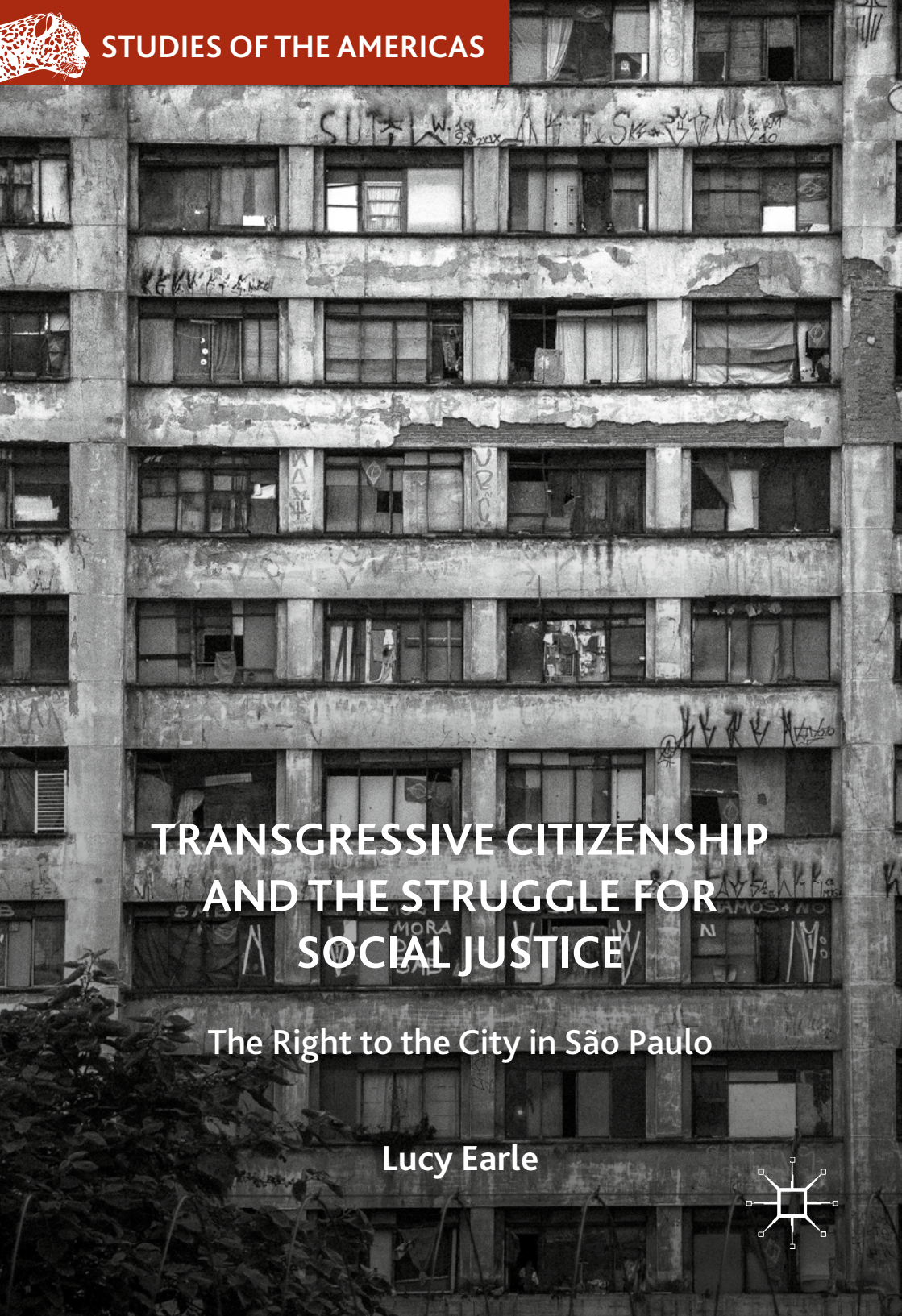

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TRANSGRESSIVE CITIZENSHIP AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Right to the City in São Paulo

Lucy Earle

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The cover displays the Façade of number 911 Prestes Maia Avenue, São Paulo. The building has been occupied on multiple occasions by the city's housing movements.

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For Tom

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The completion of that circle has taken some time. Along the way, there have been very many people who now deserve a great deal of thanks. First of all, clearly, I am indebted to Dito and the many dedicated women and men who work to achieve the goals of the housing movements in São Paulo and who were willing to spend time with me to help me understand that work and have me accompany them to their meetings. Their words are frequently referenced in the pages that follow, but the anonymity that I have granted them in the text means that I would prefer not to name them here.

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Aliança de Renovação Nacional Alliance for National Renovation (ARENA)
Assembléia Constituinte Constituent Assembly
Autogestão Self-management
Banco Nacional de Habitação National Housing Bank (BNH)
Bolsa Aluguel Emergency Rent Support
Central de Movimentos Populares Centre for Popular Movements (CMP)
Comitês Populares da Copa Popular Committees for the World Cup
Companhia de Desenvolvimento Habitacional e Urbano Housing and Urban Development Company (CDHU)
Companhia Metropolitana de Habitação Metropolitan Housing Company (COHAB)
Comunidades Eclesiais de Base Grassroots Christian Communities
Cortiço Slum tenement building
Defensoria Pública Public Defender's Office
Diretas Já Campaign for Direct Elections
Estatuto da Cidade City Statute
Favela Shanty town
Fórum Nacional para Reforma Urbana National Forum for Urban Reform (FNRU)
Frente de Lutas por Moradia Housing Struggles Front (FLM)
Fundo Nacional de Habitação de Interesse Social National Fund for Social Housing

Fundo Nacional de Moradia Popular National Fund for Popular Housing (FNMP)
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Partido Democrático Social Social Democratic Party (PDS)
Partido dos Trabalhadores Workers' Party (PT)
Partido Progressista Progressive Party (PP)
Partido Socialismo e Liberdade Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL)
Paulistano Resident of the city of São Paulo
Petrobras Brazilian Semi-Public Petroleum Corporation
Secretaria Municipal de Habitação (SEHAB) Municipal Housing Secretariat
Sem Teto Member of a housing movement (literally 'roofless')
União de Movimentos de Moradia Federation of Housing Movements (UMM)
União Nacional por Moradia Popular National Union for Popular Housing (UNMP)
Zona Especial de Interesse Social Zones of Special Social Interest (ZEIS)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In June 2013, Brazil's cities hit the headlines. Starting in São Paulo, and followed by other urban centres, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in waves of protests that continued over the course of the month. But in protest at what? The first march had been on 6th June, organized by the Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) (Free Fare Movement) to protest another increase in the city's bus fare. But within a few days, the reasons for coming on to the streets had multiplied. Police brutality targeted at the students marching against the fare rise swelled the numbers of those protesting: the right to move freely through the city and to engage in peaceful protest had been violently curtailed. This brought far greater numbers of people on to the streets—marching through the country's big cities, blocking roads and bringing traffic on major arteries to a halt. All eyes were on Brazil at this time, as the MPL's protest had coincided with the Confederation Cup, seen as a warm-up to Brazil's hosting of the football World Cup the following year. This prompted a further questioning amongst residents as to whether their rights to the city, as urban citizens, were being fully upheld and protected. Public funds were being invested in World Cup infrastructure in Brazil's main urban centres, but without clarity on whether the residents of those cities would really benefit. The grand talk of the 'legacy' of the Cup was not materializing. And so, alongside the MPL, other protagonists came to prominence that June, including activists asking 'Copa prá quem?' (World Cup for whom?) and those engaged with São Paulo's housing movements, all concerned about forced

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evictions, removals of *favelas*, land speculation and rent hikes related to investments and public works for the World Cup.

If this were the end of the roll call, the phenomenon known as the *Jornadas de Junho* (Days of June) might be slightly more comprehensible. But as the month progressed, more unexpected things started to happen. The usual suspects—the organized movements that have been taking to the streets for years, and that have shaped Brazil's policy on land, housing, health and education since democratization—were not present in the protests *en masse*. And, amongst such a multitude of other marchers, they were not particularly prominent. Some organized movements took flags and banners, but these were frowned upon by other marchers. The protests had taken on an individual hue, with people making their own placards, eschewing references to political parties, and taking to the streets for whatever cause was most important to them—better healthcare, education or, in the context of the World Cup, a general demand for a 'FIFA quality of life'. The protests also provided an outlet for frustration with corruption in public life and the difficulty of bringing about change through the formal democratic process. Many of these protesters were young and middle class, and had never been on the streets before.

Towards the end of the month, the marchers were joined by anarchist groups, notably those referred to as 'black blocks', who wore masks and engaged in acts of vandalism, targeting banks and luxury shops. They changed the nature of the protests, bringing greater police repression. Their presence, and the emergence of protesters with a very conservative agenda, including anti-abortion and anti-gay marriage, forced a decision by the original organizers to call off further action.

For many observers of São Paulo and social protest, things have never been quite the same since. The MPL protest was ultimately successful: the rise in public transport fares was cancelled. But the protests had clearly morphed into something new and different over the course of the month, and the international media had seized on the link between the protests and the World Cup (Silva 2013: 176). To paraphrase one observer, the connection between the protests and the considerable investments in urban infrastructure related to the World Cup could not be ignored (Vainer 2013: 65). The threat to bring the city to a halt during the tournament remained in the background over the following year and continued to cause stress for the government. This 'tarnishing' of Brazil's image at a time when the world was watching is thought to have prompted the initial violence with which protests were met (ibid.). Criticism of government

priorities, combined with a perception of excessive investment in sporting infrastructure at the expense of social spending, gave additional impetus to the protests, and the question 'World Cup for whom?' began to resonate.

Clearly, those on the streets proclaiming *não vai ter copa* ('there won't be a World Cup') did not get their way, and during the games themselves, there was a remarkable lack of protest. After the 2014 tournament, Brazilians consoled themselves with the fact that they could organize a great event, even if their national team was a disgrace. But the *Jornadas* have left an interesting legacy—a perception that social protest and taking to the streets gets results. Other variables have no doubt played their part, but since 2013, there has been an explosion in the number of building and land occupations across São Paulo. The most prominent of these was the 'Copa do Povo', an occupation of land by several thousand *sem teto* (literally 'roofless') near the site of the new World Cup stadium a couple of months before the opening match was held there. The organizers of this occupation made an astute move, reminding the public, nearly a year after the *Jornadas de Junho*, that while the government was investing in mega sporting events, the right to the city for the majority of its residents was not being upheld. Through a spectacular act of civil disobedience, the movement highlighted the tension between gleaming stadiums and their polar opposite: the *favelas* and temporary shacks that represent grinding urban poverty. The housing movements of São Paulo may not have initiated the June protests, but, as one observer put it, they managed to *pegar carona*, or 'hitch a lift', with the largest demonstrations of popular discontent in Brazil for decades[1] and to use the momentum and the timing of the World Cup to force the authorities to consider their demands.

It is still hard to make sense of what happened in June 2013. When I mentioned this to one young woman who had been actively involved in documenting human rights abuses linked to the World Cup, and had been on the streets that month, she replied, 'Don't worry, we don't really understand what happened either, and we were there'.[2] But one thread running through many of the protests and subsequent occupations of land and buildings across São Paulo is the demand for the right to the city: for decent housing, transport and social services, and for that right to be extended to all, including low-income groups living on the physical and

[1] Interview with Ernesto, the leader of a housing movement active in the centre of São Paulo, 19.11.14.

[2] Interview with Neves, 26.11.14.

social margins, so that they are able to make the most of what urban life has to offer.

The World Cup gave grist to the mill of those who have been campaigning for social justice in the city for many years. The 2013 protests did not spring from nowhere, but the tournament allowed organized movements to highlight the stark contrast between what became known as *padrão FIFA*—FIFA standard of living—and daily life for so many poor Brazilians. These contradictions were seized upon and given a great deal of column inches and airtime in the international media. They form part of a growing critique of mega sporting events and the perceived wasteful spending that accompanies them.[3] In developing countries, the juxtaposition of new (and often soon to be redundant) arenas with chronic and highly visible urban poverty is particularly uncomfortable. The World Cup brought urban inequality into stark relief, and those who knew how used the tournament to give visibility to their own struggles and social movements. Not for the first time, the city of São Paulo had become both the context for and the subject of social protest.

The protests of 2013 are, however, an important starting point for this book for another reason. It was not just the urban poor, students and others with a left-wing agenda whose eyes were opened to the potential impacts of social protest. A trail can also be found leading from the *Jornadas de Junho* towards the eventual impeachment and trial of President Dilma of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, or PT) in 2016. The sentiments of frustration and resentment towards the PT voiced in June 2013 by predominantly middle-class protesters re-emerged the following year around the time of Dilma's narrow victory in the October presidential elections and became increasingly organized over the following 18 months. A number of new movements based in São Paulo began to coalesce in 2015, the most prominent of which, Vem Pra Rua and Movimento Brasil Livre, have clear echoes of the earlier protests. The name of the first is a slogan associated with some of the protagonists of the *Jornadas de Junho*: it translates as 'come on to the streets'. The name of the second is notably similar to the MPL, which initiated the protests around public transport in June 2013.

[3] For discussions of the impacts of 'Olympic urbanism' on Rio and its poorer urban neighbourhoods, see Carvalho, B., M. Cavalcanti and Venturupalli, V. eds. (2016) *Occupy All Streets: Olympic Urbanism and Contested Futures in Rio de Janeiro*. New York, Terreform.

These movements' own websites and blogs naturally underscore their contribution to the eventual removal of President Dilma from office. According to Gianpaolo Baiocchi, a long-time scholar of Brazilian democracy and civil society (interviewed in Grandin 2016), the unsettled climate of 2016, with its overlapping political, economic and institutional crises, has led to a sense shared amongst many Brazilians that there are no rules, that political conflicts will be settled in street mobilization or under a logic of *vale-tudo* ('anything goes'). The extent to which street protests played a conclusive role in the decision to impeach will be a matter for ongoing debate, but certainly these mobilizations contributed to an atmosphere of massive dissatisfaction with the ruling party. The significant numbers of people they brought on to the streets across the country—said to be one million on March 13th—were widely reported in the media (Grandin 2016). Their protests focused on the mismanagement of the economy, and corruption within the PT, particularly in relation to the *Lava Jato* or 'Operation Car Wash' investigation, which has brought to light illegal profiteering from the state-owned oil company Petrobras.[4] These movements made wide use of social media, notably Facebook, but the traditional media has also had an important role in bringing attention to the protests.[5] Their contribution to Dilma's downfall should not be underestimated. Numerous scholars and observers of Brazil have pointed to the bias in reporting amongst the major news outlets, and their failure to give similar column inches to the large protests organized in support of Dilma and the PT throughout 2016 (Greenwald et al. 2016; Saad-Filho and Boito 2016). For Fortes (2016: 218), the corporate media began shaping the protests as far back as June 2013, when it 'promoted the "fight against corruption" as the unifying mantra that held together protesters hailing from a variety of ideological positions'. Later, this narrative was used to 'legitimize the Right's desire to oust the PT from power' (ibid.).

Shifts in the Brazilian political landscape have happened at great speed over the two years prior to the time of writing, and much analysis has yet to be published. However, certain critiques of these movements are

[4] It should be noted, however, that no party has been untouched in the evolving investigation. Dilma Rousseff herself has not been implicated in the investigation, and her impeachment and trial hinged on an entirely separate charge—a technical infraction of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (Hagopian 2016).

[5] The use of social media amongst organizers and participants of street protests in Arab countries from 2010 onwards has generated considerable debate. See Sharp and Panetta (2016) for a discussion.

beginning to emerge. That protesters against Dilma were predominantly middle- and upper-class is generally accepted—protagonists were notably whiter than those participating in pro-Dilma rallies (Grandin 2016; Saad-Filho and Boito 2016) and were drawn from a 'relatively narrow societal segment' (Greenwald et al. 2016). Alongside overt criticism of the PT government's management of an economic crisis caused by falling commodity prices, underinvestment in basic services and disgust at the massive scale of graft related to Petrobras, some protesters had other, more unpalatable agendas. As Baiocchi remarked in his interview in *The Nation*:

> '[The protests] are not just about corruption, but rather about a resentment of the left. In the last few years there has been open elite and middle-class hostility toward minorities, the poor, and the PT (seen as their political patrons) in a way that has simply not been seen before. There is today an expression of right-wing sentiments in politics that has tapped into this elite discontentment.' (Grandin 2016)

Innovative cash transfer policies that have lifted millions of Brazilians out of poverty are a particular target, as are university quotas for Afro-Brazilian and other minority groups, and labour rights for domestic workers (Saad-Filho and Boito 2016). As such, it appears that some of this protest is directed at the gains that the poorer sectors of Brazilian society have made over the past decades, including their more visible presence in the country's urban centres: 'the upper middle class believes that distributive policies threaten its social privileges, for example, because environments that were traditionally reserved for white and relatively well-off patrons have recently been "invaded" by black and brown working-class users. They include airports, sports clubs, private clinics and even roads' (Saad-Filho and Boito 2016: 225).

At the time of writing, with the outcome of Dilma's trial still fresh in their minds, São Paulo's new conservative social movements appear triumphant. While they may be in the ascendant, the more traditional movements of the urban poor, including the housing movements on which this book focuses, are not lying dormant. They have maintained their own protests, now organized against the current president—Michel Temer, formerly Dilma's vice president, and regarded by many as having orchestrated a parliamentary coup against her.

Whatever the future may bring, the housing movements of São Paulo deserve their place in history. As the following pages will demonstrate,

they have had a significant impact on a range of issues critical to São Paulo's development—notably on housing policy, spaces for democratic participation of the urban poor, perceptions of the city centre and of the place of lower-income residents within it, and, critically, new interpretations of urban citizenship and the right to the city.

This book is about the right to the city and how social movements of the urban poor in Brazil have organized to promote, defend and implement this right. The protests of 2013 and the subsequent wave of occupations are the most recent manifestation of the demand for this right. This book examines how housing movements in São Paulo arrived at this point, how they have reconceptualized the idea of citizenship and their relationship to the state, and created a new 'politics of rights' to argue their case for a place in the city.

***

The concept of *the right to the city* has garnered considerable attention in recent years, seizing the imagination of policymakers, academics and politicians around the world, concerned by the seemingly inexorable growth of cities and urban settlements. The term was originally put forward in 1968 by the philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, in his short work of the same name, *Le droit à la ville*, which was motivated by the problems facing cities in his native France. Since then, numerous interpretations have been put forward on what the right to the city might mean, both in theory and in practice, and drawing to a varying extent on Lefebvre's evocative, but ultimately inconclusive writings. This book contributes to these debates by showing how social movements of the urban poor in São Paulo, Brazil, have used the idea of the right to the city to promote their claims for greater social and spatial justice. In the process, it also engages with concepts of political participation, civil disobedience and citizenship. It is thus a book for readers with an interest not just in Brazil or the right to the city specifically, but also for those interested in the interaction between rights and social mobilization, the concept of urban citizenship and innovative grassroots responses to unequal cities.

There are a number of reasons for the recent increase in attention to the idea of the right to the city. Urbanization, in general, is beginning to rise up the policy agenda for international agencies after years of neglect (Beall and Fox 2009). In 2008, for the first time in history, the population of the world living in urban areas surpassed its rural population.

Current United Nations (UN) projections see almost all of the world's demographic growth over the next 30 years concentrated in urban areas (UN-Habitat 2010). Urbanization generates a range of social and economic opportunities and freedoms. But it comes with a host of complex problems—how to house, transport, educate and care for huge poor populations living in informal settlements on the outskirts of cities. Cities are also generators of great wealth, and the resultant inequalities are highly visible, particularly between the built environment and living conditions of richer and poorer neighbourhoods. With inequality comes violence—including crime, social and political unrest, and, in some cases, increases in potentially militant religiosity. The need to work towards the goal of inclusive cities is increasingly recognized across the political spectrum.

The right to the city can be used as a way to analyse and respond to some of these problems, and has the merit of appealing to a number of core issues in development policy and practice. First, it tallies with international aid donor concern for decentralization, since the focus of the right to the city requires a shift in scalar thinking from the national to the city level, and can involve a devolution of responsibility to metropolitan or municipal government. Second, through its assertion of the right of all city dwellers to benefit from everything that urban life and society has to offer, it escapes the thorny issue of entitlement in situations where there are large migrant or refugee populations. Third, it appeals to the rights-based approach to development that has been in vogue over recent years.

Responses of governments (at both national and city level) and of supra-national bodies to the concept of the right to the city have varied. Some take a position based on human rights in cities, and the promotion of the right to urban services. Others have made more concerted attempts to alter the way in which land is used, built upon and occupied in urban areas. Brazil is a particularly pertinent case for the study of the right to the city, as it is the only country, to date, to have incorporated the right into national-level legislation—the acclaimed City Statute of 2001. Other governments, as UN-Habitat (2010) acknowledges, have been less persuaded by the concept of the right to the city, leading the UN body to stress that the right is not a 'new legalistic instrument', but 'an expression of the deep yearnings of urban dwellers to see their multiple human rights become more effective in urban areas' (ibid: 123). The right to the city was an issue of considerable contention amongst UN Member States during the intergovernmental negotiations prior to the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (known as Habitat III)

held in Quito in October 2016. Not only Brazil, but many other Latin American countries, insisted on a reference to the concept in the 'New Urban Agenda'—the outcome document for the Conference. Writing for UNESCO, Brown and Kristiansen (2009: 4) state that the right to the city is not a 'positive right in a legal sense', suggesting that governments have no need to take concrete steps to ensure that this specific right is upheld. However, in the Brazilian case, the enshrining of the right to the city in national law has generated new understandings of citizen entitlements and state duties in the urban arena. The subjects of this book—the housing movements of São Paulo—are fully aware of the power of the right to the city as a concept, and have set out to show the state, at municipal, subnational and federal level, exactly what it should be doing to ensure that this right is upheld.

***

São Paulo is highly appropriate for a study of the right to the city. The biggest city in one of the world's most unequal countries, São Paulo is today a bewildering large and sprawling place (Fig. 1.1). It is architecturally diverse, if not muddled and seemingly unplanned. Its growth during the twentieth century has been described by architects, planners and social scientists as anarchic and chaotic. It has been dubbed the 'wild city' (Rolnik 1995), and much of the literature on the Brazilian urban experience posits the city as the 'new configuration of disorder' (Rizek 2003). São Paulo, along with other Brazilian metropolises, is also characterized as a divided city. It has enormous and extremely visible disparities between residential areas of the rich and the poor. Much of the impression of the chaos of the city must derive from the huge expanse of rambling low-rise, low-income, self-built peripheries. These are in marked contrast to the planned garden-city neighbourhoods, glitzy high-rises and gated condominiums of the wealthier areas, giving rise to Milton Santos's evaluation, 'The housing situation is a visual reflection of what is happening in the rest of São Paulo society' (Santos 1996: 231). Although low-income housing is concentrated on the periphery, there are also pockets of extreme poverty and deprivation in the centre of the city. The central districts are where the majority of the city's slum tenements are located. Known as *cortiços*, these are often large, formerly single-family residences given over to multiple occupancy. They are far less visible than São Paulo's *favelas* or shanty towns and self-built

Fig. 1.1 São Paulo centre (Source: Lucy Earle)

peripheries,[6] but conditions are considered as bad, if not worse: families live in one room and share the use of bathrooms and laundry facilities.

The inadequacy of so much of the city's housing stock is reflected in the figures for the housing deficit. In 2010 (the last year for which census data is available), the country as a whole had a deficit of 6.49 million units, and São Paulo was the state with the highest deficit, standing at 1.495 million (Ministério das Cidades 2013: 30). Somewhat perversely, at the same time, there were 6.1 million empty residential units nationally, and 1,100,277 in the state of São Paulo (ibid: 73). This figure does not cover the numerous abandoned hotels, office buildings and factories in the city's core. This contradiction is not lost on the social movements actively campaigning for low-income housing.

[6] A *favela* is generally defined as an illegally occupied area without paved roads and characterized by poor-quality housing construction. In practice, *favelas* are often visually indistinguishable from other peripheral areas where families have built their own homes on land they have purchased, which are equally lacking in urban services and adherence to building codes.

Of all the social movements active in São Paulo, those organized around the provision of housing to low-income families are arguably the most active, visible and belligerent. In recent years, there has been a huge increase in the number of occupations (sometimes referred to as invasions) of land and buildings, notably in the city centre, and the movements that organize them are the subject of intense media scrutiny. Often highly visible, banners and movement flags fly from the windows of occupied buildings that are often many storeys high. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that, in late 2014, there were between 40 and 60 occupied buildings in the centre of the city, although not all of these will have been organized by organized social movements.[7] The municipality's own mapping of established occupations in the centre discovered 42 in 2013,[8] and the general perception in the media is that there has been a steady rise since then (Boulos 2014).

The housing movements' claims are controversial in a way that those directed towards health and education are not. Housing is a constitutional right in Brazil, but was not included as such in the original 1988 Constitution. It was only finally guaranteed as a right in 2000 through a constitutional amendment, after many years of lobbying by academics and activists in the Forum Nacional para Reforma Urbana—National Forum for Urban Reform, or FNRU. Social housing is financially burdensome for the state in any country, and is particularly so in Brazil, where the concept of subsidized rental housing is almost non-existent. Those selected to receive social housing, often in a special lottery, will be provided with subsidized loans so that they eventually purchase the property. As a result, provision of social housing involves a significant cash transfer to the recipient, in the form of subsidies and/or cheap credit. The capital invested in social housing can easily be released through semi-legal sale of the property. The recent federal housing programme, called *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (MCMV, My House My Life), is also based on the concept of home ownership, and for lower-income groups, involves a huge subsidy, which can reach up to 99.9% of the value of the home (Tatagiba et al. 2014: 234). In this case, monthly repayments are basically symbolic (ibid: 239).

[7] Interview with Arturo, 05.12.14, and conversation with Anderson, 17.11.14. Some recent occupations have been organized by individuals with the aim of raising rent payments from occupiers, rather than with a broader project of urban reform or changes to housing policy.

[8] http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/habitacao/noticias/?p=151128. Accessed 10.03.14.

Conceiving housing as a right in Brazil is also problematic because of the shortage of housing stock. It is not just the poor who have difficulty becoming homeowners; this is also a problem for the middle classes, as has been recognized by the MCMV programme, which provides housing for those on the lowest incomes, but also for households with a monthly income equivalent of up to ten minimum wages. These factors, combined with entrenched stigma attached to the poor and their perceived inability to take care of their living environments or to cooperate with neighbours in a block of flats, further heighten tensions around the provision of housing to low-income groups (Souto and Kayano 1996).

The provision of social housing also involves interaction with market forces to an extent not shared by efforts to extend universal healthcare or education, for example. Construction of housing units both impacts upon and is impacted by the property and land markets. This is of critical importance in São Paulo, which has some of the highest land values in Brazil. Traditionally, in São Paulo and other large cities, the problem of the elevated cost of urban land was avoided by building on marginal land on the peripheries or in the 'rural zone' (see Chap. 3). This model has continued with MCMV, which has a cap on the price of land that can be purchased through the programme for house building. This means that, even with additional funding from the state and municipal governments, the bulk of new housing has been built in peripheral neighbourhoods, where land prices are lower. Many of the housing movements in São Paulo criticize this model for creating 'social apartheid' and negatively impacting upon the life chances of those with little choice but to live in the peripheries. They also query the economic rationale of this policy, since it requires taking municipal services to ever more distant areas. A number of important housing movements in the city have made provision of social housing in well-equipped, more central areas their principal claim. This, however, brings their demands into conflict with the interests of powerful actors in São Paulo linked to real estate and property development. When it comes to housing in São Paulo, the municipal and state governments must therefore negotiate this complex terrain of interests, which is further complicated by negative stereotypes of the urban poor and a tradition of exclusionary housing policy.

Housing in São Paulo—where it is built, by whom and for whom—is a contentious issue, and one that has been deeply politicized by the activities of housing movements. One of the oldest of these, the União de Movimentos de Moradia (UMM) or Federation of Housing Movements,

was founded as an umbrella body in 1987 to bring together the agendas and protests of the growing number of community-based housing associations that were starting to organize regionally within the city during the 1980s. Its principal aim is to correct gross inequalities and negligence of the state by lobbying for the building of residential units and for changes to housing policy so that it privileges the poor. The UMM is present in a number of municipalities in the greater metropolitan region and in São Paulo state. In total, it brings together around 50 separate movements, themselves made up of many smaller *grupos de origem*: neighbourhood groups and associations. Since the early 1990s, the UMM model has spread to other states in Brazil which are now affiliated to a national organization, the UNMP (União Nacional por Moradia Popular—National Union for Popular Housing), which is run out of the same headquarters in São Paulo as the UMM and by the same social movement leaders. In the early 2000s, divisions within the UMM generated a second umbrella movement—the Frente de Lutas por Moradia (Housing Struggles Front or FLM). In São Paulo city, the UMM and the FLM regularly interact with the municipal and state-level governments, through negotiations with civil servants, appointed special advisors in the housing departments and elected politicians. They use both formal channels for policy deliberation and engage in legal and extra-legal forms of protest, drawn from the social movement repertoire, to force the state to negotiate. In recent years, and particularly after the 2013 protests, another movement has risen to prominence and gained both fame and notoriety across a broad spectrum of São Paulo society for a series of daring occupations, including one close to the new Itaquera football stadium built for the World Cup. This movement, the Movimento de Trabalhadores Sem Teto ('Roofless'/Homeless Workers' Movement or MTST), chooses not to engage with the state in such an open way, and has less of a connection to formal politics. But the aims of the MTST are broadly aligned with those of its predecessors. Indeed, the leadership recognizes that on its founding in 1997, the MTST adopted the UMM's tactics of large-scale land occupations (Boulos 2012). Most critically, all of these movements use land and building occupations to make their case for the right to housing, and support these acts with legal discourse linked to the Constitution and the right to the city.

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A Note on Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

My original intention for this research project was to focus on one umbrella movement, the UMM, and use a case study approach to explore issues of social movement theory. In particular, I was interested in the impact of social movement activities—the great 'incognitus' (Foweraker and Landman 1997) of social movement research. I hoped to gain some insight into whether the movement was more successful in achieving its goals when it played by the rules in housing councils and other spaces of participatory democracy, or when it fronted up to the state by occupying abandoned buildings.

Much examination of social movements in Latin American after the democratic transitions of the 1980s and 1990s has been influenced by 'new' social movement theory. Privileging the meaning of collective action for its participants, proponents of this body of theory tend to focus on the way in which movements can provide the space for the consolidation of new or alternative identities against dominant perspectives or attempts at social categorization, and the pursuit of goals outside the traditional political arena. Many of those writing with the 'new' perspective in Latin America have downplayed the importance of the state as a focus of movement demands or placed a fundamental ambiguity over its role, concentrating instead on parallel public spaces for political decision-making (cf. Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Alvarez et al. 1998). This body of work sets itself up in contrast to that concerned with 'old' social movements—those focused on labour and goods of collective consumption. These movements have most often been studied through the lens of resource mobilization and political process approaches that seek to understand how and why movements appear and are sustained.

In the specific case of Brazil, much scholarly work on collective action has been devoted to how social movements can contribute to the consolidation of democracy through new and progressive forms of public policy deliberation and participation. Social movements are seen to be redefining what democracy can and ought to be, and the democratic transition is presented as a cultural shift. For Dagnino (1998) and Paoli and Telles (1998), partly through the efforts of social movements, society comes to give greater weight to certain values, in particular citizenship and equality. Social movements and participatory forums are credited with creating new types of political sociability and even a 'reinvention of the political

contract' that stresses how the former have established 'new subjects of rights' (Paoli and Telles 1998: 66). The principal argument is that social movements have extended the political sphere by unsettling the dominant political culture, creating in the process 'an extended and redefined notion of rights and citizenship' (ibid.), and are democratizing society as a whole (Dagnino 1998).

The dynamic presence of social movements during Brazil's democratic transition has clearly had important impacts on the way that politics is done in the country. But these discussions of citizenship, influenced by new social movement theory, appear to divorce the concept from its theoretical roots in the relationship between state and society. And what of the content of social movement demands? No social movement of poor people will last for long if it fails to deliver concrete benefits through which it can show potential new recruits that it is worth their time and effort to join up. Furthermore, while engagement in collective action can clearly be empowering, the mere act of joining a social movement does not in itself bestow citizenship, especially if an individual joins up because her fundamental rights are being denied. While citizenship should be understood as linked to identity and cultural values, it must also be anchored in a series of concrete rights and duties. This has been demonstrated by Castells (1983), and it is his definition of urban social movements that resonates most strongly with the nature and project of the UMM and other housing movements in São Paulo. Castells grounds social movements' search for cultural shifts and new identities in the concrete issues of territory and in goods of collective consumption, namely housing and urban services. He sees urban social movements across the world challenging 'prevailing cultural values and political institutions, by refusing some spatial forms, by asking for public services and by exploring new social meanings for cities' (Castells 1983: xv). For Castells, an urban social movement, to be defined as such, must combine political as well as urban and cultural issues:

> By urban social movement we understand a conscious collective practice originating in urban issues, able to produce qualitative changes in the urban system, local culture, and political institutions in contradiction to the dominant social interests institutionalized as such at the societal level. (Ibid: 278)

Focused on three axes of change at the political, urban and cultural levels, social movements must articulate 'city, community and power'.

Setting out to examine how the UMM and the FLM negotiated the terrain of political institutions to create a more socially and spatially just city, I soon realized that the movements' use of formal and informal/extra-legal channels to engage with the state were intimately entwined, and that I would not be able to separate out movement achievements along these lines. Indeed, it was the legal ambiguity of the movements' behaviour, their combination of law-making with law-breaking that made them so interesting. Neither 'new' nor 'old' social movement theory appeared to speak to an analysis of how the movements alternately courted and antagonized representatives of the state. As my research project progressed, I realized that the movements' most important contribution, and what deserved to be studied and presented to a wider audience, was the way in which they have engaged with a discourse of rights, citizenship and the law. The newer generation of movements, including the MTST, have been inspired by this discourse. My subsequent discovery of literature from the law and society canon, particularly that of Scheingold's *Politics of Rights*, provided the analytical lens I was seeking to examine the UMM's and the FLM's relationship with the state, and to engage with current dynamic debates on urban citizenship.

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I originally became interested in the São Paulo housing movements while working in the Rio office of ActionAid, a British non-governmental organization (NGO), in 2000–2001. The movements' activities, especially their occupations of empty buildings and apparent ability to induce policy change, were well documented in the São Paulo daily newspaper, the *Folha de São Paulo*, that was delivered to the NGO office. When the opportunity arose to undertake doctoral study, I decided to focus on São Paulo's housing movements, and spent a year in the city, following the activities of and working with a range of different movements, from 2006 to 2007.

At the time of this first period of field research, the two dominant umbrella groups active in the city of São Paulo were the UMM and the FLM. I maintained contact with the FLM throughout the fieldwork year, interviewed its key leaders and closely followed an occupation undertaken by one of its affiliates. But the bulk of my research was with the UMM. The fortunes of these movements ebb and flow. In the mid-2000s the FLM had a limited presence in São Paulo, albeit with one very high-