Elusive Promises

Planning in the Contemporary World
An Introduction

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What does an anthropology of planning have to offer when the discipline's tools, notably ethnography, are becoming an increasingly common feature in a range of professions, including planning? Conversely, what can a sustained theoretical engagement with planning bring to anthropology? This volume aims to craft a response to these questions by demonstrating, first, that although anthropology's critical perspective rests in no small part on the ethnographic method, it cannot be reduced to it. Instead, ethnography produces a particular kind of critical insight through its capacity to grasp the contradictory and conflicting aspects that form an inherent part of the human social fabric, as well as through its increasingly sophisticated ways of connecting observations at the immediate level of the everyday to different, 'larger' scales of political, economic and cultural life. In addition, by putting planning in a broader comparative and conceptual framework and linking it to a set of anthropological concerns regarding the state, development, entitlement, agency and the imagination, an anthropology of planning can make a real contribution.

Second, we note that the significance of planning as a practice typical of state and market organizations across the globe has attracted relatively little attention in anthropology. Anthropological research has tended to focus on the more abstract concepts of 'the state' or 'politics', or on planning in the context of colonial or postcolonial government. Only a few detailed studies have explicitly addressed the problem of planning in democratic states (e.g., Robertson 1984). More generally, there is a widespread tendency either to demonize planning or to view it as too trivial and self-evident to deserve any sustained attention. Over the years, anthropologists have gradually begun to unsettle such perceptions, and the contributions

to this volume continue in this spirit. They testify to the potential of anthropological analysis, giving us glimpses of the variety of state and non-state involvement in planning and the ways such involvement is locally apprehended and theorized. They offer ethnographic accounts from a wide range of contexts, from hypercomplexity in Sweden (Boholm) to land restitution in South Africa (James), urban invasions in Peru (Lund), the changing expectations of the welfare state (Vike), repeated evictions of the poor from desirable land in Brazil (Gledhill), river and port management in India (Bear), and virtual plans in contemporary Malaysia (Baxstrom). Between them, the chapters in this volume reveal the specific, and occasionally contradictory, temporalities and materialities articulated through planning in particular places and at particular times.

Planning is a form of conceptualizing space and time, and the possibilities that time offers space. It is something that most people do in various forms. We imagine the future – whether it be lunchtime, harvest, initiation or European interest rates – and then act on our desires for that future to take a particular shape. Of course, what exactly 'planning' signifies is not universal: the same word may apply to quite different practices, and similar practices may be described using different words (see Abram and Cowell 2004; Abu-Lughod 1975). In its most general sense of imagining the future and preparing in advance, planning entails a broad set of tactics, technologies and institutions to try to control the passage into the future, including practices and ideas that have spread across private and public organizations. At the state level, planning is a way of managing the present, of governing and organizing the relationships between the state, citizenry and other entities, whether non-departmental public bodies, non-profit agencies or commercial organizations. In our view, state planning practices continue to have a central influence on daily life. The 'local state' in particular – that is, the local agencies, bureaus, political party representations and councils through which most of us encounter the state on a daily basis (Gupta 1995) and through which the State exercises its most ordinary forms of power (Mitchell 1991) – is a planner par excellence. As we will show in this introduction, even at a time when state agencies' direct involvement in planning is being eroded, they continue to function as arbiters of planning activities. Forms of state-led planning usually have counterparts in private corporations; however, the planning activities of non-state organizations still enrol a range of private *and* public actors because of the need to abide by state and private planning and building regulations, conform to the categories of state welfare provision or organize financial affairs to the best advantage. In this volume, we are particularly interested in the institutionalized forms of planning found primarily in (nominally) democratic capitalist states. While planning oc-

curs under different political and economic parameters, our aim is to pin-
point some of the common features and implications of taken-for-granted
practices adopted by professionals, including town planners, architects,
environmental consultants, and economists. These self-conscious experts
in particular types of planning set budgets, envision new developments,
and lay out schemes for welfare at both central and local levels of the state,
and are called on to resolve objections and protests by a diverse range of
interlocutors.

The authors in this volume share an understanding of planning as an
assemblage of activities, instruments, ideologies, models and regulations
aimed at ordering society through a set of social and spatial techniques.
But they also highlight a characteristic tension produced by planning as
an inherently optimistic and future-oriented activity. The future prom-
ised in plans seems always slightly out of reach, the ideal outcome al-
ways slightly elusive, and the plan retrospectively always flawed. This, in
our minds, distinguishes the present volume from much fruitful work on
planning and the state carried out by anthropologists and other scholars,
for example, under a Foucauldian paradigm (e.g., Ferguson 1990; Rabi-
now 1989; Scott 1998). Studies inspired by Foucault have raised awareness
of the subtle processes through which state power operates and of the
apparatuses, technologies, discourses and practices of governmentality,
many of which can be considered forms of planning as described in this
volume. However, they have tended, on the one hand, to emphasize the
spatial dimensions of these processes of ordering, regulating and control-
ling – both of national territories and of conceptual spaces of populations,
assets, resources, and so on. On the other hand, these studies have gener-
ated an overly rationalistic and coherent sense of how planning operates
as a technology of government. In this view, failure remains somewhat
external to, rather than an integral and productive part of, the material
practice of planning (Li 2005; Weszkalnys 2010). By contrast, in this in-
troduction and the volume as a whole, we aim to move beyond the spa-
tial and governmental focus, including notions of land use and spatial
planning, partly inherited from Foucauldian analyses. Instead, we wish
to include the messiness and contingency of different forms of planning.
To do so, we emphasize the idea of the promise of a planned future at the
heart of much planning activity, and examine the different and sometimes
clashing temporalities at play in contemporary planning contexts.

The various forms of planning that we address have in common a con-
cern with the transition through time between current and desired states.
Planning, as a manifestation of what people think is possible and desir-
able, and what the future promises for the better, is a subject that eth-
nography can illuminate particularly well, with its capacity to capture the

conflicting desires that plans attempt to control, and the contradictions between, and mutual accommodations of, what is promised and what is done. The notion of the promise also enables us to situate planning in a new historical perspective, as a particular formalization of the contract between state and citizen. Since the concept and practices of planning vary in detail between states and local contexts within them, we cannot start from a unified definition of planning. Instead, the promise provides us with a productive starting point from which the contributors explore issues of temporality, spatiality, complexity, agency, power and resistance implicated in the planning assemblage.

In this introduction, we draw on our own experiences of carrying out ethnographic research on planning in the UK, Germany, and Scandinavia, but we believe that these experiences point to issues of greater relevance. The rest of the introduction is organized as follows. First, in place of a conventional history of planning (covered in more depth by others[1]), we briefly identify some of the common features that have emerged in planning as a unified concept in democratic capitalist states. Second, we explore how the philosophy of the promise can be used to give us better purchase on notions of contemporary planning and outline the limitations of such a philosophical account. To understand the promise of planning, it is necessary to consider questions of historical specificity, materiality, politics and power that are not included in the philosophers' abstractions. In the third part of this introduction, we attend once more to the specificity of the contemporary condition – a condition often described as 'neo-liberal'. But instead of taking neo-liberalism at face value, we take seriously a caution uttered by Ferguson (2009) and others (e.g., Brenner and Theodore 2002) regarding the multiple ways in which neo-liberalism is produced and configured at the national and local levels. This is a point demonstrated powerfully by the ethnographies assembled in this volume. Lastly, we return to our original question of what an anthropology of planning has to contribute to the discipline more broadly and, more importantly, what shape it could take. Synthesizing a disparate set of literature and insights from the anthropology of the state, development, and beyond, we suggest a way forward for an ethnographic approach to planning that highlights ideas of time and space, materiality and imagination, and that – instead of posing abstract questions about institutions and legislation – turns to the actual work carried out by planners, citizens, and the plans themselves.

The Emergence of Planning

The story of planning told in the classic accounts of planning theory and planning history consolidates a notion of planning as the ordered, if con-

tested, preparation of space for development, with its roots in modernity's invention of bureaucracy and the emergence of government as a problematizing activity (Rabinow 1989; Rose and Miller 1992). For many authors, planning as a mode of statist intervention found its ultimate expression in the Soviet planned economy, whose new cities were laid out to serve state ambitions (e.g., Alexander 2007; Sampson 1984). For others, planning arose as a response to failures of public hygiene (Boyer 1983), or more explicitly as the attempts of the state to organize the citizenry (Selznick 1949: 220). In this view, based on a welter of expert knowledge, plans arrange and distribute people, property, capital and resources in such a way that intervention becomes possible. However, while these forms of planning are clearly definable, they are certainly not unique to our historical moment. Neither attempts to organize citizenry nor the laying out of cities in an orderly manner commenced with European or American Late Modernity. Kalland (1996) points out that early Japanese cities were planned according to principles related to geomancy; and Lund (this volume) reminds us that Spanish colonists in the sixteenth century moved indigenous peoples into new cities precisely for the purpose of bureaucratic order. We might also refer to the order inscribed in ancient Greek or Aztec cities and note that architectural structure relied also on a particular social order.

Instead of retelling this story, we want to draw out four of the underlying problems for which planning has been offered as a response. These include, first, the contested relation between welfare and capital on one hand, and conflicts between capital and labour on the other. Second, in the context of colonial planning, this dual problematic was refracted by worries about race and the paramount goal of resource extraction. The other concerns to which planning seemed to offer an answer were, third, the effective exercise of state control over its citizens and territory, and fourth, what might be termed the comprehensiveness or holism of state provision. Together, the responses to these problems have given rise to forms of planning that are shared across capitalist states today. Planning regimes, or assemblages, have their own particular socio-historical trajectories and peculiarities, some of which we briefly trace in this section and through the book. We acknowledge that the emergence of planning sketched here is necessarily partial and selective. Rather than providing a chronology, however, we want to identify overlaps: for example, between state planning and philanthropic gestures, the organizational activities of monarchies and those of popular republics, or the patterns of state-organized welfare that arose in the late nineteenth century in response to the contradictions of capitalism.

A principal characteristic of contemporary democratic planning regimes is their role in mediating some of the central tensions in capitalist nation states. These tensions gave rise to a concern with the ways in which

spatial and social order were to be made congruent, and attempts to create a better, more organized, healthy and productive society for capitalist production, epitomized in the ideal company village. US American planning, for example, grew out of a frustration among philanthropists with the increasingly appalling conditions in rapidly urbanizing American cities in the late nineteenth century (Boyer 1983). Urban 'improvers' sought social stability and the amelioration of insanitary conditions, while industrialists and capitalists sought a rapid turnover of potentially disposable cheap labour within easy reach of factories, docks and other workplaces, and easy access to raw materials. Urban planning in the United States thus arguably emerged as a contest between welfare and capital. Looking across the Atlantic, it is impossible not to hear in this the echo of Engels and Marx's agitation over the conditions of workers in the first great metropolitan industrial capitalist city of Manchester. Engels' concerns over the conditions of workers were shared in campaigning literature, in novels (notably those of Mrs Gaskell, who emphasized workers' desire for clean air and country walks) and in the political movements of the trade unions and Labour and Cooperative movements in the UK.

These did not work in isolation, though. Urban utopianism among Methodists and Quakers, inspired by associations between work and dignity in the face of the indignities of capitalism, brought the UK's first industrial ideal villages and towns: the company settlements at Rowntree in York and Cadbury in Birmingham, among numerous others. These were not the dollhouse ideal villages that helped to bring the aristocracy down (such as at Versailles), but earnest attempts to bring order and stability to the lives of working people. It would be wrong to romanticize their intentions – such projects were equally designed to ensure the stability of labour supply through company loyalty, and to maximize the working lives of their inhabitants in hours per day as much as years per life – but the role of religious motivation should not be underplayed. Ebenezer Howard's influential utopian garden cities (Howard 1902) similarly sought to undermine the conflict between capital and labour by capturing improvements in land value ('ground rents') from the landlords and redistributing it to the people in the form of residents' facilities and welfare. Though he was ultimately unable to entice landowners and investors into his project, Howard's programme of city planning was economically radical, reflecting contemporary concerns over the predominance of the gentry as landowners (see Ambrose 1986). Without the participation of those landowners, though, the ambitions of garden cities and suburbs were largely reduced to aesthetic-rational concerns, while the new towns of the early twentieth century were key to the campaigns that secured town planning as a core duty of local government in the UK and beyond.[2]

Second, planning in the colonial empires pursued a similar tactic regarding the alignment of economic development and welfare issues. At the same time, planning was used to tackle a set of different concerns arising in an intense exchange of models and practices between colony and metropolis (Rabinow 1989). The 'improvement' of conditions through planning, if it was a stated aim at all, was at most a highly selective and segregated exercise, pivoting on notions of putative racial and physiological difference (e.g., Kenny 1995). Better facilities and amenities were intended primarily for white colonial settlers, or were selectively implemented where increased profits were expected through the optimization of the labour force in agriculture and industry. 'Natives' were housed either in designated quarters or, increasingly, left to fend for themselves in spontaneous settlements on the outskirts of cities, for example, those springing up around mines (Ferguson 1999). In the African context in the late phase of British colonialism, this translated into worries about a perceived double problem of a rural peasantry largely disconnected from economic development, and a growing number of mobile labourers adding to a rapidly growing urbanized (and increasingly disorganized) population (cf. Stanner 1949). The types of responses developed in the colonial era, and the modes of spatial, economic and welfare planning they provoked, may be seen to reverberate in more recent, post-colonial planning exercises conducted, for instance, in the context of extractive industries or under the banner of corporate social responsibility (Peattie 1987; Rajak 2011).

A third, related major problem underlying planning concerns the effective exercise of state power and control. The movement for rational urban layout was not inspired by desires for improved hygiene and social conditions alone. Quite explicitly, the Hausmannization of Paris aimed to clear away the urban rabble. In his analysis of Hausmann's Paris, James Scott (1998) has highlighted the role of legibility, with the city best visible from above and embodied in models produced by planners representing the God's eye view. But this order was, of course, visible and effective not only from above. It also enabled intervention at street level. No more would the streets be so easily barricaded as they were during the 1789 revolution. That the opening up of public space to the military also made it available to protesting masses was perhaps inevitable, if inconvenient for the ruling classes. Well laid-out suburbs also eased the task of tax collection and surveillance. Thus, concerns with military control and the exercise of state powers mingled with worries about public health and hygiene, as well as the appropriate place for the different classes within the urban order. Across the centuries, such planning schemes have not only furthered spatial segregation along lines of race and class, and the displacement of the urban poor to the periphery (see also Baxstrom 2008; Caldeira 2000;

Holston 1989; Peattie 1987; Waldrop 2004). They have also made planning a formidable assistant to repression, civilization, militarization, accessibility, exclusion and exploitation, as chapters by both James and Lund demonstrate in this volume (see also Yiftachel 1998).

Following the Second World War, particularly in North-West Europe and Scandinavia, there emerged what was to become a fourth popular aim of planning in contemporary democratic states: an ideal of comprehensive holistic planning that integrates economic, welfare and spatial organization. Flourishing in the 1950s and 1960s, these planning regimes saw the state as a benign, quasi-parental force that sought to achieve quality of life for the whole population (see Vike 2004 and this volume). In the United States, rational planning was heralded as the future for efficient use of resources and democratic government (Lilienthal 1944). The famed Norwegian egalitarianism was built on a three-way compromise between the state, capitalists and trade unions, when all three recognized that by moderating their aims in respect of each other, they could all gain benefits (Barth, Moene and Wallerstein 2003). Allied with a pervading religious Puritanism and material modesty, Norway achieved a degree of social levelling unparalleled in Western Europe, echoed in architectural rationality and spatial accessibility. The written plans and drawings that secured the passage to ideal communities were strikingly humanitarian in contrast with British urban plans, for example.

Today more than ever, these central aims and assumptions that have accompanied the emergence and increasing professionalization of planning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries influence the shape of planning assemblages. They include assumptions of a possible or idealized congruence between architectural and built form and the social order; attempted mediation between public and private interests and powers; efforts to improve forms of spatial control and regulation, with all their intended and unintended consequences; and finally, a rationalization and comprehensive integration of different elements of state provision to ensure the welfare of the greatest number. Importantly, state planning has also included the comprehensive regional economic development plans that contributed to the kinds of classical development failures and colonization attempts so widely recorded by Scott and others in the case of state-level development (see Brox 1966; cf. Ferguson 1990; Mosse 2005; Scott 1998).

Modern planning has thus become a primary mechanism for the colonizing tendencies of the contemporary state – chiefly, but not exclusively, the tendency to colonize internally. The public good is invoked as a key alibi of contemporary democratic government (particularly in welfare states) and also accounts for its colonizing effects, as democratic states try to govern more people and, increasingly, more things. Planning, in this

sense, mobilizes a range of techniques, models and discourses, and contributes to the making and unmaking of shifting subjectivities of planners, citizens and other actors involved in the process. Our list of the underlying concerns equipping modern planning with its particular logic is not exhaustive; neither are all these elements always present, or present to the same degree, in any given planning project. More often than not, these underlying aims and assumptions have remained an unrealized ideal, a promise that is never fully met. This inherent contradiction between aimed-for and actually achieved forms and outcomes – what might be called planning as coordinated potential failure – is precisely what many of the contributions to this volume aim to show.

The Promise as Action

As noted earlier, planning is a key material practice through which we attempt to project ourselves into the future. Arguably, Foucauldian analyses have alerted us to the spatial formations involved in modern planning as well as the subtle operations through which the state acts, and is encountered and imagined on an everyday level. Using these insights as a springboard for our own analysis, we wish to bring out the important temporal aspects of such processes, including the desires and deferrals as well as the dreams and dilemmas that constitute actual practices of planning. The temporalities of planning have received only limited attention to date. We suggest that emphasizing the temporal and imaginative aspects of planning allows us to see it as a kind of compact between now and the future, a promise that may be more or less convincing to the subjects of planning, and more or less actualized. In doing so, we take our cue from philosophical investigations of performative linguistics to ask what a promise *does* and, in a similar way, ask what plans do as they make promises about the future.[3]

Linguistic philosophy has approached the promise as a particular kind of utterance, oral or written, with peculiar effects (Atiyah 1981; Austin 1962; Searle 1969). Promises are not merely statements. They do more than describe by expressing intention. Promising is a performance; it has effects and brings about an obligation on the part of the promisor. For example, when council planners (the promisors) present their visions for a material improvement of the built environment to a public of residents and citizens (the promisees), they create a strong expectation that this promise will be fulfilled. The plan becomes a kind of performative utterance that Austin (1962) characterizes as a total speech act: an utterance that is tied to both context and action and cannot be understood without an appreciation of

the sociological conditions under which it occurs. From this perspective, the promise of planning is thus much more than 'just' speech: it produces a set of relations that should endure through time between promisor, promisee, and the thing or action promised.

Anthropological analyses of 'the magical power of words' in ritual performances similarly show that the context of speech is all-important (Tambiah 1985; Turner 1974); merely saying, 'I promise' is not sufficient to create a convincing effect. The performative effect of the promise (and of the plan) is achieved not by the utterance alone, but through its association with appropriate procedures, objects and circumstances under which the promise is invoked; certain feelings and intentions that are produced in the promisor; and the promisor's subsequent behavior in accordance with the promise. If these conditions remain unfulfilled, the utterance has not so much failed as misfired, or the process has been abused. Austin thus suggests that promissory utterances cannot be false. Rather, they can be unhappy – they can become 'infelicities' where a procedure is errone-ous or mis-invoked. Promises are infelicitous when given in inappropri-ate circumstances, such as where the giver does not have the authority to make the offer, or where a procedure is not valid or does not extend to the particular case. Promises may be given using the wrong procedures, or may be offered without the action following. The complexity of planning promises, often involving a number of different institutional actors with different aims and agendas, offers much opportunity for such infelicity. A different kind of problem or infelicity emerges where the sincerity of the promisor is in doubt. Does the promisor intend to fulfil the promise? Is the promise made in what we might call 'good faith'? Or, as Searle (1969) asks, has the promisor been placed under an obligation to the promisee to do something that he or she would not have done anyway in the normal course of events? Only outside the ordinary scheme of events does the promisor have to make an effort to fulfil the promise, which then becomes a meaningful contract.

There are, however, some significant limitations to this philosophi-cal rendering of the promise for an anthropology of planning (see also Born 2007). First, the philosophical accounts do not consider the impor-tant alternative dimensions of the promise, such as those made for rhe-torical purposes, or for parody or other stage effects. Second, and more important for our purposes, philosophers have not explicitly considered the situation where promisor and/or promisee are corporations of sorts, rather than particular persons.[4] Third, there recurs in planning a kind of infelicity that is rarely theorized and that philosophers would find hard to trace, which stems from the obduracy of procedures, tools, and the very materiality of that which is to be reformed and transformed; it may posi-

tively refuse to be reshaped by the plan (Hommels 2005). In the following section, we will elaborate these points in order to translate the philosophy to the kind of promise that plans seem to hold out.

Planning as a Promise

As the ethnographies in this volume show, the promise entailed by planning can take varying degrees of institutionalization and concreteness. Planning can be a 'mere' expectation, an instruction, a policy, a project, an exercise of democracy, a blueprint, a law. It may not be a vow, but it always includes some element of moral obligation that ties the present to the future, and occasionally the past too. Questions of politics and power are critical to comprehending the precise ways in which the plan constitutes a promise. Before elaborating some important additional dimensions of the planning promise, we want briefly to note its historical specificity (as opposed to its abstract value as a philosophical or linguistic concept). The emergence of planning as a professional and state pursuit, sketched out earlier, took shape in a particularly turbulent period of conceptual realignment in the nineteenth century, a period that saw the adoption of managerial techniques such as the forecasting of trends by statistical means (see Hacking 1990). Barbara Adam (2005) suggests that new scientific prediction techniques accompanied a sense that the future had become an empty space amenable to being shaped by rational plans and blueprints.

This realignment is understood as part of the transition to modernity. This transition is often thought to be located in the emergence of specific institutions, such as the democratic nation state or liberal market economies, but such institutions did not appear consistently in different countries. As Wittrock (2000) argues, modernity's arrival may be better pinpointed, on the one hand, in the practices that marked the transformation into extensive capitalism, and on the other in a series of important conceptual changes constituted in the emergence of a type of promissory notes. The promissory notes that, according to Wittrock, heralded modernity 'point to desiderata that can be formulated about a range of achievements that may be reached by the members of a given community' (2000: 37). These were not vague desires, but explicit states of affairs implied by deeply held values, and they were expected to be met. They lent themselves as common reference points in public debate and as the basis for changing subjectivities, affiliations and institutional forms, founded on 'radically new presuppositions about human agency, historical consciousness, and the role of reason in forging new societal institutions' (Wittrock 2000: 39). This process also included a reformulation of the relationship between society, civil society

and the body politic and new forms of enquiry into the constitution of society. Key categories formulated at the time to conceptualize society are among those we still use today, including the 'economic-rationalistic', assuming society to be a compositional collective; the 'statistical-inductive', where society is a systemic aggregate; the 'structural-constraining' and its corresponding image of society as organic totality; and finally the 'linguistic-interpretative', positing society as an emergent totality (Wittrock 2000: 45). These categories also set the parameters for the practices and techniques of increasingly professional planners and their concerns, and indeed for the promise of planning today.

It would not be stretching Wittrock's argument too far to suggest that plans constitute one such promissory document of the public domain. In this form they played a role in the regulation of the contradictions of capitalist development, the conceptual rearrangements of the nineteenth-century world and the formulation of 'the social' as a profoundly problematic realm (see also Rose 1999). Planning is a process that is documented in variously elaborated notes and pamphlets (e.g., Planning Guidance Notes, Forward Plans, Supplementary Planning Guidance). And as promissory notes, plans can be understood as meeting the broader demands of the promise as outlined in the philosophy discussed above: plans require a social context in which they can be produced, but they also require institutional structures under which they can be contested or enforced, and these reformulate the relationship between society, the body politic and what has been called civil society.

In this context, we suggest that the promise of planning may better be conceived as a performance involving actors who are more readily understood as corporate bodies rather than individuals. Robertson (2006a, 2006b) has pointed out that the corporation is the central principle on which both governments and commercial enterprises are constructed – the transcendent, metaphorized body that has been the making of modernity. By definition, a corporation is authorized by law to act as one individual, separate from the actions of its members. Corporations, institutions, administrative bodies and similar collectives need continually to convince us that they are effective, that they have some control over their and our collective futures, and that they exist in fact as well as in the eyes of the law. Plans are published, for example as the product of the council-as-corporation, and municipalities spend increasing amounts of time and energy promoting their ostensible individuality, both as distinct from other municipalities and as corporate entities. Faced with sustained attacks on their autonomy as a result of proliferating neo-liberal politics – an issue to which we return below – it has become increasingly imperative for municipalities to present themselves as though they were effective actors despite

the threats to their autonomy and accountability. Such self-representation, therefore, may soon be the only means left of producing legitimacy in the eyes of both actual individual citizens and other corporate entities such as third-sector organizations, external businesses or contractors, as well as in relation to central government.

Ways of talking and practices of self-representation by both participants and their observers in the planning process may help this process, which is always shaped somehow by specific legal and political frameworks. By proposing a plan, and thus offering a kind of promise, the producers of the plan are constituting themselves through indexical self-reference: a performative act presumes performers, and by performing the act of 'I promise', they index themselves as that performative person (Benveniste 1966, cited in Lee 2001: 169). We are all familiar with the ways that various bodies, officers, politicians and advisors doing the planning are referred to as though they formed an undifferentiated entity ('the municipality', 'the state') with a personality of its own (Stapley 1996). The plan may be presented as a personalized product – such as in the Norwegian context, where documents produced by the administration are presented as the advice of the *Rådmann*, literally the council's advisor (who in the UK would be called a Chief Executive). Or the planner may lose their 'personality' altogether, as in the German 'construction plan' (*Bebauungsplan*) that, once approved by the relevant political agencies, becomes law 'persisting into eternity' (Weszkalnys 2010: 101). The process effectively elides the complex relations between planners, designers and different levels of local and state administration, public and private, that the construction plan involves.

The promisee of planning is often understood as the public or the citizenry – also rendered as a quasi-individual, resulting in processes of abstraction and reduction of varied populations that anthropologists and citizens themselves often find difficult to stomach (Abram 2011). In the context of democratic decision making and techno-scientific expertise, publics have an increasingly important legitimizing function (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001). The public is often treated as though it were an empirical entity with an a priori existence when it is better imagined as coming into being within the specific planning moment (cf. Gal and Woolard 2001; Warner 2003). Anthropological studies have shown that planning rarely takes account of actual people in their radical variety, and that detailed taxonomies of social groups are rarely used (see Abram 2002). When attempts are made to differentiate the public, they reveal how complex and unmanageable it really is. In this sense, planning schemes rarely provide an accurate description of current circumstances but rather adopt mechanisms to conjure worlds within their scope of action as promisor, using the conceptual body of the public as a promisee counterpart to its plans.

In other cases, the plan has been turned into a total linguistic act by drawing participants – potential consultees and advisors, municipal officials and elected representatives – into relations that are both social and material. These include, yet go beyond, the original promise; they have histories and constitute transactions with future implications in their own right. Indeed, they may exhibit 'hypercomplexity', as Boholm (this volume) outlines in the development of railway planning in Sweden. This scale of planning involves a high degree of 'inter-organizational communication, co-operation and co-ordination' between a multitude of public and private actors, decision makers, stakeholders, and members of the public, all bringing their own perspectives, values, beliefs and diverging interpretations to the negotiations, and each trying to second-guess the actions of the others. Importantly, in such hypercomplex processes, plans can also be an extraordinarily effective way of coordinating action, of achieving outcomes and of concretizing our imaginative fictions about the future.

The plan can thus be understood to take the place of the performative utterance of the promise with important material implications. This promise must be performed according to the correct procedures, produced at the right time, approved by the appropriate committees, announced according to adequate mechanisms and available to the proper kind of scrutiny; it also should ideally produce concrete and measurable effects. If it does not observe such procedural niceties, it lays itself open to challenge. If its content is not adequate or its ambitions are weak – for example, if it only offers to do what would happen anyway – then it might be criticized as 'just talk' (see Vike, this volume). If the context in which a plan is issued is considered incorrect or infelicitous, the actions arising from a plan can be challenged, either through due process or on the ground. Finally, if the promises it contains are not fulfilled, it might be considered invalid, adapted in retrospect to reflect the changing circumstances, or deemed altogether illegitimate (but when do we ever formally evaluate a forward plan made twenty years ago?).

Like the promise, a plan is thus much more than simply true or false, a success or a failure, and the temporality of the plan is not necessarily a straightforward move from present to future (Weszkalnys 2010). Vike (this volume) observes two distinct kinds of future time in the context of planning. The future of contemporary time is immediate and promises real solutions to problems now. Utopian time, by contrast, sees problems resolved in a future postponed, always out of reach. The temporality invoked by planning may thus be inherently irregular, and its outcomes continually deferred and materialized only in unfinished constructions (cf. Ssorin-Chaikov 2003). The promise conjures relations of obligation,

which are themselves elements of more long-standing relationships that the promise may help maintain. However, for a plan to become a promise with an obligation on the part of the promisor, it needs sincerity. Baxstrom's study of Kuala Lumpur (this volume) is just one example where this sincerity seems to be missing: plans for urban restructuring appear to legitimize action in the present rather than to make a promise about the future, and their legitimacy is brought into question. Baxstrom goes so far as to suggest that in contemporary Kuala Lumpur, the plan functions as an 'instrument of momentary action' that, in effect, evacuates the future. This has a profoundly paradoxical effect on people's experience of time: in this city that is in constant flow, people's expectations are continually overturned while they try and keep up with the fast pace of change.

In sum, the contemporary promise of planning is a historically constituted compact, where promisor and promisee are largely configured in corporate form, be that the state and citizenry, or the council and the public. The conditions permitting such a compact include the emergence of new types of knowledge alongside a far-reaching reformulation of the relationship between society and the body politic in the nineteenth century, expressed in the peculiar artefact of the promissory note. The corporate promise of planning has, if anything, acquired more importance due to the persistent need for state bodies acting in corporate form to assert their agency, specifically in a context where their autonomy to plan seems increasingly encroached upon by private actors. The promise of planning thus produces a specific type of sociality, involving state and non-state actors, experts and lay people, planners, citizens, and private investors, as well as people who are and who are not party to the decisions and projects involved. It is not uttered in a vacuum; its exact shape in any specific locale is contingent upon a range of political, legislative and material factors. But while participants may insist that the concern to improve the human condition (which we discussed earlier) continues to lie at the heart of contemporary planning efforts, there remains considerable scope for unintended consequences, incompletion and breakdown, and for the ruses of power to play out.

Planning in a Neo-liberal World?

Present-day political transformations and changes to the model of the state – often gathered under the umbrella of the 'neo-liberal' – both accentuate and subdue, in occasionally paradoxical ways, the contrasting dimensions of the promise of planning we have outlined. Neoliberalism, as Ferguson (2009) notes, is a term used in ways that are both vague and demoniz-

ing. The Reagan and Thatcher governments' battle cries to unleash capital from the reign of 'red tape' have also reverberated in planning arguments for nearly half a century, as democratic states swing between favouring citizens and encouraging businesses. According to the free-market economists and politicians who have promoted the neo-liberal doctrine, the rise of planning regimes tied to welfare states in the post-war period led, by the 1970s, to citizen dependency and the inhibition of entrepreneurialism. The response has been an attempt to turn the tide against welfare, and planning regimes became a target of their fetishization of entrepreneurs and consumer capitalism. However, this increasingly dominant story overlooks the fact that there has rarely existed the kind of 'unfettered' free market that was then claimed to have been unduly restricted (Wittrock 2000: 34). Rather, state intervention has always been accepted, and it continues to be felt and cause considerable ambivalence in present planning regimes (Strom 2001: 6).

Beyond the general notion of the forms and effects of 'neo-liberalism', anthropologists and critical social theorists have offered a more differentiated picture of the current force of neo-liberal projects sweeping across the globe, presaged by Ferguson's (1990) critique of the disappearance of politics under managerialism (see also Mouffe 2000 for a theoretical critique). First, anthropologists have for some time called attention to how the practices gathered under the umbrella of neo-liberalism are made sense of locally, for instance, through narratives of illicit wealth and occult practices (West and Sanders 2003). They have also attended to the diverse strategies and effects through which neo-liberal formations take shape in different cultural and national contexts (Ong 2005; Zaloom 2009), thus adding a rich layer to analyses of the effects of neo-liberal tendencies across the globe. Similarly, critical theory has put forward a number of ways to move beyond a monolithic understanding of neo-liberalism. While Peck and Tickell (2002) suggest focusing on neo-liberal*ization* as a process rather than as a theoretical model or state of being, Brenner and Theodore (2002) argue that we should study 'actually existing neoliberalism'. Such critical accounts allow us to grasp what is happening on the ground rather than over-concretizing ideas of neo-liberalism, states and markets. Indeed, the kind of radical empiricism (Spencer 1997) that anthropologists have successfully applied to a number of our most taken-for-granted concepts has also been useful in unpacking neo-liberalism's supposedly unified and universal logic. They reveal differently enacted neo-liberal projects to be always shaped by the historical and cultural circumstances of their implementation (Abram 2007; Holston and Caldeira 2005; Latham 2006; Weszkalnys 2010). In this volume, James demonstrates how the neo-liberal repertoire of government may be less monolithic than

has been assumed, especially in a transitional society such as South Africa, where it coexists, if uneasily, with contradictory expectations and forms of state and planning, as well as with non-governmental organizations. Indeed, as James points out, the same administrative staff move between state and non-state organizations, creating a range of continuities and discontinuities, tangled relations and paradoxical positions.

Nonetheless, we cannot but notice a set of political and economic modalities that seem to be gathering force across a range of sites whose boundaries are being renegotiated in the process. These modalities include, among others, significant shifts in the global distribution of capital, the increasing presence of non-state organizations in a profoundly reorganized public sector, the seemingly diminished role of state actors vis-à-vis private investors and developers, and the redrawing of lines of accountability. These shifts have palpable implications for planning, of which we would like to mention just four. First, at least since the 1980s, increasing amounts of capital have moved into global corporations beyond the reach of states. As global corporations have become increasingly willing to move their activities offshore, states have competed to attract investment. Within the European Union, the invention of new regional planning regimes has incorporated agencies dealing directly with supranational organizations, such as the regional governments applying for EU funding or the UK regional development agencies that compete to attract footloose capital, often to collapse once government incentives dry up. In their wake, citizens are often left with the detritus of industrial development, depleted resources, unemployment, monopolistic economies and welfare crises. In fact, the very conditions that provoked the invention of urban improvement in the nineteenth century seem to have returned in a moderately different order.

Second, one of the largest economic growth sectors has been in services and, in particular, in management consultancy. Once listed on the stock markets, some consultancy firms in need of new areas of expansion realized by the 1980s that the public sector promised just that potential. A massive expansion into the public sector materialized in the introduction of constant reorganization as a feature of public-sector management, under the banner of the introduction of privatization and outsourcing, and pursuit of the grail of marketization, in what came to be known as the new public management (see Ferlie 1996). Recent changes have demonstrated how far the bureaucratic procedures of planning can be removed to third parties, as state planning at different levels is increasingly contracted out to private agencies. In the 1990s, local authorities in the UK began to outsource their own local planning activities. More accurately, they outsourced the administrative activities that support the political choices

made through planning. Paradoxically, as a result, a widely declared 'hollowing out' of the state has been paralleled by an increase in global bureaucratic apparatus.

Third, like many local government functions, planners face the task of regulating developments desired by large international corporations that, especially in the context of British Common Law, have the capacity to overpower small, relatively powerless and impoverished local government institutions.[5] Their methods in the UK have included threatening to launch expensive legal appeals of rejected planning applications that local authorities cannot afford to defend, and 'land banking' – acquiring ownership or options on large swathes of land for potential development. Even in national contexts where the state has remained in a comparatively more powerful position, such as Germany, there is a sense that it is increasingly not only government that is governing, and that governments are drawing back into weak regulatory modes while corporations pursue their own interests. Planners are still struggling to devise a response to these changing conditions for local planning, and to align their own and 'public' interests with those of developers. In this clash of two temporal trajectories, the modernist seeks ideal conditions and the capitalist seeks complete exploitation of the markets.

Fourth, while neo-liberal rhetoric might seem to make a focus on the state less relevant, neo-liberal discourses of minimal state, privatization, citizen-power, choice or participative government are themselves contradictory. Even highly 'shrunk' states where public services have been largely outsourced must govern these services, and the practices of audit may create a bureaucracy larger than that of a nationalized welfare state (Miller 2005; Strathern 2000). Several of the chapters in this book show how neo-liberal forms of governance tend to extend the reach of the state while simultaneously disengaging it from previous relations and ethics of accountability. They also show how the kind of democratically oriented, inclusive planning processes paradoxically endorsed by neo-liberal public management often fail to halt established competition over land, as Gledhill indicates for Brazil (this volume). Despite the promise of participative planning, it is still the poor who are displaced from the most valuable land.

Such changes prompt us to ask what exactly the roles of the state and of state-led planning are becoming. What effects do they have on the subjectivities of the actors involved? If a private commercial organization can be contracted to behave in a non-partisan way and produce the material documents that a permanently employed public service does (at least hypothetically), in what sense do the two forms differ? Bear (this volume) shows how, in fact, the role of public servants is radically transformed when they are no longer simply expected to carry out the regulations authored by state actors, but are obliged to adopt a transactionary role them-

selves. While we know that low-level bureaucrats have always had to embroider together the conflicting demands of organizational loyalty and personal ethics (see Lipsky 1980), in the new regime that Bear describes, they are free to redefine themselves as public entrepreneurs. Such changes affect not only the life of the public servant but the shape of the city too. Similarly, other studies of multinational organizations (Müller 2008), global networks (Riles 2000), consultancies and financial agents (Barry 2001) remind us that what we quaintly refer to as 'local' government is not locally bounded. This brings us considerably closer to understanding how planning practices and ideologies become global ideoscapes (Appadurai 1990) and how they participate in the arrangement and rearrangement of technological zones (Barry 2006). They move us from the old security of plans as the predictable and stable world of the state's regulatory framework to the new world of intergovernmentality, global flows and shifting relations between multinational organizations (public and private) and national and local states.

These changes raise difficult questions for the future of planning.[6] Where free trade includes the free movement of labour, how can housing be planned to account for unpredictable levels of demand? How far should plans be made to accommodate population change, or should the limited supply of buildings and services be used to regulate the flow of people? What kind of buildings should be produced to account for people's changing needs, including over the course of life (see Robertson 1991)? And how far should responses to such changes be planned at all? Such are the questions that trouble planners at different levels of the state when internationalism begins to undermine the apparent stability of national planning. Such questions further problematize what kind of promise planning is offering. From this perspective, the reach of neo-liberal ideology and global capital can easily appear infinite and very present, and planning a universal category. Yet in many cases this reach is limited: in territories that are not governed either by democratic rule or by states at all; or in movements that resist the message of good governance, transparency and democracy with counter pressures, conflicting views, and equally persuasive narratives. While the neo-liberalization of global institutions is often presented as a de facto description, ethnographic findings suggest that its manifold manifestations 'on the ground' are less clear-cut.

The Work of Planning

To comprehend the complex force field surrounding, and impinging on, the contemporary planning assemblage, we wish to unite disparate strands of anthropological research on the contemporary state, politics

and development – that is, arenas in which planning has been visible but seldom explicitly theorized. By putting planning in the foreground, we also redirect the focus onto widely shared (if differently articulated) material practices, rather than on supposedly autonomous institutions or distinctive bodies of knowledge. Instead of posing abstract questions about the state, time and locality, the distinctly ethnographic approach taken in this volume turns to the actual work carried out by planners, citizens, experts, beneficiaries and victims of planning, and to the work carried out by plans themselves. Between them, the chapters highlight the temporally and materially constituted processes – drawing in a range of objects, technologies, discourses, expertise and forms of democratic participation – through which planning happens.

Such an approach expands on recent anthropological work that has explored the quotidian practices, rituals and discourses that together make up politics, policy, democracy and the changing forms of local government found in (multi)national states (Boholm 1996; Gupta 1995; Hansen and Stepputat 2005; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Shore and Wright 1997; for an earlier example see Richards and Kuper 1971). Anthropologists have not shied away from theorizing the state itself as a central organizing authority (Corbridge et al. 2005; Sharma and Gupta 2006), as well as political parties (Salih 2003; Shore 1990), central states or superstates (Abélès 1990; Bellier and Wilson 2000; Shore 2001) and state peripheries (Das and Poole 2004). But in doing so, they have demonstrated the interplay of everyday systems of power and resistance in which people find themselves implicated (cf. Abu-Lughod 1990). Such studies include the examination of the practices of citizenship (Neveu 2003), new participative practices in democratic states (Appadurai 2002; Holston 2008; Neveu 2007; Paley 2001), the design and management of spaces, public and private (Holston and Appadurai 1999; Rutheiser 1996), and environmental activism (Berglund 1998) and anticapitalist resistance (Williams 2008). From this work has emerged a focus on contemporary state planning that is only now being consolidated, in part through this volume itself.

In drawing on this literature, we have two further goals. First, we wish to blur the persistent boundary between, on the one hand, the planning and development that supposedly happens primarily in western states, and on the other hand, in what is generally glossed as Third World (or 'southern') development, or Development with a capital *D.* The rise of development studies from the 1960s onwards has partly led to a definition of Development as socio-economic development and as the transition to capitalist modernity (Robertson 1984: 43), and thus as distinct. Anthropological studies have forcefully argued against using 'the West' as a norm to which others should aspire (notably Escobar 1995), and scholars have turned their gaze towards the multifarious development processes hap-

pening in western countries day by day (e.g., Abram and Waldren 1998) and highlighted the important links, overlaps and imitations occurring between colonial, postcolonial and 'western' development as well as governmental and extra-governmental practices (Blundo and Le Meur 2009; Peattie 1987; Rabinow 1989; Robertson 1984). The approach taken here proceeds in that spirit, highlighting the commonalities as much as the differences between forms of planning in contrasting parts of the world.

Our second goal is to speak directly to current approaches outlined within planning theory itself, which tends to be most interested in the perspective of planning practitioners in either the private or public sector. We contend that despite an increasing number of studies offering nuanced insight into the world of planning professionals based on extensive participant observation (e.g., Flyvbjerg 1998; Forester 1989, 1999; Healey 1997), planning research remains largely wedded to normative concerns and frameworks (Alfasi 2003; Reade 1987; but see Bacqué, Rey and Sintomer 2005; Carrel et al. 2009; Rui 2004 for a contrasting account of French participatory democracy). As we hope to have made clear throughout this introduction, an anthropological examination of planning in the contemporary world cannot be reduced to the useful deployment of ethnographic tools, for example, to achieve the ends of participatory planning;[7] rather, it seeks to shed the same critical light by which anthropologists have illuminated other aspects of human life, to give insight into the conditions that make such forms of planning possible (or impossible) in the first place.

In this view, the ethnography of planning includes questions about inscription and reification, about authorship, authority and associated responsibility, and finally about the creativity and agency of the plan itself: how it compels other kinds of actions. Plans embody a promise for material and temporal order. First, there is the materiality of the space to be ordered, and the effects on the things and bodies of those for which order is attempted. But, as some of the essays in this volume show, the idealized orders that plans imagine are regularly disrupted through the interventions of people, through the obstinacies of landscapes and built forms, and through the obduracy of the written word, the calculation and the drawn line (see also Abram 2006; Hommels 2005). Second, all plans embody different temporalities of past, present and future. We are familiar with notions of progress and betterment embedded in the plan, and the parallel construal of the existing as 'outdated' and in need of overhaul. Importantly, instead of regurgitating this story of teleological progress and achievement that planning tells about itself, the chapters in this book point beyond the simple discrepancies between plan and action to the multiple temporalities at play, including the 'negative' temporalities of delay and failure (Weszkalnys 2010) and post hoc rationalization (see Flyvbjerg 1998).

This prompts us to ask what kind of work we can see the plan perform when it is clear that it is not a blueprint for the future. If, as Riles notes, 'documents are the paradigmatic artefacts of modern knowledge practices' (2006: 2), central to the production of knowledge about ourselves, then a plan may be considered a kind of document that both acts on that knowledge and, importantly, seeks to predict what will be knowledge in the future. As documents, plans may be seen to perform a particular kind of work, which frequently seems to be less about a specific content than the kind of conceptual orders that they lay out. The plan is perhaps the most explicitly future-directed and agentive document of all. Yet as the essays here show, the relationship between the spatio-temporal orders laid out by the plan and the actualities they engender is always fragile and multivalent; plans both encapsulate and exclude worlds of imagination and practice. One of the key factors responsible for the perceived discrepancies between plan and action may be the clash of technocratic and lived time performed in so many planning encounters. While modernist planning was characterized by a conception of social life as a generic and readily transposable totality, the chapters in this book note the ways in which planned development is more unstable, haphazard and fragile than often assumed. It is also more capable of accommodating existing and enduring forms and functions, including urban design, land use patterns or welfare institutions. What we see here are performances of time in the institutional, technological and social relations entailed in planning; and we ask how people do and experience these performances in political processes that take a long time themselves as well as conjuring a vision of time, with continuities and discontinuities, opening up the present moment into the future (cf. Wallman 1992).

Finally, rather than being incidental or exceptional, failures, mismatches, discrepancies and gaps appear to us a pervasive modality of planning. At all levels of state and local planning, gaps between what is designed and what is built, theory and practice, or what is said and what is done have tended to constitute a major object of concern for local actors and ethnographers alike. The ubiquity of certain practices, such as popular participation, audit and reporting, attests to this: they are practices intended to make these gaps visible. The elusiveness of the promise of planning seems to lie in these gaps, and nowhere is this more evident than in the new South Africa, where according to James (this volume), the utopian promise of land reform has floundered on the bureaucratic work of instituting land reform, and on the political confrontation with the conditions of foreign debt. The ambiguities of political change become visible as key people shift from role to role between state and non-state organizations, and as models of distributive and neoliberal politics rub along

together. The 'gaps' between ideal, ideology and practice fill themselves with things unplanned, unexpected and inexplicable, and with things that get overlooked and forgotten. Instead of lamenting or simply noting them, the ethnographer's task is to chart how people deal with these gaps and mismatches, and to understand how they are significant to, and are occasionally elided by, the work of planning.

The Chapters

Halvard Vike's chapter addresses temporality in planning head-on, with a consideration of the changing temporal schemes of Norwegian welfare planning. Norwegian state planning is comprehensive, and land-use questions fall within a broader practice of short-, medium- and long-term planning at the local, regional and state levels. The context is that of one of the most robust welfare states of all democratic countries, representing something of a test case for political and social theories.

In analysing planning practices and reflecting on the development of the welfare state through the twentieth century, Vike observes that politics has come to revolve around the effective delivery of services. Service delivery, as it has come to be known, is now the medium of the contract between state and citizen. In this process, the temporal horizon of political legitimacy has shifted from a utopian future time, where comprehensive services were a goal one strived towards, to contemporary time, in which delivery is impatiently expected now. The kind of future welfare planning offers is thus altered, and Vike outlines how long-established patterns of participatory planning began to falter in the 1990s, leading to a changed public perception of plans as 'just words'. In the process, the ideal of planning appears to have been superseded by what Sørhaug refers to as the 'reforming organization', and Vike's core concern has been for the gender and class effects of this shift on the lowest-paid workers.

If the reforming organization arises out of a shift from clear distinctions between public and private sector to a world in which the public spirit that defines civil service is diverted into a range of agencies and companies, then this new framework can be captured by what Boholm calls hypercomplexity. Building on Luhmann's work on system planning and double contingency, she notes that planning includes the observation and anticipation of planning by others. In her chapter, Boholm notes that the multitude of potential consequences of policy decisions fuels heated local (and national) debates, in which conflicting interests and values are voiced. Complexity arises not only from this multitude of voices, but from

the diversity of standpoints from which they are articulated, a diversity to which planners constantly struggle to adapt.

Major infrastructures, such as the railways that emerged in the nineteenth century, were built within a particular constellation of business and government that has radically altered since then. Railways are currently undergoing a moment of upheaval across Europe, with many countries experiencing both high-tech and high-speed expansion while much of the network moulders and old infrastructure gradually breaks down. Encouraged by a clear EU policy on rail network connectivity, the Swedish response has been a massive investment in new infrastructure and technology. By studying this at close quarters over a long period, Boholm reveals how the day-to-day working practices of different practitioners are mediated through 'meetings' in which temporal questions can pose intractable dilemmas, since planning for one future or another can have major effects on local conditions. Leaving options open, such as whether or not to build additional stations, might seem like an attempt not to foreclose on future possibilities, but it causes severe difficulties in the planning process itself. In other words, postponing proves to be deeply problematic for the present, while deciding future options now is likely to be problematic in the future. Thus the temporality of planning also becomes hypercomplex, as does the organization of planning in the present. Boholm demonstrates how collection action such as planning relies on layered reflexive communications, which can be observed through the 'flow' of social interactions.

Sarah Lund, on the other hand, looks at a kind of reverse temporality of planning. The promise of official planning approval for new settlements is still seen as desirable in Cuzco, Peru, but it grows out of a quite different constellation of powers, and a very different history of development. Lund argues that the state project's spatial vision of laying claim to territory becomes particularly apparent in the places marginal to the state. The peasant invasions of 'abandoned' lands in the 1970s posed, and continue to pose, significant challenges to bureaucratic practice as well as to the established imagery of a land divided between peasant mountains and civilized cities. While the Two Republic system of separate indigenous rule was abolished after independence in 1825, elements such as indigenous tribute reappeared in various guises into the twentieth century, highlighting the persistence of the idea of a dual state, of people with different status. Gradually, peasants and indigenous people gained access to citizenship – tied still to ownership of land in the countryside, and later transferred from collective to individual forms of citizenship, forms that persist in what Lund describes as the shared historical experience of people being both corporate and private persons.

Whereas planning histories emphasize the creation of new towns, conceived and then materialized according to planned policies, Lund de-

scribes urbanization in Peru as generated by land invasion. First, someone occupies a plot as part of a group, houses are built and, perhaps many years later, an individual might gain title to the property. Government planners and settlers must negotiate the status of ownership in a complex dance around illegalities, informalities and irregularities. Migration arising not only from rural poverty but also from political violence only enhanced the pressure on urban areas to house migrants, and little state activity prepared for these influxes. On the contrary, the process was driven by action, where necessity broke into settled zones in and around the city. Lund's chapter gives a nuanced account of the process of regularization and the gaining of title, while revealing the contested concept of the urban in Peru. Showing us different sides of the story of land invasion, and the different spatial sensibilities evident across the city, Lund argues for recognition of the deeply politicized nature of planning and the patchwork nature of state intervention, by showing us the role that planning has in the transformation of public lands into private property.

Deborah James considers a different form of the shift between public and private property. Her chapter explores the contradictory and contested but closely interlocking efforts of NGOs and the state in planning for land reform in South Africa. There, planning was a key tool for apartheid policy, with zoning, segregated development, and housing policy serving separation policies. In the post-apartheid era, claims that the poorest should have land are generally accepted, but defining who is among the poorest and who is deserving of land has been technically complex and politically tricky. As government policy has increasingly favoured people with the resources to become commercial farmers, the fate of the poor and dispossessed has become the remit of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In this context, the question of how to deal with the labourers on white farms who would be rendered homeless if the farms were disbanded poses a real problem for policymakers. Should land reform be about tenure reform, and how can this be understood?

As James points out, NGOs have become involved in planning interventions not by replacing the state but by interacting with it. While it has been claimed that South Africa's new leaders embraced neo-liberal economics rather enthusiastically, James outlines the conditions for South African economic plans, and the changing relations between the state, market actors and NGOs. Recalling how the state poached staff from NGOs , she shows how many of these staff later resigned after disputes and confrontations. The turnover of staff has blurred the boundaries between the organizations, so that simplistic analyses of 'neo-liberal governmentality' are not adequate to understand the complexities of the relationship between NGOs and the state. Under apartheid, dialogue between African communities and white English-speaking middle-class activists resulted

in hybrid models of ownership that filtered African ideas about landholding through European debates that contest private with public ownership. In the new state, territory and government had to be unified where before they had been in opposition, and this tension lies at the heart of land-planning difficulties in subsequent years. Whether land reform would lead to redistributed territorial rights, or to privatization of land and subsequent loss of rights has been tussled over, exposing divisive ideological justifications of positions held by the various NGOs. James, like Gledhill in the following chapter, weaves the political history into the lives of actors in the land reform process to show the complexity of state planning in practice, the temporal strands that policy makers and activists strive to unite, and the hopes and fears that heat the debates over what might, to the uninitiated, appear to be banal details of policy formation. A 'may' or a 'shall' in policy documents can have far-reaching and determinative effects.

Echoing James's call not to treat neo-liberal governmentality as unitary, in the next chapter Gledhill offers a detailed account of the forms of neo-liberalization being played out in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, and asks whether they exacerbate class difference in urban development. Put quite starkly, he can be understood as asking what hope there is for the poor in participatory planning policy, in the face of increasingly securitized private developments built for developers, big businesses and those citizens with consumer power. Commentators are increasingly arguing that positive-sounding programmes of 'urban regeneration' that seek to improve urban conditions actually result in a retaking of the city for the middle classes. Gledhill points to cultural initiatives to raise self-esteem and foster 'black role models' that frame normative standards of desirable patterns of family life, for example, while property regimes condemn the working poor to the margins of urban land allocations. Yet Gledhill tells a revealing story of the reappropriation of planning processes by the very people who are the objects of governmentality, through a detailed historiographical account of the politics of land invasion and regularization. The struggle over the reappropriation of invaded land by private interests played out through the politics of the NGO world, direct action and youth mobilization, and was tied throughout the process to the politics of race. The process gave rise to new forms of grassroots organization, pressured by institutional political powers but exhibiting unlikely alignments of interest and unexpected consequences.

Gledhill highlights many of the issues we have nodded to in this introduction, including the role of documents and graphic plans, the subjectification of populations through planning policies, and the elusive promise that grassroots action and state plans hold out for those who have hopes for the future. His account confirms Lund's claim about the politicization

of planning, demonstrating how planning is intimately tied into much broader questions of government. The 'problem of the favelas' has dogged Brazilian politics for decades, outlived countless government and NGO initiatives, and earned along the way a lively political profile as the focus of campaigns for a more participative form of government. Claims that the poor have a right to the city – made famous in the oft-cited work of Lefebvre – were recognized at the beginning of the twenty-first century in legislation that Gledhill characterizes as being from the neo-liberal era, but his account provides a detailed mapping of actual neo-liberalization that shows the diversity within neo-liberal structures, indicating that neo-liberalization is also a struggle, not simply a global sweep of change. While powerful actors can use plans to serve particular interests, a planning system also opens such plans up to contest. Where these openings are inadequate, other forms of resistance emerge.

In a situation that could certainly be characterized as an extreme exemplar of the late capitalist era, Baxstrom also distinguishes between plans and planning in his claims that plans function as virtual objects in the present. Grand strategic plans such as the '1Malaysia' plan fall into a pattern of Malaysian plans that are strong on slogans yet vague on specific goals and rarely lead to anything like the future imagined in them. Baxstrom thus points to the very elusiveness of the promises made in plans. His chapter challenges the notion of a plan as a vision of the future and a blueprint for a programme of future action, arguing that plans for what is sometimes called urban regeneration in Kuala Lumpur function effectively as a vehicle for action in the present. While plans gesture to 'the future', he argues that they do not need 'a future' to function. A lack of specificity leads Malaysian grand plans to appear to disavow the near present, while legitimating a range of actions now. The result is a city that Baxstrom describes as always moving fast but never actually going anywhere. How, then, can the future be imagined or planned in what feels like an infinite present?

Baxstrom has elsewhere recounted the daily experience of residents in a district of Kuala Lumpur undergoing rapid and unpredictable transformations, showing how plans legitimize radical changes to the built environment that can abruptly change the fortunes of small business owners, for example (Baxstrom 2008). He notes that plans can be not only problematic for the people who experience their effects, but also difficult for professional practitioners to deal with. A lack of procedure associated with plans can leave planners in weak positions themselves. When plans are materialized as documents, they can also become available to people not associated with their creation – and hence plans start to live a life of their own.

The changing role of public servants in the administration of different kinds of objectives that plans epitomize is the subject of Laura Bear's

chapter. One of the characteristics we associate with neo-liberal governmentality is the ambiguity of relations between centres of power and localities. While the discourses emphasize 'localism', the structures of state power are often increasingly centralized through a mechanism that delegates budgets without delegating powers to control them or decide on the conditions associated with them. Bear notes that this results in contest and opacity in dialogues between bureaucrats and citizens, whose negotiations result in outcomes quite different from those promised in the texts of state plans. She argues that this leaves low-level bureaucrats in a particularly compromised position, straddling the boundaries between state, public and non-state, private action. Seeing state plans as attempts to bring about promised futures, she echoes Adam and Groves's observation (2007) that these futures are by no means assured, showing that futures are imagined and practised differently by various participants in planning processes. By moving planning beyond the state, Bear argues, the Indian government produces a new form of planning, based on decentralized improvisation and speculation through networks of association, that strikingly alters the demands made on local bureaucrats while offering them legitimation for entrepreneurial schemes.

Bear's chapter offers a detailed description of the 'shadow state' of informal and exploitative activity that is drawn into the plans and revenues of the official state through the changing activities of Calcutta Port Trust officials on the Hooghly River. She argues that what is happening in Kolkata is not that hybrid forms of the state are emerging, but that the separation between formality and informality is upheld by liberalization bureaucrats in India in the constant movement of plans, state tokens, officials and revenues between these domains. They are, she suggests, expanding an 'inner darkness of exclusion from rights' within the state. Plans thus have another level of action in this system: they legitimize local actions in the present, as Baxstrom indicates, but are also based on the personal promises of bureaucrats, underpinned by patronage, friendship and religious imagery. To understand plans and planning, Bear is arguing, we must see plans in their wider context and through an ethnographic lens. What else are plans doing, how else are they used, and what other activities do they enable, other than the specific developments of which they ostensibly speak? Her masterful account of the intricacies of port life through the daily life and philosophies of Mr Bose in the Boat Registration Office show us the 'dark side' of planning as well as its many faces, differently shaded in the contemporary context of government and extra-governmental action. In Bear's account, we see the speculative promises of a wide range of state agencies played for all their worth among entrepreneurs and informalized labour.

Notes

1. Readers may want to refer to general and national histories of planning, e.g. Friedmann (1987), Sandercock (1998), or Hall (2002).
2. In fact, one might say that land-use planning became defined by a preoccupation with the correct layout of facilities and lost the ambition to reorder society more justly. The UK planning system thus remains a weak regulatory system that swings between favouring the 'environment' and 'development' (Murdoch and Abram 2002).
3. We are grateful for guidance from Sandy Robertson in our elaboration of this section.
4. For the importance of considering corporations, especially in relation to corruption, see Robertson (2006a, 2006b, 2009).
5. There are important differences in this regard between different national legislative contexts. For example, in a situation of common law, such as in the UK, private developers and investors have considerably more legal scope to challenge and overrule the decisions of state bodies than in civil law countries, such as Germany or Portugal, where private developers do not (yet) possess the same kinds of power.
6. Strategies of 'non-planning' observable, for example, in southern African metropolises may also be seen in this light as a way of dealing with such unpredictability (cf. Kamete and Lindell 2010).
7. This is not to say that such work is not important. Questions of the governance of change in the fabric of urban environments have also been addressed in architecture (e.g., Blundell-Jones, Petrescu and Till 2005), but the focus has been predominantly on participative design, rather than on participative governance or citizen-governing per se, although new research based in architecture schools is moving in this direction and using ethnographic techniques to do so (Berry-Chikhaoui and Deboulet 2007; Deboulet 2004).

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