

***Notice of Doctoral Dissertation Examination***

**Diana Zacca Thomaz**

Doctor of Philosophy in Global Governance

**“Neighbouring horizons: migration, squatting, and citizenship in São Paulo”**

**ABSTRACT**

**Thursday November 5  
2:00 PM**

Via Videoconference

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This dissertation examines the shared struggles and political horizons of citizens and non-citizens living together in squatted buildings in central São Paulo, Brazil. Building on six months of ethnographic fieldwork, it focuses on the coalition forged between the MSTC (*Movimento Sem Teto do Centro*, i.e. Central São Paulo Roofless Movement) and international migrants and asylum-seekers who have taken up residence in the movement’s squats. This dissertation argues that the problem of political subjectivity and belonging at the urban margins is deeply shaped by the struggles for adequate housing. Further, that looking at the divergent aspirations and claims-making of citizens and international migrants reveals how the ideal of full citizenship can inspire progressive change, but at the same time can reinscribe discourses that promote inequality, and also fail to fully capture people’s political imaginations. The dissertation highlights how squatters, and those inhabiting precarious forms of housing more generally, are constructed as the immanent others of the city’s “good” or “full” citizens; portrayed as burdens and threats to

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society, they are perceived as undeserving of rights and political participation, regardless of their formal citizenship status. The constitution of the virtuous identity of the citizen in cities is thus intimately tied to processes of residential segregation. In analysing the aspirations and claims-making of those pushed to the margins of both cities and of citizenship, the dissertation illustrates that when they articulate a discourse that positions them as valuable city dwellers deserving of rights, they can contest ingrained prejudices and access rights and political recognition, but that they risk reinforcing the notion that not all city dwellers should expect to be treated as “full citizens.” The dissertation also shows that international migrants, with horizons informed by transnational ties, can evade the local discourse of deservingness, and thus reveal the limitations of fighting for full citizenship in highly unequal cities—and also critique the legitimacy of international borders guarding national citizenship regimes. These arguments have implications for how we conceptualize the relationship between cities and citizenship, for how we analyse the political horizons of international migrants, and for how we interpret coalitions forged between citizens and non-citizens.

***Dissertation will be on deposit in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and available for perusal.***

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