WHY INDIA CANNOT PLAN ITS CITIES: INFORMALITY, INSURGENCE AND THE IDIOM OF URBANIZATION

Ananya Roy
University of California, Berkeley, USA

Abstract   The fast-paced growth of the Indian economy and particularly its cities has produced an urban crisis, one that is marked by the lack of adequate infrastructure and growth management as well as by sharp social divisions that are starkly etched in a landscape of bourgeois enclaves and slums. In this context, there are numerous calls for a more decisive and vigorous type of planning that can 'future-proof' Indian cities. Yet, such efforts are often unsuccessful and many are fiercely challenged by social movements and forms of insurgence. This article explains this urban crisis by analyzing the structure of urban informality in India. While informality is often seen to be synonymous with poverty, this article makes the case that India's planning regime is itself an informalized entity, one that is a state of deregulation, ambiguity, and exception. This idiom of urbanization makes possible new frontiers of development but also creates the territorial impossibility of governance, justice, and development.

Keywords   Indian cities, informality, insurgence, neoliberalism, urban development

1. Two scenes of Indian urbanization

In late May an article appeared in the *New York Times* about the city of Bangalore in southern India (Sengupta, 2008). Bangalore, often understood as India's Silicon Valley, is a booming metropolis whose economic prosperity has far outstripped its urban infrastructure. The article noted that while the city had

built a new airport, modeled after the Zurich airport, a whole set of planning failures accompanied this infrastructural investment. The airport was located 21 miles outside town and the roads connecting the city center to the airport had not been widened sufficiently to accommodate traffic. The city water supply had not reached the airport area and so the shops, office towers, and other developments that were supposed to surround the airport had not yet been built. The article pinpoints various explanations for this planning failure. The first is that India's urban growth is so dramatic that it 'consistently outstrips even the most perspicacious planner's vision for it'. This is the narrative of the chaotic Third World mega-city that defies all planning controls and forecasts. The second explanation is that Indian planners consistently underestimate infrastructure and service needs, that they fail to 'future-proof' by planning for 'unforeseen growth'. 'Are they planning for the future or for the present?' asks one citizen, stuck in Bangalore's notorious traffic. The article notes that this is not unique to Bangalore and that in Gurgaon, the hyper-global suburban town at the edge of metropolitan Delhi, traffic was backed up on a new highway toll road the very day it opened 'because planners far underestimated growth in traffic'. This of course is the narrative of planning incompetence. The third explanation is that the new Bangalore airport is a symbol of a new planning regime in India, of a paradigm shift from state-run infrastructure to infrastructure that is built and managed by private developers, often those granted monopoly powers by the state. This is the narrative of neoliberal capitalism and the perils of unchecked liberalization. As Goldman (2008: 3) notes, Bangalore is being increasingly 'planned' if not by private developers, then by international finance institutions (such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank) who are

> pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into road expansion, water and sanitation projects, and municipal reforms . . . because these globally competitive high-tech firms make demands for world-class services (e.g. 24/7 water, power, fast transport, a responsive and accountable state bureaucracy, fully accessorized housing complexes).

But can these capital inflows address a city that is deeply divided: one where:

> while Infosys, the second largest Indian IT firm, has backup diesel generators that can run for days at a time, and ships in water from deep rural aquifers, most of the population only receives water from the public distribution system a few hours every third day, access to sanitation/sewerage services is minimal, and flows of electricity are irregular. (Goldman, 2008: 3)

Can the public interest of the city be left in the hands of private developers? Will they be better planners and 'future-proofers'? Or will it simply create a scenario of splintered urbanism where private means emerge as solutions to the paucity of integrated public infrastructure? Thus, the *New York Times* article interviews Mr G.R. Gopinath, owner of the low-cost and highly successful airline, Deccan Air, who will start offering a helicopter shuttle for Bangalore commuters. It will cost about $100 and take 10 minutes. While Bangalore is India's 'city of millionaires' (*Economic Times*, 2007), a wealth accumulation driven by information technology innovation and business process outsourcing,

per capita income in the city was only $690 in 2004 (*The Statesman*, 2004) and much lower in the surrounding rural districts of the state of Karnataka, of which Bangalore is the capital. Who then can take that $100, 10 minute, helicopter ride?

Each of these narratives is important and presents an important glimpse into the complexities of urban planning in India. However, the explanation that caught my attention was this: that 'most road and rail links that the government had promised to build to the airport have been delayed or scrapped, in part because lawsuits over acquiring the land and in part because they involve 32 government agencies'. The article then tells us about one of these numerous lawsuits.

> One lawsuit holding up the expressway project concerns D.M. Dwarkanath, a retired executive of a state-owned company. He risks losing his small bungalow to make way for the route. A hospice for children with AIDS is also threatened. Such cases have sown deep resentment among many people here, who wonder: why do people have to make way for India's frequent-flying classes, which are still relatively small? 'It is only for the rich people', Mr Dwarkanath said fuming. 'They don't have patience. They want to rush to the airplane. They want to sweep everyone out of the way. Why should we live? Sweep us into the sea!' They further contend that the path of the proposed expressway has been amended to spare the properties of politically connected people, a charge Mr Baligar (principal secretary for commerce and industries for Karnataka state) denies. He says the national highway authority will decide who must make way for the highway. (Sengupta, 2008)

At the far edges of the Calcutta metropolitan region in eastern India, people are indeed being asked to make way for planned development. This is the second scene of Indian urbanization. The rhetoric this time is not of planning failures but rather of the need for planners to take decisive action under the sign of 'public purpose'. Here, the Left Front, a socialist coalition led by the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), is busy acquiring agricultural land for private development. To do so, it has displaced subsistence and smallholder farmers and sharecroppers, often using not only the instrument of eminent domain but also the sheer violence of its political apparatus. The argument has been made thus, by Nirupam Sen, Minister of Industries, West Bengal:

> If a particular industry wants a big chunk of land in a contiguous area for setting up a large plant there, it is not possible for the industry to purchase land from each and every farmer, particularly in West Bengal where fragmentation of land is very high. If a large chunk of land is needed for a very important industrial project, will the State government not acquire it for the project? And, of course, it is a public purpose. Industrialisation means employment generation, it means development of society; the entire people of the State will be benefited. Therefore, it is in the interest of public purpose that the land has been acquired. (Chattopadhyay, 2006)

But such 'public purpose' projects require more of the state than simply the acquisition of land through eminent domain instruments. In keeping with global trends and in seeking to remake the state of West Bengal as a premier site of global investment, the Left Front is planning a series of Special Economic

Zones. Here the state creates zones of exception (Ong, 2007), suspending laws and creating exceptional benefits for corporate investors. Equally significant, the state often provides what Harvey (1989) has called 'geobribes'. In a context of global capitalism, with different regions competing with one another for a share of global flows of capital, states are often providing extraordinary deals to corporate investors. Billed as 'private' development, such geobribes are examples of the exorbitant public subsidies that underwrite capital accumulation – in this case, near-free gifts of valuable land, massive tax subsidies – all to large corporate houses and all without any promise or guarantee of employment generation (Mitra, 2007). The argument is that without such exceptional benefits, global capitalists will simply look elsewhere and West Bengal will be a loser in this global game of mobile capital and immobile regions. Here then is an example of decisive planning, one that acts in the name of 'public purpose' and one that seeks to 'future-proof' by aggressively facilitating industrial development. It seems to exist in sharp contrast to the Bangalore scene and indicates the ways in which India can indeed plan its future, albeit in ways that are explicitly anti-poor.

But this planning scenario has been sharply critiqued and fiercely contested. As the Left Front has sought to violently displace farmers in the village of Nandigram, so this violence has become starkly visible to national and international audiences. The farmers of Nandigram, organized by an opposition party, the Trinamul Congress, have refused to make way for a Special Economic Zone. Images of poor farmers being beaten by the functionaries of the state, of mothers and daughters recently raped by political thugs, have quickly eroded the longstanding legitimacy of the Left Front in West Bengal. In the May 2008 elections, the Left Front lost several rural districts that surround the Calcutta metropolitan region to the Trinamul Congress. Nandigram itself has become the lightning rod for what may yet turn out to be a national movement against the spatial instruments of neoliberal development: eminent domain, special economic zones, land acquisition, displacement. Despite the decisive planning moves, the Left Front has been unable to implement the Special Economic Zone in Nandigram and indeed all such instances of planning are now facing social mobilization and rebellion. In India, 'future-proofing' has turned out to be a much more tricky enterprise than that anticipated by the state and its planners.

2. The idiom of urbanization

Idiom, a peculiarity, from idiousthai, to make one's own, private, peculiar.

1. the language or dialect of a people, region, class, etc.
2. the usual way in which the words of a language are joined together to express thought.
3. an accepted phrase, construction, or expression contrary to the usual patterns of the language or having a meaning different from the literal.
4. a characteristic style.

(*Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd edn)

The two scenes of Indian urbanization described above when taken together can be seen to present an incontrovertible argument about the failure of planning in India: that informality and insurgence together undermine the possibilities of rational planning, and that therefore India cannot plan its cities. Against this narrative of failed planning, I present the argument that what is at work in the two scenes is an idiom of urbanization. This idiom is peculiar and particular to the Indian political economy and yet can be detected in many other contexts. While this idiom seems to be antithetical to planning, and indeed seems to be anti-planning, it can and must be understood as a planning regime. I also argue that the key feature of this idiom is informality. Let me explain by returning to the two scenes of urbanization.

The planning of Indian cities cannot be understood as the forecasting and management of growth. Instead, urban planning in India has to be understood as the management of resources, particularly land, through dynamic processes of informality. By informality I mean a state of deregulation, one where the ownership, use, and purpose of land cannot be fixed and mapped according to any prescribed set of regulations or the law. Indeed, here the law itself is rendered open-ended and subject to multiple interpretations and interests, the 'law as social process' is as idiosyncratic and arbitrary as that which is illegal (Berry, 1993; Holston, 2007). There are two important ways in which such informality comes to be actualized in the processes of urbanization and planning. First, informality is inscribed in the ever-shifting relationship between what is legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, authorized and unauthorized. This relationship is both arbitrary and fickle and yet is the site of considerable state power and violence. For example, Ghertner (2008) notes that almost all of Delhi violates some planning or building law, such that much of the construction in the city can be viewed as 'unauthorized'. He poses the vital question of why some of these areas are now being designated as illegal and worthy of demolition while others are protected and formalized. How and why is it that in recent years the law has come to designate slums as 'nuisance' and the residents of slums as a 'secondary category of citizens', those that are distinguished from 'normal', private property owning citizens? Ghertner (2008: 66) notes that 'developments that have the "world-class" look (e.g. Akshardam temple) despite violating zoning of building byelaws are granted amnesty and heralded as monuments of modernity'. Such differentiation, between the informal and the informal (rather than between the legal and the paralegal) is a fundamental axis of inequality in urban India today. Similarly, Holston (2007: 228) notes that Brazilian cities are marked by an 'unstable relationship between the legal and illegal'. While it may seem obvious and apparent that the urban poor are engaged in an informal and illegal occupation of land, much of the city itself is occupied through the 'misrule of law': 'Thus in both the wealthiest and the poorest of Brazilian families we find legal landholdings that are at base legalized usurpations' (Holston, 2007: 207). What is the relationship between planning and this sanctified 'misrule of law'? Who then is authorized to (mis)use the law in such ways to declare property ownership, zones of exception, and enclaves of value? The democratization of urban space in Brazil, Holston (2007:

204) argues, is a process by which the urban poor have learned to use the law and legitimize their own land claims: 'they perpetuate the misrule of law but for their own purposes'.

Second, while it has been often assumed that the modern state governs its subjects and conducts planning through technologies of visibility, counting, mapping, and enumerating, in previous work I argue that regimes of urban governance also operate through an 'unmapping' of cities (Roy, 2003). Such work examines the manner in which, on the peri-urban fringes of Calcutta, forms of deregulation and unmapping, that is, informality, allow the state considerable territorialized flexibility to alter land use, deploy eminent domain, and to acquire land. In particular, it has been possible for the state to undertake various forms of urban and industrial development, for example, through the conversion of land to urban use, often in violation of its own bans against such conversion. Here the state itself is a deeply informalized entity, one that actively utilize informality as an instrument of both accumulation and authority. In a manner similar to the Schmittian logic of exception, the state, as the sovereign keeper of the law, is able to place itself outside the law in order to practice development. What then is planning? Is it that which remains bounded by the law and upholds formal regulations? Or is it the relationship between the published plan and unmapped territory? In India, it seems to be the latter. But this comes with a challenge: that while informality makes possible the territorialized flexibility of the state it can also paralyze the developmentalism of the state in myriad Lilliputian negotiations. Such is the story in Bangalore where the expansion of the airport road is mired in a set of land claims. While a regime of deregulation and unmapping may have empowered the state to arbitrarily allocate land to new land uses and owners, including monopoly rights to private developers, it has also kept alive multiple claims to land that now have to be either compensated or rendered illegal through new tactics of power and violence. The limits of the state's violence are made evident in the case of Nandigram. And yet, such forms of insurgence cannot be seen as the means to justice in an unjust planning regime. Rather, from the very start, insurgent claims to land have been nurtured and fostered by systems of deregulation, unmapping, and informality. Squatters and sharecroppers were able to establish territorial claims in the unmapped city. However, these claims were precisely this: claims, not rights – and remained dependent on the arbitrary and fickle practices of the state. Such forms of uncertainty only deepened the political dependence of the rural-urban poor and guaranteed their obedience to the project of populist patronage. As the state's developmentalism has been held hostage by the very informality that facilitates its transactions, so insurgence has been trapped by the very informality that gave it a place in the city. In short, the Indian city is made possible through an idiom of planning whose key feature is informality, and yet this idiom creates a certain territorial impossibility of governance, justice, and development.

3. Four propositions about informality

Over two decades ago Janice Perlman (1986) published a now famous essay on the six misconceptions about squatter settlements. Her propositions

undermined the 'myth of marginality' and established a new common sense about urban marginality. My task here is less ambitious. Nevertheless, I wish to set out four propositions about informality that call into question the ways in which this concept is often used in the study of cities and planning. In particular, I present these ideas in opposition to a dominant viewpoint that conceptualizes informality as a separate and bounded sector of unregulated work, enterprise and settlement. While often sympathetic to the struggle of the 'informals', this framework presents informality as an extra-legal domain and thus argues for policy interventions that would integrate the informal into the legal, formal, and planned sectors of political economy. Such a perspective pervades a wide right-to-left spectrum of analytical work, from the neoliberal populism of Hernando de Soto (2000) to the Gramscian conceptualization of subaltern politics by postcolonial theorists, notably Partha Chatterjee (2004). In contrast, I call into question this division between the law and informality and argue that legal norms and forms of regulation are in and of themselves permeated by the logic of informality. In recent times, planning theorists have sought to take up the idea of informality as a feature of planning. For example, an article in the flagship *Journal of the American Planning Association* by Judith Innes, Sarah Connick and David Booher (2007: 207) presents informality as a 'valuable strategy of planning'. For these authors, the term 'informality', signifies planning strategies that are 'neither prescribed nor proscribed by any rules . . . The idea of informality also connotes casual and spontaneous interactions and personal affective ties among participants.' But such a framework quite drastically depoliticizes the concept of informality by misrecognizing systems of deregulation and unmapping as casual and spontaneous. Indeed, there is nothing casual or spontaneous about the calculated informality that undergirds the territorial practices of the state. This idiom of state power is structural and is thus a far cry from the 'personal affective ties' that Innes et al. seek to highlight. The following propositions make evident the structural nature of informality as a strategy of planning.

3.1. Informality is not synonymous with poverty

The current common sense on informality is that it is synonymous with poverty. Davis (2006) sees the 'slum' as the global prototype of a warehousing of the rural-urban poor, marginalized by structural adjustment and deindustrialization. De Soto (1989, 2000) sees informality as a revolution from below, the entrepreneurial strategy or tactical operations of the poor marginalized by bureaucracy and state capitalism. Neither approach is able to pinpoint the ways in which informality is also associated with forms of wealth and power. The splintering of urbanism does not take place at the fissure between formality and informality but rather, in fractal fashion, *within* the informalized production of space. A closer look at the metropolitan regions of much of the world indicates that informal urbanization is as much the purview of wealthy urbanites and suburbanites as it is that of squatters and slum-dwellers. With the consolidation of neoliberalism, there has also been a 'privatization of informality'. While informality was once primarily located on public land and practiced in public space, it is today a crucial mechanism in wholly privatized and marketized urban

formations, as in the informal subdivisions that constitute the peri-urbanization of so many cities. These forms of informality are no more legal than squatter settlements and shantytowns. But they are expressions of class power and can thus command infrastructure, services, and legitimacy in a way that marks them as substantially different from the landscape of slums. The important analytical (and political) question to ask in the Indian context, as well in others, is why some forms of informality are criminalized and thus rendered illegal while others enjoy state sanction or are even practices of the state.

3.2. Informality is a deregulated rather than unregulated system

It is commonplace to talk about informality as the lack of regulation. In the classic text, *The Informal Economy*, Castells and Portes (1989) designate the informal as that which is unregulated in an economy where similar activities are regulated. In short, 'it is because there is a formal economy that we can speak of an "informal" one' (Castells and Portes, 1989: 13). This work was revolutionary because two decades ago it departed 'from the notions of economic dualism and social marginality' such that the same concept could be applied to 'a street seller in Latin America and a software consultant moonlighting in Silicon Valley' (Castells and Portes, 1989: 12). But there is an important distinction between unregulated systems and those that are deregulated. Deregulation indicates a calculated informality, one that involves purposive action and planning, and one where the seeming withdrawal of regulatory power creates a logic of resource allocation, accumulation, and authority. It is in this sense that informality, while a system of deregulation, can be thought of as a mode of regulation. And this is something quite distinct from the failure of planning or the absence of the state. Thus, many scholars, working in the context of development, have pointed to ambiguities of land tenure systems but they have done so to indicate the 'fragility of authority', the 'Achilles' heel' of resettlement schemes and state-led development (for example, Li, 2007). I argue that such ambiguities are precisely the basis of state authority and serve as modes of sovereignty and discipline.

Two very different examples may help make this point. In the case of Calcutta, I have sought to plot the relationship between the formal plan and unmapped, deregulated territory by reworking the questions we may ask of such a city. My initial questions, in keeping with a traditional understanding of planning as the management of land use and growth were: How can I find the appropriate map? Who owns this piece of land? What uses are planned for it? In their place, I learned to ask: what does it mean to have fluid and contested land boundaries? How does this ambiguity regarding status and use shape processes of urban development? How does this establish the possibilities and limits of participating in such land games? (Roy, 2003). More recently, Naomi Klein (2007) has presented an analysis of the disaster capitalism complex that makes evident how the deregulation of political economies is tied to the deregulation of space. She shows how, in the last decade, there has been the emergence of a parallel, privatized disaster infrastructure that caters exclusively to the wealthy and the 'chosen', those who can opt out of the collective system. Here, as in the case of Calcutta, deregulation becomes a logic of resource allocation, accumulation, and authority.

3.3. The state is an informalized entity, or informality from above

As informality is defined as an unregulated domain of activities, so it is often understood to be unplanned. In particular, the informal sector is seen to exist outside 'institutionalized regulation' (Castells and Portes, 1989: 12) and is subsequently imagined as extra-legal (de Soto, 1989) or para-legal (Chatterjee, 2004) or as a 'shadow city' (Neuwirth, 2004). Informality is thus viewed as the practices of the subaltern (Bayat, 2000), a democracy 'from below' (Appadurai, 2002). I argue that informality has to be understood not as a grassroots phenomenon, but rather as a feature of structures of power. In my earlier work, I conceptualized the informal as a site of extra-legal discipline, continuous with formal systems of regulation (Roy, 2003). While I wish to maintain the idea of informality as a mode of discipline, power, and regulation, I now seek to reject the designation of extra-legality. That terminology implies that informality is a system that runs parallel to the formal and the legal. Yet, the formal and the legal are perhaps better understood as fictions, as moments of fixture in otherwise volatile, ambiguous, and uncertain systems of planning. In other words, informality exists at the very heart of the state and is an integral part of the territorial practices of state power. For example, in the Calcutta context, I have argued that it is not sufficient to examine the deployment of eminent domain or 'vesting' as an instrument of the state. Instead, it is also necessary to understand the informalization of 'vesting' (Roy, 2004). The concept of informal vesting may seem to be an oxymoron. Vesting indicates the legal expropriation of land by the state in the public interest or confiscation of land in excess of land ceilings set by agrarian reforms and the urban land ceiling act. Informality signifies extralegal, and possibly illegal, mechanisms of regulation. But what makes vesting such a powerful instrument in Calcutta is precisely this convergence of legality and extra-legality in the same process. It is the informal vested status of the land that allowed sharecroppers, supported by the Left Front, to establish de facto use rights; it is this informal vested status that 10 years later made it possible for the Left Front to reclaim this land for the resettlement of central city squatters; and that yet 10 years later allowed the Left Front to displace both squatters and any remaining sharecroppers to make way for peri-urban townships, Special Economic Zones, and other forms of development. It is this territorialized flexibility that allows the state to 'future-proof', to make existing land available for new uses, to devalorize current uses and users and to make way for a gentrified future; in short, to plan. It is naïve to designate such processes as extra-legal, for they do not exist outside the law. Rather as practices of the state they are elements of an ensemble of sovereign power and the management of territory. This is informality from above, rather than informality as a subaltern revolution from below.

3.4. Insurgence does not necessarily create a just city

It is tempting to interpret the tactics and struggles of the urban poor in the cities of the global South as instances of rebellion and mobilization. Are these 'shadow cities' not revolutionary, examples of a 'globalization from below' (Appadurai, 2002; Neuwirth, 2004)? Is not the community organizing work of squatter settlements an inspiring case of the 'politics of patience' in the face of

the 'tyranny of emergency' (Appadurai, 2002)? And if this is not planning – the politics of patience in the face of the tyranny of emergency – if this is not future-proofing, what is? But the relationship between insurgence, informality, and planning is more complicated. As planning is not an antidote to informality, so insurgence is not an antidote to the exclusionary city, particularly not to the types of exclusion that are deepened and maintained through the informalized practices of the state. Here it is important to reflect on the arguments presented by Castells (1983) in the seminal text, *The City and the Grassroots*. Taking a closer look at the insurgence of squatters in various world-regions, Castells argues that most of these are examples of urban populism rather than of radical social movements. Urban populism, according to him, is the 'process of establishing political legitimacy on the basis of a popular mobilization supported by and aimed at the delivery of land, housing, and public services' (Castells, 1983: 175). Such forms of urban populism characterize the enfranchisement of squatters and sharecroppers in the Calcutta metropolitan region, allowing the rural-urban poor fragile and tenuous access to shelter and services in exchange for political and electoral loyalties. The fierce and bloody struggles in Nandigram seem to mark a break with such patterns of political dependence. And yet, they can also be understood as yet another instance of populist patronage, one where insurgent peasants are now bound to the electoral calculus of oppositional politics and the protection of the Trinamul Congress. Such forms of insurgence then do not and often cannot call into question the urban status quo; they can imagine but cannot implement the just city. And most of all, they depend on, and simultaneously perpetuate, the systems of deregulation and unmapping that constitute the idiom of planning. This is the informal city, and it is also an insurgent city, but it is not necessarily a just city. It is a city where access to resources is acquired through various associational forms but where these associations also require obedience, tribute, contribution and can thus be a 'claustrophobic game' (Simone, 2004: 219).

The complex relationship between insurgence and social justice is carefully delineated in the recent work of James Holston (2007). Holston designates the struggles of São Paulo's urban working classes as 'insurgent citizenship' and notes the territorial rights that are established through such social mobilizations. The city's auto-constructed peripheries, and their gradual formalization, are a vivid example of insurgence. Such insurgence also transcends the peripheries as it creates a solid base for Brazil's 'right to the city' movement and the institutionalization and articulation of such a right in planning processes. Yet Holston's analysis indicates that the insurgent citizenship manifested in the auto-constructed peripheries is a form of propertied citizenship, one where the right to the city is expressed through home ownership and where politics is expressed through neighborhood or homeowner associations. Such propertied citizens are quick to mark the distinctions between their (newly) legal territory and the supposedly illegal territory of more recent squatters. In short, the policing of the arbitrary and fickle boundary between the legal and illegal, formal and informal, is not just the province of the state but also becomes the work of citizens, in this case insurgent citizens. This is an insurgent city, one where the very legal basis

of informality has been challenged by the urban poor, and yet it is also an exclusionary city where the poor recreate the margins of legality and formality, imposing new socio-spatial differentiations in the periphery.

4. A concluding note

The title of this article suggests that India cannot plan its cities. Indian cities serve, in such a framing, as a proxy for the Third World megacity, that which defies all norms of rational planning and 'future-proofing'. The persistent failure of planning or the splintering of cities through the privatization of planning all seem to be convincing and adequate explanations for the crisis that is the Indian city, or the Third World megacity. Yet, this article has presented a different argument. It has linked India's urban crisis to the idiom, rather than the failure, of planning. In particular it has identified informality as a key feature of this idiom such that Indian planning proceeds through systems of deregulation, unmapping, and exceptionalism. These systems are neither anomalous nor irrational; rather they embody a distinctive form of rationality that underwrites a frontier of metropolitan expansion. And yet, at least in India, urban developmentalism remains damned by the very deregulatory logic that fuels it. It is thus that the territorialized flexibility of the state gives way to the various impasses that mark the two opening scenes of Indian urbanization. Good or better planning cannot 'solve' this crisis for planning is implicated in the very production of this crisis. It is in this more fundamental sense that India cannot plan its cities.

References

Appadurai, A. (2002) 'Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics', *Public Culture* 14(1): 21–47.

Bayat, A. (2000) 'From "Dangerous Classes" to "Quiet Rebels": The Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South', *International Sociology* 15(3): 533–57.

Berry, S. (1993) *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Castells, M. (1983) *The City and the Grassroots*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Castells, M. and Portes, A. (1989) 'World Underneath: The Origins, Dynamics, and Effects of the Informal Economy', in L. Benton et al (eds) *The Informal Economy*, pp. 11–40. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Chatterjee, P. (2004) *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chattopadhyay, S. (2006) 'Land Reform Not an End in Itself: Interview with Nirupam Sen', *Frontline* 23(25): 16–29.

Davis, M. (2006) *Planet of Slums*. New York: Verso.

de Soto, H. (1989) *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*. London: I.B. Taurus.

de Soto, H. (2000) *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. New York: Basic Books.

Economic Times (2007) 'Bangalore, City of Millionaires', 2 August.

Ghertner, A. (2008) 'Analysis of New Legal Discourse Behind Delhi's Slum Demolitions', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17 May, pp. 57–66.

Goldman, M. (2008) 'Inside the "Bangalore Model" of World-city Making: E-xcitement, Inter-urban Accumulations, and Large-scale Dispossession', paper presented at the Social Science Research Council Conference on Inter-Asian Connections, Dubai.

Harvey, D. (1989) 'From Managerialism to Urban Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler* 7(1): 3–17.

Holston, J. (2007) *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Innes, J., Connick, S. and Booher, D. (2007) 'Informality as Planning Strategy: Collaborative Water Management in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program', *Journal of the American Planning Association* 73(2): 195–210.

Klein, N. (2007) *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Li, T. (2007) *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mitra, A. (2007) 'Santa Claus Visits the Tatas', *The Telegraph*, 30 March.

Neuwirth, R. (2004) *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, A New Urban World*. New York: Routledge.

Ong, A. (2006) *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Perlman, J. (1986) 'Six Misconceptions about Squatter Settlements', *Development* 4: 40–44.

Roy, A. (2003) *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Roy, A. (2004) 'The Gentleman's City', in A. Roy and N. AlSayyad (eds) *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Sengupta, S. (2008) 'An Indian Airport Hurries to Make Its First Flight', *New York Times*, 22 May.

Simone, A. (2004) *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

The Statesman (2004) 'Comparing Bangalore and Austin', 5 September, available online at: [http://www.statesman.com/business/content/business/offshoring/5compare.html].

Ananya Roy is Associate Professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley. Her teaching and research interests lie in the fields of comparative urban studies, international development, and social theory. Her current research project is entitled *Poverty Experts: Truth and Capital in the New Global Order of Development* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Address: Urban Studies Department of City & Regional Planning, 228 Wurster Hall #1850, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720–1850, USA. [email: ananya@berkeley.edu]