Beyond the “Slum”: Urban Informality as the New Normal in Millennial Capitalism

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Problematize discourse of the “slum”

Urban informality, the state, and capitalism

Political agency of urban informals
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“I was uncomfortable about the film [“Slumdog Millionaire”] because for many American kids, it’s the only glimpse of slums they will ever get...and so many of the millennials want to do something about poverty in the world” (AU student)
“What makes the word ‘slum’ dangerous is the series of negative associations that the term conjures up, the false hopes that a campaign against slums raises, and the mischief that unscrupulous politicians, developers and planners may do with the term” (Gilbert, A. 2007. “The Return of the Slum: Does Language Matter?” Int’l Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 31 (4): 697-713)
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Bangalore’s Population Growth, 2000-2010 – Mostly at the Periphery
“People who were earning Rs. 5,000 to 8,000 [$125-200] per month, people like me, they wanted a small place to stay. So what did they do? This is all agricultural land they purchased. All over Ramamurthynagar—no, all over the outskirts, it is like this. It’s illegal but what other choice did we have? At Rs 100 [$2] per sq. ft, you can buy a small site of your own. You can get the DC’s [District Commissioner] approval. What is the other remedy? When land is not available, somewhere you will have to go and buy.” (Interview with peripheral resident, Bangalore, June 2008)
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Peri-urban residents hold an impromptu meeting with municipal official about water access in neighborhood.

Construction for the Greater Bangalore Water Project, 2007

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Thank you
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