, progress, development, and their concrete consequences inevitable certainties in our lives, excluding all alternatives. Alternatives do exist, as the right to the city also demonstrates.

Degrowth is also a call to action, to assert that other North-South relations, another economy, other social relations, other relationships between humans and the environment, and other cities are all possible! It is therefore important, with these kinds of experiences already in place, to be able to take them even further and to expand their reach by increasing demands and by adopting the concept and motto of the right to the city, which will allow a comparison between these experiences and others in different areas, such as Latin America for example.

Although the Cittaslow movement is unmistakably the work of its activists and certain political figures sensitive to environmental and social issues, it is interesting to note the apparent effort of the current president of the United States, Barack Obama, to discontinue urban expansion. The new government has asserted that urban growth is not the alternative to remedy the social and economic problems of cities in deep financial crisis. A new method of urban planning has therefore been put into place with the slogan "Shrink to Survive." One of those in charge of this project is Dan Kildee, treasurer of Flint, Michigan, one of the poorest cities in the country. He has applied the new system in Flint, demolishing housing in residential neighborhoods and industrial sites left abandoned due to the crisis. This new vision for urban planning aims to promote smaller cities in order to assign more resources to social development, by, for example saving on other expenses such as daily waste removal services to less populated areas (often, people would travel several miles without encountering a single garbage can). The Obama administration is currently planning to implement this system in 50 other cities in the country, in former industrial areas that have been particularly affected by various crises and where there are neighborhoods that have been completely abandoned. The plan is to replace these deserted neighborhoods with public parks and forests.

While these diverse experiences are very interesting and a source of hope for sprawling cities plagued by poverty and inequality, it is nonetheless essential to be careful not to create a showcase city that does not allow all of its inhabitants to express themselves. In fact, the Cittaslow movement warns that a slow city must not retreat into its shell, but that it works to create new solidarity between districts and neighborhoods, cities and their outskirts, urban and rural areas, and of course between nations and continents. As advised by Paolo Saturnini, former mayor of Greve and member of Cittaslow International, cities should be prevented from excessive growth through a new urban planning policy guided by principles to control new building construction and most importantly to reuse and designate new functions for existing buildings.

This last point is where the Obama administration's "shrink city" policy could be criticized. The viewpoint and the actions that result in, for example, the destruction of unoccupied houses, must not overshadow the tragedy of

these abandoned neighborhoods. These were peripheral neighborhoods where middle class families had bought homes, indebting themselves for many years, and because of an employment crisis they were not able to continue making payments. As a result, they were obliged to watch as their houses were sold or mortgaged in order to pay off their debts. This is a real social tragedy caused by the capitalist system which led to the crisis, and this must not be forgotten when politicians present their projects for creating green spaces on the same land. Rather than demolishing houses, it is most pressing to rethink our conceptions of the city and more generally about the system we live in, in order to finally build a more just society.

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