

# SOCIAL FORUM HABITAT III 2016

U.S.A.



## HOUSING RIGHT

**The Right to Housing is not in the US Constitution !**

But

**American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man**

**Article XI** (Right to the preservation of health and to well-being)

«Every person has the right to the preservation of his health through sanitary and social measures relating to food, clothing, housing and medical care, to the extent permitted by public and community resources.»

## How have housing rights evolved in the United States?

Some specific, although quite limited, rights / entitlements exist in the housing area. Local housing codes (varying enormously with respect to coverage and standards) provide something of a right to decent physical conditions. But enforcement is a problem and market realities limit the benefits these regulations offer.

A warranty of habitability and rent-withholding provisions exist in some jurisdictions. While this levels the playing field somewhat between landlord and tenant, it falls short of guaranteeing decent housing conditions and, as is true of housing codes, does not deal with the key issue of affordability. In those few areas that still have rent control, limits are placed on rent increases. (...)

Source : Chester Hartman Director of research at the Poverty & Race Research Action Council in Washington, DC.



Redevelopment of Sandy-devastated neighborhoods with inshabitants in New York



Photo : Homeless children USA



Photo : Kindnessblog.com 10 facts about being homeless in the USA by Bill Quigley - 2014

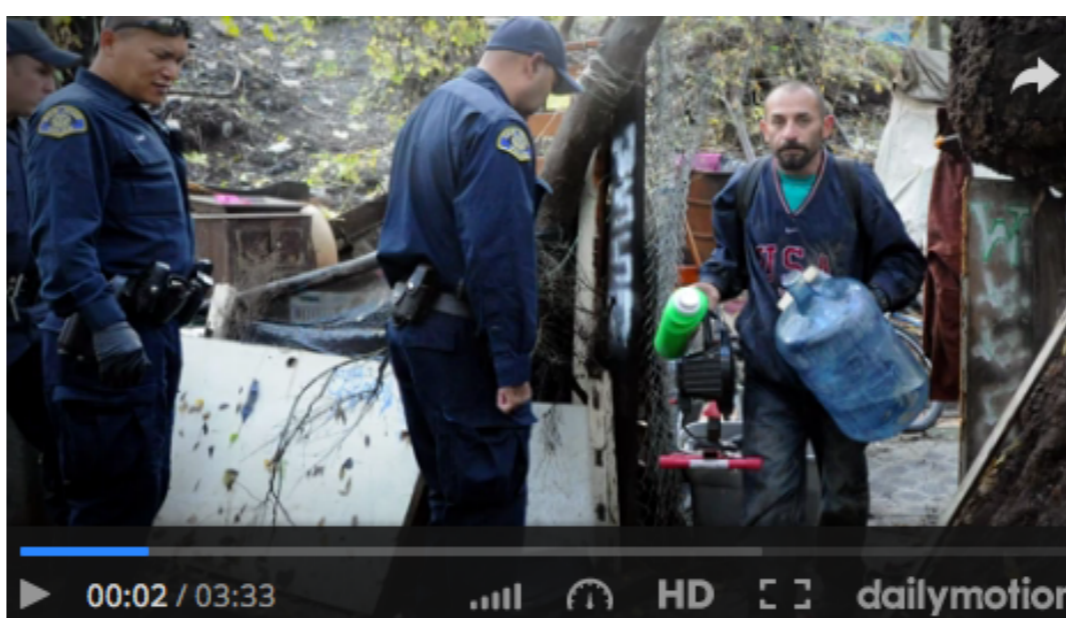
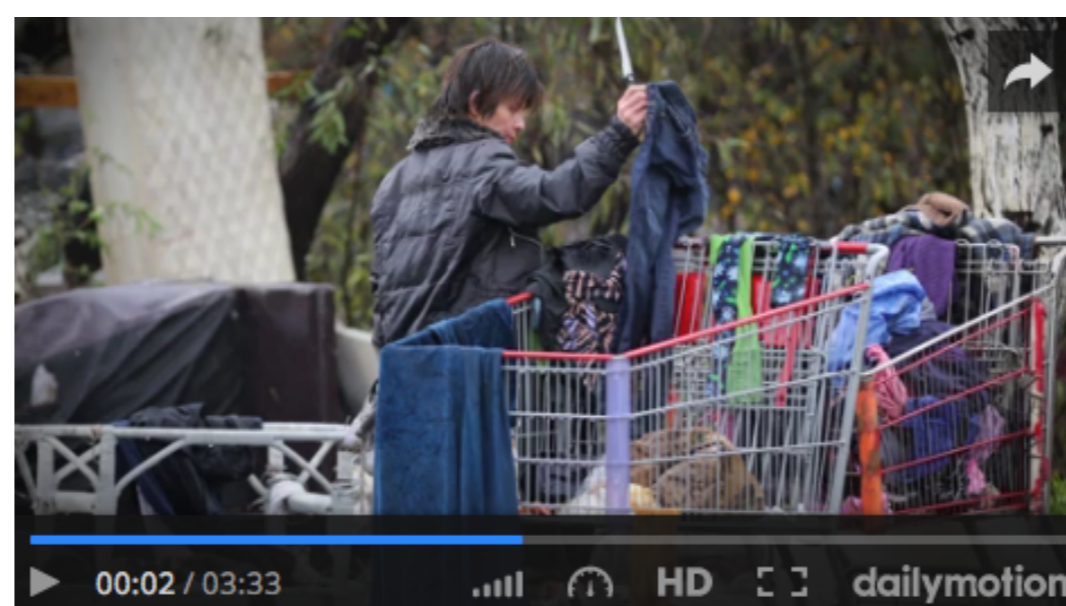
## HOMELESS & SLUMS

According to the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, since the '80s, the number of homeless has increased dramatically. **Each year, more than 3 million Americans, including 1.3 million children experience homelessness!**

According to national studies, millions of Americans living with low incomes spend more than half their income on housing (although it is recommended not devoted only 30%). Today, one third of homeless families and is composed of racial and ethnic minorities are particularly affected. the face of homelessness is increasingly diverse.

## HOMELESS ARE CRIMINALIZED

As the **American prison population grew rapidly from the 1980s**, from around 500,000 people in 1980 to 1,150,000 by 1990 and to over 2.3 million at the end of 2005, some observers concluded that the [US] penal system was a key instrument in «governing social marginality». One element of this **“culture of control”** is the increased State regulation and criminal prosecution of street beggars. Thus, some of the observed increase in the prison population could be accounted for by the increasing incarceration of individuals convicted of begging, persons who in many cases were homeless and utilizing begging as a humiliating strategy of survival. Source : Habitat International Coalition



EVICION of the «Jungle» an informal Housing in the Silicon Valley



## Evictions – quantatively :

In Detroit, more than 200,000 residents have had their residential water shut turned off (approximately 1/3 of the city), and approximately 10% of these households have had their water bills placed on home property taxes. The number of homes that were foreclosed on because of a household's inability to pay the property taxes in 2015 was approximately 28,000, affecting nearly 80,000 people. This year there are about 18,000 tax foreclosures that affect about 51,000 residents.

Most affected = women, children, the elderly, people of color.

## Evictions – causes of the problem :

Residents are unable to pay for the cost of public and private goods and services, including resources needed for basic human needs (like water), because of capitalism's devastation of local economies, the exportation of living wage jobs by corporations, and the destruction of the welfare state safety net. Big responsibility of the Banks.

## Eviction – consequences :

- > Criminalization of homeless and squatters
- > Gentrification of the City of Detroit (= actual cause)
- > 150,000 owners have already lost their property titles
- > Family Relocation = loss of neighbors, the community, schools
- > Loss of custody of her children

Source : Michigan Welfare Rights Organisation, (MWRO) Detroit, USA

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