

# Mumbai's Indian Alliance

*The Beginning of the End of  
Modernist Planning*

# **Mumbai's Indian Alliance: The beginning of the end of modernist planning**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MSc in the  
Development and Planning: Urban Development Planning

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I certify that the work submitted is my own and that any material derived or quoted from  
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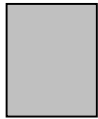
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## Glossary

**CBO:** Community Based Organisation

**CLIFF:** Community Led Infrastructure Finance Facility

**DFID:** UK's Department for International Development

**GDP:** Gross Domestic Product

**ID:** Identification card

**IDNSP:** India's Draft National Slum Policy

**Indian Alliance:** Partnership of three civil society organisations born in Mumbai

**Mahila Milan:** "Women Together", women-led CBO that deals mainly with savings

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation

**NSDF:** National Slum/Shack Dwellers Federation

**PRA:** Participatory Rapid Appraisal

**SAP:** Structural Adjustment Programme

**SPARC:** Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres

**SRA:** Slum Redevelopment Authority

# 1

## Introduction

Urban development planning is a discipline that needs to be redefined constantly in order to achieve the objectives for which it exists. That is the case for any context, but it is especially evident in most developing cities where the urbanisation of poverty is happening with unprecedented speed and patterns, which is challenging the modernist paradigm that traditionally dominates development theory and practice. The results from the failure of the dominant planning techniques are evident in the massive illegal occupation of land and all the problems that this entails, i.e. the deteriorating social, economic and environmental conditions in which most citizens live. Today over 900 million people live in slums, and the numbers are expected to rise (UN-HABITAT 2003). A positive trend today is that it is increasingly accepted that both forced evictions and inaction of local governments towards poor irregular settlements have extremely negative effects on their poor communities and on the city as a whole. However this is a still usual behaviour of local governments (Mumbai is a paradigmatic example, specially after the evictions in 2005 (Ramesh 2005)), which only exacerbates the problems that make the poor occupy and use land illegally. Where non-violent action is taken, the dominant forms of planning are having serious difficulties in coping with such unprecedented speed and patterns of urban change.

In an attempt to tackle such a critical situation, Structural Adjustment Programmes have recently shifted accountability to local levels. The purpose of this movement follows the need to make planning and development initiatives more efficient, effective and responsive to local problems and opportunities, and to give the lead of development to the market. However, the institutional and organisational development needed to be able to take charge of the new responsibilities has been insufficient, and local authorities have broadly failed to serve all citizens equally and effectively (SAPRIN 2004). Moreover, the private agents have not shown enough interest in promoting pro-poor development and the economic growth has not 'trickled down' to improve the lives of the poor as it had been predicted (*ibid.*). Despite that in many cities there are local efforts and external input in resource and expertise to make planning work, planning agencies still hardly manage to improve the living and working conditions of the majority of the citizens within their

jurisdictions. That is why there is an increasing concern, from the community to the international level, about the prospects for cities in developing countries where squatter settlements and extreme deprivation dominate most urban landscapes.

As a response to this concern in the last decades numerous researchers and practitioners in partnership with local communities have developed a new paradigm that are increasingly being implemented and are successfully challenging the dominant styles of planning. The new paradigm has Jürgen Habermas and Michael Foucault in its theoretical roots (Flyvbjerg 1998). This works according to the specificities of each context, in which new knowledge, methodologies and institutional settings are generated through communication, collaboration and constructive conflict between stakeholders. Far from being speculative or utopian, this new style of planning is grounded in decades of experience and shared knowledge between communities and development agents around the world. Among the most important contributors to this approach is Patsy Healey, notably through "Collaborative Planning" (1997), where she has managed to masterly synthesise in one book all such experiences and theories. On the practical field, the experiences of community-led urban development in Mumbai, India, is today among the best examples of how such paradigm works at a large scale (Burra 2005).

This dissertation will propose an alternative methodology for addressing urban poverty, which is mainly the response to the failure of the dominant urban development planning in the face of current speed and patterns of urban change. This methodology is essentially based on assisting local communities' organisations in gaining capacities for and in assuming the control of the formulation and execution of strategies for the development of their localities. Local communities' participation (or leadership) in such strategies should be recognised by external stakeholders (government, private sector, other communities) in order for the communities to be eligible for the external support (funding, technical assistance, security of tenure, etc.) needed to continue and scale up their interventions successfully. The main foundation of this approach is the assumption that under the control of the community it is more likely that their needs are met. However, meeting community needs implies the involvement of other actors in the city, that is, the state, the private sector, civil society organisations and other communities from other areas of the city (Ostrom 1996). The own motives and interests of all these actors inevitably influence the formulation and execution of strategies. These motives and interests' interaction constitute power relations, which in most cases are far from being balanced (Flyvbjerg 2001, Healey 1997). This fact places on planners a traditionally

neglected and now central task: to balance power relations in a way that communities gain control of interventions in order to make these more socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable. Possibilities for action “become multiple and context dependent”, and they are grounded on contextual examples instead of theoretical universals (Flyvbjerg 2001:108).

The methodology proposed in this dissertation is the result from a synthesis of recent experiences in community-led urban development in Mumbai (India), specifically the housing programmes implemented by a partnership of civil society organisations (the Indian Alliance) through the Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility (CLIFF). In this case, community-led interventions to support urban development in poor irregular settlements have been more socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable than any previous traditional externally led intervention.

The next chapter is a theoretical framework for the analysis of the case study. The research methodology is constructed upon a set of *impact* criteria. This set of criteria has been developed from the author’s knowledge about what have been the negative impacts from the application of the dominant forms of planning. The following section of the chapter is an analysis of the features that have made most modernist planning interventions have negative impacts. To finish the second chapter, these negative features are positivized into a set of *performance* criteria. The third chapter’s case study starts analysing the features that have made the dominant forms of planning in Mumbai fail, and the negative impacts that this failure has had in the city. Then, the alternative planning approach being currently applied by the Indian Alliance is analysed, again, first through the performance criteria and finally through the impact criteria. The final chapter is a synthesis of the lessons from the experiences in Mumbai to converge into a methodology for addressing urban poverty in a way that meets the impact criteria.



# 2

## Theoretical Framework

### Power in Urban Planning: Impacts and Performance

This chapter takes the reader into the theoretical ground upon which the case study is analysed. It mainly consists of set of *impact* criteria and a set of *performance* criteria. In between, it analyses the features that make modernist planning fail and discusses issues of power in urban planning and management.

#### 2.1. Impact Criteria

All interventions in urban development have outcomes and impacts that, if adequately evaluated, provide practitioners and researchers a critical perspective of what has gone wrong and why, and what is moving things forward and why. The measurement of the impacts of practice is crucial if urban planning is to remain as a recognised, legitimate discipline. The set of criteria defined here serves to measure the impacts of an intervention and has its roots in the most common negative impacts of dominant forms of urban planning, specially in developing cities: social injustice (distributive and institutional), ineffectiveness, inefficiency and unsustainable development. The criteria presented here is what is considered as the impacts of a 'good' intervention:

**A. Social justice:** Most poor localities in cities suffer from two intertwined social injustices. Interventions in urban development should be socially just according to two dimensions:

1. Distributive justice, i.e. equal distribution of benefits and burdens. In most cities, evidence shows that the retribution according to different citizens' "needs, merits and deserts" (Smith 1994:24) is disproportionate, and that this disproportion is growing (UNHABITAT 2003). In development terms, the extremely low standards in the economic and environmental juncture of the poor areas compared to those in the middle and upper-income areas show evidence of distributional injustices. Interventions in urban development should seek to level out the comparative economic and environmental junctures of the wealthiest and the poorest. A socially just intervention in

urban development is thus one that systematically over-turns the trend of growing inequalities in the distribution of benefits and burdens.

2. Institutional justice, i.e. elimination of underlying unjust structural forces, namely oppression and domination (Young 1990)<sup>1</sup>. These forces might be external and/or internal to the community, for instance a social status stigma leading to forced eviction or female submission to male leading to unequal access to household resources. Young identified five forms of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence (*ibid.* appendix I). A socially just intervention is one that institutionalises enforceable mechanisms that ensure that those who suffer structural injustices participate in the formulation and execution of strategies, that they are the ones who define the problems in terms of what and, more important, “why”, and are capacitated enough to effectively address them together with those exercising such injustices (Crawley 1998:27, Healey 1997). Through addressing the question *why* the powerless are likely to address effectively the forces that oppress and dominate them in order to be empowered (Crawley 1998). Empowerment thus should be an end in itself that enables the oppressed and dominated to influence decisions in regards to “what, where and how” interventions take place (Smith 1994:26).

**B. Effectiveness.** Most interventions in urban development do not meet their objectives, sometimes by goal displacement, other times by falling short of the mark due to ill practice and/or unforeseen obstacles (Sorensen *et al.* 1989). The initial and often avoided question is who defines the objectives. Depending on who decides the objectives are more or less likely to be met, since it determines the amount support received and the motivation of participants. The second question is who and with what means intervenes. Each actor works with different skills and knowledge within more or less enabling environments, which determine the effectiveness of interventions. In any case, urban planners should take into account that each context’ community has different needs, which should define the objectives, and that each context offers different possible courses of action and actors that may

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<sup>1</sup> Young defines ‘oppression’ as the “systematic institutional processes which prevent some people from learning and using satisfying and expansive skills in socially recognised settings, or institutionalised social processes which inhibit people’s ability to play and communicate with others or to express their feelings and perspective on social life in contexts where others can listen”; ‘domination’ is defined as the “institutional conditions which inhibit or prevent people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions” (1990:38). Oppression usually entails domination, but not everyone subject to domination is oppressed (*ibid.*).

carry out different possible tasks. In short, an intervention in urban development is effective if it meet the objectives for which it takes place.

**C. Efficiency.** Meeting the needs of citizens often requires more than what the authorities have and, most important, more than the citizens can afford to pay. Interventions should apply the most cost-effective solutions so that all stakeholders can afford to participate in their execution without loading them with constraining burdens. In short, an intervention in urban development is efficient if its products are affordable for all parties involved, especially for the targeted groups and/or communities.

**D. Sustainable development:** A sustainable intervention is one that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNEP 1972) i.e. linking environmental to intergenerational equity. In other words, interventions should prevent and eliminate environmental hazards that any citizen faces and future generations are very likely to face due to environmental degradation and natural resource depletion (Allen *et al.* 2002).

## **2.2. Failures of Modernist Planning in Addressing Urban Poverty**

In the face of current speed and patterns of change in cities, dominant forms of planning have repeatedly had socially unjust, ineffective, inefficient and unsustainable impacts. This section is an analysis of the different features that explain this failure: unbalanced power relations, the privileged role of experts, bureaucratic and managerial procedures, reductionism, and informality.

There are two dominant urban planning streams worldwide, the Rational Comprehensive approach and the Entrepreneurial Manager approach. Both forms are commonly referred to as the ‘modernist’ approach. The modernist approach has its foundations in the Enlightenment’s positivist epistemology, which privileges rationality and materialism as the only universal truth applicable to development. In this dominant, privileged form of practice, professional expertise is based in scientific knowledge and technical methodology, and any other form of knowledge or method is explicitly undervalued (Sandercock 1998).

The Rational Comprehensive approach started in the 1950s in the United States following the need to broaden the field of action from the previous spatial or physical planning to a comprehensive approach that in addition addresses social and economic issues (Banfield 1955). The state is conceived as the driving development agent under the assumption that its role is neutral and its planners’ expertise is

exercised for the public interest according to the needs of a homogeneous society (Levy 2004, Sandercock 1998). Its foundations are socially concerned and its main goal is to create a welfare society. However, the application of this approach often has socially unjust impacts on the poor, since they are exposed to unaccountable practices that allow the influence of vested interests and biases and it tends to reproduce the status quo even if it is unjust (Harvey 1973). It is also often ineffective due to the impossibility of planners of getting to know 'comprehensively' through rational means the diverse and contingent needs of the poor, and of evaluating 'comprehensively' all opportunities for action and their consequences (Sandercock 1998). "Few institutions, programs or leaders are immune to the vexatious experience of worsening the condition that they set out so nobly to alleviate" (Sieber 1981:3).

The Entrepreneurial Management approach is born in the late 1970s as a response to an increasingly globalised world under a severe economic and energetic crisis, and to a growing criticism to an unrepresentative state that leads development inefficiently (Albrecht 1991). In this approach, urban managers act in a minimised state and unregulated market and see the city as an economic system in a highly competitive environment, where *the* path to 'success' is the enhancement of its productivity. The evaluation of the performance of an urban community is done through economic indicators, mainly GDP growth. The market thus becomes the main development agent and planners now seek public-private partnerships to promote it in an enabling environment. Most responsibilities for a just distribution of benefits and burdens are placed in the market. It assumes that free markets are neutral mechanism in which, with high growth, social problems eventually disappear.

The application of the latter has grown thanks to the Structural Adjustment Programmes implemented during the last 1980's and 1990's in most countries. SAPs aimed essentially at the reduction of the state to enable the market, and at state decentralisation to make development planning more responsive to local problems and opportunities. SAPs can be seen as a framework for the gradual transition from one modernist planning style to the other, since the Rationalist approach relied heavily on the leading role of the state. The reduction of the state and a shift of responsibilities to the local government have been carried out in most instances without building the capacity and providing the necessary resources to assimilate the changes. SAPs also failed to implement effective means to increase accountability to the citizens (SAPRIN 2004). As a result, the most evident impact of the SAPs and the application of the Rationalist approach have been the growth of inequalities and the

loss of control in the face of the informal growth of cities (SAPRIN 2004, UNHABITAT 2003). The formal market has not provided the poor efficiently as it was predicted and hundreds of millions live today without the most basic urban infrastructure and services (UNHABITAT 2003).

Since the 1960s the very foundations of the dominant knowledge and practice of planning from Northwestern cultures is being questioned (Sandercock 1998). The main debate around the development and planning professions arises from a critique of the view of development as applied 'Enlightenment' (Flyvbjerg 2001, Healey 1997, Sandercock 1998). The critique to modernist planning is heard mainly from varied voices of professionals and researchers that have questioned analytically and profoundly the role of planners in our societies both in relation to the methods and knowledge used, and in their relation with the 'clients'. Today's main critiques are founded in the philosophical foundations set by Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, specifically in their efforts to understand and, above all, limit rationalisation and the misuse of power (Flyvbjerg 2001). But their voices are not the ones that originated the debate. Indeed, the original critique comes from those whom we call the 'clients', the majority of whom has been marginalized from development as it is defined by modernist professionals, and they have been deprived of the indispensable support of the state. This majority is made of women, waged workers, unemployed or underemployed, marginalized ethnic groups, disabled, the young and elderly. They are often voiceless and have to rely on advocate professionals to make their claims heard. Despite these critiques, modernist planning is still dominant in most cities in the world.

There are five main characteristics that make modernist planning socially unjust, ineffective, inefficient and unsustainable. Next is an analysis of each of the characteristics explaining why they typically fail to promote development in poor urban areas (table on appendix II):

1. Modernist planners often do not recognise or hide the fact that *power relations* are the main forces determining patterns of and initiatives in urban development (Fainstein 2000, Flyvbjerg 1998, Forester 1989, Healey 1997, Van Ufford *et al.* 2003, Watson 2002). And when power is recognised, it is often not addressed effectively (*ibid.*). For Modernist planning, the public authorities, the experts and the market are neutral, separated players within neutral institutional structures: the first ones representing the 'public interest', the second ones delivering their incorruptible technical expertise, and the market operating within a demand-offer mathematical

logic. All three acting within institutions structured under a 'social contract' that is assumed to have been reached through consensus (Sandercock 1998). However, the reality is that all actors act according to interrelated interests: public authorities are mainly interested in keeping their privileged positions, in being promoted, gaining influence in decision making arenas, and often in making profits from their powerful positions; experts mainly seek self-fulfilment through recognised proficiency in their knowledge and methodologies, promotion and profits from the services they provide; and market operators seek to cover costs and satisfy expectations for profit and/or reinvestment, which drives them to influence politics in ways that increase their profits. These actors are usually part of and represent groups (mainly middle/upper class men) whose interests, culture and biases strongly influence decision making processes (Innes 1998). Politics are thus inherent in all processes, and within these inevitably politicised processes unbalanced power structures unfairly enable some get more than others and perpetuate poverty.

A1. Lack of citizens' control of state-led or market-led interventions allows unbalanced allocation of resources in favour of the least needy.

A2. The concentration of power concentrates in a few hands is unjust since it strengthens powerlessness regarding decisions and actions that affect many citizens' lives and neighbourhoods. Powerlessness prevents the marginalised and exploited from claiming a fair role in society, and exposes many to violence (such as forced evictions) (Young 1990). Those in power often exert cultural imperialism on the powerless.

B. Through power-unbalanced development processes, the objectives are not likely to respond to the needs of the powerless. The objectives are likely to be either displaced or missed due to the agents' particular interests and biases (Sorensen *et al.* 1989).

C. Power unbalances prevent processes from responding to the income limitations of the poor in accessing basic goods and services, such as housing.

D. Power unbalances prevent powerful groups from being held accountable to environmental degradation and natural resource depletion that their actions cause, which affect the powerless majority and the future generations (Allen *et al.* 2002).

2. *Experts' privileges* cast a shadow on local knowledge and capacities. In modernist planning, pro-poor development goals and strategies to meet them are set in advance

by 'experts', since they have exclusivity in the 'knowledge' regarding what is the best for the poor. Moreover, modernist development agents often see the poor as *the* problem and undervalue their knowledge and capacities as development agents and partners. The poor are usually perceived as freeloaders and inefficient workers, which often serves to public and private agents as an excuse to behave in a patronising manner (Burra *et al.* 2003, Sieber 1981). The reality is that experts are strongly influenced by their biases and unrealistic assumptions: "when [experts'] information is most influential, it is also most invisible. That is, it influences most when it is part of policy participants' assumptions and their problem definitions, which they rarely examine" (Innes 1998:54). The danger is evident in the fact that few things have produced more suffering among humans than strong commitments to implementing utopian visions of the good (Flyvbjerg 2001).

A1. Expert's unquestioned biases and wrong assumptions often favour unbalanced distribution of benefits and burdens. The stigma of 'worthlessness' deprives the poor from public and private investment. For instance, the common false assumption that control of households resources is equally distributed between their members prevent agencies from providing the extra support that women, children or the elderly need. Undervaluation of poor people's capacities to promote development makes the state and the formal market perceive investing in their neighbourhoods as a misuse of public resources, and when they do, it is often against the poor.

A2. Expert's privileged knowledge and methodologies are exercised with a patron-client behaviour that systematically marginalises local knowledge and capacities and keeps the poor deprived of any power to influence development agendas. "Technocratic governments use technical expertise to suppress the powerless and dispossessed" (Schön 1991:340). The powerful agents' culture becomes the norm ruling development, and the cultures of the poor derogate, demote them as the 'others' (Young 1990). This stigma keeps the poor powerless by systematically demoting them to a lower, submissive production rank (*ibid.*).

B. Biases and personal interests often prevent experts from defining objectives according to the real needs of the poor and prevent strategies from taking into account opportunities for multi-stakeholder cooperation (Ostrom 1996).

C. Experts often neglect local innovative and more efficient solutions that poor neighbourhoods hold conscious or unconsciously, which need support to be

articulated and operationalised. Undervaluation of citizens' capacities often is evident in the lack of genuine community engagement, which risks the economic feasibility of interventions, since it unmotivates them to pay back loans, pay user charges or pay for the maintenance of the infrastructure (World Bank 2002). 'Expert'-led interventions often become a financial burden to public agents and to the communities (Cities Alliance 2004).

D. The exclusivity of 'expert' knowledge prevents agents from considering the local knowledge about their environment. Poor areas are often considered as sources of pollution and environmental degradation and modernist agents rarely relate the situation of the poor to their deprivation (of affordable land to live in safe and/or non protected areas, money to pay services, time to upgrade their environment themselves, etc.) and lack of protection against the groups that pollute and consume much more than them (Hardoy *et al.* 2001).

**3.** Modernist planners' *bureaucratic and managerial preset procedures* are often a burden and rarely take into account the context realities and needs and the objectives for which planners work (Sorensen *et al.* 1989, Tewdwr-Jones 1999). Contradictions, lack of cooperation and opacity in the procedures of different agencies undermine the development of the city, especially that of the poor areas (deSoto 2000). Within each agency, modernist planners are tied to and protect fixed procedures within which they are expected and feel safe to deliver their technical expertise (van Ufford *et al.* 2003). Fixed procedures undermine innovation and interaction between research and practice in urban development agencies (Schön 1991). Modernist planners often believe blindly in procedural efficiency as a panacea for a successful performance.

A1. Bureaucratic and managerial procedures are often designed by and oriented to a narrow section of society (mainly middle-class men and formal enterprises). Their complexity and lack of transparency often prevent other groups (the poor, women, minorities, the informal sector) from receiving the goods and services they are entitled to.

A2. The complexity of bureaucratic and managerial procedures, their lack of transparency and/or their inflexibility result in a systematic marginalisation and disempowerment of people and businesses that do not have capacities to follow them or the power to change them.



B. Bureaucratic and managerial procedures are often designed in advance and given priority at the expense of the objectives for which the intervention takes place (Chambers 1997, Sieber 1981, Sorensen *et al.* 1989).

C. Most agencies rely on preset procedures to select actors and define the courses of action, which often become unfeasible or unaffordable. Low-cost, community-led projects do not fit with these procurement and assessment procedures of agencies (Burra 2005).

D. Preset procedures used in the identification of environmental problems and in promoting environmental improvements often discard groups (the poor, women, minorities, etc.), the areas where they live or work, and future generations. The groups that suffer the most from environmental hazards are usually the ones that receive the least attention (UNHABITAT 2003).

4. *Reductionism* means accounting for a range of phenomena in terms of a single determinant factor (Abercromby *et al.* 2000). It simplifies the complex and standardises the diverse. It is often used by modernist planners to make diagnosing procedures more efficient by making information and statistics more manageable. The reality is that the information collected and processed through reductionist means is far from representing the diverse and contingent nature of society (Chambers 1997). The typical example is that authorities often use income as the only indicator for measuring poverty and acting to tackle it. In diverse, dynamic and uncontrollable conditions, reductionist methods can be unjust, misleading and costly (*ibid.*).

A1. By neglecting the multidimensional character of poverty, reductionist strategies often result unjust. The most common 'strategy' governments have for poverty is to support export-led labour-intensive activities owned and managed by wealthy groups, which rarely generate all the jobs needed or reduce poverty (SAPRIN 2004). Formal activities are supported often at the expense of providing the poor with basic goods and services, which are in most developing cities largely insufficient and inadequate (*ibid.*). The simplification and standardisation of household information often neglects distributive injustices that happen within them, such as the differentiated access to household resources depending on gender and age (Levy 2004). The reductionist belief that by supporting the poor more will migrate to the city and will enlarge the slums prevents government agents from providing goods and services in poor areas (Burra 2005).

A2. Reductionism, as Sieber puts it (1981), is a derogatory (miss)classification. Reductionism in planning neglects diversity and systematically marginalizes groups such as women and children within households, or ethnic minorities within communities (Chambers 1997, Crawley 1998). One main reason why reductionism is still present among social science professionals is that “counting often promotes the counter and demotes the counted” (Chambers 1997:54).

B. Reductionist planning systematically discards obstacles that often hinder development, and actors and opportunities that could help interventions meet their targets. Reductionist design of tenders for contracting the provision of goods and services are often based on methods that favour external large contractors and prevent smaller but possibly more responsive and accountable local ones from participating and winning (Burra *et al.* 2003).

C. Reductionist use of information and identification of possible actions systematically neglect potential local innovative, low-cost solutions (Burra *et al.* 2003).

D. Reductionism is often used for manipulative purposes; for instance, the poor are often blamed for polluting the cities in order to find political support for forced evictions or to excuse the lack of public support in poor areas (Hardoy *et al.* 2001). Moreover, reductionist practices systematically neglect information about the environment that could be essential in diagnosing and formulating sustainable development strategies.

5. The *formal market* has a privileged role in the development of cities, even if formal private agencies rarely show interest in poor areas and pro-poor development initiatives. *Formal tenure* is also a legal status that many cannot afford. Modernist planners prioritise support to formal activities and tenure despite that *informality* in poor areas often cover more than 50% of the market and land tenure (UNHABITAT 2003), which is the result, among other factors, of inadequate housing policies and the failure of the land market to offer sufficient, suitable and accessible housing options (Durand-Lasserre 2002, Fernandes 2002). It is not that the poor break the law, it is the system what breaks them (deSoto 2000). Informality is seen by many modernist agents as a reason for intervening only *against* the poor. Moreover, modernist planners, especially those within the entrepreneurial management style, rely on the formal market as the main or only development agent for whole cities including poor neighbourhoods. The reality is that formal market agents rarely see profits in developing informal areas inhabited by the poor. On the other hand,

modernist planners' tools cannot cope with the diversity and complexity of the informal sector (Castells *et al.* 1989).

A1. Informality leads to evictions, which are considered by the UN a gross violation of human rights (Cobbett 1999). Moreover, it keeps public and private investment away from the poor irregular settlements, and it excludes the poor from formal credit facilities and social housing schemes.

A2. Informality is a social stigma, it is considered against the law and, when it is an activity or status of poor citizens, it leads to marginalization and cultural imperialism. It is often used by development agents to prevent the poor from making their claims effective and as a pretext to evict them violently from the land they live in. On the other hand, the formal market is interested in profits and influence, not in eliminating forces of oppression and domination.

B. Modernist planning approaches were established without considering the roots, implications and needs of the poor informal areas and activities, which limits their capacity to meet the objectives (Durand-Lasserve 2002).

C. The formal contractors in poor areas often offer less efficient solutions than the informal sector (*ibid.*). The state and the formal market often over-standardise or fail to offer affordable goods and services for the poor (*ibid.*).

D. The formal market agents are often only interested in the well being of potential clients that can afford their products in the short term, and very rarely that of the poor or future generations (Hardoy *et al.* 2001). On the other hand, governments, influenced by powerful groups, often deny infrastructure and services for the informal areas, which results in the degradation of the environment of the whole city (*ibid.*).

### **2.3. Power in Urban Planning**

This section discusses the non-recognition of power relations or failure to address them effectively in planning as the main overarching reason for failure of the modernist approach in promoting socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable urban development in poor areas. Power relations, briefly described and analysed in the previous section, are embedded in all the other reasons why modernist planning fails. This section is a deeper theoretical analysis of how power relations determine urban change.

Power relations, that is, the interaction of different interests, motives and biases, have a determining influence on how modernist planners lead the development of cities. The public and private agents' interests and those of influential communities prevail above those of the powerless citizens. Modernist planners hide or neglect these particular interests behind a façade of scientific, technical expertise and assumptions about the 'public interest' and neutrality of their employers (Forester 1989). In any case, power has a dynamic nature and is not always visible (Flyvbjerg 2001, Watson 2002). As it has been discussed in the previous section, these interests (and the assumptions protecting them) can easily undermine the social justice, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of interventions. Modernist planners and other stakeholders that act through them exercise power in such a manner that oppress and dominate poor communities and keep them deprived from the most basic needs (Young 1990). Communities are prevented from influencing plans and policies with their views about what undermines development in their neighbourhoods and what they could do to promote it. That is why, power relations need to be unmasked and addressed.

According to the argument, in order for interventions in poor areas to meet the aforementioned criteria they should place the communities' interests above those of the planners and authorities, which implies that the communities are in control of development processes. For this to happen the power relations determining urban change, which are commonly exercised exclusively by public and private agents, need to be balanced by including the civil society in the formulation and execution of strategies (Healey 1997, Ostrom 1996). In fact, it is the community, and not the experts, who know best about their needs, about what is 'good' for their neighbourhoods (Satterthwaite 2001). Moreover, the communities offer commitment, labour, and innovative solutions that can only be taken advantage of if the power to make decisions and act is balanced to their side (Burra *et al.* 2003). This approach to planning has two philosophical roots, Communicative Rationality by Jürgen Habermas and Power Analytics by Michael Foucault.

Communicative planning was born in the 1980s and based on the Habermasian concept *Communicative Rationality* as an alternative to modernist planning in the face of power forces (Forester 1989) and the complex and diverse constitution of societies (Sandercock 1998) determining the development of cities. For communicative planners modernism's reliance on an instrumental, subject-centred rationality is the main reason why it generally fails to address justly and effectively the challenges that urban societies face today (Flyvbjerg 1998). Habermas proposes a

“reorientation from [modernist] focus on subjectivity (...) to a focus on intersubjectivity” (*ibid.*). Habermasian communicative planning is based on a “procedural as opposed to substantive rationality” (Flyvbjerg 2001:91). Here, communicative rationality is a platform to conduct politics towards consensus building free from domination through communicative inclusive processes, i.e. participation. In order address the inevitable influence of disruptive power within communicative processes Habermas suggests a set of principles or ‘discourse ethics’, but these principles are rarely applied and are sometimes criticized for their weakness in their practical application (Flyvbjerg 2001). “Participatory approaches rarely provide a radical challenge to existing power structures, professional positions and knowledge systems, but on the contrary they prove compatible with top-down planning and management systems” (Van Ufford *et al.* 2003:7). Indeed, despite the growing emphasis on participation “in some governmental structures, the World Bank and the UN, development has become an ever more sophisticated ‘anti-politics machine’” (Ferguson on Van Ufford *et al.* 2003:7).

The argument that criticises the limited effectiveness of communicative planning in addressing power relations has its theoretical roots in Foucault’s studies of power and his emphasis on context. Foucaultians propose concrete and substantive practices of resistance and struggle (more than consensus) founded on actual power relations as the most effective way to address politics in planning. If an intervention seeks to balance power, it needs to empower the powerless. But empowerment cannot take place without relative disempowerment (Crawley 1998), which entails conflict. Conflict is most often seen as dangerous, corrosive and potentially destructive of the social order, but there is “mounting evidence” that social conflicts are what provide modern democratic societies with their strength and cohesion (Flyvbjerg 2001:108). Conflict, more than consensus, is perceived as the “true pillar of democratic society” (*ibid.*). Conflict, if well managed, is thus not a problem but a premise if what is sought is an intervention to promote socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable development in poor neighbourhoods. Possibilities for action “become multiple and context dependent” (*ibid.*), and they are grounded on contextual examples instead of theoretical universals.

#### **2.4. Performance Criteria**

This section discusses how, from a theoretical point of view, planners can promote urban development where modernist planning fails to meet the aforementioned criteria (table on appendix III):

**1. *Planners should seek to recognise and balance power relations.*** Power relations can be addressed through mechanisms that ensure that all stakeholders at the local level and all groups at the city and regional levels collaborate fairly and actively in the formulation and execution of strategies (Forester 1989, Healey 1997). Urban planners should unmask all relevant stakeholders' power relations that influence development planning and activities, and should address them strategically through institutionalised empowering participatory processes. This involves preparing the stakeholders to face this challenge. Such processes altogether generate the "social, intellectual and political capital" needed to formulate and execute socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable strategies (Healey 1997:264). This way the poor gain control on "what, how and where" resources are allocated (Smith 1994:26), thus reducing inequality. When well practiced, citizen participation can gradually eliminate forces of oppression and domination, since they can prevent agents' interests and cultures from being imposed at the expense of the potential to make interventions effective, efficient and sustainable.

**2. *'Expertise' should be practiced in a reflective manner and acknowledge local knowledge and capacities.*** Authorities and planners' biases and interests can be influenced by promoting a reflective-critical style of planning, critical to their own capacities and role in society, and critical to the perception of the poor communities as problems. This can be effectively done through institutionalized empowering participatory processes where the interests and biases of the experts can be unmasked and their knowledge and methodologies questioned. This way, the poor can be gradually seen not as problems, but as contributors to good solutions to citywide problems (Burra *et al.* 2003, Satterthwaite 2001). Under such processes, strategies are likely to favour redistribution. Moreover, the stigma of 'worthlessness' is gradually reduced thus attracting more public and private investment in poor areas. Empowering processes gradually eliminate the marginalisation and other forms of oppression generated by the privileged status of experts. By addressing power relations effectively, agents' biases and personal interests can be prevented from displacing objectives, from disrupting the development processes and from making interventions inefficient and unsustainable. Through such processes the knowledge and methodologies are enriched enhancing the scope for effective, efficient and sustainable solutions.

**3. *Planning should be strategic instead of procedural.*** Authorities and planners' biases and interests can be influenced by persuading agents about the benefits of acting strategically through supporting local and informal procedures with which they

are not familiar and that are not standardised, but that have more potential to meet such criteria. Bureaucratic and managerial procedures should be simplified and understandable to all citizens, flexible and adaptable to the contingencies and to the changing strategic interventions needed to meet the objectives. A truly strategic intervention, as it has been defined by Liedtka (1997)<sup>2</sup>, implies the involvement of relevant stakeholders and capacitating them to change procedures according to the strategic needs. A fair involvement and effective influence of local communities in the formulation and execution of strategies is likely to attract more external investments into poor areas, to gradually eliminate oppressive forces, to make objectives more legitimate and motivating to more stakeholders so that the potential to meet them is enhanced, to allow for innovative ideas for efficient courses of action, and to favour environmentally sustainable interventions.

*4. Planners should recognise the diverse and contingent nature of society.*

Authorities and planners' biases and interests can be influenced by persuading them about the benefits of taking into account the multidimensional nature of poverty, obstacles and local opportunities, and supporting context-specific, community-controlled initiatives that acknowledge and address diversity and contingency strategically, not only mathematically. This implies that all relevant (and diverse) stakeholders are involved in formulating and executing strategies that are adaptable to unforeseen situations. The allocation of resources is more likely to be just if *all* relevant stakeholders engage in power-balancing participatory processes that identify realistically and fairly the needs and claims of the most deprived. Such processes are also likely to provide a way out of oppressive situations since they display those needs and claims previously neglected in the statistics. Strategies that are context specific and that take into account diversity and contingency can identify realistic and broadly legitimate objectives, and offer a richer range of possibilities to meet them efficiently and according to the principle of sustainable development.

*5. Informal tenure and activities should be integrated into the formal city.* Planners should promote a proactive role of state and civil society where the formal market does not act adequately. Planners should also prevent formal market agents from intervening in unaccountable ways in poor informal areas taking advantage of the residents' vulnerable legal status. However, authorities and experts are often only

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<sup>2</sup> Liedtka (1997) defined strategic thinking as understanding the system in which development takes place, including the interests that drive it; focusing on an intent; being intelligently opportunistic by taking advantage of advancements and new situations without losing sight on the objectives; taking into account relevant analogies from the past; and being driven by hypothesis, i.e. practicing trial and error for learning and progressing.

interested in working with the formal sector since they do not want to deal with the complexity and risks of informality. But such interests and behaviour can be influenced by persuading agents about the benefits of regularising and supporting the informal tenure and activities strategically towards an intent agreed by the affected communities (Durand-Lasserve *et al.* 2002), and by joining all relevant stakeholders (including informal operators) in the formulation and execution of strategies. Legal status reached through institutionalised empowering participatory processes enables formal investments and redistribution in poor areas, it reduces the stigma of informality and the risk of evictions, it enhances the scope to meet objectives in informal areas, it allows more efficient operators to be eligible for public tenders, and it reduces the obstacles to control the activities affecting the environment.



# 3

## Case Study Analysis

### **Mumbai's Community-Led Housing Development Experiences**

In this chapter an analysis of a case study in Mumbai is developed to provide evidence of the existence of a feasible alternative approach to urban development planning in poor areas that is socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable. This analysis will prove that the impacts of interventions are more likely to meet the aforementioned criteria when the local communities are assisted in gaining capacities for and in assuming the control of the formulation and execution of strategies for the development of their localities. Local communities' participation (or leadership) in such strategies should be recognised by external stakeholders in order to be eligible for external support needed to continue and scale up their interventions successfully. This case also shows the limits of modernist planning to deal with current socio-economic junctures in Mumbai, and shows how such form of community-led urban development can succeed where modernist planning fails.

This dissertation analyses the housing operations in Mumbai's slums that has been developed through a number of years by the Indian Alliance. The Indian Alliance is a partnership of three civil society organizations involved in several community-led development programmes for poor citizens in urban areas in Mumbai and other 70 Indian cities (working with some 2 million slum dwellers) (d'Cruz *et al.* 2005). Mahila Milan (women together) was created in 1986 with help from SPARC as a collective of women pavement and slum dwellers, and their central activity is the operation of savings and credit facilities (Burra *et al.* 1999). The National Slum/Shack Dwellers Federation (NSDF) is a CBO whose membership is largely made of male slum dwellers that was created in 1974 originally as an organisation against demolitions to later work as well to secure basic infrastructure and services for their neighbourhoods (*ibid.*). SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres) was established in 1984 as an NGO based in Mumbai originally supporting pavement dwellers in Mumbai's Byculla area by assisting their women with training and community-led surveys to campaign for security against evictions, services and housing (*ibid.*). Since 2002, after the application of the Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility (CLIFF) (an externally funded and assisted comprehensive financial scheme), the provision of adequate housing for the poor is being successfully scaled-up to levels that no other similar intervention had achieved before (HI 2004). These

developments are taking place together with other ones, notably the community designed, built and managed toilet blocks (Burra *et al.* 2003), which have provided over 200 community toilet blocks in Mumbai serving thousands of citizens in much better conditions and at a much lower cost than those designed, built and managed by external agencies.

### **3.1. The Failure of Modernist Planning in Mumbai**

Bombay, as it has been called until recently, was originally a relatively insignificant fishing town on one of the seven closely located islands. The first colonisers were the Portuguese, but the city did not start to gain importance until the second colonial occupier, the British, unified and connected the islands to the continent by rail, which boosted the city economy as a major port of materials to supply the British Industrial Revolution. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bombay had emerged as the second commercial city after Calcutta with nearly one million inhabitants. The colonial Bombay was a busy and wealthy cluster within an impoverished 'rural-by-force' country. After independence in 1947, millions of rural workers and entire families in India left their unproductive and vulnerable agricultural activities and moved to the cities in search for a better life. They were escaping from deadly starvation and chronic poverty caused by their vulnerability to draughts and other natural or human borne phenomena. The massive migrations have been addressed almost only by investing in development in the rural areas, i.e. trying to prevent them from moving to the cities, and neglecting the new urban population and excluding them from any government support. Mumbai's urban conglomerate has become the biggest in India and it is estimated to have currently over 15 million inhabitants, of which more than half live in slums and occupy only about 6 % of the city area (Pimple *et al.* 2002). One of its slums, Dharavi, has the reputation of being the largest in Asia. Despite being the commercial and financial capital of this over-one-billion-inhabitants country, its authorities have failed to cope with the fast and extremely impoverished urban growth.

Mumbai, as most other developing cities, is currently living a dramatic situation characterised by deprivation of the most basic needs. Such deprivation, as it has been studied in Mumbai and other cities through community-managed surveys, is most commonly as follows (d'Cruz *et al.* 2005, Risbud 2003):

1. Inexistent, too small or unsafe housing space;
2. Insecure tenure, which makes the poor vulnerable to forced evictions;

3. Lack of basic infrastructure and services, such as unsafe and insufficient water, inadequate or no sanitation and poor or no solid waste collection;
4. Lack of entitlements linked to the house, such as the right to vote or to have a passport given only after proving official address;
5. Exclusivist laws and behaviour of government agents and other citizens and organisations from other parts of the city;
6. Difficult or no access to income generating opportunities.

Following is an analysis of the features that have made Mumbai's modernist planning fail to meet the impact criteria.

Urban planners in Mumbai have not balanced the *power relations* that determine the development of the city. The problems that generate poverty and that perpetuate it in Mumbai are various and complex, but all have power as a strong component (Mehta 2004). One example is the real estate prices, which are not only unaffordable for the poor, but also for many middle class citizens (Mehta 2004). Indeed, "the main reason that slum dwellers live in 'slums' is because of the gap between what they can afford to pay for housing and the market cost of the cheapest 'adequate', legal home on a site with infrastructure and services that is accessible to income-earning opportunities" (d'Cruz *et al.* 2005:21). The extremely high prices have their origin in a law that keeps the whole of Mumbai's real estate market under chaos: the Act of 1947 or Rent Act (Mehta 2004, Pimple *et al.* 2002). For reasons that no longer exist, this still dominant law prevents rents from rising and undesired tenants from being forced to move out. The city authorities have failed to address the disrupting power exercised by 2.5 million tenants (mainly middle-and upper-class) that form the biggest political-pressure lobby group in Mumbai and have managed to keep the law unchanged until today (Mehta 2004). The result is that landlords are afraid of losing their property to tenants once they rent them out, which keeps some 400,000 residences empty and the prices of units affordable only to the wealthiest, despite that the units are scarce and extremely demanded (*ibid.*). It also scares away formal developers from investing in rental housing for low-income citizens. The permanent high levels of housing demand and the lack of control on the illegal housing market make it difficult for poor citizens to find affordable accommodation even in the most unsafe, deprived areas. Indeed, contrary to common belief, access to squatter settlements is rarely cheap (Pimple *et al.* 2002). Despite that plans and laws have been largely careful in ensuring land for all, planners and authorities have largely failed to prevent the powerful from "capturing more land than is their just due"

(Verma 2002:62). The most dramatic consequence is that newcomers and the young simply cannot exercise any power to claim for affordable houses in the formal sector and have to opt for squatting (Mehta 2004). Moreover, their powerless situation marginalises them to the extent that they are demoted as 'the others', marginalised and exposed to exploitation, evictions and other forms of violence (Appadurai 2001, Burra 2005). Since the beginning of 2005 the city authorities have demolished 90,000 homes leaving around 350,000 people homeless without any affordable alternative but to squat somewhere else (Ramesh 2005). Planners have been incapable of implementing effectively policies and laws that stipulate provision of goods and services for the poor (*ibid.*). Moreover, the powerful have been encouraged to act in lawless and subverted ways against the planned development, such as developing protected green and coastal areas (Verma 2002). The powerful minorities have prevented planners from mainstreaming the most efficient courses of action (that do not benefit them directly), which has made public goods and services unaffordable to the poor (*ibid.*). Mumbai's powerful minorities keep enhancing their unsustainable consumption and pollution levels and improving their already luxurious environmental standards while millions cannot but defecate in the open due to the lack of adequate sanitation (Burra *et al.* 2003).

Another main cause of poverty is the unplanned or ill planned urban development for the poor areas of the city. This is due to the *incapacity or lack of interest of Mumbai's 'experts'* to provide affordable housing, infrastructure and services for the poor. Mumbai's experts promote development in slums in a patron-client manner, that is, they stand on a hierarchical power relationship, which prevents the slum dwellers from having any influence or control of the development processes affecting their localities (Appadurai 2001, Burra *et al.* 2003). A clear case of experts' failure is that experts from the central government with their unsuitable but protected knowledge and methodologies (that keeps them in their profitable, powerful positions), decided through India's Draft National Slum Policy (IDNSP) what had to be done to improve the lives of slums dwellers of all Indian cities (Verma 2002). Despite its clear pro-poor focus, it was a top-down imposition that lacks the input of each context's local knowledge about why they live in poor conditions and what should be done to improve them. There are three main negative impacts: that it does not solve the problem of unjust land distribution (Mumbai's poorest 55% live in less than 10% of the land), that the eligibility for government support is 'priced' without considering the capacity of the slum dwellers to provide what they are requested, and that it is not effective in preventing the growth of slums (*ibid.*). Not even the most widely

appreciated section of the policy has been effective: resettlements and the prevention of forced evictions (Patel *et al.* 2002, Ramesh 2005, Verma 2002). Another impact of experts' incapacity to provide basic infrastructure is that the environmental conditions of the poor are extremely hazardous, which exposes them to diseases and makes their life difficult (Burra *et al.* 2003, Mehta 2004). The lack of basic sanitation, drainage and garbage collection in poor areas is one main reason why the city environment is so polluted, which is likely to compromise the ability of future generations to make their living within safe environments (Verma 2002).

India has a complex legal framework and a burdensome bureaucracy (McAuslan 1997). In this context, Mumbai's public and private development agents perform with inaccessible *bureaucratic and managerial procedures* that make their job easier in the face of very complex situations, keep them safe from critiques and allow them to illicitly profit out of citizens control (Verma 2002). When the government attempts to provide the poor with goods and services very little reaches them, since a part of the resources remain underutilised, or are inadequately used (poor construction and maintenance) (Burra *et al.* 2003). There is little accountability in the procedures and no sense of ownership among the neighbours for the goods and services provided (*ibid.*). The result is that the goods and services provided rapidly deteriorate and become useless (*ibid.*). The urban poor often do not know the laws that entitle them to receive government support, and when they do, they cannot afford to make their rights effective (Mehta 2004, Verma 2002). Moreover, procedures for eligibility seem to be based on the "intent to exclude" rather than on the principle of housing as a universal right (Pimple *et al.* 2002:77). The result is that the poorest sections of Mumbai do not receive any benefit from public interventions (Burra *et al.* 1999, Verma 2002). The law and existing policies stipulate that the government must provide the resources needed to bridge the gap between what the poor can afford to pay for housing and the market cost of the cheapest 'adequate' home, but their procedures are cumbersome and the resources are very difficult to release (Burra 2005). The unaffordable, unaccountable, non-transparent bureaucratic and managerial procedures are unjust themselves, since they keep the poor powerless and makes them vulnerable to external actions against them. Traditional procedures make planning ineffective and neglect local solution that are more efficient, among other factors because interventions initiated by the poor often do not rely on bribes to make things work (Burra *et al.* 2003). The recent floods in Mumbai (over 1000 dead) show that currently dominant government procedures fail to eliminate the

environmental hazards that endanger today and tomorrow's citizens' lives (Guardian 2005).

*Reductionist thinking* is dominant among Mumbai's planners and authorities and its main product is inaccurate and mismanaged information related to the slum dwellers. Possibly the most serious form of reductionism is that the slum dwellers are seen as the problem and not as victims (Burra 2005). Another example of reductionism in Mumbai is that, still today, many authorities and professionals see investment in housing for the poor in urban areas as an invitation to more migration (*ibid.*). The common view of the poor as *the* problem is a demoting stigma that is used as a justification to evict them violently (Burra 2005, Ramesh 2005). This stigma is unjust in itself, since, besides being untrue (Verma 2002), it marginalises the poor, it keeps them powerless and it makes them victims of cultural imperialism (appendix I). Reductionist thinking has reduced the scope of meeting the objectives efficiently, since the plans and actions set do not respond realistically to the needs and opportunities existing in Mumbai's complex and diverse society (Mehta 2004). Moreover, this short-sighted perception of the poor is a pretext used by government officials for not providing basic environmental infrastructure and services in poor neighbourhoods, which has catastrophic effects on the environmental conditions of the whole city (Appadurai 2001, Burra 2005, Guardian 2005, Risbud 2003).

Modernist planners in Mumbai have failed to prevent and address *informality* and have excessively relied on the formal market to lead the development of poor urban areas. Moreover, housing and infrastructure provision for the poor still depends on legal status as a criterion for eligibility (Burra 2005). Housing provided by the formal sector in Mumbai is too expensive for the urban poor, and the units built are insufficient (Pimple *et al.* 2002). The result is that the urban poor have squatting in densely populated and hazardous areas as the only affordable option (*ibid.*). Then, their illegal status prevents them from exercising their rights (which stipulate that the government should ensure that all citizens have adequate homes and related infrastructure and services) and from accessing to formal credit, and the formal market has not shown any interest in making such rights effective (Pimple *et al.* 2002, Verma 2002). The chaos in which the 'formal' real estate market is submerged additionally aggravates the inability of for urban poor to live in adequate, legal conditions (Mehta 2004). As a response to the lack of support from the government and the private sector, communities have to provide themselves, however the "state systems are simply not adequately geared to dealing with initiatives that are led by communities rather than by private developers" (HI n.d./b). Mumbai's planners'

failure to address informality has led to massive violent evictions, it marginalises all those who cannot afford to legalise their situation, it prevents them from exercising their democratic rights, it makes them vulnerable to situations of labour exploitation and cultural imperialism (Mehta 2004, Ramesh 2005, Risbud 2003, Verma 2002). Mumbai's planners fail to meet their planning objectives in poor informal areas because they do not address the roots of informality (lack of legal, affordable housing options) (Pimple *et al.* 2002). Their interventions rely on formal (often corrupt) contractors that fail to provide affordable solutions (Burra *et al.* 2003). The environmental conditions in which the poor majority of Mumbai's citizens live are hazardous (1000 dead in the last floods), while the government provides for the very safe environments in which the wealthy minority live (Guardian 2005, Mehta 2004).

### **3.2. The Indian Alliance's Alternative Approach**

This section is an analysis of the alternative approach to planning developed by the Indian Alliance (see chapter introduction), which is now achieving results that are attracting the attention of development practitioners worldwide. The analysis is done through, first, the *performance* criteria, and second, the *impact* criteria.

The three organisations in the Indian Alliance are working together since 1987 under a common concern in gaining secure tenure, adequate, affordable and durable housing, and access to infrastructure, notably electricity, transport, sanitation and allied services for the urban poor (Appadurai 2001). Among other similar organizations in Mumbai, the Alliance has by far the largest constituency, the highest visibility in the eyes of the state and the most extensive networks in India and elsewhere in the world (*ibid.*). Underlying their efforts to meet such basic needs is the "strengthening [of] democratic organizations within low-income communities (...) [which], if undertaken with care and patience, is the most powerful legacy of any developmental intervention. It also becomes crucial in ensuring the long-term sustainability of any process that is introduced" (d'Cruz *et al.* 2005:54). Indeed, the ongoing success in the provision of adequate, affordable housing, infrastructure and services to the poorest at a scale never seen before, is the result of many years of supporting local democratic organizations to take the lead in such tasks.

This section shows how the Community-Led Development approach, specifically Mumbai's pro-poor housing scheme carried out by the Alliance, is socially just, effective, more efficient than the modernist approach, and meets the principle of sustainable development. Their success is explained in that the Alliance has been for 20 years assisting the local communities in gaining capacities for and in assuming the

control of the formulation and execution of strategies for the development of their neighbourhoods. The other main factor is that through pilot projects (notably the community toilet blocks and the Rajiv Indra housing development) the Alliance has created a positive 'track record' of successful community-led interventions that has made their development projects eligible for external support, and they are now being scaled up (Burra *et al.* 2003, HI n.d./a). With such developments under the control of the communities, the needs of the poor are now being met (see appendix V). However, meeting the needs of the poor has implied the involvement of other actors in the city, that is, the state, financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organisations and other communities from other areas of the city. The development tasks have been divided into two groups, "little pipes and big pipes" (Burra *et al.* 2003:24). The little pipes include the construction of minor infrastructure and neighbourhood-scale management, and are in the hands and full control of the urban poor; the big pipes are the big budgets, big politics, big infrastructure, and are in the hands of external actors, mainly the state (*ibid.*). The own motives and interests of external actors have inevitably influenced the formulation and execution of strategies, but such interests have been much less dominant than previous externally led interventions. Moreover, in the eyes of many external actors involved, the communities have become indispensable for the success of such developments (HI 2004).

**1. *Power relations are being balanced*** by addressing them through mechanisms that ensure that communities and external actors collaborate fairly and actively in the formulation and execution of strategies (Appadurai 2001). Through these democratic processes, the power relations that influence development planning and activities are being unmasked, and are being addressed strategically through institutionalised empowering participatory processes. The strategies are influencing the behaviour of community members (unrepresentative community leaders, oppressive male household members, etc.) and external agencies (governmental and formal financial bodies and their members) that were generating oppressive situations affecting Mumbai's poor majority. These strategies through which the communities organise and build their capacity are what the Alliance calls the federation process. These are: generating and using information about themselves and their neighbourhoods (Burra *et al.* 2003, Mattingly 2005); building the capacity of women to organise and manage savings groups and setting precedents with community-led developments (Burra *et al.* 2003); exchanging knowledge and support between communities (*ibid.*); and pilot projects and their exhibition and festivals (Burra *et al.* 2003, HI 2004). These



activities served to increase the interaction and enhance trust between the organisations and their members involved in the development processes (HI 2004, Mattingly 2005). After some years the communities were capacitated to “read the cracks” in the system, such as in regulations and procedures in external agencies, which are being widened for change (Burra 2005, Healey 1997:270).

*2. Experts' privilege is being challenged and the perception of the poor as development agents is being improved.* The planners from the Alliance have redefined their 'expert'-imposing role to become facilitators, mediators, contributors of knowledge and skills, and learners (Levy 2005), and the communities have become the real development protagonists. Through the involvement of authorities and experts in projects and exhibitions they are experiencing that their expertise and role is being rightly questioned (Burra *et al.* 2003, Satterthwaite 2001), since “no one knows more about how to survive poverty than the poor themselves” (Appadurai 2001). The interests and biases of the experts have been unmasked and their knowledge and methodologies challenged through institutionalized empowering participatory processes. The Alliance, since its origins, has engaged in a reflective style of planning where affordable and scaleable housing for all has been set as a main objective, communities have understood that such objective “will emerge if the state creates the basis for giving them land and affordable housing finance, cities provide infrastructure and workable norms for building standards, and communities design and build their own houses” (Patel 1999:1).

*3. Bureaucratic and managerial procedures are being questioned with alternatives that meet better the criteria.* The Alliance and the CLIFF scheme “challenge ‘business as usual’ in terms of planning and building regulatory frameworks, municipal procurement and contractual procedures, and the dominance of vested interests in the allocation of scarce urban resources” (HI 2004:4). Authorities and experts’ interests in protecting their preset procedures and their exclusive power have been influenced by being persuaded about the benefits of acting strategically through supporting local alternative procedures with they are not familiar and that are not standardised, but that have more potential to meet the ‘impacts’ criteria. The Alliance has replaced the cumbersome bureaucratic and managerial procedures that used to condition state-led interventions by fluid (nonetheless difficult) strategic actions. The Alliance’s bureaucratic and managerial procedures are more understandable to their constituencies, and more flexible and adaptable to the contingencies and to the emerging strategic needs. Their procedures enable the strategic activities that are contributing to skills and knowledge, and are building

trust between the communities and the external actors, all of which have become the foundations for the formulation and the implementation of CLIFF. In short, CLIFF serves to finance the gap caused by cumbersome governmental bureaucratic and managerial procedures that is required to develop pilot projects and to scale-up interventions (HI 2004). The political underpinning in these strategic actions and in CLIFF is changing policies, practices and standards in external organisations so that they provide the essential support where the communities cannot provide themselves alone (Burra *et al.* 2003).

**4. *Reductionism is being questioned, and diversity and contingency are being acknowledged and addressed.*** Experts' information about Mumbai's slums is extremely insufficient and inadequate and it only distorts the reality of slum and pavement dwellers' lives (Appadurai 2001, Burra *et al.* 1999, 2003). The Alliance community managed surveys and mappings acknowledge and address diversity and contingency strategically, not only mathematically, and it is source of clarification rather than prejudices. These are also serving for the community members to learn from themselves, to strengthen their organization and to create the capacity to articulate their knowledge when interacting with governmental agencies and other outsiders (Burra *et al.* 2003). Twenty years working and generating information about the slum and pavement dwellers have demonstrated that the main reason that they live in such conditions is the existing gap between what they can afford to pay for housing and the market cost of the cheapest 'adequate' home (d'Cruz *et al.* 2005). This information includes listing of all neighbourhoods, households and intra-household surveys, and drawing detailed maps of the neighbourhoods, services, resources, problems etc. All this information then becomes crucial in the formulation and execution of plans for their neighbourhoods.

**5. *Informal tenure and activities of the poor are being gradually regularised and integrated in the formal city.*** One of the main objectives of the Alliance is providing security of tenure. This is being done by strategically seeking the state's acknowledgement of the informal tenure and activities not as problems but as solutions that the urban poor use in the face of unaffordable housing prices and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. In that respect, the Alliance is working out informal activities with informal operators as a strategy to show external actors what the poor can do by themselves, and to challenge and soften 'formal' procedures in order to get external support (Appadurai 2001). In addition, the Alliance has sought to prevent formal market and government agents from intervening in unaccountable ways in poor informal areas taking advantage of the residents' vulnerable legal status.

The outcomes of the strategic actions carried out by the Alliance have no precedents in Mumbai. So far seven housing projects are been developed to provide homes for more than 50,000 households (d’Cruz et al. 2005, Nirman 2003). This includes a relocation programme of 22,000 households that were living each side of the railway tracks, and another resettlement is underway for another 35,000 households (d’Cruz et al. 2005). It also includes the relocation of 327 pavement dwelling households, with 800 more underway (*ibid.*). All projects have been fully managed by the communities and serve as important precedent-settings that demonstrate what urban poor organizations can do. The involvement of other actors has built synergies since “people are learning to trust each other even if they appear to come from different worlds and to have widely varying ‘languages’ and conceptual frameworks. Slum dwellers and bankers, World Bank officials, NGOs, government representatives and municipal workers are all learning from each other and new solutions to old problems really do seem to be emerging as a result” (HI 2004:2). Altogether, the impacts of these developments and all the other related strategic interventions have been socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable.

**A1. *Distributive justice.*** The interventions of the Alliance are systematically overturning the historical trend of growing inequalities in the distribution of benefits and burdens. After more than 20 years enabling the urban poor, their community-led housing developments are improving their lives to a scale and degree that no other intervention had reached before (HI 2004). For the first time it is the poorest and most vulnerable who are being given priority. The Milan Ngar project has been designed and managed by women pavement dwellers from Byculla, the oldest leaders of the Alliance, and it is providing homes for 327 families (*ibid.*). The burden of insecure tenure is successfully decreasing where the communities have organised and been capacitated to negotiate with government officials (*ibid.*). The interventions are developing the skills of the poor not only to work on such interventions (management, savings, construction, etc.), but also to enhance the possibility to find better income-generating opportunities. The increased recognition of their rights is giving the poor access to social benefits previously denied because of their ‘informal’ status. The Alliance, through CLIFF, is providing means to spread the risks that are implied in financing and building infrastructure (such as demolishing homes to give space to the building blocks or providing funds for it), of which the poor have so far taken a disproportionate share (*ibid.*). The pilot projects are a ‘track record’ that is being used to gain the confidence of formal credit institutions, which are increasingly showing interest in financing housing for the poor through CLIFF (HI 2004).

**A2. Institutional justice.** The Alliance's interventions are successfully reducing unjust structural forces, namely oppression and domination (Young 1990). The Alliance, since its origins more than 20 years ago, has been building legitimate institutional participatory mechanisms within the community that have unmasked structural injustices and are gradually reducing them, and it has given prominence to the poorest and most vulnerable (specially women pavement dwellers) in leading the most important development processes (savings, mapping, lobbying, management, etc.) (Appadurai 2001, Burra *et al.* 1999, 2003). The Alliance has also set regular relations with government and private agents in a way that has managed to receive essential support from them (such as secure tenure) to eliminate the roots of some injustices and to develop the housing projects designed, executed and managed by the communities (*ibid.*). The fact that it is the poor who are actually leading the interventions is systematically pulling them out of their previously invisible, marginalised situation (*ibid.*). Those within the slum federations have significantly improved their powerless condition, since it is them who decide what needs to be done and how (*ibid.*). The role of the state, private sector and NGO professionals has been redefined "away from being the talkers, managers and solution generators to being listeners and supporters of community-generated solutions" (Satterthwaite 2001:136). The stigma of low social status among external actors is successfully being reduced thanks to exhibitions and other forms of dialogue that prove the capacities of the poor (*ibid.*). Threat of evictions is being gradually weakened, since many of them have IDs and have gained other forms of official recognition (*ibid.*). The exploited, marginalised, and powerless situation of women has improved with the leading and essential role of Mahila Milan, and some interventions have also benefited street children (Burra *et al.* 1999). The much improved sanitation facilities have eliminated many of the problems these two groups were previously suffering (Burra *et al.* 2003). Not all structural injustices have been eliminated for those in the federations, but the Alliance's interventions have meant a progress that no other intervention had achieved before (Appadurai 2001).

**B. Effectiveness.** "All of us involved in CLIFF know that things are really moving and far more is being achieved already than we had ever envisaged possible. (...) the journey is proving more rewarding than we could ever have hoped" (HI 2004:2). All projects are in the way to meet the objectives set by the communities, that is, affordable, adequate, legal homes on a site with infrastructure and services that is accessible to income-earning opportunities (d'Cruz *et al.* 2005). In fact, the developments are being so effective that "other societies in Dharavi are also queuing

up” to receive the same assistance to build apartment blocks (Mr Shanmuganand, Chairman of the Rajiv Indra Housing Society, in HI 2004:10). Numerous researchers have pointed out that the effectiveness is explained in that the communities were assisted during years in gaining capacity to lead the development process, including the definition of objectives, by members of the Alliance with experiences in other areas and projects (Burra 2005, d’Cruz *et al.* 2005, Jack *et al.* 2004, Levy *et al.* 2004, Satterthwaite 2001).

**C. Efficiency.** The housing projects were targeting the poorest sections of society, such as the pavement dwellers, and the homes built were not to be provided for free for important reasons<sup>3</sup>. The two main requisites were that they had to be adequate and affordable, but it became clear that the poor could not afford the loans necessary to build the homes (d’Cruz *et al.* 2005). Such constraint had two main effects: one is the pressure to build cheaper than regular private and state developments, which was achieved mainly thanks to the fact that no bribes, intermediaries, commissions or expensive technical services had to be paid, that the design was adjusted to the needs and affordability of the users (thus not over-standardised), and that the land was often provided by the state at no cost (Burra *et al.* 2003, HI 2004); the second effect was the development of the CLIFF scheme through the DFID funded research programme “Bridging the Finance Gap” (HI n.d./b), which is now operating to finance the large housing developments under study. “Community driven processes have shown how they can produce infrastructure and good quality housing for one-third to one-fifth of the prices charged by contractors” (*ibid.*:22).

**D. Sustainable development.** The situation in Mumbai is one in which the basic needs (adequate housing, sanitation, garbage collection) of the majority of its citizens has not been met (Risbud 2003), and the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is being compromised by the high levels of pollution and consumption caused by those who have more than they need (the better-off in Mumbai and other places), by the polluting industries operating in the city, and by the lack of environmental infrastructure and services in many areas of the city (Allen *et al.* 2002). The Alliance housing projects are successfully providing those environmental needs that the state and the market have failed to provide (mainly adequate housing and sanitation), and are institutionalising relations between the urban poor, the state and the private

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<sup>3</sup> “The Alliance has always opposed the populist culture of ‘free’ houses, both because it is unsustainable and because such ‘free’ handouts undermine both the responsibility and agency of poor communities” (Burra 2005:79).

sector that make it more difficult for excessively polluting and consuming activities to take place without public controls. Moreover, these developments are enabling the city to have a more sustainable management of the waste generated in the slums, mainly human waste, which can now be drained and treated, and garbage, which can be reached by trucks.

# 4

## Conclusion

### Methodology for Addressing Urban Poverty

In the face of the critical situation of today's cities, especially those in the developing world, modernist planning has proved to be insufficient, if not inadequate. The challenge posed on the urban development planning profession is today complex and continuously changing. That is why a new approach that is more flexible and adaptable to the complexity and contingency of urban societies is needed. This research has been aimed at finding such approach, a new role and methodological guide for planners facing critical urban problems, i.e. extreme levels of inequality in distributive and institutional terms. This situation stresses the need to place social justice at the core of urban development planning's *raison d'être*. The accumulated failures of traditional urban planning suggest that this new approach should also seek to be more effective, efficient and sustainable.

The case of community designed, managed and built housing projects in Mumbai initiated by the Indian Alliance proves that the impacts of interventions are more likely to meet the impact criteria when the local communities are assisted in gaining capacities for and in assuming the control of the formulation and execution of strategies for the development of their localities. In Mumbai, local communities' participation (or leadership) in such strategies is being recognised by external stakeholders, which is making the communities eligible for the external support needed to continue and scale up their interventions (HI 2004). The ongoing history of such developments and the methods used have been analysed, and the lessons drawn constitute the methodology developed in this final chapter.

The capacity of urban poor groups in leading the development of their neighbourhoods has been demonstrated in the case of Mumbai and in other well-documented cases (d'Cruz *et al.* 2005). In fact, this capacity has been *the* key factor for the appropriateness in the design and effectiveness of pro-poor housing provision, and for the feasibility in the implementation of CLIFF (Jack *et al.* 2005, HI 2004, Hughes *et al.* 2004). Moreover, the urban poor groups not only can do it, but can do it better than 'experts' acting from government and private sector agencies (Burra *et al.* 2003). But in order to do it the urban poor need the involvement of such external agencies, which makes the development processes extremely complex and stresses

the need to acknowledge the power relations and uniqueness of each context (Flyvbjerg 2001). Then, what is the role of urban planners in such approach to pro-poor urban planning?

The main lesson learned from this research is that urban planning in deprived and oppressed urban areas is rather a matter of finding out on the ground what can be done in order to build the capacity of the communities so that they can control and become essential partners in the development of their neighbourhoods. Planners can use their knowledge, skills and privileged socio-professional status (always from a critical-reflective position (Satterthwaite 2001, Schön 1991)) to assist the communities strategically to meet their developmental objectives and seek synergies in their collaboration with the state and private sector and other civil society organisations (Ostrom 1996).

Building the capacity for and taking the lead implies balancing power relations, power to make decisions regarding what is to be done, where and how to do it. The tools to address power relations, as it has been argued in the conceptual framework (section 2.4.), are a strategic combination of enhancing and conducting communicative interaction and managing conflict. In the case of Mumbai, conflict has been much less used or needed than one might expect from what the theories *en vogue* say about how to understand and limit the misuse of power (Flyvbjerg 2001). Those involved in the Alliance are using what they call “the politics of patience, constructed against the tyranny of emergency” (Appadurai 2001:30). In other words, they use dialogue or communicative interaction intensively and patiently for building trust between community members and between the community and external actors, such as the state, other communities in the city and the private sector.

From the experience of the Alliance, such trust can be built by unmasking injustices and by addressing them through the different strategic actions analysed in the previous chapter. The ‘federation process’ or ‘toolkit’ used by the Alliance has four elements: community-managed savings and credit; community-managed surveys and mapping; pilot projects, their exhibition and festivals; and exchanges with other communities (Burra *et al.* 2003, HI 2004, appendix IV). But their approach is not limited to a procedural tool-kit to be applied in any poor urban area. Underlying these activities are the intertwined ‘components of strategic intervention’ developed by Levy (2005), which can be a truly universal guide, since they act more as principles of intervention than as a rigid prescription: strategic design and



implementation, diagnosis, dialogue, organisational and institutional development, and 'public learning':

- *Strategic design and implementation.* This is a component that is intrinsic in all the other four components and planners should have it permanently present. Being truly strategic is more than prescribing actions for the future and it involves more than the immediate environment in which planners operate. A truly strategic intervention includes five elements: it incorporates systems perspective, it is intent-focused, it is intelligently opportunistic, it involves thinking in time, and it is hypothesis-driven (Liedtka 1997). According to such elements, planners should:

- a. Understand the system in which development takes place, i.e. the interrelated political, socio-economic and environmental processes in time and space and the different actors involved in them, their roles and relations (Goldsmith 1996, Levy 2005). The Alliance members have a deep, recognised knowledge of Mumbai slums and pavements and about how the development systems affect their residents (Mukhija 2003). Moreover, they know better than anyone else how to survive there (Appadurai 2001). Mahila Milan's savings and credit provide knowledge about the financial system in which they have to operate. Community-managed surveys and maps help the communities to learn about themselves and about what problems and opportunities are common priorities. The pilot projects become, through experience, another important source of knowledge. Exchanges with other communities provide knowledge about how the system and interventions affect other localities (Burra *et al.* 2003);

- b. Focus on an intent fairly agreed by the community, which, in the case of the Alliance, it is agreed after carrying out community-managed surveys and maps and kept throughout the strategic actions (Burra *et al.* 1999).

- c. Be intelligently opportunistic by finding room for manoeuvre or "cracks" in the system and taking advantage of them, of advancements and new situations without losing sight on the intent (Healey 1997:270). The Alliance is taking strategic advantage of certain supporting agents, of different opportunities for financing the housing developments present in the SRA Act, and of commercially favourable conditions (Burra *et al.* 1999, HI 2004). The strategic role of savings is to show to potentially supporting agents that the poor are financially organised and responsible (Burra *et al.* 1999). Information generated through surveys and maps is a key arm in negotiating the support from external agents (*ibid.*). Pilot

projects are strategically inaugurated with festivals in order to show their capacities to external agents (Burra *et al.* 2003);

**d.** Take into account and reflect about relevant analogies from the past occurred within or outside the community in question (Schön 1991). The Alliance members are experts themselves in how the slums developed in the past. They have learned from past experiences (in saving, carrying out surveys, pilot projects and visiting other communities) about hindering and enabling factors. All such knowledge is applied in the formulation and execution of their strategies (Burra *et al.* 2003).

**e.** Support strategies that are hypothesis driven, i.e. practicing trial and error for learning and progressing, which has been practiced systematically by the Alliance, notably with their pilot projects (Burra *et al.* 2003).

- *Diagnosis.* Diagnosis is starting point of any intervention. This stage is when information is generated and managed, knowledge transferred, the 'intent' of the intervention (mentioned in the previous point) established, and the strategy formulated. Since the very beginning the planner should seek to understand the system where the intervention is to take place (see previous point). Then, the planner should prepare all stakeholders, especially the most deprived and oppressed, for the diagnosis process. To carry out the diagnosis the planner should seek to institutionalise democratic mechanisms through which all relevant stakeholders find out together constraints and opportunities for action at particular sites of power with particular actors (Healey 1997, Levy 2005). If carried out appropriately, the diagnosis processes moves from the office board (of modernist planners) to the 'arena' (Healey 1996). To have a positive impact, the diagnosis processes should empower the disempowered (Crawley 1998)). The community-managed surveys and mapping are the main diagnosis tools used by the Alliance. They serve, first, to empower women (who usually manage them) in the communities and to unmask external power structures oppressing them (Burra *et al.* 1999, 2003). They also serve to find out realistically what the problems and opportunities are, and what courses of actions can be taken to meet the agreed objectives. Pilot projects are also an important tool of diagnosis, since they provide knowledge about hindering and enabling factors. Exchanges with other communities are a source of knowledge about other relevant factors not identified in the own community.

- *Dialogue.* When appropriately carried out, this component is often the one that causes the deepest impact (Appadurai 2001). The generation and transfer of

information and knowledge can have a deep impact on the political behaviour and structures determining development. Dialogue, in the form of communicative interaction and conflict management, is charged with power and is present in all stages of planning and implementing strategies (Flyvbjerg 1998). Given dialogue's potential impact and reach, and the fact that the power to influence decisions is often unbalanced, planners should make sure that all relevant stakeholders get involved and, more important, are well prepared to engage in a fair dialogue (Healey 1996). This implies that the poor are prepared to meet individuals and organisations that hold privileged status and knowledge about how the system works. For a fair dialogue, the techniques used (such as PRA<sup>4</sup>), the time and space chosen (convenient to the most deprived and oppressed), the units of analysis (households, work, etc., which should be free from false assumptions about social relations), and the form of recording it (reports, statistics, etc.) should be carefully strategically defined (Healey 1996, Levy 2005). To be effective, dialogue must challenge power structures not only through raising the question 'what are the problems', but also "why" they exist (Crawley 1998:27). The approach proposed here challenges the exclusivity of instrumental rationality used by and privileged status of modernist planners in the management of information and formulation of strategies by stressing the importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue in dealing with the inevitable politics of planning (see section 2.3. and 2.4.). The Alliance's dialogue with external actors, mainly the government, has managed to make their relationship more balanced through changing authorities' views about the poor and their capacities (Burra *et al.* 1999, 2003). This has been achieved mainly through preparing the communities (especially women) organising savings schemes, carrying out surveys and maps and using them during the negotiations. The exhibitions and festivals of pilot projects have also generated power-balancing dialogue, since their impressive presence deconstruct all arguments previously used by external agents in order to justify the lack of support to poor communities. The strategic use of these tools has publicly exhibited the inadequacy of previous government interventions and the reasons *why* they are inadequate.

- *Organisational and institutional development.* In the development 'game', organisations can be understood as the 'players' and institutions as the 'rules' of the

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<sup>4</sup> Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) is a qualitative survey methodology tool to formulate solutions to identified problems. It was developed for collaborating with local people in analysis and planning and has contributed to the development of action plans and participation strategies. PRA provides a 'basket of techniques' from which those most appropriate for the project context can be selected: semi-structured interviews and discussions, social mapping, preference ranking, trend analysis, seasonal and historical diagramming, etc. (UNHABITAT 2001).

game'. They are interdependent in the sense that organisations create the institutions and institutions define the role of organisations (Grindle 1997).

**a. Organisational development:** Planners often find obstacles in making their plans work because of the behaviour of organisations and individuals involved in development. To overcome such obstacles, organisational development is needed, which means shaping motives of organisations and their members strategically so that their agency is used to support urban development. The behaviour of organisations can be changed by using certain tools that influence the motives driving such organisations and their members: providing information, resources and leadership, exercising administrative and political power, increasing interaction between organisations and their members, and building their capacity (Mattingly 2005). Through their use, notably building the capacity of the organisations of the poor and demonstrating it with tangible examples, the Alliance achieved a main very positive result: many government agents changed from neglecting and hindering the developmental initiatives originated in the communities to supporting them (Appadurai 2001, Burra *et al.* 1999, 2003). The savings strengthen the sense of community and provide management skills for women in the communities and provide resources that trigger community action (*ibid.*). The surveys and maps provide information useful to influence government and private agents in order to gain their support (*ibid.*). This support was often provided in the form of administrative and political power exercised by leaders within their organisations (*ibid.*). Pilot projects also capacitate community members with experience and skills, and their exhibition and festivals foster interaction between organisations (*ibid.*). Exchanges are also a source of fruitful interaction between communities and relevant actors, and have a "viral" spreading effect (HI 2004:4).

**b. Institutional development** is the result of changes in the institutions to make the development processes more socially just, effective and sustainable. Institutional development is mainly changing norms, policies and laws, but it also implies making them legitimate and enforceable, and they cannot be abruptly changed and with imported ready-made solutions (Fernandes 2005, McAuslan 1997). Changes need to be made according to the specificities of each context (seeking harmony between formal and informal institutions (DFID 2003, McAuslan 1993, 1997)). The four tools used by the Alliance (savings, surveys, projects and exchanges) entail the development of numerous institutional settings. First within the communities (democratic federations), then between communities

and private and public sector actors (contracts, agreements, regular relations, etc.) (Appadurai 2001, Burra *et al.* 2003). Thanks to the large scale of such federations, today it is possible for the poor to influence government policies (Appadurai 2001).

- *'Public learning'*. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are powerful tools for learning from experience and for progress, especially if the tasks are carried out in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and controlled by those affected by the intervention (Gaventa *et al.* 2000). Indicators used in such assessments should be developed with the participation of those who will use and learn from them (Innes *et al.* 2000). In order to make any difference, it is crucial for an assessment to ensure that it is accountable *to* the community and not just *of* the community (IIRR 1998 in Gaventa 2000, emphasis in original). M&E are essential tools in practicing planning in a reflective-critical manner (Schön 1991), for using resources efficiently and for meeting the objectives effectively, although an excessive rigidity of the process might reduce the effectiveness of the intervention (Gaventa *et al.* 2000). Planners should make sure that the communities affected by an intervention are capable of participating and controlling the M&E processes. In addition to their preparation, the assessment task itself can build the capacity of the community. For the Alliance, M&E is not considered as a separate activity. Monitoring is inbuilt to their core rituals - exchanges, reviewing savings, reviewing construction projects/programmes, meetings and visits by city/state level Federation/Mahila Milan leadership, so in effect the same tools create the capacity to monitor and evaluate in a participatory and empowering manner (Patel 2004).

This dissertation has been developed upon an experience (community-led urban development) in a specific context (Mumbai) as a challenge to modernist planning. This experience has been synthesised through theoretical literature to form an alternative planning methodology. The main difference between the two approaches is not in the components of their methodologies, but in their foundations. Whereas the modernist approach is based on universals and reductionist assumptions, the community-led development approach is context specific. Being context specific implies that urban poor communities can and are centrally involved in improving their own lives and the general conditions of the city where they live (Burra *et al.* 2003). The central role of communities requires the development of horizontal webs of democratic relations from the community to the national and international levels (Appadurai 2001), which is what urban planners will have to promote in the future if the profession is to survive in an increasingly globalised and polarised world.

## **5** Appendices

### **I. Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression** (Young 1990, ch2)

Every context or group under oppression suffer from different combinations of the different forms of oppression, that is why causal explanation must be always particular and historical.

The first three forms of oppression occur through the division of labour, i.e. who works for whom and in what conditions (exploitation), who does not work or lacks the opportunities to work (marginalisation), and how the content of work defines one relative institutional position relative to others and how the decisions made by these others affects one's life (powerlessness).

Cultural imperialism occurs when a group's meaning of society is dominantly believed and seen as the only possible, stereotyping other groups and their alternatives as "the others" (page 59). The members of these other groups have to carry the burden of prejudice and exclusion in any relation with other members of society, often within their own group.

Violence occurs when persons have to live with constant fear of random unprovoked attacks, as well as with physical and mental wounds that limit their social capabilities. Violence is systematic in the sense that it is the surrounding context what makes it possible and even acceptable. When intersecting with cultural imperialism, violence is directed at members of a group simply because they are members of that group.

**II. Features that make modernist planning socially unjust, ineffective, inefficient and unsustainable**

	<b>A1. Social Injustice</b> Unequal distribution of benefits and burdens	<b>A2. Social Injustice</b> Institutionalised forces of oppression and domination
<b>1. Failure to recognise and address power relations</b>	Lack of citizens' control of state-led or market-led interventions allows unbalanced allocation of resources in favour of the least needy.	Powerlessness is itself unjust, prevents the marginalised and exploited from claiming a fir role in society, and reinforces cultural imperialism.
<b>2. Failure of expert's privileged knowledge and methodologies. Undervaluation of the capacities of the poor</b>	Expert's unquestioned biases and wrong assumptions often favour unbalanced distribution of benefits and burdens. The stigma of poor areas' 'worthlessness' and their resident's incapacity deprives them form public and private investment.	By privileging expert's knowledge, the poor are kept powerless, they are marginalized and exposed to violence and cultural imperialism.
<b>3. Failure of bureaucratic and managerial procedures</b>	Preset, unaccountable procedures often prevent the poor, vulnerable groups and the informal sector from having access to public and formal goods and services.	Preset procedures systematically marginalise and disempower those that have no capacity to follow them.
<b>4. Negative effects of reductionism</b>	Reductionist thinking often leads to interventions against the poor (forced evictions) or to justify the lack of pro-poor interventions in poor areas.	Reductionist thinking systematically marginalizes some groups and leaves them powerless. It is also used to justify violence against the poor (forced evictions).
<b>5. Failure to prevent and address informality and of reliance in formal market</b>	Informality leads to evictions and keeps public and private investment away from the poor informal areas and activities. It excludes the poor from formal credit and government support.	Informality is considered against the law and it leads to marginalization, powerlessness and violence (forced evictions).

	<b>B. Ineffectiveness</b> Not meeting objectives	<b>C. Inefficiency</b> Overuse of resources	<b>D. Unsustainable development</b> Environmental and intergenerational inequity
<b>1. Failure to recognise and address power relations</b>	Objectives respond to the interests of the powerful. The objectives are likely to be either displaced or missed due to the agents' particular interests and biases.	Power unbalances prevents processes from responding to the income limitations of the poor in accessing basic goods and services.	Power unbalances enable some groups to provoke environmental degradation and natural resource depletion, which affect the majority and the future generations.
<b>2. Failure of expert's privileged knowledge and methodologies. Undervaluation of the capacities of the poor</b>	Experts often fail to define objectives according to the real needs of the poor, and neglect opportunities for multi-stakeholder cooperation.	Experts often neglect local knowledge, methodologies, opportunities and innovative solutions that could make development more efficient.	Experts often neglect local knowledge and methodologies that could make development more sustainable.
<b>3. Failure of bureaucratic and managerial procedures</b>	Procedures are often given priority at the expense of objectives.	Procedures to select actors and define the courses of action are often preset, which often are unfeasible or unaffordable.	Future generation and the groups that suffer the most from environmental hazards are usually the ones that receive the least attention.
<b>4. Negative effects of reductionism</b>	Reductionism systematically discards obstacles that often hinder development, and actors and opportunities that could help interventions meet their targets.	Reductionist use of information and identification of possible actions systematically neglect potential local innovative, low-cost solutions.	Complexity of causes of environmental problems and local knowledge are often neglected. The poor are often unjustly blamed for the degradation they cannot prevent and the pollution they do not produce.
<b>5. Failure to prevent and address informality and of reliance in formal market-led pro-poor urban development</b>	Modernist planners rarely address the roots of informality, apply unrealistic prescriptions, or rely on the formal market, which is not interested in poor informal areas and activities.	The formal operators in poor areas often offer less efficient solutions than the informal operators.	The market agents are only interested in the environmental well-being of potential clients that can afford their products, and not that of the poor or future generations.



### III. How to make urban planning socially just, effective, efficient and sustainable

	<b>A1. Social Justice</b> Equal distribution of benefits and burdens	<b>A2. Social Justice</b> Elimination of institutionalised forces of oppression and domination
<b>1. Recognition and balance of power relations</b>	The allocation of resources is most likely to be socially just because the poor have more control on where, how and with how much interventions take place.	The vulnerability and the situations of exploitation, violence and/or cultural imperialism are likely to be unmasked and reduced because the poor lower their powerlessness and marginalisation so that they can address these situations more effectively.
<b>2. Reflective 'expertise' practice and inclusion of local knowledge and methodologies</b>	Unmasked agents' interests and biases, and the knowledge and methodologies used to allocate resources are likely to favour redistribution. It can reduce the prejudice of 'worthlessness' and enhance investment in poor areas.	Local knowledge, methodologies and culture are less likely to be marginalised and the poor have more chances to influence development agendas. It can gradually eliminate stigmas.
<b>3. Strategic and democratic planning</b>	If poor citizens have access to, understand and have the chance to strategically influence bureaucratic and managerial procedures they are likely to be more eligible for public investment.	If poor citizens have access to, understand and have the chance to strategically influence bureaucratic and managerial procedures the situations of marginalisation and disempowerment that procedures often produce can be gradually eliminated.
<b>4. Context specific, diversity and contingency sensitive planning</b>	Each context's unique and complex features and tendencies provide the correct answer to how benefits and burdens should be distributed.	Context focused, participatory and empowering diagnosis of problems and opportunities are likely to unmask and reduce situations of oppression and domination.
<b>5. Integration of informal tenure and activities into the formal city and proactive role of state and civil society</b>	The poor areas are more likely to receive public and private investment and have access to credit if the security of tenure and formalisation of activities are addressed by the state in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.	The poor are more likely to be less marginalised, powerless and suffer less violence if their informal land tenure and activities are given the necessary support from the state to become part of the formal city.

	<b>B. Effectiveness</b> Meeting agreed objectives	<b>C. Efficiency</b> Cost-effectiveness	<b>D. Sustainable development</b> Environmental and intergenerational equity
<b>1. Recognition and balance of power relations</b>	The objectives agreed are most likely to be met because the poor can prevent the agents' interests and biases from displacing the objectives.	The poor can prevent the agents' interests and biases from making the interventions unnecessarily costly.	Those potentially affected by unsustainable practices have more chances to prevent them.
<b>2. Reflective 'expertise' practice and inclusion of local knowledge and methodologies</b>	Biases and personal interests that can displace objectives or hinder their achievement are minimised, and knowledge and methodologies are enriched. Cooperation between stakeholders is enhanced.	Biases and personal interests that often make interventions inefficient are minimised and the knowledge and methodologies needed to find efficient solutions are enriched.	Biases and personal interests that often lead to unsustainable practices are minimised and the knowledge and methodologies regarding the environment are enriched.
<b>3. Strategic and democratic planning</b>	Accessible, understandable and strategically flexible procedures prevent objectives from being displaced and enhance the potential to meet them.	Accessible, understandable and strategically flexible procedures enable potentially more efficient solutions to be tested and taken advantage of.	Accessible, understandable and strategically flexible procedures give more scope to include the principle of sustainable development in the strategies.
<b>4. Context specific, diversity and contingency sensitive planning</b>	Strategies ensure focus on originally targeted issues, and on all stakeholders and their assets.	Strategies take advantage of possible local innovative, low-cost solutions.	Strategies take advantage of local information and ideas for possible courses of action regarding the environment.
<b>5. Integration of informal tenure and activities into the formal city and proactive role of state and civil society</b>	Legal status reduces the obstacles and systematises the development processes of pursuing objectives. Collaboration with the informal sector makes the processes more legitimate and enhances motivation to meet objectives.	Interventions are more likely to be efficient if the agents are open to involve the local residents and informal operators for the formulation and execution of strategies.	An integrated city allows more rational and better-articulated interventions to prevent environmental degradation and resource depletion, which is often caused by uncontrolled market activities.

#### **IV. The Alliance's strategic 'toolkit'** (Burra *et al.* 2003, HI 2004)

**1.** Community-managed savings and credit. Since the first moment, community members were encouraged and organized to save on a daily basis. Besides generating funds to meet small-scale collective needs and to provide loans to individuals for housing improvements or income generation activities, it has become the grounds for the cohesion of the community. This activity underpins the whole Federation/Mahila Milan structure and holds it together.

**2.** Training for and production of community-managed surveys and maps. These serve for the community members to learn from themselves, to strengthen their organization and to create the capacity to articulate their knowledge when interacting with governmental agencies and other outsiders. This information includes listing of all neighbourhoods, households and intra-household surveys, and drawing detailed maps of the neighbourhoods, services, resources, problems etc. All this information becomes crucial in the formulation and execution of plans for their neighbourhoods.

**3.** Pilot projects and their exhibition and festivals. These are used to test and learn from possible solutions, strategies or management systems. They also create precedents and exhibit them, which generate a 'track record' that makes the community eligible to receive finance to fund larger projects, and they have been used to influence policies, practices and standards.

**4.** Exchanges. Since the creation of the Alliance, the communities in different neighbourhoods, cities and countries have been exchanging knowledge learned in their experiences. This stimulates the visited communities to acquire the same skills and understanding, which in turn have motivated them to follow similar developmental activities.

## **V. Main community-led housing projects in Mumbai (Nirman 2003).**

**1. Rajiv Indra Suryodaya and Ganga Housing Society:** The Rajiv Indira Housing project is a development of apartment blocks within Dharavi (very large and dense centrally located slum) to demonstrate that it is possible to provide good quality housing without any slum dweller having to relocate. It is the first pilot housing development, the 'precedent setting'. It took advantage of the SRA Act<sup>5</sup> and the project's commercially favourable proximity to a road to cross-subsidise the constructions by selling some units in the open market.

In parallel to the failed Slum Rehabilitation Authority's (SRA) intended scheme to build free tenements for poor households in the slum, Nirman-SPARC succeeded not only to meet its targets of building five apartment blocks for 209 households and 34 units for sale in 2 years, but also to grow to include two other communities, the Suryodaya Housing Society and the Ganga Housing Society.

At the beginning the project caused scepticism among external agents and other slum societies. Today, the success of this development has converted it into a 'flagship' project that has changed the perception that many external agents have about the poor and is attracting many other slum societies that ask for assistance to build similar housing blocks (HI 2004).

**2. Bharat Janta Housing Society:** The Bharat Janta Housing Society in Dharavi was formed after seeing the work and progress of the Rajiv Indira Housing Society. Also based in Dharavi, it is another pilot project to construct five apartment buildings under the SRA slum redevelopment scheme to accommodate 147 households and to sell 50 units. This project showed that the road connection was not indispensable to find a feasible cross-subsidy scheme. This development took advantage of the SRA Act permission to sell in the open market the Transferable Development Rights generated by the development.

In terms of city-wide solutions to slum upgrading, it is a particularly important project because it reflects the challenges that most localities face. However it is a stable community which has participated in the learning from Rajiv Indira and has undertaken all the necessary preliminary steps to get its work done.

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<sup>5</sup> The Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) was created in 1995 and operates under an Act which recognises the rights of any slum and pavement dwellers who can prove residence in the city of Mumbai on January 1995 to 'avail of an alternative permanent accommodation'. A slum landowner, a cooperative society of slum dwellers, an NGO or any real estate developer having individual agreements with at least 70% of eligible slum dwellers is entitled to a unit whose floor space is 21 sqm, and

Furthermore, this project tests SPARC-Nirman's hypothesis that Dharavi has a "market" within itself, that such projects are profitable and flats will be sold. In terms of community organisation, it demonstrates the peer learning which SPARC-Nirman hopes will lead to produce the next five SRA projects.

**3. Milan Nagar:** This project designed and managed by women pavement dwellers is the first resettlement of pavement dwellers under this programme. It involves building homes for the oldest leaders of the Alliance - 536 households that live in the Byculla area and have pioneered the Alliance's processes of enumeration, ID cards, daily savings and loans, house model exhibitions, and dialogue with local authorities.

It took 18 years of negotiation and unforeseen events for the government (MHADA-Maharashtra state housing authority) to provide the necessary land. This is one of the key projects of Nirman-SPARC for a number of reasons: the norms and rituals have been set by the Alliance and have become the standards for further developments for the rest of the pavement dwellers; It has created a multiplier effect in formalising and strengthening the organisation of other pavement dwellers federations; It has no sale component and money from its Transferable Development Rights will come in a different way e.g. plinth, structure; It provides a widening repertoire of projects for Nirman.

Currently, this project is being financed by the Alliance's bridge funds. No loans or subsidies have yet been applied for, although the Alliance is considering how best to manage this process.

**4. Oshiwara:** This project involves the construction of 5 seven-storied apartment buildings for over 780 households and 38 for sale in an area called Goregoan, in the north west of Mumbai, to be finished in 15 months. The Alliance became a partner in the project in a later stage when the land owners saw they were not able to work by themselves and requested the help from the Alliance.

SPARC involved a team of experienced architects, planners and structural engineers as consultants to work on the project. They prepared detailed layouts, architectural and structural drawings, specifications and tender documents. A special feature of this project is that SPARC has selected contractors who have deep enough pockets to fund construction initially from their own funds. Since the Transferable Development Right (TDR) is released according to different stages of construction, the builders will

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developers implementing slum rehabilitation projects must provide this unit free of cost to slum dwellers occupying the land (HI 2004, 11).

be compensated as and when the TDR is released and sold by the Alliance. Such an arrangement frees the Alliance from huge initial investment, and demonstrates how the Alliance leverages private and public sector resources whilst communities maintain control of developments (HI 2004).

This is a particularly important project because financial institutions and contractors are also beginning to recognise that Nirman-SPARC can help them fill in gaps in their own portfolios, namely in areas of slum development. Moreover, Nirman sees these as a precedent setting projects because by keeping costs low and quality high, by moving the system without doling out large bribes, and by including communities in the construction of their new homes, a standard is set for future construction of low income housing.



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