

Marie Huchzermeyer

Informal settlements through the lens of Henry Lefebvre's right to the city

The right to the city, both as a slogan and as a theoretical and analytical framework, has gained prominence in the Anglophone urban and development discourse over the past decade. In the first instance, 'right to the city' is understood to promote access by the poor to urban space and decision-making. It is undermined by forced evictions and other measures that exclude the poor from cities. Forced evictions in urban areas are increasingly linked to the pressure faced by authorities to optimize the economic functioning of cities. This presentation looks to 'the right to the city', as originally conceptualized by Henri Lefebvre from the late 1960s, as a lens for strategic analysis of the dynamics that lead to forced evictions, and as impetus for new strategies for rights-based movements.

Marie Huchzermeyer is a professor in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Her research has spanned Brazil, South Africa and Kenya, where she has explored questions of policy and rights as they relate to informal settlements, large-scale private rental stock and housing more broadly. She recently published 'Cities With 'Slums': From Informal Settlement Eradication to a Right to the City in Africa' (UCT Press) and 'Tenement Cities: From 19th Century Berlin to 21st Century Nairobi' (Africa World Press).

**Urban Talks Series** 2014

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**Marie Huchzermeyer**

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