

# Journal of Urban History

<http://juh.sagepub.com>

---

## **Introduction: New Perspectives on Public Housing Histories in the Americas**

Sean Purdy and Nancy H. Kwak  
*Journal of Urban History* 2007; 33; 357  
DOI: 10.1177/0096144206297128

The online version of this article can be found at:  
<http://juh.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/33/3/357>

---

Published by:

 SAGE Publications

<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



[The Urban History Association](#)

**Additional services and information for *Journal of Urban History* can be found at:**

**Email Alerts:** <http://juh.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://juh.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

**Permissions:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

# INTRODUCTION

## New Perspectives on Public Housing Histories in the Americas

SEAN PURDY

*University of São Paulo*

NANCY H. KWAK

*Polytechnic University*

This article introduces a special issue on the history of public housing in the Americas, with contributions on the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and Argentina. It briefly surveys the state of public housing in the Americas and the contrasts and parallels between countries as well as between developed and developing regions; it stresses the political and social importance of state housing provision during the urban crises of the twentieth century; and it broadly charts the historiographical trends. In introducing the various articles that deal with the history of public housing and public housing tenants in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Toronto, Buenos Aires, Puerto Rico, and Barbados, the article highlights the shift away from narrow policy histories to interpretations set in broader political, economic, social, and transnational contexts that use diverse primary sources such as oral testimony. It also highlights the crucial role played by historical actors such as public housing tenants themselves and the media.

**Keywords:** *public housing; historiography; United States; Canada; Caribbean; Latin America*

Housing progress lags far behind industrial progress in every part of the world. The technical genius that broke the secrets of speed, sound, space, and light still cannot build a house cheap enough for the rank and file . . . A Negro laborer's family in New York and a squatter in Caracas may both have television sets, but neither can afford a decent house.

*Charles Abrams, 1964*

Charles Abrams, a pioneering American urban reformer and scholar from the 1930s to the 1960s, highlighted two essential points in this passage from his magnum opus, *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World*.<sup>1</sup> Despite impressive economic growth, technological innovation and rising affluence in the post-war period, urban workers still suffered seemingly intractable difficulties finding an affordable and decent place to live. He also deftly highlighted how such housing problems were truly international in scope, affecting

JOURNAL OF URBAN HISTORY, Vol. 33 No. 3, March 2007 357-374

DOI: 10.1177/0096144206297128

© 2007 Sage Publications

the poor in industrial cities around the globe. While government responses to the shelter crisis have varied widely over time and across space, one of the key state interventions in many countries of the Americas since the 1930s has been outright state provision of housing or what is commonly known as public housing.

A wide variety of structural and demographic changes provoked state provision in the Americas. Some were locally driven and others globally shared; they included rising concerns about public health, urban congestion, regulation of the working classes, the struggles of social movements, low domestic savings rates, declining construction industries, and population control. Demographic patterns certainly explain some of the increasing attention paid to housing by the state. Unlike sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, Latin America had a rate of urban settlement roughly equal to that of the United States and Canada: roughly three-quarters of all Americans in the Caribbean and in North, Central, and South America lived in cities in 2000.<sup>2</sup> Such regional continuity breaks down, however, when slum rates are compared for the same period. The proliferation of such dwellings—what the United Nations has called “the only large-scale solution to providing housing for low-income people”—has had far greater numerical impact in the South than the North; Latin American slums constituted 31.9 percent of all housing, as opposed to roughly 6 percent for developed nations in 2001. In an extreme case such as Mexico City, approximately two-thirds of the population lived in “owner-occupied or rented housing in irregular settlements at various stages of consolidation, in traditional *vecindades*, in pauperized public housing projects or in other types of minority dwellings on rooftops or in shacks on forgotten bits of land.”<sup>3</sup> These differences have resulted in a range of attitudes toward government involvement in housing production, maintenance, and regulation, although two overarching trends do appear in many countries of the Americas: until the 1970s, government planners and politicians preferred slum clearance and large, low-cost housing projects; in the ensuing phase, residents and planners moved toward site-specific upgrading, self-help, and an ever increasing emphasis on homeownership.

National rates of public housing throughout the Americas hovered between 1 and 6 percent of all housing stock in the 1980s, while homeownership rates typically stood between 50 and 60 percent of all urban housing units.<sup>4</sup> In some key cities, however, state-provided housing accounted for a sizable proportion of dwelling units. In 1993, according to the United Nations *Report on Human Settlements*, public housing constituted more than 15 percent of all housing stock in the large Latin American capital cities of Bogotá, Caracas, Mexico City, Santiago, and Brasilia.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the importance of public housing should not be counted only by its numerical size. Government housing projects are often highly visible physical and social landmarks in many North, Latin American, and Caribbean cities. Since the 1960s, public housing has also been a disproportionately important touchstone for wider debates about urban renewal and planning, crime, “race,” the

“underclass,” and urban social movements. Public housing has generated a substantial amount of interest in government circles, the media, community groups, and popular cultural discourse.

There were obviously clear differences in the public housing histories of developed nations such as Canada and the United States and the underdeveloped countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Urbanization in developing countries did not follow the historical route of the industrialized nations of North America. In Canada and the United States, industrialization and urbanization occurred more or less simultaneously, creating a substantial working class in the growing cities by the early twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> In the developing countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, on the other hand, dependent industrialization created an incomplete “proletarianization” and resulted, by the 1940s and 1950s, in a rapidly growing urban population with a relatively small industrial sector, a disproportionately large commercial-service sector, and a large informal urban economy.<sup>7</sup> There have also been highly different experiences relating to “race,” with Brazil, the United States, and many Caribbean nations’ being distinguished by a distinct legacy of slavery, although historians of the black diaspora are increasingly exploring the shared histories of black peoples across national boundaries. Finally, political ideologies and structures as well as cultural traditions have developed in unique and divergent ways. These distinctions between developed and developing nations in the Americas have certainly shaped the discourses of urban poverty, the particular patterns of social exclusion, and the responses of the state to the crisis of affordable housing.

Nevertheless, in the twentieth century, the large and increasingly industrial cities of both North and South America have shared some key characteristics. As Mörner, de Viñuela, and French state, “forming a geographical and cultural unit that is comparable with Anglo-America, Latin America is part of the Western world while also sharing a number of characteristics with the Third World. All this forms a point of departure for *external* comparison.”<sup>8</sup> While patterns of economic development and urbanization proceeded at different times and in different ways, by the post–World War II period, many cities in the Americas were affected by similar housing problems emanating from the frequent disconnect between economic growth and urbanization—all in an increasingly global economic environment. In the postwar period, national and local states throughout the Americas initiated interventionist economic and social policies to restructure the urban fabric to foster capital accumulation and respond to the intense urban crisis. In many countries, immigration and/or internal migration played an important role in the formation of urban populations. In the Caribbean case, the fact that many nations remained colonies of European nations or the United States until the post–World War II period obviously centrally shaped patterns of urban settlement and public policy. Yet, the strategies of dependent development characteristic of the immediate pre-independence and postindependence period

in the 1960s as well as the effects of structural adjustment on public spending and social development in the Caribbean in the 1980s and 1990s were not dissimilar to the experiences of most Latin American countries. In all countries of the Americas, furthermore, similar notions of social and economic “modernization” shaped the social and cultural attitudes of ruling- and middle-class elites and the technicians who were central in designing, implementing, and managing urban reforms. It comes as little surprise, then, that comparative and transnational historians have begun to tease out the common histories of the Americas, pointing to key patterns of convergence between North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean without erasing the uniqueness and diversity of experiences.<sup>9</sup>

### THE HOUSING QUESTION AND PUBLIC HOUSING

The “Housing Question” refers broadly to the significance of housing in capitalist society and was coined by Friedrich Engels, the cofounder of Marxism, in an 1872 pamphlet titled *The Housing Question*.<sup>10</sup> Engels’ chief contribution was in firmly situating housing within the broader context of capitalist social relations and not as a completely separate realm of social and economic life subject to its own internal laws. The miserable state of dwelling conditions in the industrializing cities of Europe and North America—unaffordable rents, substandard quality, overcrowding, and so on—was related to wider, structured inequalities in society. Modern scholars of housing have built on the insights of Engels but have considerably widened the scope of analysis to include various aspects of housing production and consumption. As a commodity, housing is seen as both a source of profit and of employment.<sup>11</sup> On the consumption side, housing constitutes one of the indispensable necessities of all families. Rent or mortgages are the largest expenses in most people’s budgets and play a considerable part in determining life chances. Housing researchers have also recently begun to explore the extraordinary cultural and ideological significance of houses. Homes are cultural and symbolic expressions and are invested with substantial emotional resonance. People’s notions of housing, their own and others’, centrally shape their larger ideas about neighborhoods, towns, and cities. Dwellings, as Richard Harris writes, have a deep personal and ideological significance for people: “For better or worse, we spend most of our lives at home and we care a lot about how we are housed.”<sup>12</sup>

As a result of its impact in the broader realms of production and consumption, housing has also become a key area of state intervention in the twentieth century in terms of housing economics and finance, the reproduction of labor power, and the political struggles that have emanated from both capital and labor around housing and related issues.<sup>13</sup> Public housing itself often eludes simple definition, as the nature of state subsidy, intervention,

and management can often be measured by widely different variables in degree and kind. As geographer Larry S. Bourne points out, “our definitions of housing problems and our approaches to housing policies are firmly embedded in particular national and cultural contexts.” In the Americas, that context has created a long-standing debate about the nature of public obligation—the duty to house citizens decently—and the public right to shelter. In his study on public housing in the United States, historian Lawrence Vale explains, “The term *public* has retained a central ambiguity, referring at once to the sponsor of an act or place (a public authority) and to the intended beneficiaries (the public). In a democracy, this ambiguity is resolved by a presumed common interest between sponsor and beneficiary in promoting the ‘public good.’”<sup>14</sup> Public housing policy can consequently be defined not so much by a static set of terms but by the process of negotiation between sponsor and beneficiary, between obligation and right.

Housing subsidy types have been neatly divided by housing activist Shlomo Angel into three distinct categories: supply-side subsidies (direct government construction, nonprofit construction, and rehabilitation, individual, or cooperative construction); demand-side subsidies (housing allowances, rent supplements, subsidies for first home purchases, mortgage interest assistance of various forms, and discounted sale of public housing); and price controls (price ceilings, rent control, mandatory savings plans, and capped mortgage-interest rates). Interestingly, some government subsidies—most importantly, mortgage assistance—typically have not been labeled public assistance, thus creating what historian Gail Radford calls a “two-tiered system” of legitimized private homeownership and an inferior public rental sector. In response, some have argued for more enabling policies in which “governments oversee markets and correct market failure,” rather than being “directly responsible for meeting housing needs.”<sup>15</sup> Recent attempts at self-help housing and low-income homeownership further emphasize the fact that differentiation of public from private housing has ultimately been about legitimacy rather than relative government expenditure.

Much current historical work on public housing has been sparked by its apparent failure in the contemporary world. Widely condemned by academics, the media, and politicians as too large and badly designed, as a haven of single mothers, welfare families, and marginalized populations, as a magnet for crime and drug problems, and as the site of potentially explosive racial problems, public housing has come full circle in the public mind from the “ordered communities” envisioned by housing reformers such as Abrams and his contemporaries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Whether an apparent or real failure, historians of the Americas have increasingly begun to investigate the underlying reasons for the current state of public housing and its importance as an element of urban reform, macro-economic planning, and social policy development in the post–World War II era.

## PUBLIC HOUSING HISTORIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

The study of public housing in the United States has benefited greatly from the combined efforts of policy makers, urban-studies scholars, architects, community organizers, planning experts, sociologists, psychologists, and most recently, historians. Although a larger synthesis of American housing history has not yet appeared, the current research and writing in existence provides a wealth of reading material for U.S. historians. Some exceptional examples include *Building the Dream*, in which architectural historian Gwendolyn Wright constructs a social history of housing in the United States by scrutinizing controversial dwelling types, "the housing prototypes [Americans] discussed with special intensity through the course of American history." Richard Plunz's work also provides an architectural history of housing but focuses exclusively on New York City, while Mardges Bacon's discussion of Le Corbusier's three types of housing (*à redents* model, slab block, and cruciform) raises thought-provoking questions about the well-known architect's effects on public housing design in New York. (Eric Mumford brilliantly addresses these questions in an article on the same topic.)<sup>16</sup> In addition to these architectural approaches to housing history, a plethora of writers have responded to Kenneth Jackson's seminal study on suburbanization in the United States; these writers have integrated studies of urban flight and mass production of consumer homes with the development of increasingly isolated public housing units. Public housing also appears on the sidelines of a number of histories addressing the formation of the ghetto, the confluence of "race" ideology and public policy, late-twentieth-century changes in specific cities, the New Deal and the welfare state, urban politics, and biographies of prominent "housers" and public housing advocates.<sup>17</sup>

Public housing as an exclusive field of study, however, remains largely untapped. Notable exceptions include sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh's recent examination of the life experiences of residents in Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes post-1945 and Rhonda Williams' newly published work on the personal histories of African-American women in Baltimore's public housing. Whereas both Venkatesh and Williams rely heavily on oral interviews and resident perspectives, Nicholas Bloom approaches the topic from a more institutional angle: his upcoming book will provide the first comprehensive examination of the New York City Housing Authority.<sup>18</sup>

Historians still have much to learn about the national housing story, but what is particularly lacking in the existing literature are studies that integrate the development of public housing ideals and plans in the United States with those around the world. Rising interest in the connections between U.S. and international urban development can be attributed in some measure to the new urban studies movement of the 1970s. Beginning at that time, urban scholars from around the world began discussing the relevancy of world-system

ideas to the study of cities; Manuel Castells and David Harvey further applied world-systems ideas to urban studies by linking “city forming processes to the larger historical movement of industrial capitalism,” while Anthony King iterated a similar theoretical bent, as evident in one of his complaints with nationally circumscribed studies: “‘Urbanization in developing countries’ was treated as a distinct and separate phenomenon from ‘British urbanization’ instead of ‘as part of the *same* process.’”<sup>19</sup> While political scientists and policy analysts—most notably Saskia Sassen, Susan Fainstein, and Peter Marcuse—have carried these studies forward into the globalization of cities in the 1980s and 1990s, historians such as Pierre-Yves Saunier have just begun to truly delve into the possibilities of international, transnational, and global approaches. One potentially valuable model for future studies is that of Daniel Rodgers, whose account of transatlantic intellectual exchanges during the Progressive period might prove useful when writing a history of post-1945 debates about housing subsidies and government provision.<sup>20</sup>

Given the broad range in disciplinary and temporal emphases in the existing literature, what general trajectory of American public housing history can be drawn? Scholars may heatedly debate with one another over the nuances of how, when, and why public housing “failed”—and whether or not it in fact *did* fail—but legal history does provide one frame for the evolution of public housing in the twentieth century. The first national housing laws were passed during the Great Depression in response to an intense need for jobs and as a potential jump-start to the national economy. Although some war housing had been created during World War I under the Emergency Fleet Corporation and the United States Housing Corporation and although some public funds were directed to housing construction through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (1932), the Public Works Administration (1933), the United States Emergency Housing Corporation (1933), and the New York City Housing Authority (one of the first local authorities in the nation, started in 1934), it was really the United States Housing Act of 1937 that formally established a national housing authority to distribute federal funds to local authorities. This law simultaneously institutionalized public housing at the federal level while decentralizing it by requiring local authorities to plan, construct, and manage all units.

Progressive dreams of a strong government ensuring decent shelter for all slowly died in the post-1945 period, giving way to the interests of private investors, and in particular, the real estate lobby. A variety of reasons can be offered for this trend: perhaps private investors were unusually hindered by the exceptional crisis of the Depression but recovered post-1945; a large public housing program might not have ever been intended to address the real problems of lowest income residents; and the national government might have set unreasonably low caps on spending, thus creating bad public housing that evoked little public support. Whatever the reason, the first postwar

housing act of 1949 promised a “decent home and suitable living environment” for every citizen but delivered the real rewards to those involved in the business of urban redevelopment. Notably, Title I of this act promised that the federal government would pay for two-thirds of the cost of any redevelopment in “blighted” areas. The “federal bulldozer” used the power of eminent domain and slum clearance to wipe out entire neighborhoods, and large high-rise towers often rose in their place.

The trajectory of public housing in Canada closely followed developments in the United States. A series of formal legislative acts was passed in the 1930s and 1940s, providing funding and regulations for state housing provision, but until the 1960s, only a handful of projects were actually built in large cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa. Canadian governments, particularly at the federal level, were slow to launch public housing, favoring a corporate-influenced policy agenda that spawned homeownership plans but little social housing—a development strikingly at odds with the formidable state housing schemes adopted in many European countries after the First World War and even in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>21</sup> The vast majority of Canadian government assistance in the housing field after World War II would be directed to homeowners, financial institutions, and developers, but there was a short political space in the late 1940s and especially in the 1960s in which state investment in low-income housing was considered a viable option. By 1988, there were almost five thousand public housing projects in Canada, with the largest percentage in Ontario, housing approximately 430,000 people.<sup>22</sup> Metro Toronto leads Canadian cities with 29,000 units of public housing spread out over 125 separate projects.<sup>23</sup> As in the United States, the prior decision to build relatively few subsidized units, shifts in tenant-selection policy, and declining political support for subsidized housing has led to housing projects’ becoming refuges of the very poor, the unemployed, those on social assistance, and single mothers; since the 1980s in cities such as Toronto, it has also become the home of many new immigrants.<sup>24</sup> As such, public housing and its tenants have suffered the same brutalizing stigmatization in media, government, and popular discourse that has been conspicuously evident south of the border. In the neoliberal fiscal and political climate of the past two decades, most funding for public housing was severely reduced, further construction was stopped, and public-private partnerships in the form of redevelopment schemes are now at the top of the policy agenda.<sup>25</sup>

Rich studies by social scientists in recent decades have added much to our knowledge of the policy, functions, and maturity of state-provided housing in Canada. Studies of policy shifts,<sup>26</sup> housing need,<sup>27</sup> racism and sexism in housing,<sup>28</sup> and the socioeconomic marginalization of tenants<sup>29</sup> have given us valuable snapshots of the state of public housing from the postwar promise of “better living” to the stigmatized neighborhoods of the early twenty-first century. The few historical studies that exist have tended to focus on policy

formation, reform ideology, and to a growing extent, the social and reform movements that campaigned for public housing.<sup>30</sup> The most recent studies retain an interest in political economy, ideology, and specific national historiographical debates, but as in the larger North American and European literature, there has been increasing attention paid to the perspectives of poor people, women, and minorities, oftentimes through the use of oral testimony and tenant case files.<sup>31</sup>

Kevin Brushett's article in this issue on emergency housing in Toronto complicates Toronto's widespread image as a city with a history of progressive urban policies. Drawing on an exhaustive reading of documentary sources from the period, he shows how a large group of low-income families was relegated to substandard temporary housing for a decade and a half after World War II and subjected to tight-fisted public policies and the moral regulation of city politicians, social service agencies, and the media. He highlights the limits of the social policies and urban-planning initiatives of the era and delivers a much-needed corrective to the hackneyed positions of contemporary politicians (and many future policy makers) on the supposed "welfare bums" who inhabited state-provided housing. Most importantly, Brushett explores the strategies of residents to resist stigmatization and escape the squalid emergency-housing camps, integrating an essential dimension of public housing formation in the city that is too frequently neglected in policy studies.

In his article in this issue on the decline of public housing in Los Angeles, Don Parson similarly subjects local housing authorities to closer political scrutiny by situating the changing public housing policies of that city in the larger context of the Red Scare and McCarthyism. He argues that "the Red Scare was an assault on social-democratic reform and the Left-liberal popular front that ushered in public housing during the Great Depression." Parson sifts through a wide variety of local media including the *Los Angeles Mirror*, *Times*, *Examiner*, and *Herald and Express* to trace changes in popular sentiment toward public housing. Los Angelenos moved from the "ridicule and disdain" of red-baiting tactics in 1945 to a general dislike of public housing and its "undesirable socialistic qualities." Parson thoughtfully explores the multifaceted reasons for such a transformation while paying close attention to the role of the media and of the real estate lobby in particular.

Parson stops his narrative in the 1960s, hinting at the importance of a new popular political form in reinvigorating public housing programs, and it is here that John Baranski begins his exposition on tenant organizing in San Francisco's public housing, also in this issue. The national context for Baranski's chosen historical moment—1965 to 1975—could not have been grimmer. Some of the most infamous, colossal public housing projects could count either their birth or demolition date within this decade: Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes was the largest public housing development in the world in 1962, with more than 4,300 units, and St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe complex opened its doors in 1956, only to be leveled fewer than twenty years

later in 1972. By the 1960s and 1970s, enough people had mobilized against large-scale slum clearance, racial segregation, and high-rise construction that legislators began contemplating new paths. Baranski retells the history of this moment by drawing on the rarely heard voices of Housing Authority residents. In addition, Baranski's article, like Parson's, shifts attention away from East Coast and Rustbelt cities and to the less studied neighborhoods of San Francisco. Baranski provides a more comprehensive understanding of the variety of public housing development across the United States, and his analysis of the prominent role of women in tenant agitation is particularly insightful. His central argument is persuasive and heartfelt: tenants were not an apathetic underclass, but rather were citizens prepared "to turn democratic values into action."

Tenant agitation left a mixed legacy. While prohibiting racial discrimination for federally funded housing, Congress also passed the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which began the controversial Section 8 voucher system. Through this program, the government helped poor families pay for private housing by providing a "gap-subsidy." Subsequent national housing legislation such as Hope VI (1992), the Homeownership Zone Initiative (1996), and the Self-help Homeownership Opportunity Program (1996) all pushed harder for market solutions to low-income housing problems and a dismantling of direct government provision. This most recent variety of housing laws and policies still requires more research by historians.

### PUBLIC HOUSING HISTORIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The study of public housing in Latin America and the Caribbean has been complicated by the dominance, in the public imagination and in the scholarly literature, of the large and highly visible irregular settlements in the physical and social landscape of many cities. Various described as slums, shantytowns, squatter settlements, or irregular settlements, they have been ubiquitous features of the built environment, politics and society since the 1950s.<sup>32</sup> Generally characterized by the invasion of or illegal settlement of public or private land in urban areas and the self-building of dwellings, they are frequently sites of incredible poverty and often lack basic infrastructure and services such as water, electricity, and sewage. In recent years, they have become the subject of much discussion because of perceived or actual increases in crime and violence, a narrative popularized by the success of such films as Brazilian Fernando Meirelles' *City of God*.<sup>33</sup> In some megapolises such as Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and Lima, squatter settlements account for the single largest proportion of low-income housing types. Many scholars have convincingly argued, however, that despite superficial physical

appearances, the irregular settlement is a widely heterogeneous housing form that has developed uniquely in different national and urban contexts and is characterized by diverse social relations.<sup>34</sup> Between and within Latin American and Caribbean countries, it has provided a diversity of living arrangements and conditions for inhabitants and has occupied distinct economic and political spaces that have changed over time.

State intervention in the housing realm in the underdeveloped regions of the Americas, including the provision of public housing, has often been conceived and implemented in close relation to the development of irregular settlements. Yet, public housing significantly predated the post–World War II development of shantytowns on the urban periphery, and it is important to emphasize that other strategies for intervention in the housing sphere were considered, and to some extent, exercised by governments much at the same as North American cities were initiating similar tentative interventions. Rudimentary planning and regulatory legislation was passed by many Latin American countries in the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>35</sup> In Argentina, the municipality of Buenos Aires actually planned to build four whole neighborhoods with ample public housing for urban workers in 1885, although it only succeeded in actually building one.<sup>36</sup> A handful of government-financed housing schemes was constructed in Chile, Venezuela, Columbia, and Panama by the 1930s.<sup>37</sup> In the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, governments strongly assisted the construction of “popular neighborhoods” of owner-occupied units through low-cost loans to private developers, assistance to worker cooperatives, and direct state construction.<sup>38</sup> Colonial governments in many Caribbean islands also launched public housing programs immediately before and during the Second World War. Government intervention usually took the initial forms of rent control and indirect financial subsidy and proceeded to involve direct construction, maintenance, and management of public housing projects.

Notions of government intervention in the economy and society were still quite limited in the pre–World War II period: the classically liberal economic and social philosophies dominant in these societies did not yet favor direct state involvement, resulting in only a few small public housing projects. Moreover, the backers of these initial schemes were often heavily influenced by the objective of morally disciplining the urban working class and poor through strict regulatory planning that segregated the poor, “cleaned up” valuable center-city real estate, and facilitated the ostentatious beautification schemes of urban elites and politicians.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, many of the public-housing projects that were built by Latin American states in this era were high-quality and expensive structures that ended up being too costly for the low-income target groups. Many eventually became private middle-class housing complexes.<sup>40</sup> With some differences, the Latin American case was strikingly similar to the experience of incipient social policy and state intervention in housing in the developed countries of Canada and the United States before World War II.

Yet, the sheer size and rapidity with which shantytowns expanded in the immediate post–World War II years, the chaotic consequences of such growth for urban planning, and the widespread social and cultural stigmatization of such spaces as hotbeds of immorality and criminality soon resulted in more sustained state interventions. Such “outcast spaces” were always under the threat of forced removal, a strategy adopted at various times and places, especially by the military dictatorships of Brazil, Chile, and Argentina in the 1970s.<sup>41</sup> But many populist governments in Latin America and the Caribbean also opted to develop public housing programs to clean up urban areas and build cross-class political coalitions in an effort to secure voting bases in poor neighborhoods. Sustained by economic growth and the assistance of politically motivated international aid agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank (funded by the U.S. government’s Alliance for Progress), many underdeveloped American countries undertook substantial public housing construction programs in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>42</sup> Venezuelan dictator Perez Jimenez used a Workers’ Bank (Banco Obrero) in the 1950s to fund slum clearance and the construction of ninety-seven super-block high rises in Caracas with a total of sixteen thousand units.<sup>43</sup> Columbia, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Chile launched similar programs in this period either by offering credit assistance to developers, cooperatives, and trade unions to build houses and apartments for sale or rent; funding homeownership schemes; and/or directly constructing public housing projects on a rent-geared-to-income basis.<sup>44</sup> In Cuba, the state socialist regime mobilized “micro-brigades” of volunteer labor for extensive public housing construction.<sup>45</sup> In the context of economic crisis, crushing foreign debt loads, structural adjustment programs, and widespread corruption,<sup>46</sup> direct public housing construction by the state has considerably slowed down or stopped since the 1980s in most Latin American countries, but state-assisted programs to “urbanize” shantytowns by improving infrastructure and granting formal land titles to residents have been established, as have various schemes for state funding for self-help housing.

The vast majority of our knowledge of public housing in Latin America comes from social scientific studies oriented toward wider questions revolving around shantytowns, “marginality,” and urban politics. Valuable as they are, few of these studies take a historical perspective on public housing. Recently, however, a number of historians have begun to look at public housing projects as rich sites of oral, social, and political history.<sup>47</sup> As in the North American literature on state housing provision, these works tend to explore public housing and its residents in the context of broader debates in urban public policy, political economy, and social history—an interest shared by the three articles in this volume related to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Barbados, the subject of Richard Harris’ article, was significantly different than the Latin American nations. A British colony until 1966, it was shaped by an almost exclusive sugar-export economy and a tiny industrial sector. Nevertheless, its few urban centers were subject to the pressures of growing

urbanization and political unrest by the 1930s, eventually forcing the colonial governments to intervene by funding public housing. Harris traces the complex interactions between the colonial authorities in Britain and local politicians and demonstrates that contrary to accepted academic notions, colonial policies, even approaching the period of independence, were by no means “miserly.” At first, government authorities proceeded cautiously, but a peculiar context in which emerging colonial government elites found public housing to be a promising means to forge a political base led to increased government spending on housing. Reflecting the growing “transnationalist” orientation in historiography and social science, Harris aptly notes the influence of American and Puerto Rican housing authorities, including Charles Abrams, on housing policies on the colony.

Zaire Dinzey-Flores also explores public housing policy in the United States colony (and later Commonwealth) of Puerto Rico. The island was one of the first and most enthusiastic jurisdictions to embrace federal U.S. public housing legislation and embarked on a relatively ambitious building program. Dinzey-Flores shows how notions of state-assisted housing as “temporary”—the dominant position espoused by politicians and housing authorities—was out of sync with tenants’ eventual construction of “permanent communities” in public housing. Dinzey-Flores relies extensively on semistructured interviews with public housing tenants to demonstrate how tenants built networks of sociability and ties of community in public housing even when they had the means to move into private-market dwellings. Her work reflects a growing trend in public policy history to engage with how the “clients” of state policy themselves helped shaped welfare state formation.

Rosa Aboy’s investigation of public housing policies under Argentinean dictator Juan Perón and of the life stories of tenants who palpably benefited from his policies treads on similar ground. Engaging with larger debates on the history of Peronism in Argentinean historiography and social science, she demonstrates why the massive public housing program initiated by Perón was crucial in cementing his political base. Using oral histories, Aboy analyzes how the “right to a home” was more than just a popular Peronist slogan; in the life experiences of urban workers, it signified a real social transformation by demonstrably increasing the possibilities of social mobility. Aboy confirms that close attention to the experiences of ordinary people can enrich our understanding of larger social and political processes.

## CONCLUSION

Public housing in the Americas evolved in the twentieth century around a myriad of differing objectives, varying social, economic, and political contexts, and the often conflicting interests and actions of state actors, reformers, and the wider population. Historians in countries throughout the Americas are

beginning to look at the complex historical processes that shaped the development of state housing and how it has come to be a prominent issue in contemporary urban politics, society, and culture. Influenced by wider debates in the writing of history, historians of public housing are broadening their investigations to include the perspectives of a broader range of actors in the policy process. In addition to the perspectives of elite reformers and government officials, they are exploring the much-neglected lived experiences of tenants themselves, not just as proverbial “add-ons” to the story but how they, too, shaped public housing histories. Such historians are using public housing as a site to explore both the larger national political developments and the parallels and contrasts across national borders. Much remains to be investigated in all areas of public housing history, however, and we hope that the articles in this issue serve as a catalyst for future research into this significant area of urban history.

## NOTES

1. Charles Abrams, *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964). Abrams was well placed to comment on housing conditions. Originally a New York landlord who pushed to embrace state intervention, by the social and economic turmoil of the Depression years, he helped to establish the New York City Housing Authority in 1934, wrote prolifically in popular and academic venues, worked doggedly against racial discrimination in housing, and conducted close studies of urban housing conditions in the United States, Africa, and Latin America. See A. Scott Henderson, *Housing and the Democratic Ideal: The Life and Thought of Charles Abrams* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

2. From 1920 to 2000, Asia's percentage of the global population rose from 9 percent to 48 percent, with cities such as Seoul increasing from one million to eight million people in twenty-five years. While sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East exhibited somewhat different patterns in their respective urbanization rates, planners in these regions also negotiated the difficulties concomitant with rapid urbanization and modernization. Statistics derived from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects to 2150* (New York: United Nations Publications, 1998); United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *The State of the World's Cities: 2004/2005* (London: Earthscan, 2004), 62–68; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, *World Statistics Pocketbook* (New York: United Nations, 2004), 36, 201; and B. R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: The Americas 1750–1993*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan Reference Ltd., 1998).

3. Definition of slums from UN-Habitat, *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* (London: Earthscan Publications, 2003), xxix, 123–25. Slum population percentages from UN-Habitat, “Table 2: Population of Slum Areas at Mid-year, by Region and Country, 1990–2001,” May 26, 2005, <http://www.unchs.org/programmes/guo/documents/Table2.pdf>.

4. Douglas Page and Raymond J. Struyk, *Measuring the Housing Sector: Results from the International Housing Market Survey* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 1990).

5. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, *Cities in a Globalizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 2001* (London; Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2001), 218.

6. Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour 1880–1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 152, 155–56.

7. John Walton, “Urban Conflict and Social Movements in Poor Countries: Theory and Evidence of Collective Action,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22 (September 1998): 463–65.

8. Magnus Mörner, Julia Fawaz de Viñuela, and John French, “Comparative Approaches to Latin American History,” *Latin American Research Review* XVII, no. 3 (1982): 57. For more general comments

on comparative research on the Americas with a comprehensive bibliography of Latin American urban research, consult Licia Valladares and Magda Prates Coelho, "Urban Research in Latin America: Towards a Research Agenda," Discussion Paper Series No. 4, Management of Social Transformations—MOST—UNESCO (May 24, 2005), <http://www.unesco.org/most/valleng.htm>. Also see Peter H. Smith, "The Changing Agenda for Social Science Research on Latin America," in Peter H. Smith, ed., *Latin America in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches to Methods and Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 1–30; and the essays in Luis Roniger and Carlos H. Waisman, eds., *Globality and Multiple Perspectives: Comparative North American and Latin American Perspectives* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002).

9. See the many examples in the bibliography of Micol Seigel, "Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn," *Radical History Review* 91 (Winter 2005): 62–90. Siegel's article is a stimulating critique of the comparative method from a transnationalist perspective—a growing approach in current historiography, especially among scholars of the black diaspora. For a comparative article particularly germane to this special issue, see Ney dos Santos Oliveira, "Favelas and Ghettos: Race and Class in Rio de Janeiro and New York City," *Latin American Perspectives* 23 (Fall 1996): 71–89. A pioneering attempt by an anthropologist to compare Brazil, the Canadian province of Quebec, and the United States is Luís R. Cardoso de Oliveira, *Direito Legal e Insulto Moral: Dilemas da Cidadania no Brasil, Quebec e os Estados Unidos* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2002). Also note the essays in Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. Legrand, and Ricardo Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.–Latin American Relations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

10. Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question* (London: M. Lawrence, 1935). It is worthwhile noting that Engels' 1844 classic, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, was the first study to systematically examine the housing conditions of industrial workers.

11. For general statements on the economic and political significance of housing, see Richard Harris, "Housing," in Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion, eds., *Canadian Cities in Transition: The Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000); and David Clapham, Peter Kemp, and Susan Smith, *Housing and Social Policy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

12. Harris, "Housing," 380.

13. Peter Marcuse, "Interpreting Public Housing History," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 12 (August 1995): 253.

14. Introduction by Larry S. Bourne in Willem van Vliet, ed., *International Handbook of Housing Policies and Practices* (New York: Greenwood, 1990), xxiii; and Lawrence Vale, *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3.

15. Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2–3; and Shlomo Angel, *Housing Policy Matters: A Global Analysis* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12, 115–21.

16. Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York: Pantheon, 1981); Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); and Peter Madsen and Richard Plunz, eds., *The Urban Lifeworld: Formation, Perception, Representation* (London: Routledge Press, 2002). Le Corbusier's three types are explained in chap. 5 of Mardges Bacon, *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001). Eric Mumford takes on the traditional viewpoint that Le Corbusier's design plans shaped American public housing, with disastrous consequences, in Eric Mumford, "The 'Tower in a Park' in America: Theory and Practice, 1920–1960," *Planning Perspectives* 10 (1995): 17–41. Pruitt-Igoe has undergone two reinterpretations: Katharine G. Bristol, "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," *Journal of Architectural Education* 44 (May 1991): 163–71; and Joseph Heathcott's upcoming publication, *The Projects and the People: Public Housing in the Life of an American City*. Jared N. Day, *Urban Castles: Tenement Housing and Landlord Activism in New York City 1890–1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

17. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Gilbert Osofsky and Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Joel Schwartz, *The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals and the Redevelopment of New York* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993); John F. Bauman, Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylyan, eds., *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-century America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Books addressing the intersections of race and housing policy include Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton's classic *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); and

Wendell Pritchett's newer *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

18. Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Sudhir Venkatesh, *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Note as well the papers on public housing presented at the 2004 annual meeting of the Social Science History Association: Marisa Angell, "Social Icon: The Architecture and Imagery of Public Housing in the Postwar American City"; Nicholas Bloom, "A Silk Purse from a Sow's Ear: How the New York City Authority (NYCHA) Saved Public Housing"; Janet L. Smith, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Transforming the Architecture of Poverty in Chicago"; John R. Breihan, "From Planned Suburb to Inner City: An Interdisciplinary Study of Cherry Hill, Maryland"; Rhonda Y. Williams, "Black Women's Activism in Public Housing in Post-Depression Baltimore"; James Wolfinger, "Of Hope and Loss: The Racial Politics of Public Housing in Philadelphia, 1936-1945"; Sean Purdy, "Rub a Dub Inna Regent Park: Race and Class in a Toronto Housing Project, 1970s-1990s"; and Dan Wishnoff, "The Tipping Point: Integration and Fall of Public Housing in New York City 1965 to 1975."

19. John Friedmann's assessment of the importance of Manuel Castells and David Harvey can be found in John Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis," *Development and Change* 17, no. 1 (1986): 69-83, as cited in Anthony D. King, *Global Cities: Post-Imperialism and the Internationalization of London* (London: Routledge, 1990), 6-7. See also Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

20. Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Victoria de Grazia provides a useful critique of the word *exchange* in her review, Victoria de Grazia, "Atlantic Crossings: Close Encounters, of What Kind?," *American Studies Journal* 44 (Winter 1999/Spring 2000): 52-53.

21. Richard Harris, "More American than the United States: Housing in Urban Canada in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Urban History* 26 (2001): 250-59.

22. John Sewell, *Houses and Homes: Housing for Canadians* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1994), 138.

23. Robert Murdie, "Social Polarization and Public Housing in Canada: A Case Study of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority," in Frances Frisken, ed., *The Changing Canadian Metropolis: A Public Policy Perspective*, vol. 1 (Berkeley and Toronto: Institute of Governmental Studies Press and the Canadian Urban Institute, 1994), 299.

24. Robert Murdie, "'Blacks in Near-ghettos?' Black Visible Minority Population in Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority Public Housing Units," *Housing Studies* 9 (1994): 435-57.

25. Sean Purdy, "From Place of Hope to Outcast Space: Territorial Regulation and Tenant Resistance in Regent Park Housing Project, 1949-2001" (PhD thesis, Queen's University, 2003).

26. Tom Carter, "Current Practices for Procuring Affordable Housing: The Canadian Context," *Housing Policy Debate* 8 (1997): 593-630; Sewell, *Houses and Homes*; and David Hulchanski, *Canada's Housing and Housing Policy: An Introduction* (Vancouver: School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, 1988).

27. J. D. Hulchanski, "The Use of Housing Expenditure-to-income Ratios: Origins, Evolution and Implications" (Toronto: Ontario Human Rights Commission, Background Paper #2, 1994); Jeffrey Patterson and Patricia Streich, *A Review Of Canadian Social Housing Policy* (Toronto: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1977).

28. Murdie, "'Blacks in Near-ghettos?'" On discriminatory OHC practices, see Dorothy Quann, *Racial Discrimination in Housing* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1979), 33-34; Sylvia Novac, *A Place to Call One's Own: New Voices of Dislocation and Dispossession* (Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 1996); and Frances Henry, *The Caribbean Diaspora in Toronto: Learning to Live with Racism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 229-31.

29. Murdie, "Social Polarization."

30. For some of the key historical studies, see Marc Choko, *Crises du Logement à Montréal* (Montréal: Éditions coopératives Albert Saint-Martin, 1980); John Belec, "The Dominion Housing Act, A Study of the Origins of Canadian Federal Housing Policy" (PhD thesis, Queen's University, 1988); John Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); and Jill Wade, *Houses for All: The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver, 1919-50* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994).

31. Kevin Brushett, "Blots on the Face of the City: The Politics of Slum Housing and Urban Renewal in Toronto, 1940-1970" (PhD thesis, Queen's University, 2001); and Purdy, "From Place of Hope."

32. There is a vast sociological and anthropological literature on shantytowns in Latin America in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. In English, see the classic studies by Janice Pearlman, *The Myth of Marginality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and Larissa Lomnitz, *Networks and Marginality: Life in a Mexican Shantytown*, translated by Cinna Lomnitz (New York: Academic Press, 1977). Note as well the first comprehensive history of Rio de Janeiro favelas in Julio César Pino, *Family and Favela: The Reproduction of Poverty in Rio de Janeiro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997). Other, more recent work can be found in Gerry Mooney, "Urban Disorders," in Steve Pile, Christopher Brook, and Gerry Mooney, eds., *Unruly Cities?* (London: Routledge, 2000), 54–99; and Robert Gay, *Popular Organization and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro: A Tale of Two Favelas* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). Interestingly, there are some historical examples of shantytowns in pre–World War II North American cities as well. On Seattle, note Donald Francis Roy, "Hooverville: A Community of Homeless Men," in Janet Abu Lughod and Richard Hay Jr., eds., *Third World Urbanization* (Chicago: Maaroufa Press, 1974); and for Vancouver, see Wade, *Houses for All*.

33. *Cidade de Deus* (City of God), directed by Fernando Meirelles.

34. Robert B. Potter and Sally Lloyd-Evans, *The City in the Developing World* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1998).

35. Gerald Michael Greenfield, ed., *Latin American Urbanization: Historical Profiles of Major Cities* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994); and Arturo Almanoz, ed., *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities, 1850–1950* (London: Routledge, 2002).

36. Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite, *Squatter Citizen: Life in the Urban Third World* (London: Earthscan, 1989), 106.

37. For an early survey of the state of housing in Latin America in the early 1960s, including statistics on public housing, see Marcia N. Koth, Julio G. Silva, and Albert G. H. Dietz, *Housing in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965). More detailed studies can be found in Mario Garcés, *Tomando Su Sitio: El Movimiento de Pobladores de Santiago, 1957–1973* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2002); and Vicente Espinoza, *Para una Historia de los Pobres de la Ciudad* (Santiago: Ediciones Sur, 1988). On Argentina, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean, see the works cited by Rosa Aboy, Zaire Dinzey-Flores, and Richard Harris in this volume.

38. Priscilla Connolly, "Housing and the State in Mexico," in Gil Shidlo, ed., *Housing Policy in Developing Countries* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 18–19.

39. See the fine article by Joel Outtes, "Disciplining Society through the City: The Genesis of City Planning in Brazil and Argentina, 1894–1945," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 22 (April 2003): 137–64; and Teresa A. Meade, *Civilizing Rio: Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City, 1889–1930* (University Park: State University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

40. Hardoy and Satterthwaite, *Squatter Citizen*, 106.

41. *Ibid.*, 98–99; Pino, *Family and Favela*, chap. 4.

42. On this point, see Tulio Halperin Donghi, *The Contemporary History of Latin America*, edited and translated by John Charles Chasteen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 294–97.

43. Juan José Martín Frechilla, "La Comisión Nacional De Urbanismo, 1946–1957 (Origen y Quiebra de una Utopía)," and Manuel A. López Villa, "Leopoldo Martínez Olavarria y los Orígenes de la Vivienda Obrera en Venezuela" both in Alberto Lovera, ed., *Leopoldo Martínez Olavarria, Desarrollo Urbano, Vivienda y Estado* (Caracas: Fondo Editorial Alemo, 1996).

44. Consult the following for details on particular public housing programs: Fernando Kuznetsoff, "The State and Housing Policies in Chile: Five Regime Types and Strategies," in Josef Gugler, ed., *Cities in the Developing World: Issues, Theory and Policy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997), 291–304; Gil Shidlo, *Social Policy in a Non-Democratic Regime: The Case of Public Housing in Brazil* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990); and D. J. Dwyer, *People and Housing in Third World Cities: Perspectives on the Problem of Spontaneous Settlements* (London: Longman, 1975).

45. On Cuba, see Robert Segre, Mario Coyula, Joseph Scarpaci, and Andres Duany, *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2002), chap. 6; and Hardoy and Satterthwaite, *Squatter Citizen*, 114.

46. See Alan Gilbert, "Power, Ideology and the Washington Consensus: The Development and Spread of Chilean Housing Policy," *Housing Studies* 17 (2002): 305–24.

47. On Brazil, see Pino, *Family and Favela*, and Nabil Bonduki, *Origens da Habitação Social no Brasil: Arquitetura Moderna, Lei do Inquilinato e Difusão da Casa Propria* (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 1998). In English, see Bonduki's "The Housing Crisis in the Postwar Years," in Lucio Kowarick, ed., *Social Struggles and the City: The Case of Sao Paulo* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), 94–120. For

Venezuela, note the work of Duke PhD history candidate Alejandro Velasquez, "Democratic Transition and Symbolic Cooptation in Venezuela: The Case of the 23 de Enero" (paper presented at the 2004 Latin American Studies Association Conference, Las Vegas, October 2004). On the repression of urban social movement activists in Chile, some of whom lived and organized in public housing, consult Laura Moya, Claudia Videla, Ricardo Balladares, Alison Bruey, Hervi Lara, Andrés Carvajal, Mario Aballay, and Marcelo Alvarado, *Tortura en Poblaciones del Gran Santiago (1973–1990)* (Santiago: Colectivo de Memoria Histórica, Corporación José Domingo Cañas, 2005.) Alison Bruey's forthcoming Yale PhD thesis in history, "To Live Like People: Community Organizing in Dictatorship, Santiago de Chile, 1973–1983," promises a fuller investigation of some key public housing themes in the Chilean context.

Sean Purdy teaches the history of the Americas at the University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil. He was an assistant professor in the Department of History/Society of Fellows in the Humanities at Temple University in 2004–2005. He thanks Philip Alperson, Richard Immerman, and other colleagues at Temple University for a truly stimulating and rewarding experience in Philadelphia.

Nancy Kwak teaches urban history at Polytechnic University in New York City. Her recently completed dissertation examines the development of public housing in London, New York, and Singapore post-1945.