

## **Ecological citizen on the barricades: Examples from right to the city movements in Spain and Turkey**

Social movements, as powerful channels of political expression and mobilization, have become global phenomena with potential to reshape societies and politics around the world. The purpose of this forthcoming project is to produce a comparative study of right to the city movements by analyzing the re-politicization of the citizens engaged in Spain's Indignados movement and Turkey's Gezi movement. Despite the large diversity of scholarly explanations of social movements revolving around different societal issues in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, little has been said about the repercussions that politicization can have on our understanding of citizenship. To address this gap, first, the project aims at analyzing how processes of urban and ecological re-politicization feature in right to the city movements by giving examples from Spain's Indignados and Turkey's Gezi Movement. Both movements became landmarks of contemporary socio-ecological struggles manifesting themselves as mobilizations against urban transformation. The struggles targeted mega-projects that were leading to enclosure of urban/rural commons, but at the same time they also created ruptures, generating spaces of hope, cooperation, and the reclamation of right to the city against market-oriented developmentalism. Secondly, the project aims at exploring the concept of ecological citizenship by analyzing strategies and potentials of these movements regarding socio-political change and improvement of citizenship practices. The new concept of ecological citizenship has emerged from critiques of liberal democracy, highlighting the limited degree of citizen participation in areas that generate ecological problems, e.g. decisions about consumption, investment strategies, production and technology

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(Barry 1999, Dobson 2003, Barry and Eckersley 2005). From this perspective, the reconstruction of citizenship as ecological citizenship underlines "the responsibilities and obligations of the citizen in the framework of a sustainable society and in relation to unrepresented or underrepresented collectives" (Valencia Saiz 2000: 191). As such it also represents an expansion of political space and participation. This study draws on the concept of ecological citizenship to analyze new public spaces created by Indignados and Gezi, and how these serve as platforms for creative and constructive strategies of ecological transformation. These strategies include guerilla plantations, urban gardening, neighborhood forums, protest art, world extension teams for social media mobilization and participatory budgeting. This is conceptualized along a continuum of active citizenry, whereby social movements facilitate the movement of populations towards active and ecological citizenship. The focus on new spaces, practices and strategies in this study also means of balancing the mass media discourses, which tend to view social movements through the lenses of conflict, chaos and violence.