Introduction
Planning Latin American Cities

Housing and Citizenship

by
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After the 1973 coup in Chile, the Pinochet dictatorship, aided by advisers from the United States, became a proving ground for neoliberal reforms in Latin America. Its efforts to minimize the public role and maximize private initiative have strongly influenced social housing programs in other countries in the region. In effect, Chile's housing reforms were recognized as best practices. The massive social housing program it launched in the early 1990s has been emulated throughout the Americas, most notably in Brazil's Minha Casa, Minha Vida program. Following its developer-driven and neoliberal approach to housing, Chile produced a significant volume of new housing units. However, from the larger vantage point of community development and citizenship rights, the new housing has been deficient. It has generated new urban ghettos and peripheral neighborhoods and contributed to suburban expansion, auto dependency, unevenness in the provision of services, and a new form of poverty.

The first five articles in this issue look at the Chilean experience from different angles. The first establishes a clear historical and political context for urban social movements in Santiago, specifically the struggles against gentrification and displacement in both poor and middle-class communities. "Struggles against Territorial Disqualification: Mobilization for Dignified Housing and Defense of Heritage in Santiago," by Nicolás Angelcos and María Luisa Méndez, highlights the common features of the struggles in the two communities, which suggest possibilities for strategies opposing displacement and the hegemony of real estate that cut across class lines. In assessing Chile's housing reforms, it is important to look beyond the question of housing as shelter and consider the extent to which they support community and individual development in a holistic way. Miguel Pérez, in "'A New *Poblador* Is Being Born': Housing Struggles in a Gentrified Area of Santiago," looks behind one of Latin America's most heralded new housing programs to uncover some of its problematic effects on citizenship rights. He shows that this program has generated resistance in the neighborhood of Peñalolén and produced new politicized subjects.

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In "Deepening Demobilization: The State's Transformation of Civil Society in the *Poblaciones* of Santiago, Chile," Carter M. Koppelman sheds light on an opposite trend in which local organizations have been weakened. These groups, many aligned with the left, previously resisted neoliberal social programs but have now been co-opted to work within them by a nominally democratic government. Koppelman argues that the groups have become instruments in local service provision while at the same time formally delineating their differences with government. This case suggests a fundamental paradox that no doubt has much wider application: the more states adopt the language and practice of participatory decision making, the more the autonomy of social movements and organizations is challenged and perhaps compromised. This can also be observed in progressive regimes (see Dinerstein, 2013, on Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil).

The issues of housing and citizenship are evident as much in large communities as in small residential complexes. Rosanna Forray and Francisca Márquez, in "The Memory of Inhabiting Modern Architecture: Villa Portales, 1955–2010," look at the way community organizing in a housing complex changed along with the economic and political transformations occurring at the national level. The modernist complex built in the 1970s underwent changes resulting from the neoliberal shift in the 1980s and municipal decentralization in the 1990s.

Mauricio Rojas Alcayaga's "Heritage and the Social Construction of Citizen Power in Historic Neighborhoods of Santiago" offers insights into urban movements that have received very little attention in such discussions because historic preservation has so often been monopolized by elite and corporate interests and focused on the preservation of buildings. Clearly, if people are to fully exercise their citizenship rights in the places where they live, they should have a say in the decisions that affect their local identities and memories, and the preservation of buildings is bound up with neighborhood preservation. However, the stories of these two neighborhoods in Santiago bring out the social and political elements that mediate decisions about preservation.

These articles demonstrate that organizing around housing and urban questions has led to both advances and setbacks in the construction of urban citizenship in Chile. Communities organize to improve the quality of life, and housing is an important element in these struggles. Yet even as gains are made, the state and powerful developers seek to co-opt leaders and activists and reverse their advances. These are contradictions that are bound to prevail as long as systemic inequalities remain.

In contrast with the experiences in Chile, some Latin American countries with left government leadership and support from social movements, have tried housing and neighborhood rehabilitation programs that aim to decommodify housing and support the transformation of individuals and communities in ways that enhance social solidarity. In 2011, for instance, the government of Venezuela launched a national social housing program called the Vivienda Venezuela Mission (Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela). Its goal was to build 2 million housing units in seven years, and it had already reached the 1 million mark by the end of 2015. The government has invested significant political will and resources in housing, giving priority to areas with the greatest needs resulting from the economic crisis and damage due to climate-related disasters. This

program, however, faces enormous challenges and contradictions in both the process and the substance of its planning. Since the government has focused mainly on the production of housing, no system of monitoring and evaluation of the program is yet in place. This will be needed to examine problems related to the location, design, and management of the housing, the effectiveness of citizen inclusion and participation, and the extent to which development has been sensitive to the sociocultural and urban context.

INFORMALITY AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF POVERTY

In their relentless pursuit of commodification in all aspects of urban life, neoliberal regimes demonize informality and poverty. The poor, unable to consume insatiably, are deemed disposable. Once they are categorized as part of a giant and amorphous informal sector, they can be summarily dismissed. One way of removing them from urban life is to criminalize them (Mitchell and Heynen, 2009). The discussion of "informality" is an important element in the fields of urban studies and urban planning. The narrowest understanding of informality is limited to a description of the living conditions of the urban poor in neighborhoods built without the approval of the state or leading financial institutions. This is contrasted with the formal or "legally built" city, often using a crude dualist approach. This stigmatizes marginalized communities and opens them up to destruction by slum eradication projects. Urban professionals throughout Latin America—architects, planners, economists, and development specialists—are trained to think of informal communities as obstacles that must give way to the formal, planned city. Even when they are not trying to get rid of them, they are usually poorly equipped to work with them.

In "The Occupation of the Parque Indoamericano in Buenos Aires: Discourse Dynamics and Stakeholder Practices," Corinna Hölzl analyzes the violent repression by the state of an occupation by 13,000 people of the second-largest park in the poorest area of Buenos Aires. The occupiers demanded decent housing, but national and local governments fostered negative images of the community that rationalized their policies, emphasizing security issues and imposed sanctions. We see the effect of the co-optation of social movement leaders by relatively progressive governments, a complex contradiction also encountered, for example, in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

Another study in Buenos Aires looks at newspaper articles and reader comments about a poor neighborhood and shows how they tend to stigmatize the residents. In "Criminals in Our Midst: Middle-Class Reactions to Representations of the 'Ordinary' in a Buenos Aires Shantytown," Jacob Lederman suggests that the stereotypical images may be related to the instability of residents in the surrounding middle-class districts, who are the main audience for the articles and comments. It is worth noting that violence is not generated solely by repressive state regimes and middle-class stereotypes. Residents of peripheral areas face crime and violence on a daily basis. Violence may be connected to criminal networks that are tolerated and allowed to flourish by corrupt national and local governments, but it may also originate and be reproduced in

neighborhoods and individual households, where women and children are frequently the victims. It has a corrosive effect on the stability of communities and undermines the ability to organize. There are some examples of community-based campaigns against violence, but there must be more if grassroots organizing is to be effective in expanding the rights of all.

Frank Müller and Ramiro Segura's "The Uses of Informality: Urban Development and Social Distinction in Mexico City" shows how stereotypical views of informality were employed by developer interests to secure land for development. Land occupations in Mexico and other Latin American countries have sometimes been perversely planned and/or paid for by developers in order to scare off landowners, particularly if they are *ejidatarios*, getting them to sell their land fast and cheap. They are told that if they do not allow the planned development to happen, then unplanned, chaotic development will take place. This is a real possibility in a rapidly growing city in which most of the housing was built outside of a plan. The problem, of course, is that such maneuvers obscure any discussion about other possible plans, including those generated by community residents. Also excluded is development that incorporates local small-scale retail and industry, which is commonly found in informal neighborhoods. This fear of mixed uses reflects a class bias; informal (unregulated) use of homes for profitable businesses by the middle class (via computer-based work, for example) is not disputed or taxed.

Urban citizenship is not automatically available to everyone, and it is usually those who have least who have to struggle the most, even after they have fought hard for their rights in the past. This is a contradiction that all progressive movements must face: the burden of mobilizing for change is most heavily borne by those social sectors with the least resources. Luisa F. Rodríguez Cortés, in "Building Citizenship: The Struggle for Housing in Eastern Mexico City," shows that, because of social inequalities and the neoliberal policies of local government, residents of a Mexico City neighborhood have to organize to achieve their basic rights to housing. In effect, citizenship is a process and always subject to change.

Finally, the article by Charmain Levy, Anne Latendresse, and Marianne Carle-Marsan, "Gendering the Urban Social Movement and Public Housing Policy in São Paulo," points out the enormous contradictions facing women with respect to the state and its housing policies and with respect to the housing movements. In both arenas women have played a critical role in gendering the housing question. In the social movements they confront barriers to their full emancipation and citizenship. They are active subjects, and their engagement brings to the fore the gender inequalities in cities and in urban policies.

When calling for more planning to solve the enormous problems of cities, we need to move beyond best practices and technological fixes to long-term solutions that come to terms with the deep economic and social divisions in the metropolis and the world. The key questions remain whether decisions by governments at all levels that determine the form and function of cities will be inclusive and democratic and help rectify the historic oppressions and inequalities created by dependent, peripheral capitalism or whether they will reproduce existing social relations, promote separate and unequal urban enclaves,

and reproduce historic dependencies. It would be a step forward if we could move beyond the pseudo-scientific certainties of the urban experts toward a more grounded understanding of the complex politics of urban life and the challenges facing the movements that struggle for deep social transformations.

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