

# ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE RIGHT TO A CITY

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## INTRODUCTION. WHY A RIGHT TO THE CITY?

Before there were cities, it is hardly likely that anyone ever expressed the thought that they have a right to one; and in the roughly six-thousand-year history of urban environments, no such idea of a right to the city was formulated until the French Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre proposed just this, in 1968. And when Lefebvre did so, this was in energetic but rather vague fashion, as much a rallying cry for the disaffected and marginalized as the expression of a clear-cut moral or legal concept on which to base detailed social design or change. Vague or not, Lefebvre's proposal found great favor among urban planners, international civil servants, public advocates, and others—somewhat independent of political or economic bent. What is the attraction—why do some believe that there is a right to the city?

In what follows, I sketch a version of the right to the city (RTTC) that I take to be (a) feasible, (b) generic, and so (c) broadly amenable to many of its adherents; further, I suggest how it is that this entails special sorts of responsibilities or obligations for architects and others tending to our built environment and the spaces—especially public space—so structured and defined. Along the way, I provide a brief account of some historical motivations for embracing the right to the city, as well as reasons for endorsing my generic account. For the moment, I offer the quick suggestion that typical reasons for supporting a right to the city are grounded in traditional rights considerations: for one, benefits of urban life point to a positive

right, along the lines of an entitlement; and for another, dangers and impediments to life—and quality of life—in the city point to a negative right, along the lines of freedoms from harm and liberties to voluntary engagements. How all this has a particularly urban focus and character, and how such a right or rights translate into specifically architectural responsibilities, depends at least in part on the sorts of things cities are and how they are constituted, or so I will argue. I begin, though, with a set of ground rules for any putative right to the city, basic principles as such one should uphold and not violate.

1. RIGHT TO THE CITY: INITIAL PARAMETERS, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, AND A PROPOSAL

*a. Assumptions.*

I start with a small set of parametric assumptions about what a right to the city should look like, which thereby provide ground rules for crafting such a right. I take these assumptions as more or less self-evident or, at least, as relatively obvious candidate parameters.

THE GOOD OR THE BEST CITY. First, the right to the city is a right to a particular range of possible cities with desirable or requisite characteristics. A right to a city which guaranteed no more than an urban hellscape would be useless, cynical ‘right.’ Note that this suggests that RTTC is, broadly speaking, an entitlement or claims right, where the positive good is a city that, for those with the rights to it—presumably its citizens—is in the balance a place more good than bad to live and work in. A further variation in this direction is to posit a RTTC that guarantees the best possible version of whatever city to which the right pertains.<sup>1</sup>

COMMUNAL. Second, RTTC is a community-focused, publicly oriented right, which individuals hold but as pertains to their current or prospective group membership qua urban citizens.<sup>2</sup> It’s unclear that hermits, survivalists, rural dwellers, and exurbanites have RTTC; and the case of suburbanites is marginal, an intriguing case given their symbiotic relationship with the city.<sup>3</sup> In short, RTTC is a right attaching to people who live in cities, hence live together in densely-populated communities. Given a communal orientation, RTTC should likely reflect historical, heritage, cultural and emotional motivations and stakes of the groups in question, with corresponding entitlements. As I argue, however, positing group claims rights does not entail all and only group obligations; further, the optimal way to meet such claims may not be in the aggregate, that is, not by the city as a whole entity but through the actions and choices of its parts and constituent members.<sup>4</sup>

FUTURE-FACING. Third, RTTC is forward-looking. Any rights such as we claim are not necessarily—and not limited to—the city as it exists now, but as it will exist in the future. This is partly a function of the imperfections of cities and a RTTC claim on the best possible city. But it's also a reflection of the city's dynamic character—its shifting and growing over time, and becoming more and less accessible, more and less capable of housing or otherwise serving its citizens, more and less well arranged to promote the good life.

Taken together, these parameters tell us that a RTTC should provide those with greatest investment in the city—the citizens—with guarantees to ongoing improvements and enhancements of goods and engagements, as well as amelioration or elimination of harms, such that quality of life progresses rather than stagnates or declines, so that an urban life is a worthy and rewarding one.

*b. The Lefebvre Construal and Alternate Takes*

Looking at actual, historical articulations of a RTTC—from Lefebvre onward—we see some degree of conformity with these parameters, at least in spirit, and if only in one or another fractional form. Lefebvre, for his part, while initially giving us RTTC, may not be its best proponent. First, as Loren King and others have noted, his Marxism makes for poor rights advocacy.<sup>5</sup> The classic Marxist sees rights as a frivolity of bourgeois democratic politics, detached from realities of material goods distributed and controlled by the capital class. Second, and more compellingly for the non-Marxist, he does not say that in which a RTTC consists nor, as Attoh notes, how it would work out in practice.<sup>6</sup> It's not surprising that, on a Marxist reading, we aren't told about particular entitlements or liberties. At all events, we are left with the question of what, quite, this is a right to. Nor are we told who has these rights, though it is fair to assume that, for Lefebvre,

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this is primarily interesting as a right insofar as it represents an unfulfilled commitment to the dispossessed and the working class. One thing Lefebvre does tell us, on the other hand, is that those who have RTTC have it because they are participants in construction of the city as an urban project of living and working together.<sup>7</sup> This is a crucial observation for just about any version of an RTTC as it highlights the reasons that cities came into being and continue to grow as the dominant form of human settlement: cities exist for the advancement of material and cultural wellbeing. His point is that intentionally and intensely concentrating populations in the same places—namely, cities—introduces claims on how people should live and prosper in those contexts.



EMILE AILLAUD, LA GRANDE BORNE, GRIGNY (1971)

Of course, not all is well in the city. Another thing Lefebvre tells us—following his Marxist-style analysis—is that while citizens build the city and gain the benefits of living in the urban environment, they are also exploited by the capital class in so doing and are alienated from the city though it is their own project.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, RTTC for Lefebvre consists in a right for urban citizens to direct life in the city as engaged with, and unalienated from, their urban environment.<sup>9</sup> With these few and imprecise notions, there is much room for interpretation and variation. For example, we might direct or shape life in a city so as to not be alienating through direct behavioral interventions like rules, laws, intentional cultural shifts, and the like—but alternatively we might think it more effective to deploy environmental interventions as crafted in architectural and planning design.

Two broad traditions have taken up the Lefebvrian RTTC, also focusing on the city as the increasingly principal context of human settlement and the greatest source of wealth, creativity, power, as well as other human

phenomena, productions, and endeavors.<sup>10</sup> For one, Marxists have tended to extrapolate from or build on Lefebvre's view within their set of conventions, for example, by explaining the role of surplus value in urban productivity and positing the RTTC as a right to that value and its management.<sup>11</sup> For another, a range of urban planners, geographers, political activists, and others have articulated more specific rights as they take to realize a vision of eliminating, punishing and disenfranchising injustices, such as Lefebvre associated with alienation and exploitation in the city or by its capital class. Examples of such specific rights include rights to housing, transportation, communications, participatory decision-making, participatory urban design, and protection from harms (e.g., excessive state force). While stimulated by Lefebvre's critique, however, these latter views generally assume neither diagnoses nor solutions along Marxist lines. As with the Lefebvrian proposal, the latter, non-Marxist views stay within the lines of the parametric assumptions laid out here, motivated by a goal-state, sensitive to the dynamism of the city, and communally oriented. Yet they also move beyond Lefebvre, in concretely specifying goods, services, liberties, or freedoms to which citizens have a right qua citizens.

*c. A Generic Proposal.*

A third approach is to craft a generic RTTC that, while also inspired by Lefebvre, is not wedded to his framework, to Marxist tenets, or to any of the specific entitlement or liberty-oriented rights in particular as may also be inspired by that framework. To this end, consider a traditional view of rights (following, e.g., Hohfeld)<sup>12</sup> as comprises the positive and the negative, emphasizing claims on entitlements on one hand and ensuring maintenance of liberty and protection from harm on the other. A more recent addition to this array in the rights literature has it that, in addition to attending to concerns of or for individuals, a complete range of rights reflects

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concerns of or for communities as aggregate parties. Along these lines, and in pursuit of a maximalist right to the city, we would likely want that right to comprise constituent sub-rights as advance claims, meet communitarian concerns, and guarantee liberties.<sup>13</sup>

I propose that this basic taxonomy points to an umbrella conception of a right to the city that includes at least these basic sub-rights: *urban access*, as entitlement claim; *urban inclusion*, as community right; and *urban flourishing*, as a liberties-assuring and freedom-from-harms right. A full-blown defense of these sub-rights is beyond the present scope; here I note a few definitional points and take note of one common denominator relative to urban public space. First, *access* is particularly suitable as a fundamental entitlement or claims right in the urban context because the city's density and intensity is not only a positive economically and culturally but a negative as well, building and accelerating scarcity of resources—be they necessary or merely desirable. Insofar as scarcity is managed by reference to moral or justice considerations, we want a right to access the city's resources as a guarantee of moral or just distribution, for example, to protect those least likely to secure access otherwise. Second, *inclusion* is suitable as a community right in the urban context because the purpose of cities, at root, is to bring people together for commerce and culture—



POLICE RAID IN GRIGNY, QUARTIER DE LA GRANDE BORNE (2016).

such that marginalizing and excluding people is antithetical to the core urban goals. Hence we want a right that serves to guarantee that, even if living in distinctive communities for solidarity purposes,<sup>14</sup> all citizens are included in the broader urban community to the extent that they choose or as is otherwise socially optimal. Much more may be said about what inclusion entails here. Suffice it to mention, in this context, various

forms of openness, availability, and welcoming as comprise but are not limited to: involvement in decision-making of import to the urban whole or significant parts thereof; participation in and consumption of the urban host culture and other constituent cultures; access to economic and social opportunities of the city; and engagement with infrastructure and networks of the city. And as a third sub-right, *flourishing* is suitable as a liberties-assuring and freedom-from-harms right in the urban context because the city only flourishes—e.g., economically, socially, culturally—when its citizens can flourish. This in turn requires a negative right or rights of individuals and communities to enjoy protection from harms and liberties to act in ways that promote thriving and success, as well as a positive right to such entitlements as are accorded to city dwellers and promote citizen success and thriving.<sup>15</sup>

It merits noting that, as a common denominator, all these sub-rights point to, and may be exploited to sustain, the broad claim of the urban dweller on public space. For example, city dwellers have a right to access public space, as a scarce commodity more typically contracted than expanded by urban development; city dwellers may only realize a right to urban inclusion if there is sufficient and fitting public space in which to freely commune; and the city and its dwellers can only truly *flourish*—optimize their thriving and success—where citizens may pursue work, study, and leisure beyond their own private spaces—free from the limits of solitude and constraints on personal room to move and share, e.g., ideas, innovation, or culture. This picture is consonant with at least one prominent RTTC view that takes city-wise rights to primarily consist in rights to public space.<sup>16</sup>

To be sure, this is a very general account of only three possible sub-rights of a RTTC. Others might be articulated; these have the merit of accounting for a broad range of urban life. To see this, as well as how

these rights may be engaged, it's helpful to consider cases where they are not, that is, where the rights are not recognized or else are recognized but infringed. Thus, we have:

**DEVELOPER.** Rita, a major developer in a major city, is planning a giant housing and commercial development of a large area of the city heretofore left in a state of disrepair and disuse. Elected officials have given carte blanche to Rita to develop the site however they see fit. The public has been left out of any semblance of a decision-making process. Operative RTTC sub-rights here concern inclusion and community.

**STREET GANG.** A new, violent STREET GANG menaces a previously prosperous area, and the residents are afraid to leave their houses. Police and social workers are ineffective and, while the gang grows in popularity and financial success, the neighborhood loses its vibrant street life and spirals downward as a desirable place to live. The operative RTTC sub-right here, as highlighted by their violation or neglect, pertains to flourishing. Note, however, that in STREET GANG, the scenario need not have been located in a city; the setting could have been suburban or even rural. We can fix this in the following scenario:

**PUBLIC HOUSING GANG.** As in STREET GANG, public security in the area deteriorates. Unlike the generic location in STREET GANG, though, this scenario is specifically set in urban public housing, where the density of population heightens the probability of criminality, and the deteriorating security environment induces social, economic, and psychological depression. Operative RTTC sub-rights here are related to flourishing, specifically in urban contexts.

**MÉTRO.** Jean-Marie waits at a métro station for a train that never arrives. Unbeknownst to him, the city has discontinued that train line and is preparing to demolish the station shortly. Henceforth Jean-Marie will need to walk to work, 7 km away. The operative RTTC sub-right here concerns entitlement, specifically to affordable and convenient mass transit service in a modern city.

These cases give a small taste of the diversity of scenarios where quality of life, integration and inclusion, and just benefits of city life—all as particular to urban contexts—are degraded for some parties X because of the actions or inactions of other parties Y. (In addition to these negative scenarios, other sorts of scenarios will highlight a *positive* picture, wherein RTTC-type rights are realized or sustained; see Appendix A.) Two points merit our attention in all these cases. For one, such cases arise in specifically urban contexts, and because of the nature of people living and working



together—which, as we have noted, is largely due to density and intensity of populations and their interactions. For another, the dereliction of Y as the cause of the failure to realize or sustain X’s rights points to Y’s responsibilities or obligations to X and all other citizens relative to the corresponding RTTC sub-rights as having not been realized or sustained in such cases. In brief, as the dereliction of Y prevents the relevant sub-rights of X from being satisfied, we sense that Y is to blame, that is, to be held responsible.

Before moving on, let’s revisit the proposed parameters for a viable RTTC, namely, that such a right should promote the best possible city, should be communal in orientation, and should be future-facing given the organic and not-so-organic change in the life of a city. All three sub-rights proposed here—to access, inclusion, and flourishing—are contributing and perhaps necessary factors for optimizing the city and city life. Further, access and inclusion are manifestly community- and communally-oriented. It may be harder to specify that or how these particular sub-rights are constitutive of a future-facing RTTC, though it is also hard to imagine articulating or satisfying any future-facing RTTC that fails to build upon, or at least recognize, prior commitments to access, inclusion, and flourishing of urban dwellers.

## 2. IDENTIFYING AND ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITIES OR OBLIGATIONS

So far, we have the picture of a broad RTTC as an umbrella right, comprising at least three sub-rights, including a right to entitlements, community, and flourishing. What attaches these rights to the city context in particular is a function of urban conditions, most prominently a population density that entails or generates problems, needs, and desiderata, that is, the stuff of special rights. And—as is traditionally held relative to rights generally—satisfaction or advancement of such RTTC sub-rights relies on parties having relevant responsibilities

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or obligations. In this domain, failure to meet those responsibilities or obligations results in citizens failing to flourish, to attain or maintain community membership, or to receive such goods or services as are expectable in a justly ordered urban life.

Two principal tasks arise relative to talk about rights-wise responsibilities or obligations: first, the *what*—identifying those responsibilities or obligations corresponding to particular rights; and second, the *who*—identifying the parties with significant responsibilities or obligations in this regard. Both tasks represent complex questions with dizzying arrays of possible answers—as many as there are variables factoring into urban planning and design and city management, financing, servicing, and so on. One specific challenge in identifying and assigning RTTC-wise responsibilities or obligations is the great diversity of urban actors (agents) pursuing different tasks relevant to the wide variety of sub-rights, in providing goods and services, promoting inclusion, or facilitating flourishing. Thus, politicians, bureaucrats, social services, corporate and small business owners, educators, health providers, public safety personnel, and many others populate a long list of people with such responsibilities.



CRICKET IN THE STREETS OF MUMBAI

Among these professions and roles, architects and those with similar occupations (urban planners, urban designers, etc.)—whom I’ll refer to as ‘architectural agents’—are highly visible in this regard, as they plan and shape the physical and broadly experiential characteristics of the city. Indeed, there is a special moral claim on architectural agents relative to RTTC-wise responsibilities and obligations: they draw the contours of possible ways

that citizens can organize and conduct their lives and work in the city, and in this way they support or prevent the possible pursuit of activities by all other agents as may contribute to the satisfaction of RTTC-wise responsibilities and obligations. This sort of meta-responsibility is additional to their ground-level RTTC-wise responsibilities in the urban context.

In this set of meta-responsibilities, however, architectural agents are not alone. One other family of actors with similar meta-responsibilities is the financial services industry, without whom nothing is possible in city life, including realization of architectural plans. So architects' responsibilities may be outweighed by those of others with greater power to determine the fate of cities and popular rights to them. Even if not outpaced in such fashion, architects are clearly not the sole actors responsible for realization of RTTC-wise sub-rights, whether at the ground-level or the meta-level.

A further difficulty in assigning RTTC-wise responsibilities to architectural agents concerns the temporal. The city and its population shift over time, and with demographic, social, economic, and other shifts come changes in the identity and nature of those holding the right to the city, and the array of sub-rights to which they may justly lay claim. Thus it is unclear to whom architects of a given moment might have responsibilities—particularly in accounting for future population shifts—or how the duration of such responsibilities should be gauged.

A third challenge in this regard concerns the appropriate degrees of RTTC-wise responsibility to be shouldered by architectural agents. For example, it cannot be fair to assign such responsibilities to individual architectural agents, however influential, relative to the entirety of a city, even if—as with Oscar Niemeyer and Brasilia—they have designed the city's basic plans and major structures. Nor is it fair, conversely, to assign such responsibilities

to the architectural professions in collective fashion, for we then excuse each architect from standard individual obligations. Neither individual architects nor architects in the aggregate considered as the profession overall can assume or be assigned the full range of such RTTC-wise responsibilities as we would apportion to architectural agents.

### 3. A COMPOSITIONALIST APPROACH TO CITY-WISE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

How, then, to apportion RTTC-wise responsibilities or obligations to architectural agents—by what means and to what degree? My proposal reflects a key aspect of the aforementioned scenarios (DEVELOPER, PUBLIC HOUSING GANG, and MÉTRO): while some such instances where rights are upheld or denied have a system-wide or city-wide origin or developmental path or set of consequences, many—perhaps most—such instances arise out of highly localized circumstances. In short, RTTC-related scenarios arise as much relative to a bus stop or a single office tower as they do relative to the urban water system or the city’s entire zoning code. It is those highly localized scenarios where architects and others with architectural agency have the most frequent and robust obligations relative to RTTC and its family of sub-rights.

To make this suggestion work, such that architects and other architectural agents can assume—at the micro-scale—the sorts of obligations we take to follow from RTTC, we need to build on two more fundamental claims. First, we need to show that architectural agents have a kind of efficacy to begin with that allows them to meaningfully contribute to realization or sustaining of RTTC sub-rights. Second, we need to show that what architectural agents do as individuals or in small groups at the micro-scale rolls up to the realization or sustaining of RTTC sub-rights.

The first fundamental claim is, at root, an empirical point. In the early interactions between architects and environmental psychologists (1970s), there were worries about the feasibility of ‘architectural determinism,’ the view that architectural forms and the spaces they shape can have regular and predictable effects on behaviors of those experiencing the forms and spaces. While there is cause for caution as elsewhere in the behavioral sciences, a wealth of scientific and commercial data supports the general notion that our range of choices and actions *may* be influenced environmentally—and that even subtle design interventions in the built environment *may* shift behaviors.<sup>17</sup> Insofar as realization or sustaining of RTTC sub-rights entails enabling, encouraging, or preventing citizens from undertaking particular behaviors, the empirical accounts of ‘architectural determinism’ tell us *how* architectural agents take on such responsibility.

The second fundamental claim involves more of a conceptual move,

drawing on (1) a picture of RTTC in which our judgment that either the umbrella right or sub-rights are satisfied is divisible by spatial and temporal regions, together with (2) a compositional notion of architectural objects. First, we know that we can divide judgment about rights satisfaction by regions (spatial or temporal) given that rights are mostly, if not always, realized only partially and to varying degrees depending on location and timeframe. While this is typically seen as a real-world imperfection for any rights regime, this feature also allows us to think about satisfaction of rights in such limited domains—of a given place or a given time—as successes within those domains. And since, in the case of realizing or satisfying RTTC-wise sub-rights, we cannot expect architectural agents (whether as individuals or in the aggregate) to satisfy such rights—either across the whole of a city or for the entire duration of its existence—spatially and temporally modest targets are called for.

Second, in a compositional account of architectural objects, we have a ready instrument for taking apart the city along spatial or temporal lines—such that we can reasonably apportion RTTC-wise responsibilities to architectural agents at a level (spatially) and over a duration for which expectations and accountability are realistic goals. A compositional account of architectural objects, as relative to cities in particular, says that urban built environments are composed of built structures as unitary individuals or collections thereof, such that, as aggregates of those unitary or collective individuals, cities are shaped by those individuals. The idea is that cities, as wholes, are shaped by the parts they comprise.<sup>18</sup> This is a three-dimensional, spatial picture, but it is trivial to expand this compositionality to a fourth, temporal dimension: the character of cities is shaped over time by earlier instantiations of the urban built environment, both where the earlier elements of that environment survive, as well as where they cease to exist and

“ PUTTING THESE TWO ELEMENTS TOGETHER, WE CAN REASONABLY APPORTION RESPONSIBILITY TO ARCHITECTURAL AGENTS FOR RTTC-WISE SUB-RIGHTS.”

make way for new elements. Compositionism contributes to our ability to judge the satisfaction of RTTC-wise sub-rights by giving us a means of gauging whether built structures (or collections thereof) may help to raise or lower satisfaction of city-wise rights within bounds—that is, on a partial or fractional basis. The idea is to then ‘roll up’ (sum across) that degree of rights-satisfaction, by taking those structures as parts contributing to the city or its regions one piece at a time, creating conditions for, e.g., strengthening inclusion, providing just benefits attached to city life, and promoting flourishing.

Putting these two elements together, we can reasonably apportion responsibility to architectural agents for RTTC-wise sub-rights. The first element is recognizing that architectural agents can shape behaviors in ways that contribute to or detract from realization of rights special to the urban context, e.g., to housing or mass transit or access to cultural resources. The second element associates satisfaction of such given sub-rights with particular buildings or collections of buildings, or sets of buildings at a particular time. In this way, we can tie realization of rights, and corresponding responsibilities to that end, to particular architectural agents where they are actually in a position to assume such levels of responsibility. Further, compositionism allows us to assemble an aggregated reading of architectural agents’ successes, on a city-wide basis, in furthering the RTTC of a given city’s citizens—as spread across different sub-rights as well as the component parts of the city.

#### 4. PROBLEMS

Here are at least three prospective problems with this view. First, architects generally accept a range of responsibilities, of course, though not in an absolute sense that some advocates associate with at least some rights in the moral and political philosophical tradition.<sup>19</sup> Consider, in this vein, city-wide and system-wide scenarios as invoke RTTC sub-rights and recognizably feature city-wide and system-wide agents with corresponding obligations we might take to be absolute per their rights-wise stipulation. For example, a RTTC sub-right to access to healthcare in the urban context (relative to, say, asthma prevention and mitigation in distressed neighborhoods) may well be recognizable as an absolute right—one not defeated by other considerations. On the other hand, for scenarios that invoke RTTC sub-rights on the local or building level, the responsible architectural agents are unlikely to have corresponding obligations in any traditionally absolute sense. Given that utility is a core professional and heritage-wise goal for architects, obligations are *pro tanto* in their worldview—they go only as far as they go, and can be defeated

for the greater good. So, there is at least a cultural gap here, if we think that architectural agents have infeasible obligations relative to RTTC sub-rights.

Second, I have suggested here that compositionism gives us a means of summing across judgments of architectural agents as satisfying (or not) RTTC sub-rights in given spatial or temporal regions, rather than tying satisfaction of rights to the city-wide scale alone and then unrealistically pinning responsibilities for such on architectural agents (singly or all together). But we might not think that we can speak meaningfully of rights-satisfaction as the sort of thing one can sum across, even if we can differentially gauge levels of rights satisfaction across distinctive spaces and times. How we see this summation problem will turn, I suspect, on whether we think of rights regimes as meaningfully satisfied at all if they are fractionally satisfied only in this or that neighborhood, only by this or that built structure. We can only sum across rights satisfaction for the city as a whole in this way if we rule out the notion that rights only satisfied for some populations are not satisfied universally hence not satisfied at all.

Finally, it may be that I have insufficiently demarcated responsibilities attaching to architects in particular—as against those attaching to other ‘architectural agents’ such as urban designers or planners. These are, after all, different roles. One way to carve up the attendant responsibilities, for example, might reflect the scale of the corresponding design tasks.<sup>20</sup> That said, the borders of architectural and urban design and planning disciplines are famously porous, especially in the domain of localized urban projects such as London’s Barbican Centre, New York’s Lincoln Center, or Paris’s La Villette. So, practice may point to a need for vagueness here. A more pertinent response is principled: the compositionist framework I have drawn upon should do the work of apportioning responsibilities for satisfying RTTC to different sorts

of architectural agents in accordance with (a) the urban design element as distinguished possibly by scale but equally possibly by function, systemic role, liability, or still other factors; and (b) the attendant RTTC sub-rights as come into play with each such design element. Even similar ‘puzzle pieces’ as compose a city will likely prompt different responsibility assignments to different roles across, for example, urban cultures and contexts.<sup>21</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

I close with a brief revisit of the STREET GANG and PUBLIC HOUSING GANG scenarios, which taken together, I propose, highlight the character of architectural agent’s RTTC-wise responsibilities in the specifically urban context. Recall that the difference between those two scenarios is that the first could take place in all manner of locations, whereas the second is at least in part the product of a city setting, which from an environmental psychology perspective has gone very much awry. At issue is (a) the degree to which a built environment that resembles an urban rat trap for human beings may accelerate, worsen, and perpetuate criminal activity or other socially deviant behaviors by some of the local citizenry, and (b) the degree to which architects and planners of said environment have responsibilities for designing in ways so as to lessen the probabilities of such behaviors and their consequences. If citizens of all backgrounds and housing settings have rights to flourishing in the city, as entails a further right to public safety, then we have identified some level of responsibility for realizing such rights as may be apportioned to architectural agents. This is, to be sure, only a piece of the puzzle: others will have relevant responsibilities and these are just some few RTTC-wise sub-rights among many others. But if we start at this level of analysis, we will be en route to identifying the many puzzle pieces of responsibility attached to the actions and choices of architects relative to the fullest range of RTTC-wise sub-rights. That will give us a picture of ways that, at the micro-scale, architects and those in related professions contribute to realizing or thwarting realization of rights to the city.

## APPENDIX A. SCENARIOS OF RIGHTS SECURED AND SUSTAINED.

CULTURAL FESTIVAL. A marginalized immigrant community sustains its cultural traditions in private homes and makeshift community spaces. The city invites community members to participate in the summer cultural festival in the park. Regular cultural programming by the immigrant community, open to all, ensues and the community’s cultural threads are further woven into the greater urban fabric. The operative RTTC sub-right here concerns inclusion.



SMALL-SCALE RETAIL. The city's produce and dry goods street market is thriving thanks to a zoning law that keeps rents low on the market stalls and protects the market's contributions to affordable and animated city life that is at once dense and human-scale. The operative RTTC sub-right here concerns flourishing.

GARBAGE. The city's sanitation department fails to collect the garbage for two years due to inadequate landfill capacity. Quality of life declines rapidly as the garbage mounts, hindering transportation and circulation of goods and services. After mass demonstrations and public pressures, a new landfill location is identified for safe disposal, and garbage collection and processing are resumed. The operative RTTC sub-right here concerns entitlement.

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#### ENDNOTES

1. While the best possible city *could* be at least more good than bad, the optimized good city and the best possible city are not necessarily equivalent. Beyond the present scope: which is *more* desirable may be a contextual matter, or decidable by logical or material considerations.
2. David Harvey argues, from one Marxist perspective, that RTTC is a collective right and not an individual right; cf. David Harvey, 'The Right to the City, *New Left Review* 53 (2008), 23-40.
3. Mark Purcell sees citizens' claim on RTTC as grounded in their contribution to urban experience and urban space; if so, the suburban claim is strengthened; cf. Mark Purcell, 'Excavating Lefebvre: The Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant,' *GeoJournal* 58 (2002): 99-108.
4. Margaret Cuonzo sees RTTC in holistic, ecological terms—inclusive of the city and all its citizens at once; cf. Margaret Cuonzo, 'The Right to the City and the Rights of the City.' In Deborah Mutnick, Margaret Cuonzo, Carole Griffiths,

- Timothy Leslie, Jay M. Shuttleworth (eds.), *The City is an Ecosystem: Sustainable Education, Policy, and Practice*, (London: Routledge, 2022), 105-115.
5. Loren King, 'Henri Lefebvre and the Right to the City.' In Sharon M. Meagher, Samantha Noll, and Joseph S. Biehl (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of the City*, (London: Routledge, 2019), 76-86.
  6. Kafui A. Attah, 'What Kind of Right is the Right to the City?,' *Progress in Human Geography* 35 (2011) 5: 669–685; cf. 674.
  7. While in Marxist orthodoxy, the city is a material artifact assembled by its inhabitants, Lefebvre takes the city as more of an artwork than a mundane instrument or tool. Cf. Henri Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la Ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968), 54-55.
  8. Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la Ville*, 108, 120-121.
  9. *Ibid.*, 120-121; Attah, 'What Kind of Right', 674.
  10. Some RTTC advocates focus on a right to cities in particular as opposed to rights to generic places (as also include rural, suburban, unsettled places, etc.). I propose that cities' density and intensity effects—e.g., on social, economic, cultural, and communal conditions, information and communication facility, and so on—demand our rights-wise attention. Density and intensity are core characteristics of cities that (a) brought them into being—ostensibly, a net positive, as well as (b) produced many pressing problems of urban life.
  11. The *locus classicus* for subsequent Marxist defenses of a Lefebvrian RTTC, particularly in a geography tradition, is David Harvey, 'The Right to the City'; cf. also David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012). Don Mitchell focuses on public space, emphasizing RTTC as a means of contesting privatization (cf. Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (London: Guilford Press, 2003), esp. 13-41). Other authors view the Lefebvrian right in the context of European Marxism of his day. Chris Butler stresses the French autogestion tradition (Chris Butler, *Henri Lefebvre: Spatial Politics, Everyday Life and the Right to the City* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge-Cavendish, 2012), esp. 133-159); Daniel Mullis sees a continuity with the Italian operaismo refrain: Daniel Mullis, 'Prendersi la città' ('Recht auf die Stadt. Facetten und Möglichkeiten einer Parole,' *Emanzipation*, 3 (2013) 2, 57-70). Jean-Pierre Garnier offers a Marxist dissent, rejecting a Lefebvrian addressing ills of capitalist urbanization as prone to serving as "...alibi, wishful thinking, or fiction"; cf. Jean-Pierre Garnier, 'Le droit à la ville de Henri Lefebvre à David Harvey. Entre théorisations et realization,' *L'Homme & la Société*, 1 (2014) 191: 59-70.

12. Wesley Hohfeld, *Fundamental Legal Conceptions as Applied in Judicial Reasoning*, Walter Wheeler Cook, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919); for an overview, cf. Leif Wenar, 'Rights,' *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2005); <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights>. Attoh ('What Kind of Right') suggests how the rights literature may ground RTTC.
13. A distinctive model has it that a single right with different aspects accommodates the varied traditional goals of rights.
14. Defined by, e.g., ethnicity, sub-culture, age, etc.
15. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for highlighting the positive right entailed here.
16. See Mitchell, *The Right to the City* (2003). For further notions of public space and rights thereto, see Evelyn S. Ruppert, 'Rights to Public Space: Regulatory Reconfigurations of Liberty', *Urban Geography*, 27 (2006) 3: 271-292; and elsewhere in this issue.
17. Even as some worry about a strict determinism, empirical evidence mounts for enhanced propensities to specific behavioral, cognitive, or emotional responses to architectural design; cf. Sarah Williams Goldhagen, *Welcome to Your World: How the Built Environment Shapes Our Lives* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2017); and Debra Flanders Cushing and Evonne Miller, *Creating Great Places: Evidence-based Urban Design for Health and Wellbeing* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).
18. Saul Fisher, 'Architecture and Philosophy of the City.' In Meagher, Noll, and Biehl, *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of the City*, 131-142.
19. See, e.g., Russ Shafer-Landau, 'Specifying Absolute Rights,' *Arizona Law Review* 37 (1995): 209-24; for a rejection of absolute rights; see, e.g., Judith Jarvis Thomson, *The Realm of Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
20. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for noting

this issue and suggesting a scale-based articulation of responsibilities.

21. Assigning such responsibilities to architects prompts yet other concerns. Architects are almost never solely responsible for satisfying moral claims as attach to even fractional RTTC. Their responsibilities may be outweighed by those with greater power to determine the fate of cities—or broad, popular rights to them. Further, the temporally and demographically diffuse nature of rights holders—the shifting city populace over time—make unclear to whom architects might have responsibilities, or how the duration of such responsibilities should be gauged.