

# Critical development studies and the praxis of planning

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*Planning theory shares with critical urban theory an orientation toward normative political questions and a 'politics of the possible'. Beyond those broad contours, however, it is fair to say that only a thin slice of planning theory takes up the normative commitments of critical urban theory: to challenge the violence of capitalism, to seek out the agents of revolutionary social change and to interrogate the ends in relation to the means of practice. In this paper I aim to develop such normative orientations in planning theory by drawing on theoretical resources in the cognate field of critical development studies. The professional practices which both critical development studies and planning theory take as their object of study share a duplicitous relationship to processes of capitalist accumulation and liberal notions of benevolent trusteeship. Yet, critical development studies has clearly done a better job of tracing the entanglements of projects of improvement with projects of empire. When such theorizations about development are brought to bear on the more subtle object of urban planning, here too the flagrances of liberal benevolence can be exposed and challenged. The paper is organized into three sections that take up key domains in which I believe planning theory can draw (or has drawn) productively from critical development studies to strengthen its capacity to envision and defend the right to the city. These are (a) the relationship of planning to imperialism and globalization, (b) resistance and the cultural politics of agency, and (c) the contributions of transnational feminism to a praxis of solidarity and collaboration.*

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## Introduction

Planning theory shares with critical urban theory an orientation toward normative political questions and a 'politics of the possible' (Lefebvre, 2003)—insofar as it does not just analyze and predict, but also develops criteria for judgment and advocates change. Beyond those broad contours, however, it is fair to say that only a thin slice of planning theory takes up the normative commitments of critical urban theory: to challenge the violence of capitalism, to seek out the agents of revolutionary social change and

to interrogate the ends in relation to the means of practice. In this terrain of praxis Peter Marcuse has pioneered approaches geared toward extending the right to access and participate in urban life. He has done so not only through the careful articulation of a reflexive and critical theory of planning, but also through a consistent and engaged public analysis of contemporary political events. After the 9/11 attacks, the New Orleans travesty and countless other occasions of immediate political urgency, Marcuse has put forward pragmatic steps for planning action rooted in principles of social justice; he has issued

these through public statements, professional mailing lists and publications geared toward both academics and practitioners. For those of us caught up in the audit cultures infecting academia in the age of neoliberalism, these ethical interventions are a steady reminder of the privilege and responsibility we have to engage academia as 'a profound edge of struggle' for the right to the city (Roy, 2006).

In this paper I aim to build on these normative commitments by drawing on the theoretical resources available in critical development studies. This is an approach within the formally institutionalized discipline of development studies that views actually existing development practices in relation to processes of imperialism, racialization, male domination and the expansion of capital.<sup>1</sup> I argue that these perspectives have been notoriously absent from planning theory as it has been formulated with reference to planning praxis in cities of the global North. There are three reasons why I think a planning theory committed to defending the right to the city might benefit from encompassing such perspectives. First, the professional practices which both critical development studies and planning theory take as their object of study share a duplicitous relationship to processes of capitalist accumulation and liberal notions of benevolent trusteeship. Yet, critical development studies has clearly done a better job of tracing the entanglements of projects of improvement with projects of empire. When such theorizations about development are brought to bear on the more subtle object of planning, here too the flagrances of liberal benevolence—the ethical perils of telling other people what to do in the name of progress, sustainability, empowerment or participation—can be exposed and challenged. Second has to do with my own professional trajectory which has traversed the fields of planning and development studies, and my reading of critical perspectives within the two fields as parallel yet largely disconnected domains.<sup>2</sup> My third reason

relates to the opportunities arising in planning from the relatively stronger commitment to praxis. In critical development studies the reflexivity in relation to post-colonial geopolitics would seem to have produced a reticence toward praxis, and an understanding of critique as taking place at a necessary distance from the work of 'programming' (Li, 2007). Planning theory refuses this distinction and is thus well positioned to put the critical resources of critical development studies to good practical use. Doing so might go a long way toward developing an 'ethics of post-coloniality' in planning aimed, as Ananya Roy (2006) has suggested, at uncovering points of the profession's complicity with neoliberal globalization and at building practice around a core principle of accountability to marginalized people and groups.

The paper is organized into three sections that take up key domains in which I believe planning theory can draw (or has drawn) productively from critical development studies to strengthen its capacity to envision and defend the right to the city. These are (a) the relationship of planning to imperialism and globalization; (b) resistance and the cultural politics of agency; and (c) the contributions of transnational feminism to a praxis of solidarity and collaboration. In elaborating these domains the paper will review the shared terrain of planning theory and critical development studies, putting them into dialogue with one another to uncover some promising new directions and themes for articulating an ethics of post-coloniality in planning theory.

### **Planning, imperialism, globalization**

With the institutionalization of development as a professional practice in the post-war period, critical development studies was concerned primarily with exposing how underdevelopment is produced by the penetration of capitalist social relations into the non-capitalist periphery, and the complicity of institutionalized development practice in

deepening these relations (Baran, 1957; Frank, 1967). It also drew on the work of Fanon (1967), to reveal the psychic deprivations endured by the subjects of development through subjection to universalized 'white', Western norms. Within planning theory, of course, these fundamentally Marxist perspectives are best represented in the *oeuvre* of geographer David Harvey who makes two interrelated arguments that are of direct significance to planning theory. First, planning is instrumental to the logic of capitalist accumulation insofar as it furnishes the technologies for investments in the secondary and tertiary circuits of capital. In so doing it plays a crucial role in mitigating class struggle and problems of overproduction, and thus in securing a spatio-temporal fix for the reproduction of the capitalist social order in particular time-space conjunctures. Second, shifts in the ideology of planning—from rational comprehensive to advocacy, and so on—can be tied to the cyclical fixing of capitalist urbanization in particular constructed landscapes. For example, periods of territorial instability (housing crises, devaluation of existing transport facilities, and so on) require planning to intervene with disciplined collective action for urban reform (Roweis, 1981). It is the logic of capitalist accumulation that 'plan[s] the ideology of planning' (Harvey, 1996 [1985]).

A second wave of work in critical development studies attends more specifically to the discursive production of ideology. It maintains a critical orientation toward core-periphery relations but focuses on the ways in which neocolonialist representations of the periphery contribute to, and in fact furnish the political conditions of possibility for, material processes of underdevelopment. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) inspired a flourishing of discourse analysis examining how development discourse worked to politically constitute both the First World (as the referent for modernity, progress and reason) and the Third World (as the undeveloped, dependent other; see also Ferguson, 1990; Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995). Peter Marcuse

has perhaps done the most to translate the contributions of Said for planning and critical urban theory. In a 2004 *Antipode* article, Marcuse likens the contemporary manifestation of imperialism which he calls 'globalism' to orientalism (Marcuse, 2004). Globalism represents actually existing globalization in a manner that legitimates global capitalism over all other forms of social organization found within actually existing globalization or that could be imagined for its alternative trajectories. In so doing, it rests upon a particular theoretical genealogy, assembling the anti-planning treatises of Friedrich von Hayek with Rostow's modernization theory and the market triumphalism of Francis Fukuyama. It is a representation that depicts a world of markets unencumbered by 'tradition' or intrusive states as natural, inevitable and true.

We can thus think about planning's role in reproducing the popular legitimacy of globalism, for example, in its current enthrall with 'creative city' ideologies that constitute the latest version of supply-side inducements to global capital (Peck, 2005). Or its pandering to corporate capital in the name of 'green capitalism' (Prudham, 2009). Or its silences with regard to the original violences that constitute city space and the ongoing processes of 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2003) through which the poor and marginal are routinely displaced from urban spaces deemed desirable for capitalist accumulation (Blomley, 2004; Roy, 2006). For Marcuse, the political imperative for theory is to reveal the difference between globalism and actually existing globalization, for the sake of dismantling its ideology and developing the political strategy and constituency to confront inequality and suffering resulting from the latter.

Deferring for a moment the matter of constituency, it is useful to consider the role planning theory can play in engaging immanent critique to develop strategy. The purpose of immanent critique is to expose the false claims of prevailing ideology by comparing it to the injustices of existing reality; for example, the relations of inequality

and processes of dispossession forged through globally integrated production and consumption that belie globalist neoliberal discourses of freedom, diversity and growth. Implicit here is a fundamentally relational understanding of discursive and material interconnections among material places in the world.

An orientation toward relationality is one key contribution of critical development studies, and in this regard the work of geographer Gillian Hart is particularly instructive. Developing a Gramscian interpretation of the post-colonial condition, Hart (2002, 2004, 2006) offers the notion of ‘relational comparison’ to emphasize the political-economic and cultural-political processes through which the center and the periphery continually make and remake one another. Critical analysis begins here with a notion of place as ‘nodal points of connection within wider networks of socially produced space’ (2006, p. 995; referencing Massey, 1994); the specificity of any place thus arises from the particular mix of interconnections to the forces and relations that lie beyond it. The task becomes one of charting material processes of interconnection to explore how multiple forces come together in practice to produce particular dynamics or trajectories within cities—as illustrated through her research on Taiwanese industrialists in the South African countryside (Hart, 2002). The widespread Taiwanese presence, she argues, must be linked analytically and politically to the land reforms in Taiwan, which provided the social wage to underwrite such a massive mobilization of Taiwanese peasant labor into the industrial sector of a post-colonial transitioning economy. The displacements she observes of South African peasants are not just a ‘natural’ process of accumulation by dispossession endemic to the logic of capital accumulation; rather they are socially produced and rooted in a specific space-time conjuncture linking rural Taiwan and South Africa.

For planning theory there is an important political implication here. It is clear that the

possibility that unexpected similarities in experience across connected historical geographies could become the foundation for critical practices, common responses and alternative trajectories for—as geographer Cindi Katz (2001, 2004) puts it—a countertopography of global capitalism. So, while what occurs by way of progressive responses to financial crisis in Argentina or Bolivia may not seem to matter too much in the metropolitan centers of the global North, we might turn this around to think about possibilities for building strategic translocal alliances within the profession that might respond progressively to the conjunctural relationalities among cities (North and Huber, 2004; Chatterton, 2005; Faulk, 2008). This is not meant in a naive ‘best practices’ sense, but a perspective that asks: where do opportunities for solidarity lie? And how can the diversity of practices elsewhere help inform a theory about what can be done within conjuncturally specific structures of opportunity and constraints (Robinson, 2006)? The experience in Vietnam with a nationalized banking system disbursing subsidized credit to poor producers in the context of long-term investments in human development and physical infrastructure, for example, might provide some inspiration in the current conjuncture for thinking ambitiously about alternative models of banking rooted in a principle of social rights (Panitch and Gindin, 2008; Rankin, 2009). The aborted initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement of peripheral states to collectively negotiate the resolution of the so-called ‘Third World debt crisis’ with the IMF likewise presents some insights into the opportunities and challenges for developing—at a municipal scale—collective bargaining vis-à-vis footloose corporate capital (Morphet, 2004).

An orientation toward comparative relationality is especially imperative in the context of the so-called financial crisis when cities and social movements in the global North may be tempted to turn increasingly inwards and respond to the problems facing their core constituencies with forms of

economic nationalism and racism (Hanieh, 2008). The challenge for planning theory is to expose the common causes of peoples' day-to-day struggles everywhere as a basis for building a constituency for the collaboration and solidarity that will be necessary to push for a better system in which the demands of all can be met. Developing *analytical* capacities for tracing conjunctural formations would alone go a long way toward dismantling the occidental view of the world that prevails in the planning profession and the institutions of planning education—a view that disaggregates relational histories and turns difference into hierarchy (Hart, 2006, p. 997). In the context of global financial crisis, a generalized right to the city depends on it.

### Resistance and the cultural politics of agency

In a paper on 'Really existing globalization after September 11', Marcuse (2002, p. 640) predicts that as the internal contradictions to actually existing globalization periodically burst out, organized opposition and noteworthy political shifts (such as that witnessed in the US electorate) are likely to grow. This is an orientation toward the key question of how the constituency for socialist futures will be built that of course reflects strong continuities with the Frankfurt School. As Brenner notes in this issue, critical theory within the Frankfurt School was unified in a common search for a revolutionary subject. In the context of 20th-century capitalism Frankfurt School theorists abandoned Marx's faith in the proletariat as a class for itself but struggled with the challenge of identifying a clear agent of social change. At the same time, as Peter Marcuse's work suggests, critical urban theory maintains a fundamental orientation toward capitalism as a system marked by fractures and contradictions that furnish the conditions for critical, antagonistic forms of social knowledge. Critical development studies shares this

preoccupation with transformative agency; the orientation here is not only to the contradictions of capitalism, but also to the ways in which other hegemonic projects manifest as governmental programs that unintentionally produce social groups sharing a common experience—of eviction from a state forest, for example, or being 'technically assisted' to grow cash crops instead of subsistence foods. The shared experience of dispossession of land and livelihood creates possibilities for those whose conduct is being conducted to recognize common interests and mobilize for change (Scott, 1998; Li, 2007).

Planning theory and critical urban theory have a lot to say about organized resistance by already constituted, marginalized social groups, and, in the case of planning theory, about the need for advocacy on their behalf or inclusionary, participatory processes that interject their demands and interests into planning processes. But they do not have as much to say about other forms that resistance might take or the cultural politics of agency. What about the places and times in which the contradictions of hegemonic projects are not readily apparent to people who occupy marginal social locations within them? Or the reality that people routinely make bargains with hegemony even as they may recognize their own subjection to it or the contradictions within it (Kandiyoti, 1991, 1994)? Or that when they do resist, they may do so covertly and individually, so as not to jeopardize what standing they do have in the rubrics of hegemonic power (Shakya and Rankin, 2008). Under what conditions might overt critique and resistance arise and pose a challenge to the stability of hegemonic projects?

I think there is an important role for critical urban theory to play in broaching these questions in relation to the right to the city—and the imperative is doubly strong for planning theory given its orientation to praxis. I am thinking here of all the work that has been done by James Scott and others to address the multiple forms that resistance takes. Through ethnographic and

archival research in peasant societies of Southeast Asia, Scott identifies the 'hidden transcripts', or offstage discourses, through which subordinate groups express a critique of the powerful, as well as their 'infrapolitics'—the footdragging, gossip and other subversive actions that take place beyond the visible spectrum of political practice (see Scott, 1987, 1990). Of course, urban theorist Michel de Certeau develops a comparable approach to considering how outward public accommodation can mask subversion in the context of everyday urban life (1984 [1980]). For de Certeau the operative concept is 'tactics', guileful maneuvers and tricks performed in the cracks of elite power, by which the weak temporarily stretch the limits imposed by dominant systems. But the differences between the two approaches are important for our purposes of developing normative planning theory. Working in the Gramscian tradition of cultural politics, Scott (1987) sees *infrapolitics* and *hidden transcripts*—'weapons of the weak'—as the foundational form of politics, the roots of more overt, collective social mobilizations. De Certeau's contribution to resistance studies formed part of the post-modernist, post-Marxist turn in urban and cultural studies; as such it refrains from positing an idealized propensity for collective critical consciousness and romantic portrayals of subalterns as essentially morally good political subjects. The focus on consumption in de Certeau's work offers nuanced insights into the ways people occupy positions of marginality—fractured, divisive, certainly not inherently benign, often not harboring a strong collective identity, and not even necessarily intentionally subversive. But the approach lacks any structural engagement with problems of social justice or any consideration of how tactics interpolate strategy (Ruddick, 1996). Thus, complex and ambiguous questions of political agency arise.

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod offers a productive way forward for planning theory by framing the challenge with respect to

Bedouin women's resistance to male domination in Egypt:

'First, how might we develop theories that give women credit for resisting in a variety of ways the power of those who control so much of their lives, without either misattributing to them forms of consciousness or politics that are not part of their experience—something like a feminist consciousness or a feminist politics—or devaluing their practices as pre-political, primitive, or even misguided? Second, how might we account for the fact that Bedouin women both resist and support the existing system of power, without resorting to analytical concepts like false consciousness, which dismiss their own understanding of their situation, or impression management, which makes of them cynical manipulators?' (1990, p. 47)

The challenge for planning is to develop a theory of resistance that retains Scott's commitment to political engagement and social transformation, while also acknowledging the significance of de Certeau's and Abu-Lughod's insights about the contradictory nature and political ambiguity of subaltern practices. To this end we may distinguish between 'subversion' and 'resistance' as overlapping zones of practice (Shakya and Rankin, 2008). 'Resistance' itself may be specified as collective, overt actions that are intended to challenge prevailing systems of power. 'Subversion', in contrast, denotes more ambiguous political agency—individual, covert instances of nonconformity that engage tactics to get as much as possible out of a constraining situation. Crucially, subversion may be unintentional, just the outcome of people just trying to get by—support families, repay debts, meet social obligations, and so on. The subversive agency lies in the ways in which people put dominant cultural productions into their own moral and social frame of reference. At the same time it would seem reasonable to suggest that marginalized people may not possess the concepts with which to transpose

this mode of agency into a fully formed critique of neoliberal urbanism (Hall, 1996). Nor are subversions inherently progressive; they may reinforce existing social hierarchies. On the other hand, subversions reveal fissures and weak points in the dominant apparatus, exposing the fragility of hegemony. And in some cases they can have long-term, destabilizing effects.

How might these distinctions help to inform a post-colonial ethics of planning that is accountable to marginalized groups and aims to engage people's agency in progressive ways? A first order of accountability might be to learn to read the 'hidden transcripts', 'infrapolitics' and tactics that convey nonconformity and contradictory consciousness in *both* its covert and overt forms—a mode of 'listening' that rests not on other people's capacity to participate in liberal democratic venues but on the skills and the will of the planner as organic intellectual (cf. Forester, 1989). It then becomes possible to recognize subversion as 'a diagnostic of power' (Abu-Lughod, 1990)—as conveying important information about the political rationalities of specific planning regimes as well as the conditions of peoples' lives. The small-scale initiatives of ordinary citizens to build a composting toilet out of cob construction in a public park, for example, can expose the rigidity of planning protocols designed fundamentally to appease the owners of private property. Non-participation by new-immigrant entrepreneurs in the opportunities afforded by Business Improvement Districts reveals the fragmenting effects of devolving responsibility for local economic development onto populations that are differentially capable and endowed. For radical planning praxis, such diagnostics uncover points of the profession's complicity with neoliberal urbanism in everyday professional practice. They also provide an imperative to respond not by judging or punishing deviance or non-participation, but by viewing subversive behavior as a window on the conditions people face and re-evaluating planning action accordingly.

### Transnational feminism, reflexivity, solidarity

A second order of accountability to marginalized groups has to do with catalyzing a collective critical consciousness among those engaged in individual subversive practice. Under what conditions might those in marginalized social locations come to recognize the arbitrary foundations of prevailing systems of exclusion as well as interests in common with those who are differently marginalized? To consider what role planners might play in facilitating such circumstances I want to turn to the issue of 'getting to' the right to the city—the *process* of social transformation—with recourse to the contributions that transnational feminism has made to critical development studies. The orientation in transnational feminism toward critical reflexivity can go a long way toward bringing the principle of relational comparison *à la* Gillian Hart into planning praxis in a more reflexive way than is commonly found in Gramscian cultural politics. Feminist perspectives can also introduce procedural questions in a way that does not bracket out difference (as you find in so much of the literature on communicative action in planning theory), but engages it politically.

Planning theory shares with social science and humanistic disciplines a 'turn' toward cultural concerns and explanations in the post-socialist age, and in this the question of difference figures prominently. In planning a plethora of publications emerged in the 1990s celebrating cultural diversity and hybridity as resources for critique and transformation (Healey, 1992; Sandercock, 1998a, 1998b, 2003). In response to these developments, I would like to suggest that planning theory would do well to heed the cautions offered by feminist philosopher Nancy Fraser who develops a theory of justice that engages a politics of recognition in conjunction with a politics of redistribution (see Fraser, 1997). Her argument goes like this: socioeconomic difference demands practices of redistribution which aim to eliminate difference; cultural

difference demands practices of recognition which aim to valorize difference; injustices arise from both forms of difference—as maldistribution and misrecognition—and the challenge is to find remedies that support both redistribution and recognition; many remedies on the contrary exacerbate one form of injustice while trying to alleviate another—as with redistributive programs that stigmatize the poor or multiculturalist policies that balkanize them (Fraser, 1997; Bannerji, 2000). The latter dynamic is particularly pertinent for postmodernist planning theory, which has increasingly turned away from state-based modes of redistributive planning in favor of civil society as the appropriate terrain on which to build a ‘postmodern utopia’ (Sandercock, 2003) rooted in a politics of making sense together while living differently (Healey, 1992). What emerges in practice is little more than mainstream multiculturalism within which difference is aestheticized—voided of its political-economic determinants, depoliticized and presented as a palatable spectacle for consumption and commodification (Goonewardena and Kipfer, 2006).<sup>3</sup> The problem with most formulations of cultural diversity in planning theory, then, is that they ignore the socioeconomic base of so much cultural difference (Goonewardena and Rankin, 2004; Goonewardena and Kipfer, 2006).<sup>4</sup>

Clearly planning needs strategies which confront both cultural and socioeconomic in/justice simultaneously. Fraser (1997) offers a further insight that can be useful in this regard: actually existing remedies for injustice can operate either in an affirmative register—leaving undisturbed the underlying structural frameworks that generate inequitable outcomes—or in a transformative one—correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework. A theory of justice (and thus a normative planning theory) must advocate transformative rather than merely affirmative strategies for redistribution, recognition and encounter. Transformative redistribution may seem increasingly elusive in an era of

neoliberal urbanism but it is easy enough to imagine—as socialism or other governmental forms that would resocialize the economy and create alternative (to capitalist) modes of surplus appropriation. Transformative recognition, which Fraser conceptualizes as ‘deconstruction’ or changing the structures of valuation that underlie prevailing understandings of cultural difference, has been relatively poorly elaborated in planning theory.

In this regard I want to mention a wonderful book called *Playing with Fire* written as a collaboration involving women development workers in India and geographer Richa Nagar (2006). As the Sangtin Writers (*sangtin* being Hindi for ‘solidarity’), they recount a process of their collective political conscientization where, in relating to one another their experiences, they come to recognize how they have each had to ‘drag the institutions’ of patriarchy, capitalism, castism with them differently—in some cases resisting them, in some cases reproducing them, in some cases strategically inhabiting them. The stories here are poignant—about the day-to-day joys and sorrows experienced by the women of the collective, as children, young daughters-in-law, mothers and NGO workers. But the transformative moment arises only when the women collectively come to recognize how their modes of collaboration in development practice have overlooked their different relationships to oppression and in so doing have deepened those oppressions and compromised their shared mission of women’s development and empowerment. Recognition of their mutual implication in the intersectionality of caste, class and gender oppressions then forges a solidarity among the Sangtin Writers that enables them to collectively challenge class-based injustices within their own development organization, and ultimately to catalyze an entire social movement rethinking of the nature of expertise within the women and development sector in India.

How might this account inform a practice of ‘cultural deconstruction’ in conjunction



with a transformative politics of redistribution? Three key domains of practice emerge rooted in the fundamental feminist principle that change begins with everyday practice and experience. The first has to do with historicizing experience and reflexively querying positionality in order to educate oneself about one's own experiences in relation to the histories of others who are the beneficiaries of planning action, as well as one's implication in those relational histories (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Mohanty, 2003; Roy, 2006; Razack, 2007). This is where I think Hart's principle of relational comparison can infuse planning praxis in a more reflexive way. It demands that we understand difference in terms of historical relationality and responsibility rather than as static, embodied categories, and experience as constructed and relational, rather than as purely personal or visceral. Historicizing difference in this way creates possibilities for the second domain of practice, building solidarities across difference out of which can emerge stronger theorizations of universal concerns. Finally, new modes of political agency might be forged. The solidarities arising from a reflexive, interpersonal 'relational comparison' themselves constitute a social change process, insofar as they involve the formation of new political subjects able to engage in critical activism.

How can this engagement with feminist theory inform the initial query: under what conditions do those who are oppressed in particular socio-spatial arenas develop a critical consciousness of hegemonic processes and mobilize together to change their situation? Confronting the complex question of subaltern agency offered some analytical resources for distinguishing among different modes of consciousness. It was necessary, however, to broach issues of cultural difference—and specifically the articulation of a politics of recognition with a politics of redistribution—in order to conceive a role for planning in catalyzing the conditions for collective action. The insights of transnational feminism suggest that a planning

action rooted in reflexively querying positionality might play such a catalytic role and help build the political constituencies needed for claiming the right to the city.

The challenge of reflexivity and the praxis of collaboration across seemingly intractable differences may seem to pose an onerous responsibility upon planners. But the challenge is imperative for the sake of harnessing 'diversity' to the critique of actually existing globalization. A praxis of collaboration produces critiques that are potentially more potent than those that might be formulated exclusively within planning institutions or planning academia—substantively because they encompass knowledge situated in the experience of marginalized people, and procedurally because they build a political base for social change. It also holds out the possibility that reflexive practice might produce an immanent critique of those planning institutions themselves, exposing the gaps between the principles of justice and empowerment they promote and the work practices and modes of relationality that they exhibit in practice. At the very least, a praxis of collaboration requires a shift in the criteria for judgment. Good planning theory must not just accurately and authentically represent the exclusions of the neoliberal city or strategically articulate the rights people must have to access and participate in urban life. What is equally significant politically is the possibility for theory-making to constitute individual and collective agency in the service of critical activism.

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### Notes

- 1 As such, the meaning of 'critical' in critical development studies is analogous to that in 'critical

- urban studies' as it has been elaborated by Peter Marcuse and others in this issue: a questioning stance toward the world that exposes both the negative and the positive, and takes a fundamentally antagonistic stance in relation to the logic of capital accumulation and other modes of domination.
- 2 Some exceptions in this regard include the work of Peter Marcuse himself, as well as of Ananya Roy, Oren Yiftachel, Kanishka Goonewardena, Jennifer Robinson, Vanessa Watson and others who have explicitly confronted the politics of post-coloniality in relation to radical planning theory.
  - 3 See Roy and AlSayyad's 2004 book on informality and the 'aestheticization of poverty' from which this argument is formulated.
  - 4 Anthropologist Jim Ferguson argues similarly in his book *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (2007) that however much the 'alternative modernities' celebrated by anthropologists might aim to treat diverse cultural traditions as 'equal', real and lived cultural differences typically index membership in unequal social groups.

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