



The 21st Century Indian City
Towns, Metros, and the Urban Economy
indiancities.berkeley.edu

March 26-27, 2013
Indian Institute for Human Settlements
Bangalore, India

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction: The Indian City as a Site of Transformation | 2 |
| Panel 1: Policy Perspectives—Issues of Urban Finance and Governance | 4 |
| Panel 2: Building Urban Infrastructure in India | 6 |
| Panel 3: Agglomeration, Economic Geography and New Modes of Urbanization | 8 |
| Panel 4: Location, Regulation, Speculation—Urban Housing and Real Estate | 10 |
| Panel 5: In Search of Livelihood—Job Creation in Urban India | 12 |
| Panel 6: Urban Welfare Regimes—Inclusive Growth, Cash Transfers, Job Programs | 14 |
| Panel 7: Living in the City—Debating Bangalore’s Urban Future | 16 |
| Conclusion | 18 |

Introduction: The Indian City as a Site of Transformation

- ◆ How can scholars and policymakers promote an alternative *political* vision of India's future that acknowledges the transformative role of its cities and small towns, and incorporates the needs of India's urban poor?
- ◆ How can policy frameworks and approaches provide an integrated, effective, and equitable response to rapidly changing urban realities, including the role of the informal sector and migration?
- ◆ What new conceptualizations, research methodologies, and policies do we need to take into account the dynamic relationships among metros, small towns, and villages?

PANELISTS

Lawrence Cohen (University of California, Berkeley)
Aromar Revi (Indian Institute for Human Settlements)

DISCUSSION

The concluding conference in a three-year series on the 21st Century Indian City brought with it an opportunity to reflect on previous insights and conceptualizations, revisit key debates (while sparking new ones), and refocus on urban economies and the links between towns and metros. In previous conferences, questions about urban economic growth, and the long-overlooked role of India's rapidly transforming small towns within it, had repeatedly emerged as central. Over the two days of the conference, distinguished scholars, civil society activists, and policy-makers gathered for an in-depth examination of these issues. In the spirit of the previous two conferences, conversations combined rigorous and nuanced discussions of urban economic planning with fundamental theoretical questions about how to formulate creative, inclusive, and effective new urban visions.

Lawrence Cohen opened the conference by thanking the participants and organizers and introducing a key underlying theme of this year's conference: the politics of scale. The conference's focus on smaller cities and towns, he said, would allow for a refocusing of the discussion beyond the metro. **Aromar Revi** also discussed the politics of scale, referencing the neglect in India's public policy of urban spaces in general. He pointed out that, since the 1980s, when there had been a partial engagement with urban questions, cities had disappeared from political imaginations and the public policy agenda. Both the Gandhian and Nehruvian economic visions for India were fundamentally rural. Yet in the next twenty years, India's economy is likely to move from a 50% urban economy to an economy that is 2/3 or even 3/4 urban. In contrast to the Gandhian and Nehruvian understanding, Mr. Revi cited Ambedkar's vision of the city as providing an opportunity for mobility and an end to gender,

caste, and ethnic inequalities. The biggest challenge today, Mr. Revi argued, is to build an imagination of an Indian society in which cities have a central part.

In addition to the urgent need for a public policy focus on urban India in general, Revi called for policy reform that acknowledges the importance of the urban informal sector, the source of an estimated quarter of India's GDP. A lack of effective political representation of the informal sector exacerbates its under-representation in India's economic policy. Further, India continues to under-invest in its small towns, even though they offer key opportunities for economic growth. Both the informal sector and the small town are already sites of tremendous productivity, and demand urgent political attention. They also require new visions that can adapt to changing realities. Rather than reinstating old assumptions about migration as an economic constraint, Revi suggested that migration could be seen as an opportunity, and that new entitlement frameworks should reflect the dynamism and mobility of India's cities and small towns. Ultimately, these questions play out not only through policy prescriptions, but, fundamentally, in the arena of politics. In Karnataka, for example, key instabilities derive from contestations over land. Addressing questions of governance—and of rents—and building political consensus are thus central to setting up a framework that can deliver basic services effectively and equitably.

Ultimately, the urgency of the challenges and opportunities discussed at this conference extend far beyond India. At the global level, Mr. Revi pointed out, the imagination of cities as sites of transformation is not yet set; the case has not been put to rest. Yet it is increasingly clear that the future will pivot around China and South Asia, and soon sub-Saharan Africa, and the way they envision their cities and towns. Pursuing debates and exploring connections across the global South thus has tremendous value, and is relevant to the North as well.

While attending to the important task of stimulating in-depth conversations about long-neglected sites for India's economic growth, the conference also served as the culmination of three years of ongoing discussion on the future of India's urban landscape and economic, social, and political geography. Professor Cohen reflected on the outcome of a previous conference on India's urban future, more than 50 years ago, on Berkeley's campus. Following the distinguished tradition of this collaborative effort, the conference organizers now aim to publish a book that can set an ambitious new agenda for urban imaginations in India's 21st century.

Panel 1: Policy Perspectives—Issues of Urban Finance and Governance

- ◆ How do we define a city, for the purposes of governance and service delivery?
- ◆ What are the failures of JNNURM’s approach to urban governance, and what can we learn from these failures? What is required for an effective system of urban governance that is responsive to the needs of the poor?
- ◆ What is the appropriate role for the private sector in administering public services?

PANELISTS

K.C. Sivaramakrishnan (Centre for Policy Research)
Debolina Kundu (National Institute of Urban Affairs)
Raghu Rama Swamy (Infrastructure Development Corporation (Karnataka) Limited (iDeCK)
Chair: Pranab Bardhan (University of California, Berkeley)

DISCUSSION

K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, the opening speaker, promised to give up being “reasonable” and be provocative. He pointed out that engagement with urban issues has increasingly faded in the last decade. A dominant mindset demands that India become urban, but somehow stay rural. There remains a certain romance around the village economy. In contrast to these nostalgic assumptions, Sivaramakrishnan showed how the urban frame for the Census is 10 years old, and the criteria for defining towns and cities are pre-determined, making it difficult for data to capture the realities of rapid urbanization. Further, states’ criteria for establishing cities differ from the Census definitions, all urban areas are not municipal, and an array of unclear categories results in “oddities galore.” For example, in Tamil Nadu in 2004, 566 towns were reclassified as villages, and then become towns again once they received grants and assistance. Professor Sivaramakrishnan linked these ambiguities to the dominance of the state apparatus in governance. The “rudraksha mala” of urban local bodies still consists of scattered and broken beads, he argued, and the 74th Amendment has not helped small towns or megacities. Money is distributed without attention to what is needed, and urban concerns are reduced to issues of real estate. Among other suggestions, Professor Sivaramakrishnan said the 74th Amendment should be revisited, that higher thresholds for municipal status should be considered, and that governance mechanisms should be refined. He also called for colleagues to engage the political spectrum more effectively.

Debolina Kundu also drew attention to limitations in current mechanisms for urban finance and governance, emphasizing in particular the urban poor. India has a top-heavy urban structure, with 23.5% of the urban population in cities with over 5 million people, and India could reach 50%

urbanization in the next four decades. This urban growth demands fundamental changes in central government policy perspectives. While JNNURM did lead to first-time urban local body (ULB) elections in many states, ULBs still lack financial wherewithal and remain dependent on the state structure to carry out development and planning. In general, Dr. Kundu argued, JNNURM's benefits are biased toward bigger cities, at the expense of small towns, which remain unable to access funds. Regarding the urban poor, community participation remains limited or falls prey to elite capture, and the poor remain marginalized. JNNURM's project-based approach, which does not coordinate the needs of the city as a whole; the lack of beneficiary surveys; and ambiguity in definitions (for example of a "tenable" slum) further exacerbate intra-city inequalities. Dr. Kundu advocated building of greater capabilities at the level of ULBs, and for a JNNURM-like program for small/medium towns that focuses on the urban poor.

Finally, **Raghu Rama Swamy** argued that government partnership with the private sector has potential to improve service delivery efficiency in Indian cities. Though there is much antipathy toward public-private partnerships (PPPs), he suggested, government processes are already largely privatized, and the only thing missing is for the private sector to put its own risk in to service delivery projects. PPPs simply force developers to address investment and maintenance. Mr. Swamy conceded, however, that private participation in urban Indian governance, for example in the water sector, does not always offer the best example of success. Experience with PPPs is taking time to build up, he said, but the model is beginning to show results in some places. He discussed examples of PPPs in solid waste management, urban transport, and public land use. Reflecting on JNNURM, he said that it had resulted in a scramble for proposals at the expense of improving the efficiency of service delivery. Mr. Swamy said that civil society has a role to play in urban development alongside government and private developers: hybrid models are required to provide tailored solutions and results.

In response, **Pranab Bardhan** pointed to the political implications of wealth creation concentrated in cities and the population concentrated in rural areas. Dr. Kundu said that slum vote banks being pushed out had led to pro-elite policies, while Professor Sivaramakrishnan argued that policies were actually not responsive enough to public pressure, and that governance models were flawed from the start. **Amitabh Kundu** called for attention to sustainability. Turning to land use, **Smita Srinivas** drew attention to the fragmentation of agencies governing land, while **Ashok Bardhan** and Dr. Kundu discussed developers' reluctance to develop land for the poor, despite incentives. Mr. Swamy said projects were driven by the land market rather than the need for services. **Ananya Roy** called for attention to what can be learned from shifting the focus to oddities, exceptions, and failures.

Panel 2: Building Urban Infrastructure in India

- ◆ What are the appropriate roles for government, civil society, and private developers in urban infrastructure provision? What does it mean for public infrastructure to be public?
- ◆ What is missing in our public infrastructure—is it capacity? Resources? Coordination? Regulation?
- ◆ How can urban planning be integrated with planning for urban infrastructure?

PANELISTS

Anand Bhal (Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India)

S. Sriraman (Department of Economics, University of Mumbai)

Rohini Nilekani (Arghyam)

Chair: Somnath Sen (Indian Institute for Human Settlements)

DISCUSSION

Anand Bhal, the first speaker, offered a perspective from the government on urban infrastructure issues. He said that JNNURM was a first attempt to draw attention to the issues facing urban areas; before that, our hearts remained in rural areas. Mr. Bhal discussed some of the limitations of government partnerships with outside actors, which he called the “terrorism of consultants.” He linked this to the failure of capacity building and advocated greater skills in government to manage consultants. But whose capacity should be built? Mr. Bhal also discussed the role of democratic culture in India’s urban governance. India is law and China is order, he said, and India’s “noisy democracy” means that stakeholder participation is ingrained at all levels and impacts policy processes. Bureaucrats might complain about the Right to Information (RTI) Act, he said, but acknowledged that it was wonderful. Finally, Mr. Bhal echoed Mr. Swamy in advocating PPPs.

S. Sriraman turned the focus to urban transport. He highlighted key concerns in urban transport today—huge growth in personalized modes of transport, a decline in public transport, more and longer trips, and hardly any facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Driving these concerns are the underlying issues of urban population growth and sprawl. He said an estimated 5-10% of urban household income is spent on transport, and in very large cities, over 25% for the poorest families. Professor Sriraman called for attention to a better vision for what an optimal city might be. Urban planning is still not integrated with transport planning. Investments are low and not effectively planned—he mentioned skywalks in Mumbai, which were only being used for morning walks. Further, pricing remains arbitrary and inefficient. Professor Sriraman also pointed to the institutional arrangements that structure urban transport. Largely, public buses are state-run, but there is little attention to efficiency. PPPs might be a way out, but responsibilities have not been clearly defined and communicated. Professor Sriraman said

urban goods mobility had also been overlooked, and truck capacity was often wasted. He suggested limiting city size and sprawl, streamlining pricing, emphasizing investments to build up transport systems capacity, coordinating planning and operations, and improving facilities for pedestrians.

Rohini Nilekani concluded the panel with a focus on water, advocating that we entirely reconceptualize our approach to water management and sanitation. Water, she said, was once an organizing principle for human settlement; now, water has to be brought to people at high energy costs. How can we imagine water supply for more than 6,000 towns? One approach is to recognize informal sector innovation that is already taking place. Such innovations do not fit into the imagination of planners, but are quite effective. She suggested that we build from these informal arrangements rather than imposing a master vision of water planning. She argued for a basic principle in water management: using local water first. She also suggested organizing rainwater supply at the community level rather than the household level, and integrating planning around wastewater and other water. Costs of water, and questions of who should pay them, also need to be addressed carefully. Finally, on the “demand side,” collective action needs greater thought: more civil society activism is urgently needed. Ms. Nilekani highlighted the gap between the lack of imagination of planners and what she called the overactive imagination of activists. Whose imagination, she asked, is playing out around water? Is it possible to work within existing structures at a small scale, while building up demand at a larger scale?

Following the presentations, **Shrayana Bhattacharya** asked about the usefulness of rights-based approaches to water. Ms. Nilekani said that, in a context of structural inequity, enshrining new rights without attention to their implementability was tantamount to defiling them. **Gautam Bhan** asked about the split between the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, likening the two to a “dysfunctional joint family.” Mr. Bhal agreed that synergy was needed, but said it was hard to realize on the ground. Dr. Bhan also pointed to an underlying mistrust of public institutions, and **Ananya Roy** called for thought about what the public character of infrastructure means. **Kala Seetharam Sridhar** said through her research she had been able to calculate an optimal city size. She also said most cities, except Bangalore, underprice their water. **A. Ravindra** said there were conflicts between central and state level actors. Regarding capacity building, Mr. Bhal said capacity building processes were unclear and poorly measured. **K.C. Sivaramakrishnan** emphasized the importance of not thinking in silos: ignorance exists at all levels. **Partha Mukhopadhyay** renewed the focus on rents, suggesting that they needed to be addressed more frankly—in practice, projects might be designed to generate rents, not to fulfill a function. **Ganapathy P.G.** said capital efficiency of infrastructure should also be re-evaluated: why are our systems so expensive?

Panel 3: Agglomeration, Economic Geography and New Modes of Urbanization

- ◆ What are the spatial patterns of urban transformation in India?
- ◆ To what extent does the information we have about the character of urbanization in India reflect realities? What data is still needed?
- ◆ What patterns of urbanization do we want to see? How can our visions incorporate both economic growth and environmentally sustainable economic development?

PANELISTS

Amitabh Kundu (Centre for the Study of Regional Development)
Kala Seetharam Sridhar (Public Affairs Centre)
Partha Mukhopadhyay (Centre for Policy Research)
Chair: Aromar Revi (Indian Institute for Human Settlements)

DISCUSSION

Kala Seetharam Sridhar opened the panel with a discussion of suburbanization in Indian cities. She showed that Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai all saw increases in the percentage of the population living in suburban areas between 1981 and 2001. She presented the methodology of using population density gradients to estimate levels of suburbanization; an decrease in the density gradient since 1981 is related to an increase in suburbanization. She also shared regression results showing that land use regulation, specifically a lower maximum permissible residential FAR, was significantly related to greater suburbanization, along with the caste composition of the central city. Employment suburbanization is in turn linked to population suburbanization. As a result, cities are increasingly compact. Dr. Sridhar also suggested there were potential conflicts between suburban development and rural land use. **Aromar Revi** added that this suburbanization is linked to mobility systems, the functioning of land markets, and the colonial history of urban geography.

Partha Mukhopadhyay argued that urbanization is about the transformation of places, not the movement of people. Only 22.2% of urbanization in India is because of migration; a third is because of reclassification of villages as towns. (He suggested family ties may be one reason for low migration.) India is unique in using an urban definition that incorporates population size, population density, *and* the composition of the workforce. It is difficult to meet all three criteria—many villages are dense, but the criterion of over 75% of males being in the non-agricultural workforce is hard to meet. As a result, India may actually be more urban than it seems. For example, 52% of people in India live within an hour of at least a Class II town, compared with 36% in China. There is a large non-farm economic workforce

in rural areas. Many new towns not near bigger towns go uncounted. Further, growth occurs *around* large cities, not just in them. Dr. Mukhopadhyay said that Bangalore is the only state capital growing faster than the rest of the state; in other states districts near the state capital are sites of the highest growth. (He suggested that this phenomenon might be related to the political primacy of state capitals.) The boundaries between rural and urban play out in each place—localities might prefer to be classified as rural to access some resources, and urban for others. Dr. Mukhopadhyay concluded that the story of Indian urbanization is a distinct one, and it extends far beyond just metropolitan growth.

Amitabh Kundu began by making a distinction between economic growth and economic development. Economic growth may be linked to urbanization, he said, but income per capita is not. Instead, he said, we have seen a capture of urban space by elites and middle classes. He differed from Dr. Mukhopadhyay in arguing that India is not particularly unique in its definition of the urban. In fact, he said, accounting for Census activism, there may be much less urban growth than we think. In contrast to surprisingly low levels of migration, Dr. Kundu said an additional 410 million people will need to leave agriculture and be absorbed into urban areas. But this urban growth must also be sustainable. How will these people be employed? Dr. Kundu made the case for taking manufacturing out of big cities, where the cost of public services might be lower. Finally, he turned to consumption. Indian middle class consumption is slated to exceed that of the US and China by 2030. Can we plan a more balanced urban structure? To do so, both demand and supply must be taken into account. For example, there exists robust demand for manufactured goods in rural areas, but there is no infrastructural support for manufacturing to grow there.

Following the presentations, **Aromar Revi** raised the question of agricultural sector collapse, accelerated by climate change, and its potential impact on migration, while **Rohini Nilekani** mentioned water and energy and the young population. **Smita Srinivas** underlined the difference between India and China—India has seen redistribution of population, whereas China has a floating population of migrants. **Gautam Bhan** asked if suburbanization was a useful frame. Does it prevent us from thinking about spatial patterns? **K.C. Sivaramakrishnan** asked whether the rural/urban distinction itself should be done away with. Dr. Kundu said classifications remain important; depending on the incentives, many areas themselves do not want to be urban. There was a lively discussion about growth and urban classification. Dr. Mukhopadhyay disputed the relevance of Census activism and insisted there had been transformation and a growth in towns, while Dr. Kundu was skeptical, saying that consumption and facilities do not reflect this story of growth.

Panel 4: Location, Regulation, Speculation—Urban Housing and Real Estate

- ◆ What are the appropriate roles of government and private developers in the provision of affordable housing?
- ◆ How can strategies for affordable housing build on the informal strategies of resilience and durability the poor have already developed for themselves?

PANELISTS

Venky Panchapaganesan (Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore)

Hrushikesh Mallick (Centre for Development Studies)

Liza Weinstein (Northeastern University)

Chair: Ashok Bardhan (University of California, Berkeley)

DISCUSSION

Ashok Bardhan opened the panel with an introduction for non-economists. After outlining general features of real estate markets, he said real estate markets are two to three times larger in India, China, and Brazil than they are in more developed countries. All three countries have much higher price-to-income ratios than developed countries, indicating very unaffordable housing, with both demand pressures and supply constraints. Both Brazil and India have programs to alleviate housing costs, but China has a more robust one, with 36 million affordable housing units to be built between 2008 and 2013. Professor Bardhan argued that affordable housing could be the key to urban economic growth, and that only government could address housing affordability at scale. Yet housing markets are very country-specific. He concluded that outside-the-box solutions are urgently required.

Venky Panchapaganesan began by stating that while the gap in housing and infrastructure, fueled by urbanization and changing needs, is not unique to India, there are many local nuances. Housing is about not only cost but also standard of living. While the demand for urban housing comes largely from the lower sections of the income distribution, the response to this demand has been inadequate and uncoordinated. The housing market is thus “under-developed but over-regulated,” for both structural (related to the land market and financing) and governance-related (constraining policies) reasons. Professor Panchapagesan called for increasing land supply, in part by unlocking government land; curbing speculation; and developing private enterprise to enhance efficiency, while policy-makers stay out of the way and address larger problems. He also insisted that the political establishment be more effectively engaged. Finally, he called for improved property rights and data transparency, perhaps building on Aadhar or RTI, but emphasized that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Hrushikesh Mallick presented on the urban housing market and prices. The key determinants of housing prices include migration (for jobs and services) on the demand side and location (on the supply side.) Many Indian cities have seen rises in housing prices, and these rises could be linked to the country's growth rate. Turning to the case of Bhubaneswar, Professor Mallick said most of the available land is in the outskirts of the city. Arable land is often purposed for residential uses. There remains little housing for the very poor. The NUHHP 2007 favors the poor, but has not been translated into any concrete results. Professor Mallick said the high density of urban populations still must be addressed, perhaps through developing smaller townships linked to bigger cities. Prices should be normalized across cities, and infrastructure should receive much more investment.

Liza Weinstein concluded by presenting on the political context of the housing market, drawing on her book on collective action in Dharavi. Building on the question of the failed PPP, she asked how Dharavi sustains itself in the face of constant attempted land grabs. Professor Weinstein highlighted entrenched power and durable spaces as dynamics simultaneous to dispossession. She analyzed key elements of Dharavi's durability: centrality in economic and political networks extending beyond the slum, density of vibrant civil society organizations and political parties, fragmentation among state agencies, and the history of struggle embedded within the spaces of the slum. Against powerful odds, the residents of Dharavi have managed to assert their "right to stay put." Rather than a rights-based framework or broad right to the city, this right to stay put takes shape in the repertoires people use at smaller scales to respond to threats, constituting the durable slum.

In a lengthy discussion, **Amitabh Kundu** warned that saying "one size does not fit all" tends to bolster arguments for leaving everything to the market. He suggested instead that India has no housing shortage: there are 9 million vacant units, and the problems are distributional. Professor Panchapaganesan agreed, but said rather than centrally re-distributing land, policy-makers should develop natural incentives. **Gautam Bhan** challenged presenters for their insistence on discussing what "we" should do to address affordable housing. Instead, he argued for recognition of the housing the poor have built for themselves, and the ways in which they resist and avoid informality. **Partha Mukhopadhyay** argued that we should see markets where they operate, paying attention to people's informal ownership (and rental) of housing in slums, rather than being "insulted" by the form and aesthetics of slums. **Aromar Revi** said that the idea of the housing shortage and the idea that housing markets don't work are both myths, and that norms that refuse to accommodate forms of informality must be redefined.

Panel 5: In Search of Livelihood—Job Creation in Urban India

- ◆ What might be a meaningful mode of analysis for making sense of flows of people and capital through different spaces and work sectors? What new research methodologies might be needed to move beyond polarized categories, such as “rural/urban” or “formal/informal”?
- ◆ How are patterns of job growth shaped by regional land politics and structures of capital, gender relations, and caste and class hierarchies?
- ◆ How can we characterize transitions and links between training and work, and between the manufacturing and service sectors?

PANELISTS

K.V. Ramaswamy (Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research)
Carol Upadhya (National Institute of Advanced Studies)
Smita Srinivas (Columbia University)
Chair: Gautam Bhan (Indian Institute for Human Settlements)

DISCUSSION

K.V. Ramaswamy began by discussing the relationship between manufacturing and services in job growth, drawing on the analysis in the *India Development Report*. He raised the question: Could India skip to service-led growth? In urban India, construction is the leading creator of jobs, followed by transport/communications/other, and manufacturing is in third place. Construction involves casual employment. Manufacturing demands lower levels of education. Wage inequality is higher in the service sector, and the service sector also demands much higher skills. In this context, vocational education becomes a key concern—and yet there has been a decline in vocational education in India. Dr. Ramaswamy called for renewed attention to the incentives needed to expand trainee programs. The Labor Ministry has backtracked on its initial commitment to trainees. Rural-urban inequality is also a concern. Trainee seats are empty in urban areas, while companies say they don’t want rural workers, who are difficult to “mold.” Absorbing trainees, then, requires political commitment.

Carol Upadhya challenged the dominant policy narrative about urbanization, which, she said, is one of urbanization as crisis. She offered an alternative: looking at cities not in terms of concrete formations of economy or settlement, but in terms of mobilities and flows. Shifting the lens to mobilities, rather than migration, opens up new analytical possibilities for tracing short-term labor flows, circular and temporary migrations, and connections between urban and rural spaces. She showed a photo of a paddy field coming up against the edges of a new, unoccupied SEZ. Professor Upadhya emphasized the importance of changing class formations in describing the urban economy—for example, the circulations of both high-skilled and low-skilled workers, and the emergence of a growing

lower middle class. She also critiqued dichotomous understandings of formal and informal economies, in which the formal is unmarked and the informal is presented as its “other.” The two are not separate entities, but are deeply interlinked: through processes of neoliberalization, the public sector is fading and the corporate sector depends on informal sector labor. Finally, Professor Upadhya turned to her research in coastal Andhra to show how historical formations of regional capital, including centrally the politics of land, shape new transformations, such as attempts to start SEZs or local IT industries.

Smita Srinivas also questioned the usefulness of a fixed, simplistic conceptualization of rural-urban transformation. Instead, she said, effective analysis must incorporate rural-urban, farm-non-farm, informal-formal, school-work, public-informal, self-employed-wage, and vernacular-English transformations. She began by focusing on the gap between job creation and opportunities for building job skills. It remains easy for low-skilled people to “fall off the map” of professional development programming. Professor Srinivas differentiated three types of industrial welfare systems: place, work, and work-place. Current policy, she said, fails to address these differentiations. Professor Srinivas also emphasized social hierarchy. For example, India has a history of work training organized by caste. She then turned to two student projects to demonstrate new strategies for research. One looked at firms’ interest in moving out of cities, and developed methods of analysis that accounted both for formal jobs and the indirect jobs linked to them. The second envisioned different modes of urban infrastructure, and analyzed employment within infrastructure networks. Ultimately, Professor Srinivas said, development priorities are embedded in politics. In whose interest is it to provide skills?

In discussion, **Gautam Bhan** picked up on comments problematizing analytical categories and definitions, and suggested that rather than beginning with the concept of the urban, we arrive at it. Responding to **Ananya Roy’s** question about units of analysis, Professor Upadhya noted transnational circuits—Vyzhak is connected to Hyderabad, which is connected to the U.S. —and Professor Srinivas pointed to the specificities of labor control in different sectors. Professor Upadhya also discussed the role of gender and sexuality politics and the relative social valuation of “urban” and “rural” in shaping the discourse of “unemployability,” which ultimately serves as a labor control strategy. **Ashok Bardhan** noted that the educational sector seems unresponsive to the needs of the labor market. **Partha Mukhopadhyay** said there is a need to get over the mental block that sees manufacturing as low-skilled and services as high-skilled. He also pointed to the changes in the nature of the labor force, for example changes in women’s patterns of work. **Aromar Revi** drew attention to how the entitlement framework might respond to the mobility of people and capital across spaces and work categories.

Panel 6: Urban Welfare Regimes—Inclusive Growth, Cash Transfers, Job Programs

- ◆ What spatial assumptions underlie urban welfare regimes in India, and how might they be retooled to reflect the inherent precarities of urban poverty?
- ◆ What resources are really needed to provide a basic social safety net for the urban poor? What prevents these needs from being met?

PANELISTS

Om Mathur (National Institute of Urban Affairs)
Shrayana Bhattacharya (World Bank)
Gautam Bhan (Indian Institute for Human Settlements)
Chair: Ananya Roy (University of California, Berkeley)

DISCUSSION

As **Ananya Roy** pointed out in her introductory comments, Indian welfare regimes were developed for rural, not urban, contexts. What is at stake when we reimagine them for urban realities? How do contestations over urban space come into play—which urban do we mean when we speak of urban welfare regimes? If we can subscribe to a politics of patience when airports and highways are built for the affluent, why do we lose patience in relation to housing and infrastructure for the poor? And how do urban welfare regimes fit into shifting transnational geographies and circulation of models?

Om Mathur focused his presentation on characterizing and evaluating existing urban welfare regimes for the poor. The aim of Indian urban welfare regimes is to use public sector initiatives to redistribute the benefits of economic growth, in four areas: basic services, shelter, tenurial security, and livelihood. Existing welfare regimes are difficult to measure, but Professor Mathur concluded that existing provisions are grossly inadequate. In fact, he said, just 0.5% of GDP would be enough to uplift all the urban poor. Turning to implementation strategies, Professor Mathur said existing welfare regimes were designed on the basis of financial partnership of three levels of government, and aimed to engage beneficiaries as well as the private sector, as well as addressing long-term sustainability. Yet efforts do not seem to be returning their investments. Fragmentation of channels reduces effectiveness and increases cost. Even the desired outcomes remain unclear. Ultimately, welfare regimes become a zero-sum game, with welfare regimes simply offsetting policy distortions.

Shrayana Bhattacharya presented research on a program for old-age pensions in Delhi. In a study of the program, Dr. Bhattacharya found that households in which the head of the household is female, households in unrecognized slums, and households with disabled members were less likely to be

enrolled, while those with an existing bank account or ration card were more likely to be enrolled. Counterintuitively, those living closer to an area of high real estate value tended to have less access to programs, and a local MLA being a minister was related to low likelihood of enrollment. There was no evidence of elite capture. Explaining these results, Dr. Bhattacharya analyzed the role of paperwork and politicians in administering the scheme. In addition to an extensive array of documents, applicants also need a politician's signature to verify it. In the context of real estate boom, party workers have less incentive to seek out potential applicants. Ideally, she suggested, the program would exploit "mission convergence" between politicians' desire for votes and the needs of potential applicants.

Gautam Bhan foregrounded the effects of spatial illegality on the possibilities for urban citizenship and access to welfare. He argued that systems of welfare provision are predicated on the assumption of rootedness to land—urban migrants, for example, are assumed to receive benefits in rural areas, where they belong. Dr. Bhan pointed to the absurdity of geographical targeting in the context of persistent slum evictions. Those who move, he said, can take ten years to get back on the welfare rolls. These configurations suggest larger contradictions in the intent of governance, rendering the urban poor essentially nonexistent on paper. When planned colonies house only 23.7% of the population, the dichotomy between legality and illegality appears reductive. Thus, insecure tenure places severe restrictions on access to basic services. In response to these breakdowns in the concept of "proof of residence," Dr. Bhan proposed an alternative organizing principle: the "intent to reside." Such a framework, he argued, offers the benefit of the doubt, and references a foundation of universal entitlement. Both Dr. Bhan and Dr. Bhattacharya suggested that the "known unknown" of Aadhar may resolve some concerns with urban welfare regimes.

Following the presentations, one audience member emphasized the need for multidimensional measures of poverty. **Amitabh Kundu** challenged the notion that welfare regimes benefit the poor, arguing instead that, in the name of the poor, subsidies go to the middle class. **Partha Mukhopadhyay** suggested an approach akin to Brazilian strategies for municipal-level decision-making. Dr. Bhan argued that the poor have powerful visions for what they need, but in the face of eviction, their voices have not translated into collective impact on policy. **Lawrence Cohen** asked if the resident was replacing the citizen as the unit for political action. Finally, **Ananya Roy** reflected on the apparent disjuncture between a proliferation of programs and the appearance that no one is actually enrolled in programs in the slums. How might ethnographic work help reveal the processes populating this disjuncture?

Panel 7: Living in the City—Debating Bangalore’s Urban Future

- ◆ What are the prospects for a future for Bangalore that is livable and sustainable?
- ◆ How does Bangalore’s history shape its cultural politics and social geography?
- ◆ Who is the paradigmatic citizen of world-class Bangalore, and who is erased from its aspirations?

PANELISTS

Narendar Pani (National Institute of Advanced Studies)

Kalpana Sharma (Journalist)

Prakash Belwadi (Journalist and Theatre Personality)

A. Ravindra (CM’s Office, Urban Affairs, Karnataka)

Chair: Raka Ray (University of California, Berkeley)

DISCUSSION

The final panel turned to the cultural politics of the city, focusing on Bangalore. **Raka Ray** highlighted an enduring nostalgia for the rural, even in the midst of proliferating fantasies about the magic of the city.

In thinking about visions of “livable cities,” Professor Ray also pointed to the dominance of upper-middle class tastes. What might a more inclusive vision for Bangalore’s urban future look like?

Narendar Pani’s presentation sought to root an understanding Bangalore in a perspective on its past. Pre-colonial Bangalore was populated with spatially segregated, inward-looking caste groups, each with separate languages and structures, with an autonomous Cantonment. Each space claimed to represent Bangalore. This arrangement persisted until the 1980s, when Kannada agitation sought to get Kannada into the Cantonment—even as the English of the Cantonment began to penetrate the city. This linguistic shift was linked to the IT revolution, which also created a new spatial pattern of gated communities, linked by specialized transport to gated workplaces. Meanwhile, policymaking is increasingly insulated from politics and sensitive only to elite interests. Professor Pani also discussed the depletion of nearby water sources, changes in the cost of living and infrastructure costs, and a resulting labor shortage. What might such shifts mean for a restructuring of contemporary Bangalore?

A. Ravindra began with a common refrain: what has happened to Bangalore? Bangalore’s transformation is widely discussed and is paradigmatic of problems of urbanization more generally. What do we want out of urbanization? Does Bangalore represent the worst of it? Mr. Ravindra suggested that the IT presence in Bangalore has led to mismanagement of public space. Bangaloreans are seen as docile in the face of these transformations. He also discussed rising costs of primary education and the resulting burden on the middle class, despite world-class higher education.

Prakash Belwadi provided a more optimistic take on Bangalore. Despite the whining, he said, nobody is going to leave this city, and it remains the best place to live in the state—a place to shed small-town caste classifications and expand access to education and the English language. He said that in contrast to images of crisis, Bangaloreans actually have an excess of water and energy; the real concern is in management. Further, despite such setbacks, Mr. Belwadi insisted that the vitality of Bangalore would prevail no matter what—what is needed is to think positively and creatively.

Kalpna Sharma reflected on urban citizenship in Indian cities. The often-heard phrase “citizens and slum-dwellers” renders slum-dwellers non-citizens, even if they comprise 60% of the population of Mumbai and nearly half the population of Bangalore. In Mumbai, only 10% of street vendors have licenses: the rest are considered illegal and pay fines to the municipal corporation every day. These regimes of illegality and legality are justified on the basis of convenience to the “citizen.” Who is the citizen who is inconvenienced? Women feel street vendors increase the safety of public space. Thus, imaginations of legality and illegality inscribe certain people’s vision of what the city should look like, at the expense of other people’s stake in public space. Once, Ms. Sharma asked a woman who lived on the pavement why she bothered to vote. She replied that only if she voted would there be proof that she exists. The urban poor, Ms. Sharma concluded, do have agency to make political decisions—even if counterintuitive, as in the case of Muslim women in Dharavi voting for the Shiv Sena—and these must be taken seriously. Ms. Sharma also argued for attention to livability and environmental sustainability.

In response to a question from **Smita Srinivas**, Professor Pani and Ms. Sharma reflected on the narrow purview of the news media and its effective invisibilization of huge sectors of the population. **K.C. Sivaramakrishnan** said the story of Bangalore was the story of different communities learning to come together. There was a discussion of the surprising paucity of politicians from Bangalore involved in state politics. Another participant suggested that the utopic vision of the “world-class city” shapes ideas about who the urban citizen can be. **Amitabh Kundu** noted that Indian poverty alleviation subsidies are biased toward megacities. **Ashok Bardhan** asked if Bangalore represented something closer to “Delhi cosmopolitanism” or “Mumbai rootlessness.” Professor Pani suggested rootlessness, with immigration a permanent element of city life, and village residence providing the main safety net. Mr. Belwadi said Bangalore would not so easily convert to another state’s culture—Kannada newspapers, for example, continue to prevail. The urban culture is a host culture for a range of new entrants. As the first Indian city being built by Indians, he said, Bangalore could expect some mistakes—but a vibrant younger generation is poised to lay claim to the city’s future.

Conclusion

PANELISTS

Lawrence Cohen (University of California, Berkeley)
Aromar Revi (Indian Institute for Human Settlements)

It is almost trite to say that the Indian city is riddled with contradictions. As **Lawrence Cohen** pointed out in his concluding comments, it is marked by simultaneous durability and insecurity—both themes that surfaced again and again over the two days of the conference. As the site of rapid urban transformation, a long litany of infrastructural breakdowns, and an impressive history of cultural and social fragmentation, Bangalore represents perhaps the best and worst of this contradictory urban reality. How might unexpected sites of durability, creativity, and experimentation be incorporated meaningfully into a livable, sustainable collective vision for the city's future? And how might configurations of state, civil society, and the private sector secure a framework for universal social entitlement within which the poor can stake their legitimate claim to inclusion?

From a pessimistic beginning, as **Aromar Revi** concluded, the conference progressed toward a renewed sense of optimism about where Indian cities are now and where they might go. Bangalore is an Indian city built by Indians for India, and its future holds the potential to articulate alternative paths for urbanization. What might a different kind of urbanization look like? Conference discussions confirmed that the urban economy matters, and that the informal sector and the poor hold a central place within it—indeed, Mr. Revi said, the urban economy is built on the backs of the poor, and they are working very hard. Each presentation confirmed the inadequacy of static, bounded dichotomies—the urban and the rural, the formal and the informal, the legal and the illegal were each unpacked, questioned, and brought into relation to one another. Participants engaged centrally with the question of land and its integration with labor markets. The need for further dialogue with the private sector, and especially the informal sector, is clear. The conference produced a new vision of the city built on the idea of circulation—of people, of multiple identities, of information. Conference participants also put into practice a new analytic framework, premised on a reconsideration of failure. Whom do failures fail for? And how do failures produce new sites for survival and innovation? Where might the disjuncts between policy and its effects open up opportunities for new theory building? Such questions reveal a rich new terrain for analytical inquiry, policy formulation, and activism for the emerging Indian city.