

Reflexivity and post-colonial critique: Toward an ethics of accountability in planning praxis

Planning Theory
9(3) 181–199
© The Author(s) 2010
Reprints and permission:
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermission.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1473095209357870
<http://plt.sagepub.com>


Katharine N. Rankin

University of Toronto, Canada

Abstract

In her important essay 'Praxis in the time of empire', Ananya Roy (2006) calls for planning theory to confront imperialism and colonialism as the constitutive 'present history' of planning and to substitute a liberal 'responsibility for' others with a postcolonial 'accountability to' them. This article takes up Roy's appeal with reference to the disciplines of anthropology, critical development studies and feminist studies. It argues that in order to move beyond the limits of 'liberal benevolence', planners need an ethics of accountability that recognizes the conditions of postcoloniality, to be sure, but that can also foreground the relational subjectivities of planners and beneficiaries more generally with an eye to broaching the normative terrain of 'what is to be done?'. Through a review of literature at the juncture of planning and critical development studies, and reflections on my own cross-disciplinary travels, the article identifies four theoretical concepts that planning needs to recognize and engage in order to strengthen both its critical and normative orientations: the structures of imperialism, agency and resistance among the 'beneficiaries' of planning action, the subjectivity of planners and the conditions of collective action. The article argues that, cumulatively, these concepts can inform an ethics of accountability that encompasses both postcolonial critique and a 'reflexive relationality'.

Keywords

collective action, development, imperialism, planning, postcolonialism, praxis, reflexivity, resistance

The draw to Planning as an academic discipline lies for many in its commitment to practice. As a result, theory in Planning must not only perform the tasks conventionally assigned to it in other social science disciplines, of prediction, analysis, critique; it must also serve a normative function oriented to improving practice. As John Forester (1987) famously put it, planning theory can't just be about complaint; it also has to be about hope – about fueling political imagination, identifying the limits to hegemonic power, developing

Corresponding author:

Katharine N. Rankin, Associate Professor & Director of Planning, Department of Geography & Program in Planning, University of Toronto, 100 St George St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 3G3
Email: k.rankin@utoronto.ca

criteria for judgment and advocating change. It is this commitment, more specifically, to *praxis* that unifies planning theory – whether articulated around an objective of socio-economic redistribution, cultural recognition, efficiency, or any other interpretation of the public interest/s. Too often, however, an orientation toward practice is confused with an orientation toward the future, with history being reduced to a functionalist and politically decontextualized ‘lessons learned’ or ‘best practices’. In the context of imperialism – rarely acknowledged in planning theory – this ‘forgetting’ of history takes the form of a paternalistic benevolence toward others, with ‘difference’ becoming the basis for dividing up the world into separate cultural spheres conceptualized around the categories of self and other (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Ahmed, 2000; Razack, 2007).

In her important essay, ‘Praxis in the time of empire’, Ananya Roy (2006) refuses the separation of the future from the past and interrogates planning’s liberal benevolence to advocate, instead, an ‘ethics of postcoloniality’. Hers is an ethical stance that begins with confronting imperialism and colonialism as a constitutive ‘present history’ of planning and ends with an injunction to substitute the liberal ‘responsibility for’ others with a postcolonial ‘accountability to’ them – a commitment to recovering the perspectives and voices of marginalized, oppressed and dominated people. This essay is imperative reading in any planning theory course in which students and planners are struggling to reconcile their commitment to do good in the world with all they know theoretically about the politics of representation and the complicity of planning action in imperialism, colonialism, neoliberalism, racism and other hegemonic projects. The essay lucidly lays out this normative terrain, while refraining from broaching pragmatic guidelines about ‘what is to be done’.

Roy’s inspiration lies largely in the humanities as a resource for ‘effect[ing] an uncoercive rearrangement of desires in an endgame of the dispensation of bounty’ (p. 25) and thus ‘turn[ing] the heart of power into a profound edge of struggle’ (p. 9). I take this to mean that Roy sees as a primary normative project not shaping the conduct of the ‘beneficiaries’ of planning action (for example, with transportation policies that encourage the use of public transit over private automobiles), but shaping the imaginaries of its practitioners so that *their* conduct can begin to resist rather than reproduce the dynamics of imperialism through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production.

My interest in taking up Roy’s notion of an ethics of postcoloniality in planning praxis is animated by my own professional trajectory, which has moved from the study of feminist anthropology, to critical studies of gender and development, and finally to Planning as a disciplinary location from which to practice a kind of ‘applied anthropology’ geared toward interrogating and challenging the shift from state-led to market-led approaches to planning and development (Rankin, 2004). Each of these fields is embedded in global imperialist legacies, and yet rigid disciplinary insularity often persists. In this article I advocate for a dialogue across these disciplines as a way of critically engaging the disciplinary ‘homes’ that have shaped my own ‘imaginary’, and as a move toward developing a reflexivity in planning praxis.

In so doing, I find it particularly useful to look at critical development studies in relation to planning theory. Situated within the formally institutionalized discipline of development studies, critical development studies references an interdisciplinary body of

work from across the social sciences that views actually existing development practices and their attendant ideologies critically – in relation to conditions of postcoloniality, capitalist expansion, racialization and male domination. I have always found it remarkable that, with some notable exceptions (some discussed in this article), planning theory and critical development studies have rarely engaged one another as critical resources or sources of political insight. This disciplinary insularity persists in spite of the fact that both fields confront the difficult separation between theory and practice – and, more specifically, that the professional practices that both fields take as their object of study share a duplicitous relationship to processes of capitalist accumulation and liberal notions of benevolent trusteeship.

The analytical edge that critical development studies has on planning theory lies precisely in its mandate to view liberal projects of improvement in relation to projects of empire – in its own well-articulated ethics of postcoloniality. The bald entanglements of development in global geopolitics pose starkly for critical development studies the continuities with ‘civilizing missions’ of 19th-century colonialism, the racializations and gendered violences entailed therein, and the ethical perils of telling other people what to do – in the name of modernization, nation-building, progress, sustainability, poverty alleviation, empowerment or participation (Pieterse, 2000). Where critical development studies comes up relatively thin is in the challenge of praxis – how to be critical while also engaging with development in pursuit of substantial social change. The reflexivity in relation to postcolonial geopolitics would seem, rather, to have produced a reticence toward praxis and an understanding of the role of the critic as ‘properly distinct’ from the role of the programmer (Li, 2007). With its normative commitments, planning theory must refuse the luxury of this distinction and is thus well positioned to put the resources of critical development studies to good practical use.

Planning’s explicit commitment to engage encounters a challenge in critical development studies: a laser focus on the broad structures of empire too often renders invisible the complex agency of the ‘recipients’ of planning action, and the subjectivity of planners working both inside and beyond formal planning regimes.¹ This blind spot makes it difficult to envision the conditions of collective action for social change. Thus, in order to move beyond the limits of ‘liberal benevolence’, planners need an ethics of accountability that recognizes the conditions of postcoloniality – the materialist and discursive processes constituting the occident in relation to the orient – but that can also foreground the relational subjectivities of planners and beneficiaries more generally with an eye to broaching the normative terrain of ‘what is to be done?’

Through a review of literature at the juncture of planning and critical development studies, as well as with some reflections on my own cross-disciplinary travels and the methodological orientations they have inspired, this article identifies four theoretical concepts that I argue planning theory must recognize and engage in order to strengthen both its critical and normative orientations: the structures of imperialism, agency and resistance among planning’s ‘beneficiaries’, the subjectivity of planners and the conditions of collective action. Addressing any of these concepts alone is not sufficient, but the article endeavors to show how, cumulatively, these concepts might inform an ethics of accountability in planning praxis.

Structures of imperialism

Critical development studies is an important resource for exploring imperialism as the 'present history' that constitutes planning practice, not only in the metropole but in cities everywhere structured by relations of colonialism and postcolonial governmentality. The early contributions of Baran (1957), Frank (1967) and others exposed how underdevelopment was produced in the post-Second World War period by the extension of capitalist social relations into the non-capitalist periphery and the complicity of institutionalized development practices in deepening these relations. In Planning these fundamentally Marxist perspectives are best represented in the oeuvre of David Harvey, which investigates the role of planning in containing class struggle and crises overproduction and thus in securing a spatio-temporal fix for the logic of capitalist accumulation. Another strand of critical studies was inspired by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which led to a flourishing of discourse analysis examining how neocolonialist representations of the periphery contribute to, and in fact furnish the political conditions of possibility for, material processes of underdevelopment (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995; Ferguson, 1990). Peter Marcuse (2004) has perhaps done the most to translate the contributions of Said for planning and urban studies – likening 'orientalism', as Said conceived it, to the contemporary manifestation of imperialism, which he calls 'globalism'.

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 might be imagined as alternative trajectories. 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 represent the latest version of supply-side inducements to global capital (Peck, 2005); or its pandering to corporate capital in the name of sustainability (Prudham, 2009); or its silences regarding the original violences that constitute city space and the ongoing processes of accumulation by dispossession through which the poor and marginal are routinely displaced from urban spaces deemed desirable for capitalist accumulation (Blomley, 2004; Harvey, 2003; Roy, 2006).

The question from the perspective of radical planning praxis is how to engage such modes of discursive analysis politically. For Marcuse, the imperative is to conduct an immanent critique of globalism for the sake of dismantling its ideology and revealing instead the suffering resulting from actually existing globalization. In a study seeking specifically to expand the geographies of urban studies, Jennifer Robinson ventures more explicitly into the domain of practice. In *Ordinary Cities* she argues that a disciplinary separation between development studies and urban studies has falsely divided the world into zones of 'development' and zones of 'modernity', and she advocates instead a postcolonial understanding of cities wherein the diversity and complexity of urban experience could be engaged as a resource for both theory-making and city-building everywhere – a 'form of theorizing in which the resources for thinking about cities are as cosmopolitan as the cities that are being theorized' (2006: 65). Based on an excavation of 'diverse cosmopolitanisms' found within the city she knows best, Johannesburg, South Africa (these range from counter-hegemonic, subaltern accounts of colonialism to 21st-century public-private partnerships aiming to assert an African modernity), Robinson proposes an 'urban policy for ordinary cities' that would achieve the dual goal

of poverty reduction and economic growth. Planning, she argues, can play a role in building linkages among diverse economic activities in neighborhoods and communities – in part by supporting urban agglomeration economies that would reflect the economic diversity and cooperative relationships at hand in cities everywhere, even those in countries with a limited skills base, scarce public resources and strong external dependencies. Crucially, for Robinson, such support for local capacities must be embedded within city-wide development strategies aimed at promoting shared access to infrastructure, crime control, logistics management, financial services and skilled labor.

Yet when Robinson attempts to illustrate these ideas with particular examples from the Johannesburg context, it is difficult to discern a critical perspective on imperialism and capitalist globalization. It turns out that the World Bank – newly interested in Third World cities as key sites for pioneering commercially driven forms of governance – has had a strong hand in forming the particular partnership of planners, business leaders and elected politicians which articulated Johannesburg's 'City Development Strategy' (CDS). Robinson concedes that practices of urban management derived from a 'cosmopolitan imagination of possible urban futures' reflected, in fact, a desire to 'buy into the competitive world of global capitalism with great enthusiasm . . .' (p. 147) and amounted to little more than 'the installation of proto-privatized institutional procedures for service delivery with a slim central managing body' (p. 148). Forward and backward linkages between large globally networked firms and smaller, local enterprises, moreover, appear only to reproduce the existing maldistribution of services and opportunity, as well as spatial segregation along race and class lines.

My aim in focusing on Robinson's work is not so much to critique its faulty praxis but to confront the challenge posed by Tania Li (2007) – that critique must be kept 'properly distinct' from practice – or from what she calls 'programming'. An anthropologist with a deep historical and ethnographic understanding of the politics of colonialism and development in Indonesia, Li shows how successive incarnations of a liberal 'will to improve' failed to account for the messy realities of landlessness, disease, exploitation and other structures of law and force, and were subsequently confounded when populations failed to improve. Li argues that such accommodations to hegemonic orderings of the world, as revealed in Johannesburg's CDS, emerge whenever the concepts of improvement, even ones that profess to be critical, are 'rendered technical' through programs that seek to 'translate messy conjunctures into linear narratives of problems, interventions and beneficial results' (p. 4). Her take on this conundrum is to insist on the unity of politics and political economy, and to reject any form of programming – or planning – that excludes political-economic relations from view. Without wishing to reify a distinction between critique and practice implicit in Li's analysis, I do wish to specify a mode of post-colonial critique that explicitly confronts the intersections of postcoloniality and capitalism (Hall, 2006; on this note see also the brilliant contributions on insurgence and informality in *Planning Theory* 8(1)). The question for our purposes is how and whether one can carry these kinds of critical-analytical tools into the domain of planning practice in ways that do not merely reinforce mainstream governmental agendas, but instead transform them.

The notion of 'relational comparison', elaborated by geographer Gillian Hart, offers some interesting possibilities in this regard. Critical analysis begins here with a notion of 'place' as a nodal point 'of connection within wider networks of socially produced

space' (2006: 995, referencing Massey, 1994); the specificity of any place arises from its particular mix of interconnections to the forces and relations that lie beyond it. Thus the task becomes one of charting material processes of interconnection to explore how multiple forces come together to produce particular dynamics or trajectories. Hart illustrates this point with reference to her own research on Taiwanese industrialists in the South African countryside (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 postcolonial transitioning economy. Likewise, one might explore how transnational capitalist market formations articulate postcolonial processes of racialization in Johannesburg in order to better assess the cultural politics of economic agglomeration.

Hart's own stance clearly accords with Li's notion of critique insofar as it develops a key analytical resource for understanding the political-economic parameters of planning action. Yet I would argue that the notion of relational comparison also poses interesting possibilities for a radical planning praxis. How, for example, might webs of interconnection among concrete places in the world become, in and of themselves, the foundation for critical practices and alternative trajectories? As the work of geographer Cindi Katz (2006) illustrates with reference to critical ethnography of global restructuring, such interconnections point to unexpected similarities in experience across connected historical geographies – similarities that could offer common ground for political response across scale and space. Within planning, a commitment to comparative relationality would go a long way toward dismantling the prevailing occidentalist view of the world that disaggregates relational histories and turns difference into hierarchy (Hart, 2006); it might on the contrary suggest possibilities for building strategic transnational alliances within the profession that could respond progressively to the conjunctural relationalities among cities. Such an orientation finds particular urgency in the context of the present 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). A relational perspective would consider where opportunities for solidarity lie and how critical practices at the forefront of counter-hegemonic organizing in the global South (e.g. Chatterton, 2005; Faulk, 2008; North and Huber, 2004) might help inform a theory about what can be done elsewhere within conjuncturally specific structures of opportunity and constraint.

In this way, comparative relationality provides firmer ground for a postcolonial critique and an ethics of accountability in planning than simple celebrations of diverse cosmopolitanisms. Understanding the political-economic processes through which the center and periphery continually make and remake one another within actually existing globalization makes it possible to assess the dynamics of power in ordinary cities and the inequalities and injustices that arise when capitalist markets articulate local social histories. A politics of comparative relationality can help account for imperialism and colonialism as planning's 'present history', and illustrates well the imperative to build a political approach rooted in structural critique animated by the contributions of postcolonial theory. But to more fully elaborate an ethics of accountability, other considerations are necessary.

Agency and resistance among planning's 'beneficiaries'

An often unintended effect of planning and other governmental programs is the production of social groups sharing a common experience and capable of mobilizing for change (Li, 2007; Scott, 1998). In his analysis of globalist discourse, Marcuse (2004) predicts that as the internal contradictions to actually existing globalization periodically burst forth, organized opposition – of the kind so recently demonstrated in the monumental political shifts witnessed in the US electorate – is likely to grow, not subside. These processes reveal the provisional nature of hegemonic projects, which must be actively created and constantly reworked, and are always subject to critique and resistance by those whose conduct is ostensibly being managed. They also suggest that planning's 'beneficiaries' clearly need to be at the forefront of efforts to arrive at an ethics of accountability.

Planning and urban theory have a lot to say about social movements and organized resistance, but have been less adept at recognizing the alternative forms that resistance may take or the cultural politics of agency. Planning theory has also failed to anticipate the places and times in which the contradictions of hegemonic projects are not readily apparent. Or the fact that people routinely make bargains with hegemony even as they may recognize their own subjection to it, or the contradictions within it (Kandiyoti, 1991). Or that resistance may take place covertly and individually, so as not to jeopardize one's own standing in the rubrics of hegemonic power (Shakya and Rankin, 2008). With this in mind, two salient points arise for an ethics of accountability in planning from the insights of critical development studies: the first concerns the diagnostics of power; the second, the complex matter of subaltern agency.

In her seminal essay 'The romance of resistance', anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) draws on Foucault's analysis of the productive dimensions of power and enjoins critical scholars to engage women's resistance as a diagnostic of power. She chronicles nomadic Bedouin women's forms of resistance to male domination in Egypt, which include such things as smoking in secret, singing irreverent songs about male sexuality and protesting unwanted marriage partners. She shows ethnographically how these seemingly trivial practices reveal a great deal about the dynamics of male domination, such as how power works through restrictions on women's movements, codes of sexual morality and ideologies of sexual difference.

Similarly, I have found in my own work that people's transgressions and acts of non-conformity in relation to planning programs reveal much about the political rationalities of actually existing planning and the space-time conjunctures within which it transpires. The small-scale initiatives of insurgent citizen-planners to build a composting toilet out of cob construction in a public park, for example, 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 (Rankin, 2008b). Again and again, these small transgressions act as a diagnostic of power, exposing the profession's complicity with neoliberal urbanism in everyday planning practice.²

Moreover, these only apparently trivial forms of resistance raise vital and complex ethical questions about political agency. Transgressive practices may serve to secure

prevailing political rationalities – for example, by provoking corrective measures against deviance. They may also pose limits to neoliberal governmentality. Still thorny questions remain about the extent to which these practices are performed with subversive intentions. Analytically, this is extremely fraught territory, which Abu-Lughod (1990: 46) incisively frames with respect to Bedouin women's resistance to male domination when she asks how 'theory' might account for women's agency and resistance in ways that neither attribute forms of consciousness and politics that are not part of their experience, nor resort to abstract concepts like false consciousness, which diminishes women's own understanding of existing systems of power and their resistance to them.

In confronting the contradictory dynamics of political agency in my own research on market formation, I, too, have found it helpful to engage ethnographic approaches that yield insights into the contours of people's daily lives by sourcing multiple modes of self-representation and a wide range of daily practices, in addition to what people say in the context of a one-off interview. From 2002–2005, along with colleague Yogendra Shakya and a team of community-based researchers, I conducted collaborative, multi-site research investigating microfinance as a governmental technology in Nepal and Vietnam. Our purpose was to explore how a market-led development model articulates regulatory frameworks, institutional formations and beneficiary political cultures in two different national contexts – one, an aid-dependent 'open economy', the other a 'market socialist' one. The project aimed to highlight the political and cultural contours of market formation – and indeed much of the analysis centered on how regulatory, institutional and cultural politics differently shape exchange practices and economic subjectivities across the research sites (Rankin, 2008a; Rankin and Shakya, 2007; Shakya and Rankin, 2008).

Yet what quickly emerged from the village- and commune-scale ethnographic portion of the research was the remarkable uniformity of tactics that clients in all sites engaged to escape what they perceived as the limitations and dominating effects of microfinance projects. These practices – such as investing in social relationships as opposed to income-generating enterprises – rarely amounted to an open critique and could not be detected through standard indicators of project performance. Instead, women bent the rules discretely so as not to jeopardize their access to a much-valued service. Engaging ethnographic approaches allowed us to recognize how individual, covert actions amount to below-the-surface agitation that, while not disrupting key program bench posts of operation, nonetheless relentlessly test the limits of program regulations. Like Abu-Lughod, we questioned the extent to which such actions were performed with subversive intentions, but we could also trace the ways in which, cumulatively, they had a destabilizing effect on a neoliberal development model premised on fostering entrepreneurial subjectivities.

Endeavoring to analyze the limits that ambiguous practices by microfinance beneficiaries in Nepal and Vietnam might pose to neoliberal governmentality, we turned to the rarely juxtaposed literatures on resistance and subaltern agency in development studies and urban studies. Here, we found similar analytical categories animating strikingly different orientations to praxis. James Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), canonical in critical development studies, develops an understanding of subaltern consciousness with recourse to Gramscian notions of cultural politics. De Certeau's *Practice of Everyday Life* (1984 [1980]), on the other hand, forms part of the postmodernist,

post-Marxist turn within cultural studies and urban studies as the definitive theory of consumer agency in modern industrialized societies. Both works claim to look below the surface of public accommodation to recognize how the outward consent of the dispossessed masks practices of subversion. Scott does so with his notion of 'infrapolitics', which, like the infrared zone, takes place beyond the visible spectrum, but sheds light on peripheral discourses and practices through which subordinate groups express a critique of the powerful. For De Certeau the operative concept is 'tactics' – the guileful maneuvers and tricks performed in the cracks of elite power, by which the weak temporarily stretch the limits imposed by dominant systems.³ Yet there are important differences in the political implications of Scott's and de Certeau's approaches that are crucial to crafting a planning praxis capable of engaging people's agency.

For Scott, infrapolitics are the foundational form of politics and convey a latent potential for social transformation: 'It is simply impossible to understand the explosion of enthusiasm and activity that characterized [major social mobilizations of our time] without examining the previous offstage culture and resistance of the lower classes' (Scott, 1990: 225). Unfortunately, Scott's binary understanding of power rooted in class politics is characterized by an idealized propensity for collective consciousness and a romantic portrayal of subalterns as essentially morally good political subjects. For de Certeau, the politics are more ambiguous, but the subjects and practices capture more effectively the complexity of subaltern agency. His focus on how individual consumers' 'chart their own trajectories' in the face of dominant cultural productions 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. Politically, however, de Certeau's emphasis on consumption lacks any structural engagement with problems of material distribution or economic justice – or any consideration of how tactics might interpolate strategy (Ruddick, 1996).

The challenge with respect to our research in Nepal and Vietnam was to develop a theory of resistance that retained 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. It was precisely a synthesis of these seemingly contradictory orientations that would prove useful for articulating a 'politics of subversion in development practice' (Shakya and Rankin, 2008). To this end we distinguished between 'subversion' and 'resistance' as overlapping zones of practice. 'Resistance' itself may be specified as collective, overt actions that are intended to challenge prevailing systems of power. 'Subversion' 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, simply the outcome of people trying to get by – supporting families, repaying debts, meeting social obligations, and so forth. Subversive agency lies in the manner in which people put dominant cultural productions into their own moral and social frames of reference.⁴

What could all this mean for planning? How might this distinction help to inform a planning praxis that engages and is accountable to people's agency in progressive ways? I have suggested that a first order of accountability might be to adopt an ethnographic approach in relation to the contexts of planning action; this would involve learning to read

the modes of representation that convey nonconformity and contradictory consciousness in *both* its covert and overt forms (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991). In the context of planning action, we can think of doing ethnography as a mode of ‘listening’ that rests not on the capacity of ‘others’ to participate in liberal democratic venues, but on the skills and the will of the planner as organic intellectual to observe and interpret the ordinary, day-to-day practices of people in different social locations. It then becomes possible to recognize subversion (and also resistance) as conveying important information about the political rationalities of specific planning regimes as well as about the conditions of people’s lives – and to respond by re-evaluating planning action in relation to these insights.

A second order of accountability has to do with catalyzing a collective consciousness among those engaged in subversive practices. Doing so requires thinking about the conditions under which those in marginalized social locations might come to recognize the arbitrary foundations of prevailing systems of exclusion as well as interests in common with those who are differently marginalized. The remainder of the article is devoted to considering the role of reflexivity in crafting accountable planning practice and catalyzing collective action, beginning with a brief sojourn through the grounds of subjectivity – and specifically the subjectivity of planners. For this I turn to the contributions that feminist theory has made in reminding us that the personal is political.

The subjectivity of planners

Roy situates the onus for an ethics of postcoloniality on planning professionals and others empowered with the task of organizing space. She calls for a rejection of the seductive allure of liberal benevolence in favor of a ‘rearrangement of desire’ – a critical reflection on planners’ location(s) in the rubrics of imperial power that might inspire a ‘consciousness of crisis’. To this end, I would argue that planning theory can engage Hart’s principle of relational comparison in more reflexive ways than is commonly found in conventional structuralist accounts of core–periphery articulations. The notion of relational comparison brings into focus the webs of interconnection among concrete historical geographies. The insights of transnational feminism allow us to transpose this analytical orientation onto the subjectivity of planners and other ‘dispensers of bounty’ (Roy, 2006: 25) who are, like planning’s ‘beneficiaries’, constituted through their relations to others. What follows is an emphasis on procedural considerations that do not bracket out difference (as it is so easy to do when attempting to forge a politics of resistance from a politics of subversion), but engage it politically – we might specify this as an approach rooted in a ‘relational reflexivity’.

A powerful illustration of the political possibilities that arise from a reflexive praxis can be found in the extraordinary book *Playing with Fire* (2006), written by the Sangtin Writers in collaboration with geographer Richa Nagar, who undertook action research with them. The book confronts intimate questions of expertise, status and accountability among a collective of development workers occupying multiple social locations and ‘ranks’ within a shared practice of organizing and delivering services to economically disadvantaged village women in Sitapur, India. Learning about one another’s experiences, members of the collective come to recognize how they have each had to ‘drag the institutions’ of patriarchy, caste and poverty with them in ways that both naturalized and reproduced the differences in status and opportunity among them.

Their stories are poignant: a Muslim girl, married at age 13, who gives birth to a daughter having no value in the calculus of the patriline, who flees to her natal home after facing domestic violence at the hands of her in-laws, only to have her father permanently separate her from her baby and 'return' it to its 'rightful' progenitors in the patriline; a low caste woman whose father refused to perform rituals associating childbirth with inauspiciousness and impurity at the time of her birth, who is then massacred by villagers seeking to punish his defiance of tradition; and the day-to-day sorrows and joys experienced by women of the collective, as NGO workers, mothers, wives and daughters. The women in the collective come to recognize how their modes of collaboration in development practices 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. Recognizing their mutual implications in the intersections of caste, class and gender oppressions, they forge a solidarity among themselves as the 'Sangtin Writers', enabling them to collectively challenge class-based injustices within their own organization. Their perseverance and resilience, in the face of a vicious backlash against them from the elite center of the organization, spawned a social movement engaged in rethinking the nature of expertise within the 'women and development' sector in India.

For the purpose of articulating how a reflexive praxis might furnish a starting point for building constituencies for change, key insights emerge from this account that are rooted in the fundamental feminist principle that change – and accountability – begins 'at home' with everyday practice and experience. The first has to do with understanding and historicizing one's own position in relation to the history of others – especially those who are often the 'beneficiaries' of planning action – and with recognizing that these positions are relational and contingent (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Mohanty, 2003; Razack, 2007; Roy, 2006).

In an important essay on feminist politics from the 1980s, Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty (1986) explore this notion of accountability and historically constructed identities in the work of Minnie Bruce Pratt, using the concept of 'home' as a metaphor through which to understand experience not as purely personal or visceral but as relational and contingent. Pratt's challenge, they note, was to seek out ways of 'not being home' – understood as an experience of being-out-of-place. To do this, Pratt grounds herself in a concrete geography of the towns where she has lived in which architecture, streets and buildings become 'physical anchoring points in relation to which she both sees and does not see certain people and things' (p. 196). Growing up white, middle-class, lesbian and Christian-raised in the American South, write Martin and Mohanty:

Pratt problematizes her ideas about herself by juxtaposing the assumed histories of her family and childhood, predicated on the invisibility of the histories of people unlike her, to the layers of exploitation and struggles of different groups of people for whom these geographical sites were also home. (p. 195)

'Home' is thus reframed as an 'illusion of coherence and safety' that excludes the histories of oppression and the resistance of 'others', and denies, as well, fragmented and fractured differences even within oneself. Their essay is a still powerful reminder to planners of the radical histories of difference that occur between self and others even in the disciplinary and physical locations one considers to be unproblematic 'homes'.

Thus, the challenge of a reflexive praxis is to understand difference in historically and contextually specific terms of relationship and accountability rather than as static, apolitical, embodied categories. Historicizing difference in this way creates possibilities for a second domain of practice geared toward building solidarities across difference, out of which can emerge stronger theorizations of universal concerns. In a postscript to *Playing with Fire*, Richa Nagar concludes:

Our coming together from a diverse set of social, geographical, and institutional locations . . . allowed us to craft an intellectual agenda and methodology that allowed all of us to develop our understandings of globalization, development, and geographies of difference and scale and to grapple with how these could be used to reimagine concrete place-based politics. (p. 152)

Finally, when critical analysis arises collaboratively from an experiential anchor in the lives of marginalized people – and when planners recognize their implication in those relational histories – new modes of political agency may be forged. Building solidarities across such differences is itself a social-change process, insofar as it involves the formation of new political subjectivities able to engage in critical activism.

The conditions for collective action

These insights furnish a first order of response to the initial inquiry about the conditions for collective action: that the onus falls on planners to query their own positioning in relation to those who are oppressed within particular socio-spatial arenas and whose lives they would seek to improve. The emphasis on historicizing positionality, then, raises the issue of the multiple forms that difference can take and the significance of those multiple forms in conceiving a role for planners in catalyzing conditions for collective action. Here we may turn to a formulation of social justice within feminist philosophy that has been widely taken up in planning theory, a formulation that grapples explicitly with the opportunities and challenges posed by multiple axes of difference.

Addressing the ‘turn’ toward cultural concerns and explanations in the post-socialist age, philosopher Nancy Fraser articulates a theory of justice that engages a politics of recognition in conjunction with a politics of redistribution. She argues that socioeconomic difference demands practices of redistribution that aim to eliminate difference; cultural difference demands practices of recognition that aim to valorize difference; injustices arise from both forms of difference – as maldistribution and misrecognition. The challenge is to find remedies that support both redistribution and recognition. As Fraser (and others) point out, far too often the aim of alleviating one form of injustice exacerbates another – as can be seen with redistributive programs that stigmatize the poor, or multiculturalist policies that balkanize them (Bannerji, 2000; Fraser, 1997). An accountable planning praxis, then, requires strategies that can confront both cultural and socioeconomic in/justice simultaneously.

Fraser argues further that actually existing remedies for injustice 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

a reflexive praxis) must advocate transformative rather than merely affirmative strategies for redistribution and recognition. 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 modes of surplus appropriation. Transformative recognition, which Fraser conceptualizes as a deconstruction of the structures of valuation that underlie prevailing understandings of cultural difference, has been relatively poorly elaborated in planning theory.

The predominant orientation to cultural difference in planning theory identifies civil society as the appropriate terrain on which to build what Leonie Sandercock envisions as a ‘postmodern utopia’ (2003) rooted in a politics of recognition – and what Patsy Healey (1992) characterizes as ‘making sense together while living differently’.⁵ For Sandercock, it is the ‘insurgent practices’ and ‘tiny empowerments’ of citizen-planners within civil society that constitute the multiple publics to which planning action must be accountable. What is lacking in this formulation (much like Robinson’s ‘diverse cosmopolitanisms’) are any criteria by which to judge the practices and constituencies making claims on the right to the city within civil society (Fincher and Iveson, 2008; Goonewardena and Rankin, 2004). In the absence of such criteria, blind invocations of multiple publics within civil society may likely promote little more than mainstream multiculturalism within which difference is aestheticized – void of any political-economic determinants, depoliticized and presented as a palatable spectacle for consumption and commodification (Goonewardena and Kipfer, 2006).⁶

Celebrating difference in the absence of a redistributive mechanism disguises inequality and deflects accountability to peoples’ desires for a better place in the world, a higher rank in a system of social categories (Ferguson, 2007). This limitation is evident in Sandercock’s assertion that in the idealized ‘mongrel city’ ‘people stand forth with their differences acknowledged and respected, though perhaps not understood’ (Young, 1990: 119, cited in Sandercock, 1998: 197). Here, a key proposition that was only implicit in *Playing with Fire* must be made explicit: that transformative recognition and a theory of urban justice, hinges not simply on ‘appreciating difference’ but on understanding the ways in which difference indexes membership in unequal social groups. It is here that a praxis of relational reflexivity becomes important. While enlightened planning action might, on occasion, succeed in promoting a politics of recognition in synch with a politics of redistribution, a more enduring mode of engagement with justice must attend to building a broad constituency for transformative redistribution through the kind of solidarity building described by the Sangtin Writers. It is precisely with respect to this process of social transformation that the contributions of feminist theory lie.

I have attempted to embed this theory as praxis while conducting recent work on commercial gentrification in Toronto’s multicultural neighborhoods. The challenge of building a constituency for critical action is formidable in the context of commercial gentrification because most stakeholders, even commercial tenants at risk of displacement, imagine they stand to benefit from the reordering of commercial spaces for progressively more affluent uses (here I am drawing on Hackworth’s, 2002, useful definition of gentrification). I have aimed to document this challenge through conventional techniques such as interviewing various stakeholders – residents, commercial tenants, social service agencies and politicians – about their perceptions of commercial change. But I

am also inspired by feminist theory to confront the challenges through more engaged forms of research. By joining the Board of Management of my local Business Improvement Area (as a resident representative) and volunteering to lead a participatory 'Community Safety Plan' for the neighborhood in which I live, I aim to develop processes of encounter through which 'safety' is explored in relation to gentrification and exclusion, and people's positive aspirations for safety and good city life might be harnessed to a collective commitment to improving the livelihoods of all people in the community. A key dimension of this project must be to acknowledge my stature as the director of a graduate planning program and to mobilize this position to offer resources for thinking critically about gentrification, transnationalism and the politics of social mix.⁷ Another dimension, however, must involve working to create the social spaces through which these tools can be mobilized collaboratively through processes of relational reflexivity.

Toward an ethics of accountability

My goal in this article has been to elaborate an ethics of accountability in planning praxis that begins to take seriously Roy's challenge to planners to interrogate planning's liberal benevolence. As Roy herself suggests, this objective requires postcolonial critique that takes up planning's complicity in the material and discursive processes that constitute the global South in a dependent, inferior and racialized relationship to the global North. Yet, as we know from debates within transnational feminism (expressed here through the work of the Sangtin Writers, but see also Silvey, 2009, and Swarr and Nagar, 2010, for useful summaries of the literature), it is not only the postcolonial condition that poses ethical dilemmas for planning. An ethics of accountability must also confront the contradictory dynamics of subaltern political agency, the histories of difference that separate people from one another, including planners from 'beneficiaries', and the challenge of catalyzing the conditions for collective action. This article draws on insights from critical development studies, anthropology and feminist theory to negotiate these ethical dilemmas. These disciplines converge in their entanglements in a global geopolitics shaped by the legacies of imperialism and colonialism. When their most critical insights are brought to bear on the more subtle object of planning practice, the flagrances of a paternalistic responsibility toward others can be exposed and reframed as an ethics of accountability.

Resources for postcolonial critique are extensive in critical development studies, and I have suggested that the most effective approaches are those that expose the articulations of wide-scale regimes of accumulation with local social histories. Critical development studies maintains a distance from practice – wary of the complicity in prevailing governmental projects that often results when problems are 'rendered technical' (Li, 2007). There is an important role for planning theory to play in engaging these critical concepts in a manner that would transform hegemonic governmental agendas, rather than merely reproduce them. Hart's notion of relational comparison lends itself particularly well to building a political approach rooted in structural critique – and it can be extended into the realm of subjectivity to formulate a principle of 'relational reflexivity'.

Anthropology offers ethnographic approaches with which to diagnose how power operates through planning to produce injustice and marginality as well as to prize open

the contradictory dynamics of political agency. These approaches are crucial not only for understanding the political rationalities of planning regimes, but also for imagining how planning action could help catalyze constituencies for counter-hegemonic change. In order to forge a politics of resistance from a politics of subversion, I have argued that feminist perspectives are required. A feminist praxis begins with a refusal to be trapped by guilt or blinded by the impulse to rescue (Razack, 2007); instead, there is a commitment to locating one's own experience, even at 'home', in relation to the histories of others, and to acknowledging one's implication in these relational histories. Through contextually specific examinations of relational reflexivity, 'difference' can be understood, not as broad conceptual categories of 'self' and 'other', or as something to merely recognize and celebrate, but as indexing unequal access to resources and power. Conjoining a politics of recognition with a politics of redistribution in this way creates possibilities for collaboration across seemingly intractable differences. It makes possible critiques that are likely more potent than those that might be formulated 'at a distance' within planning institutions or planning academia – substantively because they encompass knowledge situated in experience, and procedurally because they build a political base for social change. Good planning theory, then, must not only recover marginalized voices, account for planning's colonialist 'present history' and disrupt imperialist grand narratives. An ethics of accountability demands postcolonial critique, to be sure. Of equal significance politically, an ethics of accountability requires a reflexive praxis that historicizes difference and forges new modes of critical political agency.

Acknowledgments

The editorial process at *Planning Theory* has been most productive and I thank Jean Hillier and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. I am also grateful for a careful reading and extensive comments from Kathryn White. Heartfelt thanks go to Neil Brenner, Martin Danyluk, Stephanie Gris, Peter Marcuse and Margit Mayer for their comments on an earlier paper on these themes prepared for the conference on 'Right to the City: Prospects for Critical Urban Theory and Practice', Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technische Universität Berlin, and revised subsequently for a special issue of *City*.

Notes

1. I place quotations around 'beneficiaries' throughout to signal an interrogation of the implicit claim that the intended recipients indeed benefit from planning action.
2. The argument here is analogous to claims by James Holston (1995), Faranak Miraftab (2009) and others that insurgent practices outside the formal regimes of citizenship and planning expose both the limits and the fragility of those dominant regimes.
3. See Perera (2009) for a recent engagement with de Certeau in *Planning Theory*.
4. At the same time, as we note in the 2008 article, 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.

5. There is a limited body of politically more potent work within planning theory that explicitly engages the state as a locus of struggle over the recognition of cultural difference (e.g. Wallace and Milroy, 1999). For a review of this work, see Fincher and Iveson (2008).
6. See Roy and Al Sayyad's 2004 book on informality and the 'aestheticization of poverty' from which this argument is formulated.
7. In *A Postcapitalist Politics*, Gibson-Graham writes (2006: 134):

We began to see the 'inequality' between academic and community researchers as constitutive of our work, rather than as a hindrance or detraction. The relationship between academic and community members was eroticized by inequality, in other words, by the way 'they' invested our peculiar status and formal knowledge with power, and this is in part what made our conversations work. A seductive form of power drew them to us and our project, even as it prompted them to mock, berate, or belittle the university and those working within it. We realized that, far from attempting to achieve a pristine interaction untainted by power, our project needed to mobilize and direct power, and to make sure it was used to foster rather than kill what we hoped to elicit – passionate participation in the project.

References

- Abu-Lughod L (1990) The romance of resistance: Tracing transformations of power through Bedouin women. *American Ethnologist* 17: 41–45.
- Abu-Lughod L (1998) Feminist longings and postcolonial conditions. In: Abu-Lughod L (ed.) *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1–31.
- Ahmed S (2000) *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-coloniality*. London: Routledge.
- Bannerji H (2000) *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Baran P (1957) *The Political Economy of Growth*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Blomley N (2004) *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*. New York: Routledge.
- Chatterton P (2005) Making autonomous geographies: Argentina's popular uprising and the Movimiento de Trabajadores Descocupados (Unemployed Workers Movement). *Geoforum* 36(5): 545–561.
- Comaroff J, Comaroff J (1991) *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Crush JS (1995) *Power of Development*. London and New York: Routledge.
- De Certeau M (1984 [1980]) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Escobar A (1995) *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Faulk KA (2008) If they touch one of us, they touch all of us: Cooperativism as a counterlogic to neoliberal capitalism. *Anthropological Quarterly* 81(3): 579–614.
- Ferguson J (1990) *The Anti-politics Machine: 'Development', Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press Archive.
- Ferguson J (2007) Globalizing Africa? Observations from an inconvenient continent. In: Ferguson J, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 25–49.

- Fincher R, Iveson K (2008) *Planning and Diversity in the City: Redistribution, Recognition and Encounter*. New York: Palgrave.
- Forester J (1987) Critical theory and planning practice. In: Forester J (ed.) *Critical Theory and Public Life*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 258–282.
- Frank AG (1967) *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Fraser N (1997) *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition*. New York: Routledge.
- Gibson-Graham JK (2006) *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Goonewardena K, Kipfer S (2006) Spaces of difference: Reflections from Toronto on multiculturalism, bourgeois urbanism and the possibility of radical urban politics. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29(3): 670–678.
- Goonewardena K, Rankin KN (2004) The desire called civil society: A contribution to the critique of a bourgeois category. *Planning Theory* 3(2): 117–149.
- Hackworth J (2002) Postrecession gentrification in New York City. *Urban Affairs Review* 37: 815–843.
- Hall S (1996) When was 'the post-colonial'? Thinking at the limit. In: Chambers C, Curti L (eds) *The Post Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*. New York: Routledge, 242–260.
- Hanieh A (2008) Making the world's poor pay: The economic crisis and the global south. *The Socialist Project E-Bulletin no. 155*, 23 November. Available at: <http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/bullet155.html> (accessed 2 March 2009).
- Hart G (2002) *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-apartheid South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hart G (2006) Denaturalizing dispossession: Critical ethnography in the age of resurgent imperialism. *Antipode* 38(5): 977–1004.
- Harvey D (2003) *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Healey P (1992) Planning through debate: The communicative turn in planning theory. *Town Planning Review* 63(2): 143–162.
- Holston J (1995) Spaces of insurgent citizenship. *Planning Theory* 13: 35–52.
- Kandiyoti D (1991) Islam and patriarchy: A comparative perspective. In: Keddie NR, Baron B (eds) *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 23–42.
- Katz C (2004) *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Li T (2007) *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Politics of Development*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Marcuse P (2004) Said's Orientalism: A vital contribution today. *Antipode* 36(5): 809–817.
- Martin B, Mohanty CT (1986) Feminist politics: What's home got to do with it? In: de Lauretis T (ed.) *Feminist Studies, Critical Studies*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 191–212.
- Massey D (1994) *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Miraftab F (2009) Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south. *Planning Theory* 8(1): 32–50.
- Mohanty CT (2003) *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- North P, Huber U (2004) Alternative spaces of the 'Argentinazo'. *Antipode* 36(5): 964–984.

- Peck J (2005) Struggling with the creative class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29(4): 740–770.
- Perera N (2009) People's spaces: Familiarization, subject formation and emergent spaces in Colombo. *Planning Theory* 8(1): 51–75.
- Pieterse J (2000) After post-development. *Third World Quarterly* 21(2): 175–191.
- Prudham S (2009) Pimping climate change: Richard Branson, global warming, and the performance of green capitalism. *Environment and Planning A* 41(7): 1594–1613.
- Rankin KN (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Markets: Economic Liberalization and Social Change in Nepal*. Pluto Press and University of Toronto Press.
- Rankin KN (2008a) Manufacturing rural finance in Vietnam: Contested governance, market societies, entrepreneurial subjects. *Geoforum* 39: 1965–1977.
- Rankin KN (2008b) Commercial change in Toronto's West-End neighborhoods. *Research Paper 214*. Toronto, ON: Cities Centre, University of Toronto.
- Rankin KN, Shakya Y (2007) Neoliberalising the grassroots: Microfinance and the politics of development in Nepal. In: England K, Ward K (eds) *Neo-liberalisation: Networks, States, Peoples*. Oxford: Blackwell, 48–76.
- Razack S (2007) Stealing the pain of others: Reflections on Canadian humanitarian responses. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy and Critical Analysis* 29: 375–394.
- Robinson J (2006) *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development*. London: Routledge.
- Roy A (2006) Praxis in the time of empire. *Planning Theory* 5(1): 7–29.
- Roy A, Al Sayyad N (2004) *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Ruddick S (1996) *Young and Homeless in Hollywood: Mapping Social Identities*. New York: Routledge.
- Said E (1978) *Orientalism*. London: Vintage Books.
- Sandercock L (1998) *Towards Cosmopolis*. New York: Wiley.
- Sandercock L (2003) *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Continuum.
- Sangtin Writers and Nagar R (2006) *Playing with Fire: Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Scott JC (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Scott JC (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Shakya YB, Rankin KN (2008) The politics of subversion in development practice: An exploration of microfinance in Nepal and Vietnam. *Journal of Development Studies* 44(8): 1181–202.
- Silvey R (2009) Development and geography: Anxious times, anemic geographies, and migration. *Progress in Human Geography* 33(4): 507–515.
- Swarr A, Nagar R (2010) *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Wallace M, Milroy B (1999) Intersecting claims: Possibilities for planning in Canada's multicultural cities. In: Fenster T (ed.) *Gender, Planning and Human Rights*. New York: Routledge, 55–73.
- Young IM (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Author biography

Katharine N. Rankin is Associate Professor and Director of the Planning Program in the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto. Her broad research interests

include feminist perspectives on development, comparative market regulation, financial restructuring, planning history and theory, and South Asia. She is the author of *The Cultural Politics of Markets: Economic Liberalization and Social Change in Nepal* (Pluto Press and the University of Toronto Press, 2004), and is currently conducting research in the following areas: gender politics of market-led development, 'democratic transition' in agrarian districts of Nepal, and commercial gentrification in Toronto.