CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS IN PHYSICAL PLANNING

EDITED BY
LAYI EGUNJOBI

VOLUME 1

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Contents

Preface

The idea about this book – *Contemporary Concepts in Physical Planning* – dates back to 2003, at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria. I had to take a small group of postgraduate students in a course coded URP 741: *Contemporary Issues in Planning* as a sabbatical appointee in that university. I was eager, excited and fascinated as I observed the Department of Urban and Regional Planning responding positively to the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria's call to planning schools to start enriching and expanding the scope of their curricula in response to global environmental, demographic and technological changes. Among the concepts identified around which the course was designed are 'globalization', 'climate change' and 'sustainability'. At the end of the discussion cum seminar-based course, it was realized that each of those concepts could in itself form the basis for a new course. I, therefore, started to identify and compile a list of such emerging concepts up to 2013, when the idea of putting these together into a book occurred to me, having had the notion of the potential values of such a book to planning teachers, students and practitioners as well as those in physical development arena.

The cardinal objective of the book is to facilitate familiarity with and acquisition of in-depth knowledge of contemporary concepts, especially as they relate to urban and regional planning, and other environment-related disciplines and professions.

During this 10-year period (2003-2013), a total of over 120 planning-related concepts were leisurely compiled. Realizing that it could take another 10 years researching and writing as an individual on each concept identified, I resorted to mobilizing potential authors who share in this aspiration. A total of 80 academically and professionally qualified writers were eventually involved in this first volume of 66 alphabetically arranged chapters. Authors were guided as to the structure and length of their chapters even though there was latitude for independence and variety of approach. Essentially, each chapter is to review the

literature on the concept, focusing on meaning, historical origin, philosophical and/or theoretical basis, use in other fields; and, thereafter, draw out the relationship or relevance of the particular concept to urban and regional planning theory, practice, research and training. This latter part is supposed to be the author's contribution to planning knowledge.

The outcome of this exercise is an indication that the objective for which it is carried out is, to a large extent, being achieved. Firstly and looking at the outcome from a general perspective, the book has the potentiality of stimulating critical thinking and encouraging new knowledge accumulation. Secondly, for those in planning education – teaching, research and consultancy, the book can make for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Thirdly, for those in planning administration mainly in government ministries and local government departments, there is a lot to learn from such a cluster of concepts, as 'cooperation', 'collaboration', 'policy' and 'governance'. Fourthly, immense values await those in private practice, as the book will contribute to strengthening their capacity to analyze, adapt to new technology and launch them into new areas such as entrepreneurship and advocacy. Fifthly, planning students will, perhaps, be the highest ranked recipients of the benefits derivable from reading the book. For this category of recipients, the book has the potential value of developing in them the ability to conceptualize, facilitate skill acquisition and widen their horizon even while still in school.

Furthermore, by reading about the concepts in relation to planning, one should have a better grasp of the nature of physical planning as touching on virtually all aspects of human life, as well as have wider perspective of the main objective of planning, which, broadly speaking, is the attainment of desirable quality of life. It follows that the reader is going to have a better appreciation of why planning has necessitated the planner having to operate in complex social, cultural, economic, institutional, legal and technological environments.

The book has the characteristic of not only looking at the present, such as those chapters on 'globalization' and 'sustainability' represent. It also looks at what has been in the past, as such already familiar concepts as 'neighbourhood', 'design' and 'density' will confirm. Chapters on 'lunar colonization', 'peace' and 'conflicts' evidently represent the immediate and not too distant futures. There is this message that runs through the entire length of this compendium of concepts: it is for contemporary planners to be knowledgeable in, and be

adaptable to global changes that call for local actions towards the attainment of acceptable quality of life.

In conclusion, I owe this obligation to acknowledge that whatever measure of success that may have been achieved in this endeavour is gratefully attributed to the following: the chapters authors whose names are listed in the table of contents; the peer reviewers, who mandatorily remain anonymous; the language editor, Dr. Adesina Sunday of the Department of English, University of Ibadan; the technical team consisting of Dr. Faith Kasim, Tpl. Olusegun Falola, Miss Fisayo Abiodun and Mr. Ola Martin; the cover designer, Tpl. Demola Adebayo; the printer, Mr. Gbenga Oke; and more importantly the publisher, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Ibadan, led at the time of writing by Professor C.O. Olatubara, with the following eminent scholars – Prof. Tunde Agbola, Prof. Layi Egunjobi (rtd), Dr. Bolanle Wahab, Dr. Lekan Sanni, Dr. Olusiyi Ipingbemi, Dr. A.M. Alabi, Dr. Joe Omirin, Dr. U.U. Jimoh and Dr. Faith Kasim. They are all appreciated for their dedication and for expecting no more rewards than scholarship and professionalism.

Layi Egunjobi, B.Sc, M.A., Ph.D
The Editor
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INFORMALITY

Y.A. Sanusi, S.O. Medayese and O.O. Idowu

34.1   Introduction

The study about cities today is marked by paradox, contradictory concepts, beliefs and sectional ideology. For instance, most of the report on urban growth of the 21st century are much more glare in the developing world, while the theories of how cities function remain rooted in the developed world. Dear (2002) addresses the discussion common to the academic sector, whether it is time to move from the Chicago school of urban sociology to the Los Angeles school of postmodern geography. Urban sociologist Massey (2001) opines that urban future lies neither in Chicago nor Los Angeles, but in the cities from the developing regions of the world, like Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai, Hong Kong and Lagos.

Studies on urban growth are now universal. Developing regions (Africa and Asia) have conducted several studies on the factors supporting the growth of settlements and urban transformations. Planning practices are constantly borrowed and replicated across borders; any attempt to stem this tide is portrayed as insignificant, useless and turns isolationism in outlook.

UN-Habitat (2001) gave the rate of growth of cities in the world within the period of 1980, 1990, 2000, and projected the growth for 2010. It projected that by 2010, most of the cities in the developing countries would attain the status of mega-cities, with Lagos ranked third in the world. Robinson (2002) captures how the field of urban studies was constituted as duality concept; that is, global cities versus megacities. Global cities are conceptualized idea of the developed region, command nodes of a global system of informational capitalism, "model" for the less developed regions of the world. In contrast, megacities are assumed to be primarily attributed to the developing continents of the world. They are characterized and conceptualized in terms of crisis – "big but not powerful" (Robinson, 2002). The idea of planning could be seen as indigenous in nature. Studies of urban planning need to shift from the paradoxical beliefs of developed world models and developing world problems. The possible route for the so-called developing regions could be viewed with respect is through articulate structure and efficient workable policy, which is to be a point of reckoning of the regions (Sanyal, 1990; Roy, 2003b).

Informality reflects abnormality and marginality of settlements. This pattern of "illegal" settlement is tolerated and, in most cases, its population generally is not threatened by eviction, despite its non-conformity with the official norms and standards. It does not expect to be provided with the infrastructure, services, or any kinds of improvements and management which the planned area of city enjoys. The informality of this kind of settlements reflects neglect, abandoned and insignificant environment and deprived of benefits of urban services and management. Any settlement of this nature characterizes planlessness, poor coordination, decentralization and fragmentation.

Urban informality, especially in areas of housing and labour, has long been a key concern to urban planners and decision-makers in several urban and development debates. This area of study is pertinent to the social sciences: from work on poverty, livelihoods and social exclusion, to the production of marginality, patterns of socio-economic spatial fragmentation, unemployment and labour exploitation, and inequality (Waibel, 2009).

For the past three decades, the expansion of "irregular" settlements has been perceived as a lasting structural phenomenon, and a central topic for debate in conferences and gatherings of specialists and professionals. They consider inconsistence of the housing policy, which refers to the question of the illegality of human settlements, without reaching any satisfying solution.

Over the period, it appeared that, in order to get rid of this problem, it would have been sufficient to combine measures of repression of illegal occupations, prevention measures, legal tenure regularization and large-scale programmes of land delivery to the poor. The results have been limited and disappointing. In many developing cities, the map of illegality, corresponding largely to that of poverty, indicates a steady sprawling of the phenomenon, particularly at the periphery of cities, in spite of slackening of their demographic growth.

34.2   Conceptual Framework of Urban Informality

34.2.1   Definition of Informality

The term "informality" has attracted significant attention within the recent planning literature. Generally, "informality" refers to a category of income-generating, servicing or settlement practices that is relatively unregulated or uncontrolled by the state or formal institutions. Broadly speaking, "informal planning" is used in the sense of planning that happens outside formal regulatory procedures. It means "unofficial" modes and strategies of planning a collection of processes that are not "formally" sanctioned or regulated as part of a predefined rule-based procedure (these may include quasi-legal land transfers, casual or spontaneous interactions, or informal "behind the scenes" negotiations between developmental actors (Duminy, 2011).

Many definitions have been used to describe informal work and informal settlements. In urban planning, studies on informality define it as a mode of production of space defined by the territorial logic of deregulation (Roy 2009). "Informal spaces" are produced as states of exception, where "the ownership, use, and purpose of land cannot be fixed and mapped according to any prescribed set of regulations or the law". Some definitions focus specifically on the housing aspects of informality, describing these as areas that have been developed largely through community or individual effort and outside of formal institutional processes and regulations; aspects of the settlement (infrastructure, services, shelters, tenure) may not conform to formal legal requirements and may be deficient in ways detrimental to health and well-being (Watson, 2010). Since the 2002 resolution on the informal economy, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has advocated universally accepted definition of informal economy which to includes both enterprise and employment relations (without secure contracts, worker benefits or social protection) both inside and outside informal enterprises (ILO, 2002).

34.2.2   Origin of Informality

The pull factors driving a number of people to urban areas include economic, social and political factors. Migration to urban areas means to be far away or detached from the extended family and other cultural constraints, such as restricted land access or a low level of female independence. Castells (2002) argues that the new global economy and the emerging information society have indeed reflected a new spatial form, which develops in a variety of social and geographical contexts: mega cities of Cairo, Lagos and Beirut inclusive. This move is accompanied with the acceleration of economic situations, for example the expansion of Eastern Beirut and mount of Lebanon, by which informal areas squeezed in between.

Migration to an urban area may also occur because of an expected increase in social status and standing. The perception that the "high life" can be found among the "bright lights" is also significant. Some migrants were lured to the city by exaggerated tales of high income and technologically advanced living, especially by returnee migrants who "wished to convey to others a positive image of themselves and their experiences." The wars and ethnic conflicts that occurred in Lebanon may also lead to an increase in rural-urban migration. Apart from the impact of war on agricultural income through its effects on transport and marketing, war may also push people out of rural areas or even from one part to another in urban areas, for sheer safety reasons.

34.2.3   Promoters of the Concept of Informality

Many of the significant urban transformations of the 21st century are taking place in the developing world. Particularly, informality associated with poor squatter settlements is now seen as a generalized mode of metropolitan urbanization. Informality can designate a range of phenomena, such as absence of regulation, smallness of size and competition (Hussmanns, 1996). Harris-White and Sinha (2007) characterize the informal sector broadly as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services operating typically at a low level of organisation, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production (also an extensive blurring between labour and management or ownership), and on a small scale. Labour relations, where they exist, are based mostly on casual employment, kinship, or personal or social relations, rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees. The owners of these production units have to raise the necessary finance at

their own risk and are personally liable, without limit, for any debts or obligation incurred in production. Moreover, expenditure for production is often indistinguishable from household expenditure and capital goods, such as buildings or vehicles, may be used indistinguishably for both business and household purposes. Activities performed by firms in the informal sector are not necessarily performed with the deliberate intention of evading the payment of taxes or social security contributions, or infringing labour or other legislation or administrative provisions.

There are two particular reasons why informality, seen as the loosely construed constellation of features, has persisted in the discourse. The first is the strong association between informality and poverty level of individual. The study conducted by Chen (2006) emphasized heterogeneity within the informal sector. A few of other empirical studies also shows that those working in the informal sector are predominantly poor in income and in non-income dimensions. For instance, in India, the NCEUS (2007) notes that workers in the unorganized sector had a much higher incidence of poverty (20.5%) than their counterparts in the organised sector (11.3 %). This is an indicator of inadequate income levels and the extent of vulnerability of workers in the unorganised sector known as informal.

Similarly, the report by OECD notes that "informal jobs are often precarious; with low productivity level and quality. Certain groups of young ladies, boys and women seem to be over-represented within this category of jobs" (Jutting and de Laglesia, 2009: 18). There is need to develop anti-poverty policy which will be used to tackle the issue of informality and design interventions targeted to such activities.

Another reason why informality is central in urban development debate is because the explicit or implicit prediction of many development theories is that informality will pale into insignificance as development proceeds. This can be interpreted as the prediction of the Lewis (1954) model of development, in which labour is pulled out of the "traditional" sector and into the "modern" sector during development. The share of the informal sector in total employment or total output is often used as an indicator of development. Especially over the last twenty years, informality has been conventionally defined (Kanbur, 2011).

The deepening of informality has two important implications. First, an increasing number of people engage in informal employment, getting very limited access to welfare and work related benefits. This poses a challenge in

the design of welfare provision, provided that there is any interest in increasing the coverage to informal workers. Current trends indicate that there is. Secondly, while informality remains, it is assumed that welfare provision would have to adapt to a vast share of the population not contributing to the welfare system in a consistent way. This second implication brings into the debate the widespread claim that non-contributory welfare is counterproductive; it is a disincentive to formalization of employment. To put it simply, if informal workers access benefits that they have not paid for via taxes or direct contributions, they will have the perverse incentive to remain in informality.

Besides, the current emphasis targets social assistance, particularly CCTs. But this has not overcome the historical division between social insurance and social assistance. To reduce attractiveness to the non-needy population and sanction idleness, social assistance benefits are often set at a very low level. In fact, most of the new agendas for social protection brings active labour market polices to facilitate the transition from assistance to work (Cook and Razavi, 2012). These policies (based on the European experience with active labour market policies) are currently seen by some as the preferred toolkit to address market obstructions impeding inactive workers being gainfully employed in Latin America. A critical assessment of the assumptions implicit in the implementation of labour market policies is advanced in the following section, together with a discussion of their potentially problematic implementation in highly informal settings.

34.2.4   Antagonist to the Concept of Informality

Informality is often assumed to be territorialised and common to slum settlements within the margins interface of the city, although there have been several moves to disabuse the logic that emphasise the more generalised spatiality of the 'informal'. For instance, Dicken (2005) argues that Rio's favelas, far from being marginal spaces to the city, are central to the logic of urbanism because they enable and constitute debates on urban 'civilisation' and law. Informality is often thought as spontaneous, tacit, and affective. The central organisational form is that of unorganised, unregulated labour, although, in practice, such labour is often highly organised and disciplined. For example, Hoffman (2007) conceptualises the norms, or general organising principle, of labour in urban West Africa through the conceptual category of the barracks. Taking Agamben's camp as his point of departure, he argues that the barracks concentrate (especially male) bodies and subjects into formations

that can be deployed quickly and efficiently to any corner of the empire. They may be called up at any moment as labourers on the battlefield, workers on the plantation, or diggers in the mine (Hoffman 2007). Others have argued that the informal and formal labour categorisations have been partially broken down, partly because we have seen an increase of informalized labour as municipalities increasingly privatise public services.

34.3   Literature Review on Urban Informality

The concept of urban informality sector is fatally flawed as a tool of analysis for policy making (Peattie, 1996). The informal sector is, therefore, said to contain the mass of the working poor whose productivity is much lower than in the modern urban sector from which most of them are excluded. Recently, a controversy on urban informality and its linkage with the urban poor and correlation with the transformation of the socio-economic situation and the diversity of cultural/religion context within Third World cities became a critical debate in the literature (see Rakowski, 1994; Roy and AlSayyad, 2004; Soliman, 2004). Rakowski (1994) examined urban informality from two different perspectives: Structuralists and Legalists. The former comprised the ILO and advocates of the underground economy; the latter included Hernando De Soto and the advocates of microenterprise perspectives. Similarly, Roy (forthcoming) examined urban informality from two contrasting frames. The first came from the report of the Urban 21, an exclusive group appointed as a world commission in the year 2000 and published by Hall and Pfeiffer (2000), as a book entitled *Urban Future 21: A Global Agenda for 21st Century Cities*. Hall and Pfeiffer pay particular attention to one category of urbanization that they call "informal hyper growth" cities.

Expressing great concern for these exploding and swollen cities phenomenon, these scholars argue that this phenomenon is not simply restricted to the cities of the developing countries, but, through migration, some cities of the developed world are invaded by the developing world, thereby rendering them ungovernable (Hall and Pfeiffer, 2000). In contrast to this, Hernando De Soto (2000) presents an image of informality as heroic entrepreneurship. On the other hand, De Soto (1989) is of the opinion that informal economy is the people's spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses. Also, De Soto, in his book, *The Other Path*, defines the concept of informality as activities with illegal means but legal ends and social utility.

Consequently, informal housing is a distinctive type of market where affordability accrues through the absence of formal planning and regulation (Baross, 1990; Dowall, 1991). Informal housing and land markets are not just the domain of the poor; they are also important to the middle class and in developing countries. Such trends point to a complex continuum of legality and illegality, where squatter settlements formed through land invasion and self-help housing can exist alongside upscale informal subdivisions formed through legal ownership and market transaction but in violation of land use regulations. Both forms of housing are informal but embody very different forms of concretization of legitimacy. The divide here is not between formality and informality but rather differentiation *within* informality. In many parts of the world, the site of new informality is the rural/urban interface. Metropolitan expansion is being driven by informal urbanization. In the context of Mexico, Aguilar and Ward (2003: 3) recognises a "polycentric expansion" – the incorporation of small towns and rural peripheries in a dispersed metropolitan region.

McGee (1991) labels such metropolitan regions in Southeast Asia *desakota* (a combination of the Indonesian words for city and countryside), signalling a complex hybridity of rural and urban functions and forms. In the case of Egypt, Bayat and Denis (2000: 195) suggest that a more appropriate term is *"post-metropolitan urbanization"*, a diffusion of urbanity over a vast area. These dynamic rural-urban interfaces are constituted through differentiated forms of informality, including the flows of labour and types of housing that constitute what Breman (2003) calls life "at the bottom of the urban economy." Such processes take at least three distinct forms: a "corona" or "halo," that extends beyond metropolitan boundaries through a hinterland of commuter flows (Aguilar and Ward, 2003; Roy, 2003a); rural-urban migration to agro-towns, urban villages and new industrial towns that are in the metropolitan zone, rather than to central cities (Bayat and Denis, 2000); and the relocation of central-city squatters to state-sponsored resettlement sites on the urban periphery (Roy, 2003a).

At the same time, the metropolitan fringes have become a key location for the informal housing practices of the elite. Here there are gated communities, the hermetically sealed secessionary spaces (Graham and Marvin, 2001) that splinter the urban landscape; but many of them are also informal subdivisions. Unlike squatter settlements, such forms of high-end informality usually enjoy premium infrastructure and guaranteed security of tenure. Indeed, in many

cases they are promoted and encouraged by the state, as in the case of Cairo where transnational investment in upscale housing has been subsidized through the provision of expressways and cheap sale of public land (Mitchell, 2003). Such metropolitan spatialities indicate, as Smith (2002) notes that, with globalization, "the scale of the urban is recast…. the old conceptual containers – our 1970s assumptions about what 'the urban' is or was – no longer hold water."

Metropolitan informal urbanization is made possible through the particular regulatory logic of agricultural land that exists at the rural-urban interface of many Third World cities: the privatization of the ejidos in Mexico (Jones & Ward, 1998); the "unmapped" land on the rural outskirts of Calcutta (Roy, 2003a); the inheritance laws of Egypt that have created thin, linear, and ultimately uncultivable agricultural plots (Soliman, 2004); the drop off in registered land rights toward the periphery in Jakarta (Leaf, 1993). This, in turn, means that informality must be understood not as the object of state regulation but rather as produced by the state itself. Here the concept of the state of exception is useful. Following Carl Schmitt, Italian philosopher Ciorgio Agamben (1998) sees sovereignty as the power to determine the state of exception. For him, the paradox of sovereignty is the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order. If the sovereign is truly the one to whom the juridical order grants the power of proclaiming a state of exception, and therefore, of suspending the order's own validity, then the sovereign stands outside the juridical order and nevertheless belongs to it. This means that the paradox can also be formulated this way: "I, the sovereign, who am outside the law, declare that there is nothing outside the law" (Ciorgio Agamben, 1998: 15).

Informality can be seen to be the expression of such sovereignty. It is not, to once again use Agamben's (1998: 18) terminology, the "chaos that precedes order, but rather the situation that results from its suspension". The planning and legal apparatus of the state has the power to determine when to enact this suspension, to determine what is informal and what is not, and to determine which forms of informality will thrive and which will disappear.

34.4   Informality and Planning

The relationship between informality and planners is complicated. On the one hand, informal spaces have been perceived as unplannable; on the other hand, there has been a series of attempts to improve and integrate such spaces.

These mandates of improvement and integration bear resemblance to efforts in the American context to manage spaces of poverty.

Inaccessibility to housing services and shelter has forced the poor outside the formal system, the settlements known with informal economy and informal settlements. Informality is an important issue in urban planning because of the challenges it poses for on the traditional planning methods. The first challenge is transforming socio-economic discussions on informality into actual changes in the physical planning process. Cities are trying to upgrade or network existing squatter settlements into the formal city though the question of planning for future informality remains unanswered.

The second challenge is the scale. Solutions so far have been localized, rarely spreading from local context of slum to the larger context of city. Poverty and informality are rooted in the broader realities of the city; therefore, planning for them has to be at city level. "Scaling-up to the level of social needs in urban areas in general, and in relation to slums and squatter settlements in particular, is inexorably about reaching the dimension of the city itself through the articulation of its multiple scales" (Fiori, 2001).

The third challenge is the boundary between "legal" and "illegal" systems. This is set to be blurred by the logic of growth as the "informal/ illegal" develop closer, more intricate and organic relationships with the "formal/ legal" systems. These blurred theoretical and spatial boundaries lead to complex patterns in urban form. The traditionally temporal (time-bound) nature of planning ignores both the rapid-growth rates and the complex patterns of informality. So planning has to develop a paradigm that takes advantage of the rapid growth rates of informality and occurs simultaneously with growth instead of preceding it.

Basically, the poor acquire from planned city systems that ignores them, making the acquisition process contentious. So, planning has to start providing the means by which the poor can contribute and benefit from city systems without conflict. The two have to co-exist with "…the sense that the informal represents a universe of resourcefulness and inventiveness which requires support and enhancement rather than eradication" (Fiori, 2006).

34.4.1 Informality and Housing

i. **Effect of emerging land markets on the urban poor**
How do the urban poor get access to land for housing, and more specifically what is the extent of commodification and market

behaviour? How are emerging lands being sold likely to affect the urban poor? More specifically, what is the importance of residential land to urban household strategies within the poor?

ii.   **Attitudes to land access for the poor in the context of wider land access issues**
What are the attitudes of the poor, organisations within civil society, the state and private sector to the emerging land markets and the policies and practices that underpin this? How is this affecting the broader policy and legal environment?

iii.   **Alternative land access and development mechanisms**
What are alternatives for more closely associating the formal state land allocation system with actual practices which improves access for the wide group of stakeholders, especially the poor majority?

34.4.2   Spatial Planning and Informal Spaces

Earlier in this chapter, the challenges to planning were identified as planning methods that ignore the poor and the rapid growth of their settlements, the time-bound nature of planning and the blurred boundaries between "formal" and "informal" systems. Other challenges are the complex patterns of informality and the localized scale at which they are currently being dealt with. This chapter argues that the spatial planning process is important for dealing with informal settlements in spite of these challenges; that it has to develop new paradigms for dealing with it; and that the discourse on urbanism may help it do so.

A major benefit of urbanism to planning is its city-level analysis and intervention, since existing ways of dealing with informality are still at the individual settlement level. The other benefit of urbanism is the study of complex patterns in urban form. Urban design methodology is able to analyse a place, reduce it to its defining characteristics and then create a model that can be reproduced elsewhere. This is what "new urbanism" did (though with some controversy). This methodology can be applied to informal settlements to analyse their urban forms, reduce them to a set of key characteristics and then apply them in other parts of the city where there is the likelihood of informality.

By anticipating informality, it might be possible to let it retain its desirable aspects while mitigating its undesirable effects. The sense of informality

frequently creates spaces that provide great freedom. Shoppers in street markets negotiate prices. Squatters creatively use streets as shops, playgrounds and sitting rooms. Festivals and celebrations are uninhibited and boisterous. There are certain characteristics (over and above availability of labour) associated with the irregular and the informal that brings vitality to a city. It is up to the planner to work with the people to ensure that the planning process enables good living environments within this informality without snuffing out its vitality.

34.5   Conclusion

Krueckeberg (1995) argues that, while land use is a central concept in planning, the issue of property deserves equal attention. He observes that, by focusing on the utilitarian question of where things belong, planners forget to ask to whom things belong. Informality, at first glance, seems to be a land-use problem and it is thus often managed through attempts to restore "order" to the urban landscape or to bring it into the fold of formal markets. However, in line with Krueckeberg, it can be argued that the more fundamental issue at stake in informality is that of wealth distribution and unequal property ownership, of what sorts of markets are at work in our cities, and how they shape or limit affordability. In this sense, the study of informality provides an important lesson for planners in the tricky dilemmas of social justice. Informality also indicates that the question of to whom things belong can have multiple and contested answers. In his recent work, Blomley (2004, pp. xiv, xix) notes that, while the ownership model of property premised on the "right to exclude," dominates, it is constantly challenged by those who claim the "right not to be excluded".

These are appropriations and claims that the French urbanist Henri Lefebvre (1974) termed "the right to the city" and contrasted with "the right to property." It is the right to the city that is at stake in urban informality. It is also at stake, as Mitchell (2003) notes, in the struggles over public space in American cities. Against this backdrop, planners cannot simply be concerned with the land use ordering and exchange value of the right to property. They also have to pay attention to the use value claims that constitute the right to the city. Engagement with informality is in many ways quite difficult for planners. Informal spaces seem to be the exception to planning, lying outside its realm of control. In this sense, informality resembles what Mitchell (2003) calls the object of development, a seemingly natural phenomenon that is external to

those studying it and managing it.

Finally, international planning today is constituted through models and best practices. These blueprint Utopias are seen to be the key to the universal replication of "good" planning. Confronting the failures and limitations of models provides a more realistic sense of politics and conflicts, and also forces planning to face up to the consequences of its own good action. Such outcomes must be seen as something more than simply "unintended consequences." This vocabulary of planning not only has the flavour of a casual shrug but also implies the inability to think about the complex social systems through which plans must be implemented.

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