



Editorial

Development, as traditionally conceived, has either failed the majority of global citizens or been transfigured into a tool of wealthy and powerful elites, opening great scars of global inequality and social injustice. At the same time, the world order seems to be changing and we do not know how it might further transform development concepts and ideas moving forward. Yet this is also a time when ordinary actors are able to affect and influence how we measure and support people's wellbeing in the future. Hence, there is perhaps no better time to more deeply and thoughtfully explore the question of development than now.

As an import of Western colonialism, "development" is enmeshed with political, economic and cultural histories that have, since its import and melding with movements of national independence, been firmly rooted in the modern South Asian experience and undergirds numerous efforts of "becoming modern" and nationalist identities as the articles demonstrate.

This special issue of *Bhumi* takes aim at the complex web of development theory and practice—that is by now a hegemonic and global specter. By exploring fissures and gaps in the results of current development practice, the editors and contributors of this volume desire to open up the necessary space by which room is made available to imagine new alternatives.

The contributors represent diverse personal backgrounds and academic focuses and bring them to bear on the question of development. While most contributions are focused on South Asia there is one that brings the issue back to the West during the heyday of American industrialism and exceptionalism. While all contributions are unique in their own right, they are all linked by an ambition to critique development in either its theory or practice and explore things from an approach empathic to ordinary people.

Nihal Perera and Jeffrey M. Lauer

Guest Editors for Special Issue on Development

Bios of Authors

Chloé Dotson is an urban planner, sociologist and social environmental activist. She received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Urban Planning from Ball State University; her master's thesis on Gary, Indiana received the Best Thesis Award. In 2011, she participated in the CapAsia program, the immersive field semester in India and Nepal. In Indianapolis, IN, Milwaukee, WI and Brownsville, TX, Dotson managed and coordinated projects and programming for city management, parks and recreation, housing development services, water and waste water infrastructure, transportation and capital Improvements, and maintains relationships with public and private partners and congressional representatives. While employing a variety of methodologies, Dotson passionately engages residents, community advocates, government officials, and both the public and private sectors in an effort to unite, strengthen, develop, and facilitate holistic and data driven strategies for physical, managerial, social/cultural, economic, environmental, and institutional improvements.

Jeffrey M. Lauer is an independent researcher, real estate professional and consultant. He received his Bachelors (2011) and Masters (2014) in urban and regional planning from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. He worked as an associate planner for the City of Westfield, Indiana and a contract planner for the City of Indianapolis. As student, in 2011, he participated in the CapAsia immersive field-semester abroad in Ahmedabad, India and Nepal. He subsequently completed a Masters thesis on the effects of Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project on the Gujarati Bazaar in Ahmedabad (2014). Lauer's work focuses on urban planning, urbanism, anthropology, post-colonialism and international development studies. He has published a book review on *Transforming Asian Cities* (Routledge 2013) in *Urban Studies* (2014) and has a forthcoming chapter on heritage conservation and the Gujarati Bazaar in *Global Perspectives in Heritage Conservation* (Routledge 2017).

Shalini Mariyathas is a Lecturer at the Department of Town & Country Planning, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka where she specializes in Planning Theory, Urban Conservation and Urban Design. She earned her Masters in Urban & Regional Planning from Ball State University, Indiana and B.Sc (Hon) in Town & Country Planning at the University of Moratuwa. Mariyathas is also a Chartered Town Planner and the Editorial Assistant of *Bhumi*, the Planning Research Journal of University of Moratuwa.

Nihal Perera is Professor of Urban Planning at Ball State University, as well as the founder and Director of the CapAsia immersive field-semester in Asia. In addition to the USA, he has taught in Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. The two-time

Fulbright Scholar awardee: to China (2006–07) and Myanmar (2015-16) was also Senior Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore (2010) and has received three Fulbright-Hays awards. Perera's research, as a leading scholar of social space, focuses on how ordinary people create and negotiate their own spaces. His publications include articles on feminizing the city, competing modernities in Chandigarh, competing visions for Dharavi and books entitled *Decolonizing Ceylon* (OUP 1999), *Transforming Asian Cities* (Routledge 2013; Co-eds with Tang), and *People's Spaces* (Routledge 2016).

Pradeep Sangapala is a PhD student in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Alberta, Canada. He received his Masters (2014) in urban and regional planning from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. His research interest includes urban planning, planning history, post colonialism, development studies, right to the city, and human rights. Sangapala's Masters thesis is on Empowering Communities or Creating Dependencies: People's experience of a development project in Sri Lanka? (2014) His current research, entitled 'Nationalism, Planning, and Postcolonial Politics', investigates the impact of colonial and nationalist thought on postcolonial spatial thinking in Sri Lanka.