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Chapter 13

Housing Crises, Right to the City, and Citizenship

James Holston

Housing crises are a regular feature of capitalism. They have been devastating both rural and urban populations at least since the middle of the eighteenth century in Europe, the United States, and Latin America. Based on this historical record, it is clear that some crises lead to citizenship transformation and some do not. Why? Under what circumstances? What might explain such differences? In this essay, I consider these questions in relation to several historical and contemporary examples. In terms of the latter, I bring into contrast two cases: the kind of housing crises predominant in many cities of the Global South that have produced remarkable transformations of citizenship in recent decades, with the kind currently ravaging the United States that is just as remarkable for having failed to do so.

My method is to identify characteristics of the former that seem to account for or provoke citizenship transformation and then to assess their relevance in the United States—indeed, in most cases their absence. It is, one might say, a method of reverse defamiliarization, for most often other societies and states have been evaluated against the hallmarks of North Atlantic development to render them exotic, inferior, or pathological (“no clothes, no civilization” as Columbus is said to have remarked). I propose, instead, to reverse the comparative lens, not to pathologize but to render strange in the global context what most Americans take for granted, namely, that housing is a matter of market share rather than citizenship for granted. My intent is to suggest the terms with which what has not happened in the US—no sustained development of a right to the city which grounds a right to housing—can be productively conceptualized as a problem for further investigation. I begin, however, with some nineteenth-century considerations to establish the historical ground on which this method thrives. I do not intend, let me add, to set out a full, scholarly account. That would require a book. Rather, I understand that my task in these closing comments of the volume is to establish a number of problems and provocations for further study that this comparative method reveals.

Nineteenth-century Urban Crises and Citizenship

The extraordinary urbanization of the nineteenth century profoundly restructured town and country throughout Europe, producing cities into which gathered millions of poor provincial migrants and new proletarians with no place to live. The ensuing urban crises generated important changes in European citizenships. By citizenship, I mean membership in a political community that confers on members both a formal status based on criteria of belonging and a substantive distribution of rights, obligations, and practices that membership entails to those deemed to belong. The nature of the formal (e.g., its rules of inclusion and exclusion) and of the substantive (e.g., its mechanisms of distribution) as well as relations between them define the historical character and trajectories of specific citizenships. It is worth reviewing this European history of urbanization to highlight not only the kinds of changes in citizenship that the urban crises wrought but also the collision between national and urban citizenships that emerged. Although the nation ultimately crushed the city, the conflict posed the problem of urban citizenship distinctly for the modern age. The triumph of the nation was so resounding, however, that the question of urban citizenship would only regain its footing a century later and in other parts of the world.

Since the history of nineteenth century urbanization is well-known, I can be brief. Throughout Europe, a combination of push-and-pull factors forced peasants out of the countryside and into cities in massive numbers. In England, over 5,000 Enclosure Acts between 1750 and 1860 ended ancient rights of common land use on approximately 20 percent of the land. Deprived of access to rural lands and in search of new means of subsistence, hundreds of thousands of displaced peasants moved to cities to supply the industrializing urban economies with wage labor (see Thompson 1966). These processes of rural enclosure and urban migration were repeated in one form or another throughout Europe, where cities quadrupled and quintupled in size in a matter of decades as a result. Eviction and immiseration produced not just a landless proletariat but a rightless one as well, as citizens were stripped of traditional rights to work the commons in the countryside and denied rights to vote, work, and live with a minimum of dignity in the city. For the new urban working classes, the disjunction between the form and substance of citizenship became acute: their formal status as national citizens entailed very little substance in their new cities of residence.

Once lodged in cities, moreover, the rightless urban poor were again the target of massive displacements, epitomized by the gigantic redevelopment of Paris in the 1850s and '60s under the direction of Haussmann. As extraordinary numbers of workers settled in destitute city centers, occasioning crises of housing and sanitation, the model eventually perfected by Haussmann became codified into a recipe for urban redevelopment throughout Europe (see, for example, Clark 1984 and Sutcliffe 1970). It entailed the eviction of the new urban proletariat from city centers to abject peripheries, where the displaced urban tenants joined the flow of rural migrants, for both of whom the center city was now off-limits. In concert with

these evictions, it also entailed revolutions in administration and finance. Both to exploit new opportunities for profit in the emerging urban real estate markets and to discipline the "dangerous classes," national states created new banking, stock, and credit systems, in tandem with new administrative powers of policing, monitoring, mapping, and managing the urban populations. This coordination focused on the expansion of industrial and financial capital, on the one hand, and on the phenomenal growth of unsanitary housing that fueled successive epidemics of cholera, on the other.

What became known as Haussmannization exploited the housing crises to create unprecedented opportunities for profit in real estate development in city centers, while displacing the urban poor to new and equally unsanitary conditions in the peripheries. Eventually, new laws were instituted permitting state intervention into the private sphere of property relations for "the public good" of sanitation and circulation. Vast powers accumulated to executive institutions of government to enact these goods by evicting residents and expropriating properties without recourse to the courts. Moreover, Haussmannization used a language of demands for the public goods of improved security, circulation, and health in the city to legitimate its urban redevelopment that amounted to a right to the city for the upper classes.

By mid-century, these processes of urbanization had created two interlocking conditions that led to revolutionary changes in citizenship: the massive destitution of the urban working classes and their management in the city, through a public planning of total design and fiat that elites justified in terms of their rights to certain public goods. The first was exposed and articulated by the great urban detectives of the period: Poe, Engels, Marx, Baudelaire, Manet, and Dickens, among others, who, working through different media, discovered the urban crowd, the spatial organization of labor, the inner and outer workings of capitalism, commodity fetishism, "the eyes of the poor," the city itself as a stage for the spectacle of capitalist consumption, and the social life of immiseration—discoveries in large measure made by attending to the consequences of "the urban question." The second condition of large-scale urban redevelopment produced a set of conditions that propelled the urban poor into insurrection, including massive unemployment, housing evictions, and housing shortages. I want to consider two insurrections for their effects on citizenship.

The Revolutions of 1848 that erupted in many countries of Europe generally involved combinations of middle-class demands for liberal political and market freedoms and working-class struggles for radical improvements in urban conditions. The latter focused on the right to work as the means of unemployment relief, private property as the root cause of housing crises, and universal suffrage as the solution for unrepresentative and autocratic governance (see Robertson 1952). Although many insurgents adopted Proudhon's provocation that "property is theft," mobilization around it failed to generate a right to housing among the working classes. In fact, the transformations of property that emerged in the "haussmannization model" had the opposite effect: they facilitated state

intervention through the expropriation of housing stock, and thus eviction of residents by executive order, and empowered a bourgeois right to city through public works designed to implement new standards of sanitation, circulation, and security.

Nevertheless, in France, the army of angry citizens among the urban poor succeeded in two major transformations of French citizenship. The French Revolution had significantly expanded the qualifications for political citizenship. The Constitution of 1791 created an electorate that included about 17 percent of the total population and 61 percent of men over 25 (Applewhite 1993: 50). In these terms, it was by far the most extensive experiment in electoral representation by direct vote ever attempted. However, the Bourbon Restoration in 1814 had again restricted political rights with dramatic results: the number of voters dropped to less than one percent of the population. This restriction primed the violent explosions of 1848, especially in Paris. With demands for political rights an explicit focus of insurrection, the liberal provisional government of Louis Blanc that resulted sponsored a new constitution granting universal male suffrage. Thus, the urban insurrection of 1848 spearheaded a basic transformation of French national political citizenship.

It also resulted in the institutionalization of a right to work, a revolutionary accomplishment indeed for the working classes. By May 1848, the new National Workshops, which guaranteed this right to French citizens, were employing about 100,000 workers. Although the Workshops did not last more than a few months, the insurrection had established a precedent for the deployment of a new kind of citizenship right, namely, a socio-economic right that ensured a minimum standard of living and dignity of life and that was guaranteed by the state and independent of the market worth of individual citizens. Within a century, this new type of right would transform the nature and structure of citizenships globally. Thus, in France, the mobilization of poor tenants against the differentiated rights of landlords and employers, primarily in cities, contributed significantly to the institution of universal suffrage for males and a universal right to work for all citizens. Though the latter was short-lived in this case, both became beacons for the transformation of restricted and differentiated citizenships worldwide.

Let me mention that the relationship between housing and suffrage was also crucial to the transformation of American citizenship some decades earlier. Of the original 13 colonies, all had real or personal property qualifications for suffrage before the Revolutionary War (Porter 1918). These restrictions forced poor white men—overwhelmingly tenants and not land owners—to struggle to achieve the franchise as a distinction of their citizenship. After independence, these men, many revolutionary patriots, organized into tenant movements of various kinds to fight the restrictions on manhood suffrage for citizens. Even though each state claimed sovereignty in matters of suffrage (a peculiarity of the US federal constitution), the development of qualifications in response to these struggles was generally similar: first, states imposed a realty qualification, then a personality alternative, and finally a substitution of state or county tax payments for both kinds of property. As nearly

all free adult males were subject to such taxation, taxpaying suffrage was almost a universal franchise for whites. By 1826, however, four of the original colonies had also abandoned taxpaying and, by the end of the Civil War, it was gone in all but three—though poll taxes were later introduced in southern states to deny African-Americans their political citizenship. After 1817, moreover, no new state entered the Union with either a property or a taxpaying qualification.

In sum, white male citizens enjoyed universal suffrage in the United States without qualification, except residency and majority, in some states by the first quarter of the nineteenth century and in all but a few by mid-century. As in France, the mobilization of poor tenants against the differentiated rights of landlords contributed significantly to the institution of universal suffrage for males. Although it was not the only factor, it played a decisive role in this transformation of national political citizenship. Yet, in both France and the United States, these tenant mobilizations did not produce a right to housing or a right to the city. No concept of urban citizenship emerged.

In France, a generation later, however, a struggle for urban citizenship developed at the core of the Paris Commune. It finally confronted the bourgeois claims to the city with another. As Lefebvre (1996) argued and both Castells (1983) and Harvey (1989b) subsequently elaborated, the Paris Commune of 1871 was an insurrection not primarily focused on industrial class struggle, as in 1848, but rather on popular mobilizations for the construction of new institutions for democratic municipal government, citizen participation, and more equitable control of urban infrastructure, especially housing. It was an urban revolution, to be sure. But I would also describe the Paris Commune as a movement for urban citizenship sustained by a popular demand for the right to the city. This form of citizenship conferred rights on residents of the city as its substance: rights to inhabit the city, appropriate its space, not to be excluded from it, participate in its production; in short, precisely what Lefebvre had in mind when he identified the right to the city as a “cry and a demand” for the production of a daily life worthy of citizens.

Moreover, this mobilization created what we can call an urban citizenship as a specific form and substance of belonging in contradistinction to national citizenship. Residence is not in itself a political community to belong to. Rather, the political community of citizenship that the Paris Commune invoked was the city itself, as the very name of the insurrection indicates. The Commune proposed that in a context of nation-states that required birthline, birthplace, or a combination for national membership, residence would be sufficient qualification for urban citizenship; that is, by the principle of residence (*ius domicilii* or *habitationis*), dwellers are urban citizens just as by the principle of birthline (*ius sanguinis*) or birthplace (*ius soli*) people are national citizens. In the case of the city, the right to housing is one of the substantive aspects of urban citizenship, part of the bundle of rights that belong to urban citizens.

In this way, the key question that the Paris Commune poses is the nature of urban citizenship for the modern age. Its proposal was new because the classical

versions of urban citizenship were based on lineage membership and not residence. They were in that sense exclusive to particular blood lines and elitist. Moreover, the classical versions of membership in the *polis* had been specifically targeted and demolished as the locus of citizenship by the emerging national states centuries earlier, a destruction that transferred the formal and substantive primacy of citizenship from city-state to nation-state.

The struggles of the Paris Commune suggest that the resurgence of this new form of urban citizenship develops with four conditions that all refer to dwelling in the city: 1) Urban residence is the basis of mobilization, not national identity, employment, or market worth, all of which are irrelevant to the standing of urban citizen, as are distinctions between renters and owners and other kinds of property relations; 2) The agenda of mobilization is about the experience of living in the city, about residents' daily life, infrastructure, services, and struggles, about their abilities to appropriate and participate, about their right to the city; 3) The city is the primary political community of comparison for these developments, not the nation, regional state, or some other juro-political unit, territory, or conception; 4) Residents legitimate this agenda of rights and participatory practices on the basis of their contributions to the city itself, that is, their making the city so that contributing to city-making gives people the conviction that they deserve a right to it. City-making can happen in many different ways, including home building, urban agriculture, gaining services for a neighborhood, street cleanup, paying local taxes, and defending one's dwelling and neighborhood from eviction or destruction.

These four conditions do not have to be present in the consciousness of individual resident-agents. Though they may be there, the key is their location in the historical structuring of struggles over the form and substance of belonging that takes shape around sets of social relations, resources, and concepts—around access to land, labor, services, and rights, for example, around supposed antinomies like public/private, owner/renter, legal/illegal. In other words, these conditions either are or are not inherent in structures of power and their practices at particular times and places.

If the Paris Commune inspired the emergence of an urban citizenship, the insurrection also resulted in its demise. Having challenged the primacy and domination of the nation-state in matters of governance, membership, identity, distribution, and right, the Commune confronted its wrath. In league with the Prussian army, the military forces of the French national state crushed the rebellion of Paris and did so with extreme violence. Once again, national citizenship triumphed over urban. Moreover, as Harvey (1989b) observed, the devastating defeat of the Paris Commune had severe consequences for the prospects of urban movements in Europe for the next century. Mindful of the defeat of the Commune and the supremacy of the nation, political organizations that bore the banners of social justice into the future invested primarily in national political mobilizations. In fact, for more than a century after the Commune, hardly a trace of social movements for right-to-the-city or urban citizenship appeared in the North

Atlantic. Social theory as well focused on national questions of citizenship (even when crossed with issues of class, gender, and race), as in the classic studies of Marshall (1977) and Bendix (1977). Works on postnational citizenship considered transnationality, diaspora, and universal human rights as alternatives but omitted the urban (Soysal 1994, Bozniak 2000). In this universe of national, postnational, and global concerns, Lefebvre stands as a singular beacon focused on right to the city—though his conceptualization of right is not anchored to any framework or foundation such as citizenship that would articulate it as a right. Indeed, the Commune's legacy of urban citizenship as the ground of right to the city has only reappeared in the last few decades, not in the North Atlantic but rather with the intense urbanization of the Global South.

Urban Citizenship in the Global South

This reappearance of urban citizenship as the ground of right to the city occurred in cities of the metropolitan south like Porto Alegre, São Paulo, Caracas, and Johannesburg. Moving south, so to speak, this consolidation of right to the city developed in ways that Lefebvre did not suppose—but this is another story. The important point here is that the massive urbanization of the South produced unrelenting housing shortages and property conflicts in cities. It has also coincided with an invention of democracy and an institutionalization of neoliberalism in many regions of the world. Although the combinations of these processes are intensely local in combustion, they generate a remarkably similar condition worldwide: enormous numbers—soon approaching a majority—of the world's population now live in impoverished urban peripheries in conditions of illegal and irregular residence, many facing regular eviction, displacement, and dispossession, around urban centers that benefit from their services and their poverty.

Yet these conditions also generate a characteristic response: precisely in the urban peripheries, residents come to understand their basic needs in terms of their inhabiting the city, suffering it, building their daily lives in it, making its landscape, history, and politics a place for themselves. The many meanings of this making often coalesce into a sense that they have a right to the city. This transformation of need into right has made cities a strategic arena for the development of new and insurgent citizenships. By insurgent urban citizenship, I refer to the political transformation that occurs when the conviction of having a right to the city turns residents into active citizens who mobilize demands around city-based issues and often through residentially-based organizations that confront entrenched national regimes of citizen inequality and disability. Not all urban peripheries in the Global South produce this kind of insurgence of city against nation. But enough do to qualify this collision of urban and national, local and imperial, insurgent and entrenched citizenships as a global category of conflict.

The results of these combinations of peripheral urbanization, democratization, and neoliberalization in Latin America, Southern Africa, India, Thailand, and

elsewhere have been contradictory, to be sure, bringing their own kinds of destabilization, delegitimation, violence, and even de-democratization. The result is an entanglement of democracy with its counters, in which new kinds of urban citizens arise to expand democratic citizenships, and new forms of urban violence, inequality, impunity, and dispossession erode them. But my concern here is not so much with these contradictions—about which I have written elsewhere (see Holston 2008)—but with their consequences for the development of an urban citizenship that sustains a right to the city, including a right to housing, and reciprocally a right to the city that inspires urban citizenship.

The key condition for the development of urban citizenship in these cities is one of city-making. For the pioneering generations of urban migrants, this making is often literal: they built the cities. Forced to the urban peripheries with no place to live, they build their own homes—even if they started out residing with relatives who had come earlier—and through this process of autoconstruction (*autoconstrução*, as Brazilians call it), construct their neighborhoods as a collective undertaking. In these neighborhoods, often the key experience that triggers the realization that residents are city-makers is the threat of eviction, of losing what they have built. In addition, however, residents gain the sense of city making by organizing campaigns to procure urban infrastructure and services through which they construct their neighborhoods, such as potable piped water, sewage lines, street paving, public lighting, bus service, trash collection, schools, police, and health clinics.

Autoconstruction also engaged the working classes with modern market consumption as they transformed their shacks into more finished masonry houses. The consumption of commodities for the home—from construction materials to furniture and appliances—resulted in two changes deeply related to the developments of citizenship. One was a change in subjectivity. As the working classes built and equipped their homes, they assumed the unprecedented identities of both producers and consumers of city life. Their houses became legible texts attesting to this change, architectural performances both of individual commodity acquisition and status competition and of the collective drama of producing the peripheries themselves by appropriating and transforming the very soil of the city. As city builders, they came to understand themselves as having stakes in the city, as contributing fundamentally to its economy and society. This identity of stakeholder grounded an unprecedented sense of belonging by appropriation and production—in effect, of an ownership based on productive use—that in turn consolidated a new kind of earned right to the city.

The second change was thus one of rights. The sum of these city struggles often and predictably generates a conviction among urban autoconstructors that they have a right to the city they are making—a contributor's right, a city-maker's right, as I have called it—because they perceive their acts of making as structuring, organizing, populating, opening up, paying for, securing, and provisioning the city. Building a home of one's own may be the classic act, but residents also perceive that raising a family, planting a garden, and working to

get potable water are also acts of making the city grow. When perceived in this way, as growing the city productively, even personal actions traditionally seen as private become understood as also civic (“the personal is political” as feminism argued). By inhabiting the urban landscape in these many constructive ways, they appropriate it as the place they belong to. These acts of appropriation create a sense not only of belonging to the commune/ity thus made but also of a subjective power that derives from the visible proof of residents’ objective powers of having transformed the physical and social cityscape.

These constructive actions create the four conditions I outlined earlier that are constitutive of an urban citizenship, especially when they become articulated through organizations which have a significant grassroots component. This articulation accomplishes a number of important things. It generates a new kind of participation in an alternative public sphere of the city—alternative to the sphere of national citizenship in which most autoconstructors are marginal, discriminated against citizens; in that sense, it produces a counterpublic. Organized grassroots articulation creates an appreciation that autoconstructor claims to resources can be understood as rights in and to this counterpublic and that these rights have a new foundation in productive residence (contribution, as just discussed, rather than privilege or favor). This appreciation generates a pervasive sense that autoconstructors are worthy of dignity and respect as bearers of rights. It creates the sense that the urban poor—marginal national citizens and immigrant noncitizens—are citizens of their cities equal in dignity and rights to those in economic classes above them. In most cases, these transformed spatial, social, and conceptual relations have resulted in new legal frameworks, participatory institutions, policy-making practices (e.g., Brazil’s 2001 *City Statute*); in many cases (e.g., Brazil, South Africa, Colombia, Venezuela, India, Thailand) the charge of transformation goes from city to nation, as new national constitutions, constitutional amendments, and planning policies get enacted that give new body to the articulations of the counterpublic of urban citizenship.

Thus, over the last four or five decades, massive numbers of poor people have moved to cities in the Global South and built the urban peripheries. These migrant autoconstructors perceived the making of the peripheries, however precarious at the beginning of their settlement, as a vital source of both their political constitution and their self-understanding as modern urban residents. These experiences fueled the eruption of urban counterpublics of insurgent citizenship. In many cities, this eruption destabilized the publics of entrenched inegalitarian and differentiated national citizenship at the very sites that had produced differentiation, namely, those of political rights, landed property, residential illegality, misuse of law, and servility. Although these conditions continue to sustain publics and paradigms of differentiated national citizenship, they also became the conditions of its transformation. In effect, under different circumstances in the peripheries, with their new densities of opportunity and politically organized articulations, the sites of differentiation and degradation became those of insurgence, as the autoconstructing marginal residents gained political rights, became property

owners (variously defined), made law an asset, and achieved a greater sense of personal competence through their urban practices. These changes generated an urban citizenship. As residents battled against eviction and for infrastructure and services, they mobilized on the basis of their daily lives in the city. They created a specifically urban status of belonging, an agenda of claims legitimated on the basis of their sense of city-making, and a discursive public about both that countered the national citizenship that had marginalized them.

The Comparative Poverty of American Citizenship

Urbanization in the Global South has produced housing crises of gigantic proportions, forcing most of the urban poor into autoconstructed peripheries. Even on the fringes, they continue to confront eviction, displacement, and dispossession because these assaults invariably follow the fraudulent land speculation, illegal occupation, and interminable land conflicts that typify peripheral urban settlement. Under these desperate conditions, remarkably, residents develop organized claims not to be evicted, ultimately a claim to have a right to reside with a minimum measure of dignity and wellbeing. In many cases, as I have described, these claims lead to a notion that residents have a right to the city they make, and that conviction develops into one of urban citizenship.

In the last half century, the United States has also experienced housing crises as it urbanized. A comparison with Brazil is revealing. Both have had enormous numbers of home evictions during this period. However, their trends are opposite. In Brazil, evictions have declined precipitously as the urban poor claimed their right to the city and learned how to mobilize politically and use the law to stay in eviction proceedings. Though they have generally not succeeded in resolving underlying problems of illegality, fraud, and title, they are today able to avoid eviction in most cases.¹ In the US, evictions steadily increased until the financial

1 An exception is currently underway in Rio de Janeiro where some favela residents are being evicted as a result of the city's preparations for the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. These preparations involve a combination of massive investments in favela upgrading (*Morar Carioca*) and favela "pacification" (through a new policing strategy implemented by Pacifying Police Units—UPP, *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora*—followed up with a program of social and infrastructural services—UPP Social). In the national context, the resulting evictions are very small in number, though that is no consolation to those evicted. There is little doubt, however, that the urban upgrading generates increased real estate values in some of the small "postcard" favelas with spectacular ocean views, such as Vidigal and Chapel Mangeira. Some gentrification will certainly occur as a result and thus produce displacement. But this process is significantly different from eviction. Moreover, the extent and type of gentrification remains to be researched, as prices in these favelas are already high; there has been for many years a circulation of higher income working-class residents displacing lower; and the upgrading entails complex land tenure arrangements and construction restrictions.

crisis that began in September 2008. Since then, they have skyrocketed, totaling approximately 4.1 million completed foreclosures across the country by December 2012 according to CoreLogic's February 2013 National Foreclosure Report. If we suppose that on average each residence has four people, foreclosures since 2008 have evicted around 16 million people or five percent of the American population. There were approximately 83,000 in September 2011 alone, four times the average monthly foreclosures between 2000 and 2006, though they have since declined to 56,000 in the month of December 2012.²

The housing crises of the United States and Brazil share important characteristics, such as massive numbers of evictions, a residential life of marginalization for the urban poor, housing claims based on various kinds of possession and property relations but generally advanced in terms of ownership (a far more complex question in the case of Brazil), among others. Yet, unlike Brazilians, Americans have not developed a right to housing, much less to the city, even when confronting extraordinary numbers of evictions in the last five years and even though their sophisticated mass media makes them intensely aware of this situation. Rather, according to my conversations with housing activists in Oakland, California, where foreclosures are rampant, Americans who confront the loss of their homes because they are "under water" tend to "blame themselves" for failing to meet their mortgage payments. This acceptance of individual blame and, with it, mortification seems to be the greatest impediment to collective action and to the development of a right to housing, according to community activists (see also Samara, this volume). Let us consider some of the differences between Brazil and the US with regard to the housing question that might elucidate this comparative poverty of American citizenship.

Among the most important differences is that significant numbers of Brazilians in the urban peripheries see themselves as city-makers, as both producers and consumers of city life. Their collective actions against eviction—evident in their organizations, mobilizations, protests, legislative initiatives, party affiliation, and elections—and their explicit articulation of these actions in terms of right to the city support this generalization. By and large, Americans see themselves primarily as consumers of a city already produced. The paucity of their collective actions and of right-to-the-city articulations supports this generalization. Although the Occupy Movements suggested a stirring, this protest against financial capitalism has not produced a focus (either discursive or strategic) on housing eviction or been articulated as right to the city for the "99 percent." Moreover, Occupy has

2 In the US, foreclosure includes eviction. But in Brazil, foreclosure is rare in the peripheries because banks infrequently hold title to residential properties. They are not active in this market because of the legal quagmire that characterizes the settlement of so much of the land and the development of its housing stock. Court-ordered eviction in Brazilian peripheries generally results from other processes, typically related to competing and often fraudulent land claims.

more or less fizzled, especially in comparison with contemporary housing activism in Latin America and Europe (e.g., the M15 movement in Spain).

The classic expression of city-making in Brazil is the autoconstruction of houses. By the 1970s, it had become a symbolic calculus for tens of millions of residents of an imagined new future calibrated with each new brick (production) and each new appliance and furniture (consumption). This future is individual for home builders; but it is also a collective narrative of struggle and achievement as autoconstructed houses form a neighborhood, neighborhoods a district, and districts a city. Residents summon this collective narrative to mind when they see a house under construction, garden planted, street paved, bus service extended, infrastructure installed. For pioneer settlers of peripheral neighborhoods, everything speaks of this individual future that is also collective. Yet for succeeding generations of residents, daily urban life also evokes city-making. They have not only the heritage of founders to invoke but also the innumerable aspects of everyday life that are for them small and large victories against the immense difficulties of living in the never completed peripheries as well as indications of their continuing disabilities that fuel their anger and protest. These experiences of productive residence have given working-class Brazilians the conviction that their demand-claims for a better life and, indeed, for a new compact of citizenship—are legitimated by their contributions to making the city grow.

Most lower and working-class Americans have no such sense of making an urban future. It is not a question of structural unemployment, prevalence of gangs, ghetto flight, or institutional racism, all of which no doubt have some bearing, but all of which also affect Brazilian peripheries.³ Perhaps it is also, ironically, that market and state never abandoned poor urban Americans to the shacks of autoconstruction. However dilapidated the infrastructural conditions of American inner cities, they are better than the squatter settlements of autoconstructed peripheries.⁴ Perhaps the American ideology of individualism works deeply against collective identification, even among the poor—especially the current that argues that rights should be individually earned, generally through employment (market worth), and that any form of “welfare” should be “paid for” by a loss of dignity if not rights (see Shklar 1991). Perhaps the enduring American villainization of cities in favor of suburban arcadia makes it difficult for city residents to identify as city-makers. At this point, I can observe the marked differences between Brazilian and American notions of productive residence, note that the former becomes the basis of right-to-the-city claims and urban citizenship while the latter seems generally

3 For a review of these arguments, see Massey and Denton 1993. Though now 20 years old, this review remains an excellent analysis of the basic issues. Given its main conclusion that segregated residence is the principal factor that aggravates other factors and perpetuates the African-American ghetto, it is all the more striking that there has been so little mobilization around a right to housing.

4 I once took some Brazilian urban sociologists to visit a poor inner city neighborhood in Newark, NJ, and they kept asking me when we would arrive.

nonexistent with regard to city-making, and let these differences suggest clues for further investigation.

Certainly, one such difference concerns rights. The right to the city is what we may call an omnibus right—like the right to justice—that enables many other rights and aspects of citizenship. Although it has civil and political elements, it is fundamentally a socio-economic right. As Marshall (1977) defined it, this kind of right refers to minimum standards of well-being and dignity, secured by institutions of the state. I would add that as *minimums*, they are based on an absolute worth of people as citizens independent of their market value. Socio-economic rights are the most important kind of citizenship rights to most Brazilians. They were first introduced in Brazil during the 1930s and were overwhelmingly labor rights. But access to them was restricted to certain subsets of urban workers based on qualifications that the state established for eligibility. In this way, they perpetuated the old regime of citizenship by differentiating workers according to social differences that were not the basis of national membership—in this case, certain kinds of registered urban occupations—to distribute different treatment to different categories of citizens. Thus, most labor rights were available only to particular kinds of citizens and exercised as the privileges of particular social categories. For example, rural workers were categorically excluded even though they were just as Brazilian as urban workers in registered professions.

The transformation of socio-economic citizenship in Brazil began in the 1970s with the right-to-the-city movements of the peripheries. They generated a different set of social rights, of new substance and ethical significance, focused on the new practices of citizenship in the residential neighborhoods and concerned with rights to public services, infrastructure, and residence itself. These rights pertain to urban life as a condition of dwelling and have little to do with differentiated market performance. The new socio-economic citizenship that developed from right to the city expanded social rights to all Brazilians.

By contrast, it is well-known that Americans have few socio-economic rights. Most have never heard of the concept. It is not on the radar in debates about housing, healthcare, minimum wage, taxes, and social services. Even public education, one of the few and probably the most important socio-economic right Americans do have is rarely considered or defended in these terms, terms that are standard elsewhere. I know of no other modern citizenship that lacks this fundamental component to such a degree. This deficit of socio-economic citizenship is not surprising given the ideology of the minimal state that so many Americans seem to espouse, in which the state is more of a beast that must be starved than a guarantor of citizen welfare and dignity. Without the latter conception of state, social rights cannot develop. Without the deep rooting of a concept of socio-economic right in the United States, which thus seems difficult at least in the near future, the development of right to the city—including right to housing—is unlikely.

Part of the problem in the United States is surely the absence of a sustained public discussion about the meaning and practice of American citizenship. Elements of this discussion crop up at various moments in Tea Party and Occupy

meetings, inaugural speeches, state of the union/state/city addresses, and talk radio (on Occupy, see Gitlin 2012; on Tea Party, see Skocpol and Williamson 2012). But they are mostly catch phrases, patriotic exhortations, and rattlings of old sabers, or they refer to fictions of universal humanity (in which citizenship is divisive) on the left or to the intentions of colonial white men as expressed in the Constitution (which didn't mention citizenship until 1868) on the right. Direct discussion and analysis of the state of American citizenship—its principles, practices, and institutions—is not fashionable. Even in an unfashionable book on social justice and housing, *Freedom Now!: Struggles of the Human Right to Housing in LA and Beyond*, citizenship is not mentioned as far I can tell (Camp and Heatherton n.d.). Rather, this book presents rights as an aspect of humanity (as in human rights) rather than of citizenship (as in citizen rights). This conceptual displacement from local membership to global belonging has become commonplace in American discourse on social justice—though the difficult problems of what the latter might mean in political practice and how rights based on it would be enforced are rarely if ever broached. It is difficult to imagine, for example, a right to housing based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights having any efficacy in the United States. Rights are matters of local performance; without it, they are dead letter. For a right to the city to take root in the US, it would require articulation as a principle of local residence and law, for which both national and global identities would have to be irrelevant. Such a counterpublic is lacking that articulates local citizenship against the grain of national citizenship, but without recourse to the fiction of membership in a global community.

It was precisely this kind of counterpublic formulation of local (urban) citizenship as the basis of social justice that arose in Brazil and became the foundation of a popular and extensive rethinking of Brazilian citizenship. When I investigated why working-class residents in the peripheries of São Paulo think they have rights, including socio-economic ones, they almost invariably gave me a mix of three reasons: they are morally good and thus deserving of rights; they earn rights by making the city (they cite autoconstruction, domestic consumption, paying taxes to fund government—which is tied to being both producers and consumers of city life); and they have rights because the new Citizen Constitution of 1988 guarantees them (see Holston 2008: 253–267 for an analysis of the coincidence of these three arguments). The moral argument has been used against the working poor since the inception of the Brazilian nation-state and remains an internalized holdover of its differentiated regime of citizenship. The last two are new understandings that confront the moral with very different logics.

They both emerged as residents developed the new participatory publics of an insurgent citizenship that ultimately countered the old regime with a new constitution and related new urban legislation. To be sure, the old remains a force; hence the entrenched moral argument is still common. But the new counterpublics have considerable personal and political power, and they are deeply related. Key to the legal argument is access to knowledge, to knowing for oneself what the laws say citizens can legitimately demand from the state and from each other,

without having to depend on the recognition or confirmation of someone else that one is morally good enough to deserve rights. Moreover, the constitution is itself to a significant degree the product of the new stakeholder understanding of rights founded on the urban working-class production and consumption of the city. Certainly, its sections on citizen rights and urban policy are a direct result of right-to-the-city mobilizations focused on problems of residence and daily life in the urban peripheries (and not on labor) and their articulation in the counterpublics of an insurgent citizenship.

The new urban legislation derived from these constitutional principles keeps these counterpublics animated with proposals, debates, and actions concerning the right to the city and urban citizenship. This animation swirls around contests over whose voices will lead the mandated participatory processes in urban decision-making.⁵ The rich have demonstrated the capacity to mobilize very effectively in these processes, as in fact they have always done in implementing their right to the city. The key difference is that today they must compete in a public democratic arena with organized working-class movements which have also effectively articulated their own right to the city. The outcomes are far from certain, and the rich have distinct advantages. Yet, at the very least, working-class organizations can argue that for the first time, their production of the city inspired the formulation of urban policy, and their right to the city established social justice as a core value of planning. The extent to which, in the arena of the urban citizenship thus created, they can put policy into practice on this basis remains to be seen. In the meantime, they provide an alternative to American lethargies.

5 A study of this participatory planning may be found in Caldeira and Holston (forthcoming).