



CSAS

Center for South Asia Studies
University of California at Berkeley

South Asia Research Notes

Fall 2012

The 21st Century Indian City Working Towards Being Slum Free?

A report on the 2-day conference on urbanization in India organized by the Center for South Asia Studies, Global Metropolitan Studies, and the Fisher Center for Real Estate & Urban Economics at the University of California, Berkeley on April 27-28, 2012.

SUMMARY

The Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), in its call for a “slum-free India” begins from the recognition of the right of the poor to be in the city. RAY calls for slums to be brought into the formal system with an upgrading of basic amenities; the redressal of “the failures of the formal system that lie behind the creation of slums;” and the need to address the problem of urban land and affordable housing for the poor. This conference seeks thus to address the critical question of urban poverty, to create better, sustainable habitats for those who currently live in slums, and to think about new systems of urban governance, that can tackle the challenge of urbanization. The conference brought together scholars on urbanization from Berkeley with experts and practitioners from India. The invited speakers shared their thoughts on the economic, social, political and cultural issues that must be considered as we think about the so-called “slum free city.”

This is a brief report on the proceedings of the conference that took place in Berkeley in April 2012.



THE 21st CENTURY INDIAN CITY
Working Towards Being
Slum Free?

April 27 - 28, 2012
Blum Center for Developing Economies
University of California at Berkeley

Acknowledgements

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Ann & Kanwal Rekhi

About the conference series

The 21st Century Indian City

The 21st century will be an Asian century. But it will also be an urban century with much of this urbanization taking place in Asian cities, especially in India and China. India's rapid urban growth thus presents a call to scholars, policy-makers, planners, and civil society activists to engage with the various potentialities and challenges. In recognition of the urgency of the issue, CSAS launched a new research initiative titled **The 21st Century Indian City**. The inaugural conference in this initiative, **Developing an Agenda for Urbanization in India**, was held in New Delhi in March 2011.

The **2nd** conference in this initiative, **Working Towards Being Slum Free?**, took place on April 27-28, 2012 in Berkeley, CA. Preceding it, on April 25, 2012 was, **Urban WASH: Paradigms for Water, Sanitation & Hygiene for the 21st Century South Asian City**, a graduate student symposium focusing primarily on urban water management.

The **3rd** and final conference in this initiative, **Towns, Metros, and the Indian Economy** will take place on March 26-27, 2013 in Bangalore, India.

For further details on all three conferences please visit the conference website at indiancities.berkeley.edu.

This conference is part two of an interdisciplinary, collaborative endeavor that unfolded in the Spring of 2011 with a conference in India. That conference, hosted by our partners at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi was



ANANYA ROY

meant to set an agenda for research and policy concerned with the 21st century Indian City. Organized around the 4 broad themes of Globalization & Economic Growth; Infrastructure, Environment, & Planning; Democracy & Governance; and The Social Life of Cities, that conference also placed these issues in a comparative context, drawing in particular on the experiences of urbanization in other world-regions such as Latin America. This conference, following from the debates and discussions of the first, took up a very specific theme – that of the making of slum-free cities in India that the Rajiv Awas Yojana holds out – as the horizon of analysis and intervention.

The term, slum, however remains an inadequate shorthand for what is the sheer heterogeneity of urban political economy: the diversity of informal and para-legal property arrangements, the dense economies of work and livelihood, the complex formations of associational life and popular politics. If we recognize the slum



MATIAS ECHANOVE & RAHUL SRIVASTAVA

not as defective or deviant, but rather as integral to the logic of urbanization, then of course we recognize that the slum, in its inadequate nomenclature, signifies the global urban future of the world's urban majority.

But this conference was also about something else, something more. It was concerned with how the slum becomes an object of governance and of governmental reform. One of the most ambitious urban planning endeavors, India's national urban renewal mission,

...the slum has become the symbol of the troubles of the Third World megacity, of the deficits of urban infrastructure, of the failure of urban planning, and as a place which is marked deficit, defective and deviant

— Ananya Roy

We are faced with the complexity of thinking about legislation when the space of the slum is not clearly bounded, when the borders are questionable, and when people who are defined to be in it reject the identity of being a slum dweller. When the immigrants of the 190 recognized villages in Bombay are being misrecognized as in deficit and defective, instead of people with relationships and sets of complex skills with which they build homes and communities.

How can we plan with their input and not despite them?

— Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava

or the JNNURM, is a national plan for the building of urban infrastructure and for the provision of basic urban services to the urban poor. But urban infrastructure is also the conduit of an important mandate of government: reform. Reform, as is the case also with urban infrastructure financed by multilateral and regional development banks, is a broad term which includes both economic reforms and the restructuring of systems of governance. It includes a variety of practices, including the reform of property taxes, the levying of user charges for urban services, the repeal of urban land ceiling acts, the simplification of legal and procedural frameworks for conversion of land from agricultural to non-agricultural purposes.

Now, the implementation of such reforms is inevitably uneven. Whether or not they can be fully implemented, what is at stake in such reforms are new conceptualizations of urban governance. One of these is the financialization of megacity infrastructure, for example USAID's Financial

Institutions Reform and Expansion-Debt (FIRE-D) project, which is the work of creating municipal bond markets in India mainly for the financ-

ing of urban infrastructure. Such reforms also transform urban politics; in other words, as they produce urban infrastructures, so they produce political infrastructures, often reframing urban citizenship as stakeholder politics. Ultimately the national urban renewal mission seeks to transform

...we are at a stage when we are beginning to talk about property rights for slum dwellers...indicative of the fact that there is a shift from the "burn it down" mode. But what can the policy deliver regarding the poor? For example, What sort of rights are these nontradeable but mortgageable property rights?

— Om Mathur

...the reform mandates of the national urban renewal mission have created a variegated landscape of state power, negotiations, and contestation.

— Ananya Roy

the Indian megacity, and spaces like the slum, into governable entities.

The 21st Century Indian City Working Towards Being Slum Free? Conference Agenda

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

9:00 am: **The Slum—Setting the Stage**

KC Sivaramakrishnan (*Center for Policy Research*)

Ananya Roy (*University of California, Berkeley*)

10:00 am: **Slum Free Cities—The Legislation**

Chair and Discussant: Raka Ray (*University of California, Berkeley*)

Om Mathur (*National Institute of Urban Affairs*)

Rahul Srivastava (*urbz.net*)

Matias Echanove (*urbz.net*)

11:30 am: Break

11:45 am: **Policing the Basti**

Keynote Reading: Novelist Vikram Chandra (*University of California, Berkeley*)

12:30 pm: Lunch

2:00 pm: **The Political Economy of Slum Free City Planning**

Chair and Discussant: Ashok Bardhan (*University of California, Berkeley*)

Amitabh Kundu (*Centre for the Study of Regional Development*)

Malini Ranganathan (*University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign*)

Ravi Sundaram (*Center for the Study of Developing Societies*)

3:30 pm: Break

3:45 pm: **Slum Infrastructure (Screening of "Q2P" followed by discussion)**

Chair and Discussant: Alison Post (*University of California, Berkeley*)

Paromita Vohra (*Director of "Q2P"*)

Isha Ray (*University of California, Berkeley*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

9:00 am: **Social Protection for the Urban Poor?**

Chair and Discussant: Pranab Bardhan (*University of California, Berkeley*)

Alain de Janvry (*University of California, Berkeley*)

Gautam Bhan (*Indian Institute for Human Settlements*)

10:30 am: **The Politics of Land**

Chair and Discussant: Teresa Caldeira (*University of California, Berkeley*)

Amita Baviskar (*Institute of Economic Growth*)

Mike Levien (*University of California, Berkeley*)

Partha Mukhopadhyay (*Center for Policy Research*)

12 noon: **Moving Forward & Wrap-Up**

Raka Ray (*University of California, Berkeley*)

On the one hand, Slum-free Cities signals what Professor Mathur, in his influential national urban poverty strategy paper, has titled a “new deal for India’s urban poor.” This is a radically different understanding of slums than the criminalization and marginalization of urban poverty that has been at work in Indian cities. Indeed, the Rajiv Awas Yojana, in its call for a slum-free India, is premised on the recognition of the right of the poor to be in the city. It is also premised on the recognition that social protections, once imagined only for the rural poor, must be made available to the urban poor.

...how do we understand RAY in the context of all the other intervention and schemes that have preceded it? Do we see it as simply pronouncement or a New Deal for India’s urban poor in a moment when not slums but slum lands are valued as urban assets?

— **KC Sivaramakrishnan**

been widely prevalent among the proponents of slum redevelopment, as in Dharavi. Is this the vision that will dominate the national urban renewal mission?

The Slum-Free cities initiative requires each state in the Indian federation to prepare a Slum-Free Plan of Action, one that is “expected to give primacy to a Public-Private-Partnership model that would enable it to cross-subsidise through Floor Space Index and land use concessions as much of the slum redevelopment as possible.” In other words, the policy continues a line of reform

we need better data so that we can create more effective policies – better data not just for class 1 cities but for class 3 -6 cities. There also needs to be political will to enable such data to be collected.

— **Amitabh Kundu**



AMITABH KUNDU & MIKE LEVIEN

There are several vital tensions that will need to be resolved in order for RAY – but also any of the schemes that now exist and which will no doubt exist in the future – to be meaningful. For example how does one deal with slums and slum dwellers as both a special category while wanting to mainstream them, or how can one expect to formalize complex bundles of services that have not been formalized anywhere else, or how do we go with the PPP model without handing costs to the users.

— **Malini Ranganathan**

On the other hand, the guidelines for Slum-Free city planning seek to transform slum land into urban assets. Indeed the imagination of Slum-free Cities has



OM MATHUR & K.C. SIVARAMAKRISHNAN

that was established with the national urban renewal mission, notably to grant public funds to local government mainly to leverage private sector participation in urban infrastructure. What will this ultimately mean for the urban poor? For the urban majority?

that was established with the national urban renewal mission, notably to grant public funds to local government mainly to leverage private sector participation in urban infrastructure. What will this ultimately mean for the urban poor? For the urban majority?

It is worth noting that the problem of the slum is being framed not so much as a matter of housing policy as it is as the reconceptualization of property. This includes the conferring of property rights to the poor. Such security of tenure for the urban poor is crucial in India where slum evictions have been commonplace. Yet, what does this mean?

In announcing Slum-free cities, India’s minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, in a talk titled “Inclusive Paradigms for Inclusive Growth,” posed the following question: “How do we create a process by which the poor can convert capital from the extra-legal to the legal sphere and in so doing, contribute to the GDP at the bottom of the pyramid?”

It is thus that India’s first urban social protection policy is also an endeavor to title and revalue property. It is thus that security of tenure in

newly visible slum lands becomes the basis perhaps of slum redevelopment and the conversion of informally regulated property into liquid capital.

Such experiments of governance and reform and inclusion are inevitably in conversation with experiments elsewhere. We know that India's experiment with Special Economic Zones had an eye on what was perceived to be China's success with such zones. We know that certain models of urban planning and best practices circulate with great intensity. But can comparisons and circulations also make possible alternative

urban futures?

As the state continues to divide categories of citizens, will there be resistance? We now see the shift from the acquisition of land for production to land for the market and SC/STs are worse off after selling their rural lands. What then can we expect of the slumlands as they are increasingly thought of as urban assets?

— Mike Levien

on paper, then are alternative understandings of property possible, for example from Brazil's experiments with the social function of property? And if India's

If to be slum free is to be poverty free, one needs income growth and social protection. What are the viable models that would work for India? Conditional cash transfers and SHGs? If so, then what should be the basis of these provisions, the map of entitlements and the political machinery of implementation?

— Alain de Janvry

ple, from experiments with conditional cash transfers in Brazil and Mexico?

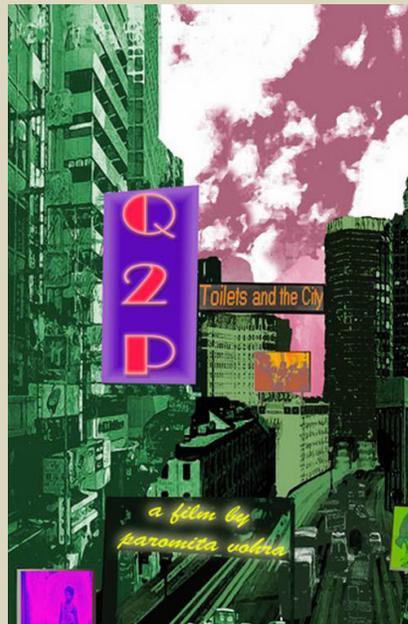
Finally, given that slums are tenable and productive spaces, should we just let them be? What exactly



RAVI SUNDARAM & ALAIN DE JANVRY

Special Event:

A screening of Paromita Vohra's Q2P



Q2P is a film about toilets and the city. It peers through the dream of Mumabi as a future Shanghai and searches for public toilets in Bombay with a small detour in Delhi, watching who has to queue to pee. As the film observes who has access to toilets and who doesn't, we begin to also see the imagination of gender that underlies the city's shape, the constantly

shifting boundaries between public and private space; we learn of small acts of survival that people in the city's bottom half cobble together and quixotic ideas of social change that thrive with mixed results; we hear the silence that surrounds toilets and sense how similar it is to the silence that surrounds inequality. The toilet becomes a riddle with many answers and some of those answers are questions – about gender, about class, about caste and most of all about space, urban development and the twisted myth of the global metropolis.

Paromita Vohra is a filmmaker and writer. Her films as director include *Partners in Crime* (2011), *Morality TV* and *the Loving Jihad* (2007), *Where's Sandra* (2005), *Work In Progress* (2004), *Cosmopolis: Two Tales of A City* (2004), *Unlimited Girls* (2001), (Women's News Award, Women's International Film Festival, Seoul), *A Woman's Place* (1998), and *Annapurna: Goddess of Food* (1995). Her films as writer include the feature *Khamosh Pani* (Best Film, Locarno Film Festival; Best Screenplay, Kara Film Festival); and the documentaries *A Few Things I Know About Her* (Silver Conch, MIFF and National Award, Best Film), *If You Pause: In A Museum of Craft and Skin Deep*. She teaches writing for film at various universities and writes a popular newspaper column in the Sunday Middy.

The film's producer PUKAR (Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research) is a Mumbai based organization that creates a new space for critical engagement with the city, and seeks to contribute to a global debate about urbanization and globalization.

Organizers

The conference was made possible by the leadership of four UC Berkeley faculty from disciplines ranging from Economics, Sociology, City and Regional Planning, and the Haas School of Business. The conference participants included speakers from a variety of academic disciplines at Berkeley as well as from universities throughout the US and India, as well as scholars, advocates, policymakers, and other stake-holders in the future of Indian cities.



Pranab Bardhan is Professor of Economics

at the University of California, Berkeley. He has done theoretical and field studies research on rural institutions in poor countries, on political economy of development policies, and on international trade. A part of his work is in the interdisciplinary area of economics, political science, and social anthropology. He was Chief Editor of the *Journal of Development Economics* for 1985-2003. Widely published and cited, Professor Bardhan's most recent publications include *Awakening Giants, Feet of Clay: Assessing the Economic Rise of China and India*; *International Trade, Growth and Development*; *Poverty, Agrarian Structure, and Political Economy in India*; *Scarcity, Conflicts and Cooperation*; *Essays in Political and Institutional Economics of Development*; *Globalization and Egalitarian Redistribution, Inequality, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability*; and (co-edited), *Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective*.



Raka Ray is Professor of Sociology and

South and Southeast Asia Studies, Sarah Kailath Chair in India Studies, and Chair of the Center for South Asia Studies at UC Berkeley. Her areas of specialization are gender and feminist theory, domination and inequality, cultures of servitude and social movements. Publications include *Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity & Class India* with co-author Seemin Qayum (Stanford University Press, 2010); *Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India* (University of Minnesota, 1999; and in India, *Kali for Women*, 2000), *Women's Movements in the Third World: Identity, Mobilization and Autonomy* with Anna Korteweg (Annual Review of Sociology, 1999); *Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power, and Politics*, co-edited with Mary Katzenstein (Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); and *Elite and Everyman: The Cultural Politics of the Indian Middle Classes*, co-edited with Amita Baviskar (Routledge, 2011). Raka Ray's PhD is from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.



Ananya Roy is Professor of City and Regional

Planning at UC Berkeley, where she teaches in the fields of urban studies and international development. She also serves as Education Director of the Blum Center for Developing Economies and as co-Director of the Global Metropolitan Studies Center. Roy is the author of *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), co-editor of *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America* (Lexington Books, 2004) and co-editor of *The Practice of International Health* (Oxford University Press, 2008). Her most recent book *Poverty Capital: Microfinance and the Making of Development* (Routledge, 2010). Roy is now completing an edited book (with Aihwa Ong) titled *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* (Blackwell, 2011). Roy serves on the editorial boards of various journals including *Planning Theory*, *Public Culture*, and the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.

Conference Lead Faculty



Ashok Bardhan is Senior Research Associate

in the Fisher Center for Real Estate & Urban Economics at the Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley. His research includes papers on the impact of offshoring on jobs, wages and firm organization; on global financial integration and real estate; on urban housing; and on trade and technology linkages between US, China and India. He is co-author of a book, *Globalization and a High-Tech Economy: California, US and Beyond* (2004), and co-editor of the forthcoming books *One World, One Crisis? The Global Housing Market Meltdown* and the *Oxford Handbook on Global Employment and Offshoring*. His current research projects include linkages between the higher education sector and jobs, and the determinants of sustainable urban development. Dr. Bardhan has an MS in Physics and Mathematics from Moscow, Russia, an M.Phil in International Relations from New Delhi, India, and a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California at Berkeley.

Conference Speakers

University of California at Berkeley



Teresa Caldeira
(City & Regional
Planning)



Vikram Chandra
(English)



Alain de Janvry
(Public Policy)



Mike Levien
(Sociology)



Alison Post
(Political Science)



Isha Ray
(Energy & Resources
Group)

Other Institutions



Amita Baviskar
(Institute of Economic
Growth)



Gautam Bhan
(Indian Institute for
Human Settlements)



Matias Echanove
(urbz.net)



Amitabh Kundu
(Centre for the
Study of Regional
Development)



Om Mathur
(National Institute of
Urban Affairs)



**Partha
Mukhopadhyay**
(Center for Policy
Research)



Malini Ranganathan
(University of Illinois,
Urbana Champaign)



**K. C.
Sivaramakrishnan**
(Center for Policy
Research)



Rahul Srivastava
(urbz.net)



Ravi Sundaram
(Center for the
Study of Developing
Societies)



Paromita Vohra
(Filmmaker)

should we let be? The consensus among the participants was that there still is much to be done to enable those

who do not live in the “drawing rooms” of the nation to live with dignity and without disease. This will require political will as well as a will for social justice.

(talking about the issue of labour)... these are not just the poor. These are the core workers of the city – the construction workers and servants that the middle classes of the cities require.

— Amita Baviskar

This conference attempted to address the question that we started with: is the issue about slum free cities about space, or poverty, or should we simply deal with job generation and social

provisioning and delink it from the place in which people live?

how do we understand the “problem of the slum” against a certain imagination of the city in which the premodern village was supposed to be excised from the modern urban

— Ravi Sundaram



AMITA BAVISKAR



RAKA RAY & VIKRAM CHANDRA

The Center for South Asia Studies (CSAS) at the University of California, Berkeley is one of the world's foremost centers for research and programs on South Asia. CSAS works with faculty members, graduate students, community members, private institutions, and non-profit organizations to deepen understanding of the region and to create new generations of scholars of South Asia. One key area of focus at CSAS is research about and programmatic activities on contemporary South Asia, examining closely issues like democracy and democratic reform, reduction of inequality, and social development.

The 21st Century Indian City Conference Series

the 1st conference

Developing an Agenda for Urbanization in India

March 23-25, 2011

India International Center
New Delhi, India

the 2nd conference

Working Towards Being Slum Free?

April 27-28, 2012

Blum Center for Developing Economies
Berkeley, CA

the 3rd conference

Towns, Metros, and the Indian Economy

March 26-27, 2013

Indian Institute for Human Settlements
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10 Stephens Hall
Berkeley, CA 94270
southasia.berkeley.edu
510 642 3608

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