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## **Symposium Introduction: Immigration and Transnationalities of Planning**

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This symposium of *JPER* on immigration and transnationalities of planning is about movement—of people, resources and policies. It brings together scholars across their disciplinary homes in Sociology (Simone), Geography (Parnreiter), and Planning (Roy and Miraftab) to prompt a much needed conversation.

We live in an era marked by unprecedented movement and crisscrossing of capital, labor and ideas. The conventional urban development literature that theorizes or formulates policy based on a territorially bound understanding of development and constituency building processes can neither explain, nor help us change, the evolving trends we observe today in city forms, or in urban and regional booms and busts. Immigrants' earnings in one part of the world lead to the development of housing and infrastructure in another distant nation (Miraftab). Politicians and electoral campaigners launch their constituency building efforts among expatriates and in political communities located outside their national jurisdiction. Mayors and policy makers striving for solutions to local development problems of their constituent communities window shop for "fast policies" and "off the shelf plans" at global policy fairs (Parnreiter, Roy). In short we are facing a re-articulation of state, citizen and market relationships that deterritorialize and reterritorialize the meaning of citizenship and belonging to a national political community. Today it is not only the immigrant workers that "lead the way with their feet," by emigrating to implement their own economic plan (Simone 2011 p.xx); it is also the economic development officer in the remote municipality of the Jalisco highlands, who serves the district by travelling to Concord, California, to determine with fellow Jalisco immigrants the public works mandate of his municipal jurisdiction (personal field notes 2008). Here in this Jalisco municipality, immigrant residents of Concord have a greater say than citizen inhabitants within its territorial bounds— a condition that needs to be considered as part of the *new geographies of planning decision makings*.

The contemporary fluidity of populations, families, resources and even policies and ideas across national borders is a ground shifting transformation with important implications for planning— a field that has conventionally been about stabilizing populations and places (Simone ). The ideas of planning and planners, as Parnreiter in the opening of his contribution articulates, have "traveled across borders for a long time" (p.XX), imported, exchanged, exported and imposed. Planning as a profession with a colonial genesis, has often feasted on the very inequalities and development problems itself has produced through its plans and models for "progress." As we move deeper into the twenty-first century, however, we encounter a historical moment marked by both its transnational hyper mobility, and its protectionist xenophobia or what Roy calls "hysterical nativism." At this particular moment in the historical transnationality of planning, it is important for planning educators, scholars and practitioners to engage critically with planning's current transnationality and the cross border and cross continental movements of people, resources, policies and plans.

A decade ago *JPER* dedicated a special issue to the relationship between "globalization and planning" (Afshar and Pezzoli 2001). This was one of the activities of the then recently created Global Planning Educators Interest Group (GPEIG) within the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). The important conversations that the journal and the interest group have created over time among planning

educators need to be revisited today. A global planning perspective rightfully critiques the older “international development planning” paradigm that separates the “here” and the “there” or the “domestic” and the “international”, and urges reflective engagement with globalization processes. But it also needs to adequately develop or allude to the ethical principles through which such engagement could or should be pursued and clarify the conceptual vehicles we use in that regard. Revisiting these questions is particularly critical today, when global planning itself is often accused of participating in the creation of a form of “globalism” in the sense Marcuse (2004) or Steger (2002) define as a new legitimization of global capitalism that obscures the power dynamics, tensions and unequal relationships constituting the global. Moreover the inter-changeable use of the terms international, global and more recently transnational have created “murky grounds” that make it more difficult to distinguish the critique from its subject and to recognize the important implications each conceptual framework might have for a methodology and praxis of planning. I therefore take the opportunity in this introduction to make an attempt to clarify.

### **Globalization and Planning**

Within the field of planning two perspectives tend to dominate the explanations of and engagement with globalization. An international framework rooted in political science disciplinary traditions explains globalization as accelerated exchanges and relationships amongst sovereign national entities. Its unit of analysis being the nation state, this perspective concerns inter-governmental or inter-national governments ‘relationships. International planning shaped with this perspective assumes planning professionals and agencies exchange programs, plans and ideas outside the structures of power— the sphere of “willing buyer and willing seller.” This framing of globalization dismisses global structural inequalities. Moreover, it “atomizes” the global challenges at the national level as well as concealing the multi-directionality of development processes. Ultimately this reinforces an old colonial mentality among planners and practitioners in the global north about the development “burden of the white man.”

A global framework that emerged in response to the misconceptions outlined above, rightfully tried to see the forest beyond the individual trees. But in moving the unit of analysis beyond the nation state it has swung to the other end of the analytical spectrum to a monolithic world in which national territories are irrelevant. The idea of a “post national” world as Roy discusses creates a “phantom global” that “assumes a transcendence of structural difference and unmaking of borders and boundaries” (Roy p. X). This conceptualization that celebrates globalization as the victory of one unitary world (global capitalism) as reflected in the writings of Fukuyama, and Thomas Friedman and early Jeffrey Sachs underlies much of the work that institutions like the World Bank, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund undertake and the policy advice driving the bulk of strategic plans they promote (see Parnreiter). Independent of the scholarly debates that have long moved away from such views of globalization, in the world of practice by multilateral organization the globalization framework has translated to a unifying tendency, a sort of universalism that yet again obscures structures of power and global inequalities. This narrative depicts globalization as a placeless and irresistible flow that often moves uni-directionally from the center or the West to the rest and feeds off a binary construct that suggests “the North produces globalizations and the South experiences it” (Miraftab p.xx). In a universal narrative of globalization with a unitary object of analysis, problems and solutions are globally convergent, and planning enjoys its subject matter with a singular prefix: *the global*. Global planning then becomes understood as a unifying practice, whereby consultants via short trips and quick-fix policies can make use of homemade universal blue prints, requiring only minor adjustments for implementation anywhere in the world.

Each of these frameworks, the global as a singular, universal and placeless, or the international as the sum of multiple sovereign yet closely interacting territorialized national entities, involves convenient absences, silences and a silencing that Ferguson (2006) articulates in *Global Shadows*. He uses a nodal concept to describe globalization as processes that connect discrete points or locations, “capital is globe-hopping, not globe-covering” he writes (Ferguson 2006:38). In that vein a transnational framing of global processes is attentive to the points of disconnect, disjunctions, and friction (Tsing 2000) as well as the stoppages and decelerations (Sassen 2000). To see both the trees and the forest a transnational framework strives for a multi-scalar and multi-directional analysis (Burrawoy et al 2000, Guarnizo and Smith 1998). While anchored in specific locations, a transnational analysis spans local, national and global, and recognizes multiple directions through which globalization is constituted. Such a framework allows us to see the complex and “multiple spatialities and temporalities of globalization” (Miraftab p.XX). It accounts for the zig zags of processes that shape global policies and human migration, and recognizes the structures that selectively include and exclude nations in the imagination of a global community.

### **Developing the Transnational Framework**

Using a transnational framing of the global processes, contributors in this symposium pay special attention to the power dynamics in the travelling and border crossings of ideas, policies, plans, and people, and bring to light those forces and resources that motivate and sustain such movements. Far from a post-national homogeneity they demonstrate that transnational fluidity of families, policies and resources are structured and bear on specific institutional practices and policies that selectively erect and erase national borders. People and policies travel not according to free will, nor in free circuits, but through specific “technologies of crossing” (Sandoval 2002 cited in Roy) that engage particular structures and practices. Moreover, their movements are complex and cannot be simply captured by a “push-pull factor” analysis (Simone) that inevitably leads to a uni-directional understanding of how people, resources and ideas move: namely, people, as cheap laborers, move from global South to North; resources, as in remittances, move from global North to South; and policies radiate from the center, the West, to the rest of the world (Mahler 1998).

Through a wide range of stories, contributions to the present symposium expose two aspects of transnationalism shaping contemporary urban and regional development policies and plans: (1) the multi scalar structures and processes that shape transnational urban and regional experiences; and (2) the multi directionality of transnational processes. Grounded in a broad spectrum of experience that includes traders, youth and residents in West and Central Africa, Togolese and Mexican meatpackers in the heartland of the US, “aliens” along the US-Mexico border, and policy tourists in European city-networks, these essays help us understand the making of transnationalism from below, above, in between and sideways.

Contributors to this symposium engage with a series of questions that are key to the understanding of immigration and planning in a transnational era. *What are the spaces these movements shape and how do they offer a resource to increasingly fluid relationships, places and people?* **Simone** tackles this through a detailed ethnographic description of the dynamic frontiers of contemporary Africa and informal trading spaces people create through informal cross border and cross continental trade. In his earlier work, (2004) Simone helped us see people as effective infrastructure in much of the urban world, but absent from planners’ understanding of how urban infrastructure works. Here he reminds us of the relationship between movement and trade that has long been a source of livelihood for Africans yet has made little dent into the existing planning and governance frameworks. He argues that “planning mechanisms tend to assume certain stability in the relationship of population to place . . . Although

stabilizing populations and economic practices does have value, not enough attention is placed in urban planning on making use of how movement continuously respatializes social positions and resources” (p.12). He highlights the potential of a regional governance framework in border zones for urban articulation of fluid communities in ways that make “already existent movement more productive and convenient” (p.12). These spaces, Simone argues, governed at a regional scale, produce an urbanity that follows the resources and reflects the fluidity of cross border communities. They produce what he calls an “urbanity of movement.”

*What are the invisible structures and relationships that make this movement of people and resources possible?* **Miraftab** addresses this by examining the revitalization of a Midwestern meat-packing town in the US and how its local development is intimately connected to a series of dispossessions and transnational reorganizations of familial and community care that take place in Togo and Mexico— processes she calls the “global restructuring of social reproduction.” Her ethnographic studies make visible the multi directional flow of resources in immigrants’ transnational practices. While immigrants’ remittances serve as social insurance for relatives back home (what she calls the “public’s policy”), families and home institutions of immigrant workers subsidize the low wages of meat packing workers at the Illinois plant and hence subsidize the social reproduction of people and place in this small Midwest town. Hence, the development of both the immigrants’ home communities in their land of origin and that of the Illinois town where they work are based on immigration. Ultimately, she advances the thesis that global restructuring of social reproduction has increasingly de-territorialized and re-territorialized the processes of local economic development.

*What are the ethics of contemporary planning that distinguish its praxis from the previous eras of transnational planning?* **Roy** introduces the idea of critical transnationalism as a critique and practice and then grapples with this complex issue. She posits a critical transnationalism revealing the structural power difference that the universal narrative of globalization, discussed earlier in this introduction, obscures. In addition, critical transnationalism is instructive to planning as a practice since she argues this is a “value oriented” profession defined by ethics, one that is concerned or ought to be concerned with the public interest (p.7). Drawing inspiration from the work of Chicana/o visual and performing artists and scholars who create a “nexus between art and social change” (p.5) she imagines a planning praxis that “negotiate[s] the divide between social responsibility and technocratic professionalism” (p. 3). Critical transnationalism posits planning ethics that foster “new imagination of cities as inevitably transnational, made up of “parts of elsewhere”” (p. 7.). Similar to how many environmental activists have mapped the ways in which highly industrialized societies owe an ecological debt to the rest of the world, Roy calls for a planning that is acutely aware and able to map “relationships of dependence and complicity, a stark reminder of how our planned landscapes are dependent on and complicit in the carbon and war economies of the world” (p.8). This however, requires “slow learning,” to defeat the urge in policy circles for ready-made, off the shelf products, that have reduced planning to a “transnational trade in models” (p. 6). Slow learning, Roy argues, requires planners and policy makers to learn by closely engaging the context and requires “an ethnographic patience that interrupts the frantic traffic of labor, capital, ideas, and symbols through which late capitalism operates” (p. 6).

*What are the contemporary mechanisms by which planning ideas and practices travel and cross national borders?* **Parnreiter** deals with this question by looking at the institutional arrangements and practices that produce policy desire and strategic plans. These plans he argues are indeed models to help produce cities hospitable to global firms. His main concern is not “the worldwide shift to strategic plans, but how it was achieved – and what happened to strategic planning in the process of spreading.”(p. xx). A large body of literature has focused on punitive processes and conditionalities that the International

Monetary Fund and World Bank operationalize to produce policy consent across the globe—"the stick." Parnreiter's contribution helps us understand "the carrots" involved in this process. He points out how globalization of plans and policies involves certain institutional practices that legitimize and disseminate plans and models. Those include events such as the World Urban Forum, which he calls "trade-fair for urban policies" (p. xx) offering awards for "best practices" and detailed "how to" manuals for dissemination. It also involves city-networks through which professionals, mayors and planners engage in "policy tourism" and window shop for readymade, off the shelf plans. Taking Barcelona's Regeneration Plan and the multi-lateral institutions like UN Habitat as cases in point, Parnreiter moves his analytic optic beyond an export model where the West exports its plans to the rest, stressing the multiple points of conception involved in production and consumption of transnational plans.

In sum, the works in this symposium have provided ample material for understanding the transnational movement of people, resources and policies. As planning educators and scholars we need to pay attention to these emerging trends and conditions as they inevitably affect how we teach, plan and analyze. Planning is a field through which relationships among the state, citizens and the market are negotiated. If these very relationships are going through profound changes due to the mobilities we discuss in this symposium, then surely the practice, teaching, and conceptualization of planning require a profound debate and, ultimately, transformation. The contributors to this symposium hope to have contributed to this process.

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