



# Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City

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The worldwide financial crisis has sent shock-waves of accelerated economic restructuring, regulatory reorganization and sociopolitical conflict through cities around the world. It has also given new impetus to the struggles of urban social movements emphasizing the injustice, destructiveness and unsustainability of capitalist forms of urbanization. This book contributes analyses intended to be useful for efforts to roll back contemporary profit-based forms of urbanization, and to promote alternative, radically democratic and sustainable forms of urbanism.

The contributors provide cutting-edge analyses of contemporary urban restructuring, including the issues of neoliberalization, gentrification, colonization, "creative" cities, architecture and political power, sub-prime mortgage foreclosures and the ongoing struggles of "right to the city" movements. At the same time, the book explores the diverse interpretive frameworks – critical and otherwise – that are currently being used in academic discourse, in political struggles, and in everyday life to decipher contemporary urban transformations and contestations. The slogan, "cities for people, not for profit," sets into stark relief what the contributors view as a central political question involved in efforts, at once theoretical and practical, to address the global urban crises of our time.

Drawing upon European and North American scholarship in sociology, politics, geography, urban planning and urban design, the book provides useful insights and perspectives for citizens, activists and intellectuals interested in exploring alternatives to contemporary forms of capitalist urbanization.

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Review

**"From some of the most important urban scholars of our time comes a book that confronts the central political question of our time: can cities be for people? Written against the backdrop of both the global financial crisis and intensifying social movements, this collection of essays is a wonderful example of why critical theory matters for social change."** - *Ananya Roy, Professor of City & Regional Planning and Co-Director, Global Metropolitan Studies, University of California, Berkeley, USA*

**'The contributors provide analyses of contemporary urban restructuring, including the issues of neoliberalization, gentrification, colonization, "creative" cities, architecture and political power, subprime mortgage foreclosures and the ongoing struggles of "right to the city" movements. The book also explores the diverse interpretive frameworks – critical and otherwise – that are currently being used in academic discourse, in political struggles, and in everyday life to decipher contemporary urban transformations and contestations.'** - *Lonaard Magazine, Issue 12, Vol. 2, November 2012*

**"*Cities for people, not for profits* came out at a time when such an edition was needed for critical urban theory. The chapters provide a holistic approach discussing both, theory and practise, looking at it on a global scale, putting emphasis on the housing market where injustice is most evident and providing an outlook on what is needed for overcoming the recent (urban) crises. The book is highly recommended to those seeking to get started with critical urban theory, looking for an adequate update on theories formulated in the 1970s and wanting to know how desirable social urbanization could be reached. *Cities for people, not for profit* is a book coming out just at the right time."**? *Johannes Riegler, Austrian Institute of Technology*

About the Author

**Neil Brenner** is Professor of Urban Theory at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. He formerly served as Professor of Sociology and Metropolitan Studies at New York University. He is the author of *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (Oxford University Press, 2004); co-editor of *Spaces of Neoliberalism* (with Nik Theodore; Blackwell, 2002); and co-editor of *The Global Cities Reader* (with Roger Keil; Routledge, 2006). His research interests include critical urban theory, sociospatial theory, state theory and comparative geopolitical economy.

**Peter Marcuse**, a planner and lawyer, is Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning at Columbia University. He is the co-editor of *Globalizing Cities* (Blackwell, 2000) as well as of *States and Cities: The Partitioning of Urban Space* (Oxford University Press, 2002) and *Searching for the Just City* (Routledge, 2009). His fields of research include city planning, housing, homelessness, the use of public space, the right to the city, social justice in the city, globalization, urban history, the relation between cultural activities and urban development, and, most recently, solutions to the mortgage foreclosure crisis. He is beginning work on a book on critical planning, and a companion volume including analytic cases culled from past writings.

**Margit Mayer** teaches comparative and North American politics at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her

research focuses on comparative politics, urban and social politics, and social movements. She has published on various aspects of contemporary urban politics, urban theory, and (welfare) state restructuring, much of it in comparative perspective. She is co-editor of *Politics in European Cities* (with Hubert Heinelt; Birkhäuser, 1993), *Urban Movements in a Globalising World* (with Pierre Hamel and Henri Lustiger-Thaler; Routledge, 2000) and *Neoliberal Urbanism and its Contestations – Crossing Theoretical Boundaries* (with Jenny Küinkel; Palgrave, 2011).

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