Exploring Urban Change in South Asia

Surajit Chakravarty
Rohit Negi *Editors*

Space, Planning and Everyday Contestations in Delhi

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Space, Planning and Everyday Contestations in Delhi

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Contents

1 **Introduction: Contested Urbanism in Delhi's Interstitial Spaces**. 1
Surajit Chakravarty and Rohit Negi

Part I Dis/Locating Bodies

2 **Seeing and Governing Street Hawkers Like a Fragmented Metropolitan State** 21
Seth Schindler

3 **Understanding Participation in a Heterogeneous Community: The Resettlement of Kathputli Colony** 35
Shruti Dubey

Part II Claims at the Urban Frontier

4 **"Propertied Ambiguity": Negotiating the State in a Delhi Resettlement Colony** 59
Kavita Ramakrishnan

5 **Urban Negotiations and Small-Scale Gentrification in a Delhi Resettlement Colony** 77
Ursula Rao

6 **Incipient Informality in Delhi's "Formalized" Suburban Space** 91
Rolee Aranya and Vilde Ulset

Part III Informalization and Investment

7 **Between Informalities: Mahipalpur Village as an Entrepreneurial Space**. 113
Surajit Chakravarty

8 **Unpacking the "Unauthorized Colony": Policy, Planning and Everyday Lives**. 137
Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda

9 The Shape/ing of Industrial Landscapes: Life, Work and Occupations in and Around Industrial Areas in Delhi 163
Sumangala Damodaran

10 Megaproject, Rules and Relationships with the Law: The Metro Rail in East Delhi 181
Bérénice Bon

Part IV Gendered Mobility

11 Housing, Spatial-Mobility and Paid Domestic Work in Millennial Delhi: Narratives of Women Domestic Workers 201
Sonal Sharma

12 Bus/Bas/बस: The 2012 Delhi Gang Rape Case, City Space and Public Transportation 219
Tara Atluri

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List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Locations of the studies presented in this volume. **Map copyright** © Rohit Negi and Surajit Chakravarty 9
Figure 3.1 Locations where itinerant artists camped in Delhi. Source and copyright: © Sarthi. Reproduced with permission 40
Figure 3.2 Letter outlining alternative to resettlement. Source and copyright: © Sarthi. Reproduced with permission 42
Figure 6.1 Layout plan of Savda Ghevra resettlement colony. *Source* Created by Vilde Ulset (2014), adapted from DUSIB data 95
Figure 7.1 Indicative map showing landmarks around Mahipalpur (not to scale). 120
Figure 7.2 Men at labour Chowk waiting to be hired for the day (*Source* Photograph by author) 122
Figure 7.3 Neon-lit hotels along NH-8 (*Source* Photograph by author) . . . 124
Figure 7.4 Advertisements for positions in Mahipalpur's hotel industry (*Source* Photograph by author) 125
Figure 7.5 Developer flats on consolidated plots (*Source* Photograph by author) 126
Figure 7.6 Densely packed buildings often separated by 1 m or less (*Source* Photograph by author). 131
Figure 7.7 Exposed cables are a perennial fire hazard (*Source* Photograph by author) 132
Figure 10.1 Schematic map of the Shastri Park project (*Source* Previous publication by Bon and Solanki (2015), reproduced with permission) 186
Figure 10.2 Panorama of the Shastri Park project. *Left* to *right* the station, the maintenance buildings, the formation centre, the IT Park, the residential component (*Source* Photograph by author) 186
Figure 10.3 Main gate of the IT Park (*Source* Photograph by author) 191
Figure 10.4 The project in its urban environment and the land sinking area (*Source* Photograph by author) 193

Figure 10.5 Residents of the Buland Masjid are living in the immediate vicinity of the DMRC wall and the pipelines (*Source* Photograph by author) 194
Figure 10.6 Residents sitting in front of the Pradhan's jeans manufacturing unit in Buland Masjid (*Source* Photograph by author) 195
Figure 11.1 An RTV leaving from Madanpur Khadar for Nehru place. *Source* Photo by Shahana Sheikh. 213
Figure 12.1 Tahir Siddiqui's metonymic inscription of Jyoti's fate on Delhi's map Source: Painting by Tahir Siddiqui, reproduced with permission 231

Chapter 1
Introduction: Contested Urbanism in Delhi's Interstitial Spaces

Surajit Chakravarty and Rohit Negi

1.1 Planning Delhi

Cities of the global south are known for being messy and inscrutable in terms of the systems and institutions that govern them. Much is known about the debilitating effects of the chronic lack of resources and technical capacity, rapid population growth, poverty, infrastructure deficits, layers of bureaucracy, and corruption. In addition to all of the existential difficulties, the neoliberal moment has allowed liquid capital to circulate in search of investment opportunities, with weak regulation and under the conditions described above. Delhi, in a short time, has found itself transforming from a minor outpost in the global economy to an important regional node with "world city" aspirations, embedded within one of the world's fastest growing economies.

But when we talk of Delhi's aspirations, whose aspirations do we mean? There are a lot many dreams churning in Delhi's growth machine. For more than half of Delhi's residents, aspirations are as modest as a legal residence, with a water connection that works. State agencies, planners, political parties, developers, civil society and residents contest Delhi's urban space through the channels available to them—regulation, investment, construction, the courts, mass media, social movements, collective practices and individual choices. From this complex interplay of motives what lessons can we distil about the nature of urbanization in Delhi,

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the technologies of governance, the agency of neoliberalism and the production of ordinary spaces and everyday life? To what extent are urban outcomes predictable and when does the local context weigh in?

Comparisons of urbanization across South Asia (Anjaria and McFarlane, 2011), or in "the Indian city" (Shatkin, 2014), are useful for confirming broad trends based on their multiple manifestations, and for understanding the diversity of impacts of structural conditions. Focusing exclusively on Delhi, this volume presents grounded empirical accounts that accumulate evidence regarding the nature of urbanism and urban politics. Studies in this volume view Delhi as a complex outcome of interacting forces, rather than a self-evident product of neoliberalism. The chaos and ambivalence, that have marked planning in Delhi since independence, fundamentally shape neoliberal urbanization, which proceeds in an uneven and highly specific manner. From Delhi's urban condition we attempt to derive fresh insights regarding the disjunctures between planning and ideology, between narratives of growth and realities of immobility, and between facades of modernity and the actual spaces and practices produced in its pursuit.

Delhi has grown relatively swiftly since the 1950s to become a metropolis of over 16 million by 2011 (Government of NCT Delhi, 2012). As the capital of the Mughal Empire, Delhi was a dense and vibrant site, a centre for culture and commerce, for a long time. But the city's position of prominence was really consolidated after it was declared the capital of British India in 1911, and New Delhi was developed as the seat of the colonial government. After independence in 1947, hundreds of thousands of refugees of the partition were settled in Delhi. In continuation of colonial urban form, New Delhi remained an elite-scape housing bureaucrats, politicians, and wealthy residents, unsurprisingly, cornering disproportionate services, including water, power and access to urban parks.

Land development and spatial planning in Delhi have proceeded through a centralised institutional arrangement, of which the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is the appointed node. In accordance with globally prevalent practices in the 1950s and 1960s, the dominant planning instrument in the city came to be the Delhi Master Plan (the current version has a perspective until 2021), which is a legally-enforceable document outlining the arrangement of land uses and attendant policies, supported by periodic population projections, pooling of land, provision of infrastructures and, finally, allotment of land and housing to the various beneficiary publics. Thousands of hectares have been assembled by the DDA via eminent domain, primarily from rural inhabitants of the hundreds of villages in and around the city, making it the largest land-holding agency in the state. Most of the residential neighbourhoods of post-independence Delhi, along with commercial districts and institutional zones found across the city, were constructed on DDA land.

Yet, the actual requirement of housing and urban infrastructure has far outstripped supply. This has given rise to a variety of informally provisioned housing and services. The gap also creates opportunities for deriving rent from the discretionary space available to the state on account of what Achille Mbembe calls the postcolonial "etatisation of society" (2001), i.e. the bureaucratization of the

practices and processes of everyday life. Over time the land available to DDA for greenfield developments has shrunk. Except for a few pockets the metropolitan area of Delhi is entirely built up, and new developments are concentrated in satellite towns and peri-urban spaces in the city's wider region (known as the National Capital Region, or NCR), which includes territories of three of Delhi's neighbouring states—Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. The NCR, too, resembles a fragmented assemblage of municipalities, engaged in opportunistic growth around Delhi's core, rather than a planned and managed region.

Since the 1990s, state authorities have repositioned themselves increasingly as facilitators and regulators of private sector participation in urban development. The release of private enterprise in housing has been largely uncoordinated, leading inevitably to an uneven urban fabric with a preponderance of gated communities. Further, the new speculative real estate economy has attracted vast sums of "black" money, leading to inflated values and fears of a housing bubble in Delhi as in other large cities in the country. Meanwhile as the trickling streams of economic gain remain too meagre to keep the lives of the worst off from becoming increasingly precarious, the state is able to use flexible regimes of legality and extra-legality to rearrange spaces and bodies at the margins (Govinda, 2013). In cities where 60 % or more of the residents live in "unauthorized" developments of various kinds (Bhan, 2009), the management of informality becomes one of the most important functions of planning. Informality, though, is only one element of marginality, more fully understood in terms of the subjects' relationship with the structures of political and economic power.

Bhan (2013) argues that planning is a potent vector of urbanization in Delhi precisely because of its failures. Indeed DDA-led planning has been critiqued time and again (Chakravarty, 2015, and in this volume; Lemanski and Lama-Rewal, 2013; Tarlo, 2000; Dupont, 2008; Ghertner, 2008; Sivam, 2003; Pugh, 1991 amongst others). Despite all its shortcomings, however, the role of urban planning cannot be reduced either to absolute failure (Bhan, 2013), or chronic incapacity due to subservience to the neoliberal agenda (Roy, 2009a). Plans carry the weight of law and state machinery, and embody all of society's complex contestations over space and temporality. Once made, they are challenged, recalibrated and rewritten multiple times. Plans do not so much fail as become microcosms of the contested terrain of the city. Thus plans prepared by state agencies are best understood, in the spirit of the Lefebvre's (1991) notion of "representations of space", as one element contributing to the composite social production of space.

1.2 The Context of Neoliberal Urbanism

The mundane and lived urban contestations, addressed by the chapters in this volume, are situated in a specific context. A little over two decades after its inauguration in India, neoliberalism now shapes urban space in deep and diverse ways, yet not necessarily in a manner that can be predicted based on "western" experiences.

Under the political-economic paradigm often abbreviated as "neoliberalism", the state creates the conditions for cycles of private investment and accumulation through policy instruments, financial incentives and enabling infrastructures. Bodies, communities and space are administered and policed in a manner that maximizes productivity of land and natural resources. Supposed indicators of worth, such as a "world class" status, megaprojects, city branding, major sports events, etc., are pursued in keeping with the broader logic of attracting investment from multinational firms (by way of production and service centres) and tourism, further expected to lead to jobs, a broader tax base, foreign investment and overall economic growth. Cities have thus come to be viewed as engines of national growth and development, and operating in competition with each other within a global system (Brenner, 1999; Smith, 2002).

These processes have been examined thoroughly by critical theorists from various vantage points. Harvey (2005) periodizes these developments as a phase in capitalism dominated by "accumulation by dispossession" or profit-making that results from the "non-productive" sectors like land speculation, privatization of the commons and so on. Hardt and Negri (2001), through the concept of "Empire", have argued that the state and capital become an inextricable unity fed by the extraction of surplus through the appropriation of human creativity via immaterial labour. Wacquant (2010) understands neoliberalism as a political project with the state as the pivot, imposing market logics on the commons, while inaugurating unprecedented mechanisms of surveillance and the penalization of marginalized populations. For Smith (1996) the state assumes a "revanchist" stance through punitive policies towards spaces and communities not yielding the highest possible rents. Some of these impacts of neoliberalism are visible in cities in the developing world (Lees et al., 2015). As a diffuse and generalized set of imperatives, the spatial logic of neoliberalism operates in similar ways across planning cultures (Chakravarty and Qamhaieh, 2015), but, nevertheless, is always subject to a process of interpretation, adaptation and localization.

Certainly, each of these frames of interpretation contributes to our understanding of contemporary Delhi. And yet, it is a fraught venture to simply "apply" theory to situations in India or more generally in cities of the Global South, as has been argued persuasively (Donner and De Neve, 2006; Robinson, 2006; Roy, 2009b; Anjaria and McFarlane, 2011; Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Sheppard et al., 2013; Connell, 2014; Ren and Luger, 2014; Watson, 2014; Miraftab and Kudva, 2015).

It is important to extend the analysis of neoliberal city planning and governance beyond the competitive-revanchist world city model, to incorporate heterodox histories, struggles around infrastructures that support everyday life, modes of survival of subaltern populations and structures that underpin the conditions of existence of the majority. To grasp the contemporary urban condition, in other words, it is critical to understand how general processes are conceived, adapted and reshaped by specific contexts.

The paths traversed by specific places must be illuminated by empirically engaged research. It is precisely this method that Tsing (2004) has in mind when she invites us to examine universals as "practical projects accomplished in a heterogeneous world" (8); to illuminate, in the words of Brenner and Theodore (2002, 2005), "actually existing neoliberalisms"(also see Peck et al. 2009). Whereas the state is believed to recede from its social welfare functions as part of the neoliberal transformation, welfare programmes in India have not dissolved, but rather grown in volume, reach and impact. Though the work of state-backed welfare programmes remains uneven, mired in corruption and ultimately still insufficient on many measures, the welfare component of the polity has not diminished and is increasingly inclusive of groups that had earlier remained marginal to the state and economy. These trends sit uneasily with the trajectory anticipated by theorizations of neoliberalism emanating from the Global North. Moreover, what is true of Delhi may not hold in the second- and third-order cities around the country. Therefore, if divergent outcomes are witnessed despite the generality of overarching logics, it must be concluded that local conditions matter. The complex of ideologies, institutions and political practices in specific locales are as important as the gravity of global capital. It is necessary, then, to investigate how broad and universal policy outlooks that represent neoliberalism, are contested, co-opted and contextualized in specific places and systems.

With the opening up of various sectors to private—and global—investment as part of the neoliberal reorienting of the Indian political economy, and the subsequent speculation-driven investment in urban property, a huge "rent gap" (Smith, 1987) emerged at the scale of the city, and in particular at sites that were central and relatively well connected to the existing and emergent economic nodes. What was earlier beautification or other motive-led enforcement of property was now increasingly driven by real estate's "re-enchantment" (Knox, 2005) with spaces that were under some form of precarious existence. Several developments that dot Delhi's landscape today, for instance, are constructed on erstwhile squatter colonies (e.g. Pacific Mall, Punjabi Bagh) or green patches (e.g. Vasant Kunj malls) and wetlands (e.g. Commonwealth Games Village), part of the urban commons. This period has been thus marked by a wave of dislocations for the urban poor. Important research projects (Menon-Sen, 2006; Ghosh, 2008; Menon-Sen and Bhan, 2008; Rao, 2010; Ramakrishnan, 2014) have outlined the immediate impacts of displacement in Delhi.

Neoliberal urbanism was overlaid on a very specific imagination of the citizen as the subject of welfare. As critiqued by various scholars (Ghertner, 2011; Webb, 2012, 2013), mechanisms of redistributive welfare *and* service delivery are deeply enmeshed within webs of patronage that link together politicians, middlemen (*pradhans)*, lower-level bureaucrats and local strongmen. Some of these cross-scalar alliances are built around shared occupation and/or caste, as Gill (2009) illustrates in her study of Delhi's waste recycling networks. Such webs of patronage are operationalized for securing de facto tenurial rights and access to basic services to the urban subalterns, in exchange for political support, a form of welfare clientelism distinctive to Indian cities. Such compacts necessarily exist alongside a

degree of insecurity, but that, paradoxically, is also their raison d'etre, and the reason why residents in informal settlements tag their futures to one or another local strongman.

Recently, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) juggernaut claimed a majority in Delhi's Legislative Assembly, based on promises to undo the patronage complex, and thereby improve service delivery. In addition, the party was able to win over a large number of lower income voters based on promises of regularizing unauthorized colonies and halting demolitions, a tactic used successfully by the Congress in previous Delhi state elections. To what extent AAP will deliver on its promises remains to be seen.

1.3 Reading Interstitial Spaces

This volume analyzes Delhi's urbanization through the politics and everyday contestations of its interstitial spaces. By the term "interstitial" we mean the ordinary spaces that exist alongside centres of consumption, megaprojects, special economic zones, gated communities, high-end apartment complexes and large infrastructure installations. Interstitial spaces are not of direct interest to large investors and developers, and are typically dwarfed by remarkable artefacts of urbanization. Interstitial spaces are the neighbourhoods, parks and streets that constitute the everyday city. These may be entirely new formations, or evolving socio-spatial entities with changing meanings and functions, or even old places existing in the vestiges of other times.

Yet they are not untouched by state and capital. Rather, in these spaces, neoliberalism is still an incomplete and evolving project, mediated by small developers, with interventions from a number of actors (including state authorities, non-governmental organizations, financial institutions, contractors, lower bureaucrats, etc.), along with counter-vectors of public agency (such as street hawkers, domestic workers, artists, migrants and other marginalized groups.)

In Delhi, interstitial spaces, much like extraordinary objects of analysis, exhibit the influence of policy asphyxiation (i.e. a lack of novel ideas, disjointed vision, haphazard implementation etc.) And they are equally subject to the rules that govern investment and accumulation. Yet, due to a number of historical and political factors, outcomes are unpredictable and require contextual investigation and theorization. While appreciating the structural and global forces at play, these chapters attend to the "friction" (Tsing, 2004) generated in the moments when universal ideas hit the ground. As such, they are keenly interested in spontaneous and scalar reworkings of anticipated urbanities.

Various works have made important contributions to understanding urbanization in Delhi, and in India in general. Confronted by unceasing urban growth, efforts to plan urban development are unstructured, uncoordinated and, in the face of pressures of speculation, insensitive to social and environmental concerns (Mahadevia, 2011). Narratives of "modernization" and democratization coexist with zealous

identities, exploitative regimes of accumulation, and semi-feudal systems of property and labour (Baviskar, 2003; Chatterjee, 2009). In this general scenario, the reshaping of the Indian city as a neoliberal spectacle, its spaces of consumption, and its revanchist outlook towards land uses, practices and groups that compromise the success of the agenda, is well documented (Bhan, 2009; DuPont, 2011, 2004; Ghertner, 2012; Rao, 2010, 2013; Roy, 2009a; Schenk, 2004).

There is also a rich body of work that engages with the existential and political lives in urban slums (Das, 2011; Datta, 2012) and with the imaginaries and performances tied to the city's elite and middle-class lives (Baviskar and Ray 2011; Dasgupta 2014; Ghertner, 2015). Much of the critical work on urbanism and urbanization in Delhi (Srivastava, 2015) pivots around a poverty-versus-consumption dialectic, expressed in spatial terms as the juxtaposition of slums against shopping malls and "gated communities". The tension emanating from the polarization of space is very real in Delhi today, and thus unsurprisingly reported frequently in existing literature.

These studies are a necessary point of departure in locating Delhi within a comparative global framework. Interstitial spaces, however, are inconspicuous in the sense that they do not command public or scholarly attention as do spaces of absolute poverty and deprivation (as also argued by Lemanski and Lama-Rewal, 2013). How, then, does spectacular urbanism (including "spectacles" of both excess and deprivation) relate to ordinary inconspicuous spaces and features of urbanization? If the logic of neoliberal accumulation, interacting spontaneously with local conditions, produces sanitized enclaves and unsanitary slums, what does the same process mean for the rest of the city? What becomes of lands where malls are not financially infeasible? What kind of lived spaces are created in the process?

Studies on the politics of interstitial neighbourhoods, districts and nascent spatial formations are relatively less common. The tendency to "reduce" the dynamics of urbanization to winners-and-losers of "brave new" India obscures the trends, tensions and topologies in the middle. Filling this gap in knowledge, however, is only a part of the challenge. Separate theorization of interstitial and ordinary spaces, within the study of neoliberal urbanism, also leads to advancement in the broader analysis of the logic and mechanics of spatial production. Although slums and squatter settlements are complex formations, and hold much analytical value, a critical objective of this volume is to explore the interstices of scholarship. It is for this reason that we have specifically chosen to focus on interstitial spaces (markets, resettlement colonies, industrial areas, urban villages, public transportation), at the obvious expense of slums and squatter settlements.

As long as neoliberal urbanism is understood through its most visible artefacts, either nodes of consumption and accumulation, or those of absolute poverty, little is known of how neoliberalism is played out in the rest of the city. Studying the "predictable excesses" of neoliberalism also leaves us with an incomplete understanding of local politics, capacities for adaptation, and the agency and ingenuity of those holding power and capital, as also those at the margins of these structures. Ultimately we only obtain a partial understanding of the fuller nature of neoliberal urbanism itself. Studying the contestations of ordinary spaces helps to understand

how the logic of neoliberalism operates in partial, incremental or emergent forms where it is not able to operate expansively. In so doing this volume responds to Maringanti's (2013) call to utilize "ordinary entanglements" as an analytical tool.

This approach yields tangible gains in theorization. For example, the celebratory narrative of economic growth posits increasing disposable incomes and consumption as incontrovertible evidence of success, and poverty as a tragic by-product—temporary, and afflicting only a few, who are destined, eventually, to catch up. In contrast, the studies compiled in this volume locate interstitial spaces as data points on a *continuum* of contemporary urbanization. The trend line, which begins with exclusive residential and retail enclaves on one end, and pockets of absolute deprivation and dispossession on the other, describes a principle (or logic, or function) that applies to all parts of the city with different intervening conditions.

As such, interstitial spaces help elucidate the logic of governance and investment that links the various artefacts of urbanization. Far from being a temporary and unavoidable condition afflicting a few, dispossession is an everyday norm and a deliberate strategy with which everyone has to contend. This argument provides a serious challenge to the narrative promoted by the state (regardless of incumbent political ideology) that, barring outliers, economic growth has increased welfare for everyone and empowered all communities. All parts of the city are under the pressures of the neoliberal growth machine—either directly through investment, or indirectly through labour, rent, support services and regulations. There is, however, more contestation and negotiation of outcomes in the ordinary middle, than there is in the inevitable malls and marginalized slums.

Two clarifications are warranted in this regard. First, "interstitial spaces", as conceptualized here, are not necessarily used and occupied only by the "middle class". As understood for the purpose of this volume, interstitial spaces may be owned, leased, inhabited, occupied, operated or navigated, exclusively or simultaneously, for various periods of time, by people of various economic classes. Like any other space, interstitial spaces, too, are co-produced by their users, owners, developers, planners and elected representatives. Second, the idea of "interstitial spaces" is quite different from the idea of "informality", or spaces falling outside realms of regulation, or leftover spaces as conceptualized by Brighenti (2013), Matos (2009) and Tonnelat (2008) among others. As explained above, for our purpose, the term "interstitial" points to an epistemological condition.

1.4 Organization of the Volume

The studies in this volume are organized into four parts, which traverse aspects of dislocation, citizenship at the margins, tensions between regulation, accumulation and survival, and strategies of labor and mobility, particularly among women. The various narratives offer a kaleidoscopic view of the contestations that define Delhi's urbanism. It is worth noting that the studies compiled in this volume represent an interdisciplinary field, including works grounded in geography,

Fig. 1.1 Locations of the studies presented in this volume. **Map copyright** © Rohit Negi and Surajit Chakravarty

anthropology, economics, urban planning, political science and public policy. We believe this secular outlook is necessary to achieve the fuller understanding we seek of both urbanization and neoliberalism. Locations of the studies compiled in this volume are shown in Fig. 1.1.

1.4.1 Part 1: Dis/Locating Bodies

The first part of the book serves to remind us how bodies are moved strategically in urban space according to the logics of rent extraction. As citizens resist

and negotiate their rights and legitimacy, shifts in state policies and practices continually unmap and remap places and communities. Bodies and populations are redefined and juggled through acts of dislocation, disciplining and the uneven operation of planning instruments.

Seth Schindler studies the precarity of street hawkers, and how, perceived as a nuisance and disruptive of public order, their space and mobility is restricted through coercion and intimidation. Shruti Dubey critiques the processes by which residents of Kathputli Colony were relocated and the land cleared for development. Kathputli Colony was home to a community of craftspeople and puppeteers, a genuine island of creativity, tradition and community (Sennett, 2008; Chakravarty, 2011) in the otherwise overwhelmingly consumerist city.

1.4.2 Part 2: Claims at the Urban Frontier

The three chapters in the second part follow the trajectory of relocated citizens to their new home at the urban frontier—the large resettlement project of Savda Ghevra in Bawana—now receiving waves of arrivals from cleansing drives and megaprojects. Even as residents of resettlement colonies display immense resilience to bounce back from dislocation, their struggles of identity and placemaking are always tenuous and temporary, awaiting the next wave of valuations and changes. Following a predictable trajectory, the peri-urban is "opened up" with less profitable uses, until the land is revalorized. Concomitant characteristics of "frontier culture" (Tsing, 2004; Li, 2014) include unclear boundaries, informality, internal contests and contests with long-term residents. Chapters in this section examine these new sites of vulnerability.

Kavita Ramakrishnan investigates how unsettled citizens re-engage the state in their struggle for legitimacy. Ursula Rao argues that struggles for survival are reset in Savda Ghevra, resulting in competitive micropolitics and processes of gentrification within the resettlement colony. Building on the critique, Rolee Aranya and Vilde Ulset astutely posit resettlement as an incomplete and abandoned state project—a quintessential product of the informalized state, where informality returns within explicitly formalized spaces.

1.4.3 Part 3: Informalization and Investment

Driven by investment in finance and real estate, Delhi has also gained a layer of residential suburbs along with spaces of conspicuous consumption. Several unlikely agents have had a part to play in the property-led redevelopment of the city, including the Delhi Metro, but despite the engagement of such celebrated agents, the process through which land is remade into differentiated property retains elements of informality.

The third part takes a closer look at relationships between investment, informality and governance, particularly at emergent scales and spatialities. The four papers in this section attempt to elucidate the dynamics through which informalized governance is creating new kinds of investments opportunities that are shaping city form. Surajit Chakravarty critiques the "urban village" category, as a socio-spatial entity rooted in layers of informality, and overrun with rentier real estate development in the absence of adequate and appropriate state interventions. Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda in their study of the "unauthorized colony" of Sangam Vihar, find evidence of a community disconnected from state agencies, courted before elections and forgotten soon thereafter.

Delhi also grew as an industrial centre until the 1980s, with both small and large enterprises, attracting millions of migrants from the hinterlands to the city. Though manufacturing sector employment has declined in Delhi in recent times (Negi, 2010), residential areas near the remaining industrial zones have become hubs of flexible and shape-shifting economic activities. Sumangala Damodaran's chapter on the industrial areas of Wazirpur and Patparganj, sheds light on the settlements near industrial estates that accommodate rural workers in dormitory-like conditions, creating new kinds of socio-spatial entities. Bérénice Bon shows how government agencies engage each other through collusion and competition, in developing real estate around Delhi Metro stations. Institutional weaknesses in megaproject development undermine process and externalize social issues.

1.4.4 Part 4: Gendered Mobility

The fourth part focuses on issues of mobility and gender. Sonal Sharma traces domestic workers' attempts to resolve the tripartite spatial challenge that defines their existence in the city—access to affordable housing, access to stable employment, and the means of access itself. Tara Atluri's essay interprets the 2012 Delhi gang rape case from a spatial perspective, employing it as a heuristic to explore the bus as a locus of a feminist-spatial struggle.

1.5 Findings About Delhi

As discussed earlier, the outcomes of neoliberalism are diverse, contested and negotiated. Neoliberalism, as a vector, advanced forcefully by the agents of global capital in conjunction with bearers of political power, pushes urban space in somewhat predictable directions. Yet local conditions and actors mediate specific outcomes. A thorough reading of the production of space, its processes and outcomes, reveals nuances of the local conditions that mould the neoliberal project. State agencies, internally differentiated by power and access to resources, attempt to clear the way for investment, all the while trying to balance measures

of economic success with welfarism. Significantly, private capital, in turn, articulates with Delhi's politics and governmentality to further its advance, leading to novel outcomes such as emergent investment opportunities for small capital and increasingly informalized institutions of planning. Meanwhile, those affected by the developing propinquity between state and capital, attempt to salvage a life at the margins, with varying degrees of success. These "margizens" (Schuilenburg, 2008) must engage with the same formal and informal institutions, understand and adapt to changing rules and policies, and find ways into networks, in order to cobble together basic services, employment and tenure.

The studies find ordinary "interstitial" spaces to be neither immune to the broader urban politics, nor passive towards it. Ordinary spaces, too, are deeply contested, between a variety of stakeholders. The experiences of these spaces challenge usual narratives of victimhood, yet should also not be romanticized, as nascent forms of resistance are able to operate only within strict regulatory and existential limitations. The volume adds to our understanding of neoliberalism as a comprehensive institutional and regulatory logic that affects everything in its path, not just remarkable sites of consumption or deprivation. The selected cases illustrate how neoliberal urbanization operates in spaces where it is fettered and contested. The cases also illuminate the processes and power relations behind Delhi's unique urban complexity.

The volume confirms that Delhi's urban form and planning institutions reveal a disarray of thought and action. Lacking a coherent vision, state agencies find themselves caught between competing ideological positions, layers of bureaucracy and a budget deficit. The state remains a bundle of contradictions, challenged by a dearth of conviction and capacity. The government performs a delicate balancing act between compliance with the neoliberal agenda on one hand, and welfare-based politicking on the other. Consequently, state agencies often appear to be getting in their own way and making contradictory policies. State agencies attempt to make the city "attractive" to capital, but this process continues to be resisted and contested on the ground. Small capital finds rent-seeking opportunities is risky environments where large capital does not (yet) dare tread. For instance, large formal-sector developers are not yet players in the booming unauthorized colonies, but some local builders and contractors are able to make small fortunes in that vacuum. That which cannot be turned into high-end retail gets turned into uses that can derive the maximum rent within the given context.

Popular resistance to formal or informal capital accumulation is carefully managed through de/regulation, shifting of bodies, and incremental offers of legitimacy. Those at the margins of structures of capital and power attempt to maximize their welfare by forming vote blocks, and by finding anchors within informal networks that form to take the place of uneven state welfare functions. The margins themselves have become heterogeneous featuring different kinds of grey citizenship claims. New local markets of welfare, property and labour take shape within the combined context of informality and marginality. These new informalities and grey networks operate across different scales from the Metro system to households and individual properties within the ordinary sites and spaces.

Chapters in this volume analyze Delhi's urbanization through its interstitial spaces, using the framework of accumulation, governmentality and social reproduction. They do so via deeply engaged and situated methodologies, while being attentive to the cross-scalar imbrications of everyday lives in the city. The chapters rub conceptual questions against experiences on the ground, and triangulate the information using official narratives and policies, and broader political analyses. We hope that readers will gain clarity on the politics and contestations that shape Delhi's everyday spaces and urbanism. Further, it is expected that the analyses will yield a fuller understanding of the ongoing processes linked to governance, accumulation and solidarities in the global south.

1.6 Contributions from "Off the Map"

This volume's examination of trends in Delhi's urbanization offers insights for reading cities in the global south and perhaps even more widely. The first lesson to emerge in this regard is that although the effects of neoliberalism can be seen everywhere, it is not a stable uniformly applicable concept, with entirely predictable outcomes. Accordingly, as we study the neoliberalization of Delhi, so we delve deeper into the "Delhification" of neoliberalism. Cities around the world bend and skew "classical" neoliberal expectations in their own ways. The nature of this transformation depends on the peculiarities of local political culture and the strength of social institutions. As cities like Delhi inch closer to three decades of economic and urban reforms, we certainly find some of the expected processes play out, but also begin to recognize many more, somewhat less expected, outcomes.

It is expected that neoliberal urbanization will lead to polarization of space and society through its various instruments. These include the privatization of public goods, enclosure of the commons, and the enforcement of regimes of private property where the urban poor had built tenuous lives. To these can be added other anticipated outcomes such as the valorization of consumption-oriented land uses, land-based incentives for investment of large capital, and the entrenchment of increasingly technocratic polity or what Ferguson (1990) called the "anti-politics machine".

There is no doubt that these processes have played out to a large extent. Studies in this volume show that there have also been a number of unexpected outcomes—in terms of urban functions and morphology—of the enactment of neoliberal policies. Small capital has thrived in grey spaces, bringing welcome prosperity for some, while leading to reproduction of informality and marginality. The land and construction industries, riding on the lure of speculative profits, cast a long shadow on planning and welfare functions. Yet, due to stakes in electoral politics, politicians have continued to support welfare functions through state agencies, and also through cliques of private-sector service providers. Communities have utilized institutions of democracy to launch struggles for tenure and welfare (some

more successfully than others). Those packed off to resettlement colonies have not become passive victims of eviction, but have continued to struggle for their rights to the city. The more things change the more they stay the same. The inertia of "older" institutions outlasts commitments to neoliberalism. Corruption, identity allegiances and cynical competition continue to underpin all political activity. This political habitus is made resilient through bureaucracy—institutional ecology and regimes of procedures and plans—which evolve to make space for neoliberalism, while keeping structures of power resolutely in place.

At least in some contexts neoliberalism can be more of a catalyst than a cause for the observed trends. Parties across political spectrum have supported the world city agenda at the local level and neoliberal "restructuring" more generally over the last 30 years or so. Delhi's neoliberal experiment was, in great measure, dominated by the political aim of selling the dream of a "world class" city, and the "development" industry's desire to profit from ensuing projects. Critical scholarship on Delhi followed these early indications and rightly found evidence of what Harvey (2005) calls "accumulation by dispossession".

Between unexpected socio-spatial outcomes and resilient political-economic institutions the trajectory of neoliberal urbanization in Delhi raises new questions for theory. What has neoliberalism changed in the infrastructure delivery sector? Water, for example, was privately supplied in many parts of the city before neoliberalism and still is today. The supply was characterized by oligopolistic tendencies then, as it is now. Earlier this system was considered a temporary arrangement until the state could build capacity. Now it is considered not only a legitimate solution, but valorized as a policy that encourages private sector participation. Similarly, housing was tightly controlled by a coterie of influential politicians and construction corporates. It still is. Though, perhaps, more competitors have been able to enter the construction and real estate market. And yet more people than ever before are living in informal settlements.

The metro has made commuting easier for millions of residents but, as Bon's chapter indicates, it is now becoming a real estate developer challenging existing institutional norms. Chapters on rural immigrants (Ramakrishnan, Rao, and Aranya and Ulset), street vendors (Schindler), industrial labourers (Damodaran) and domestic workers (Sharma), all indicate that certain groups are caught between being needed for their economic functions, and being located within a strategically managed geography of marginality. Other chapters (Dubey, Chakravarty, Sheikh and Banda, and Atluri) uncover new contestations within evolving socio-spatial contexts—revolving around caste, class, gender, newcomers to the city, competition between multinational and local small-scale capital, and political grappling over it all. Cases in this volume describe new socio-spatial formations, narratives of lives reconstructed after the neoliberal "intervention" (Ong, 2007) or "Event" (Žižek, 2014), bureaucratic innovations, and novel strategies of making claims of citizenship. These are the unpredictable (peculiar-emergent) spaces and moments within which neoliberalism is simultaneously operationalized and contested. There is reason to suggest, then, that studies of neoliberal urbanization must revisit some of the generalizations that were made based on early trends.

The potential for resistance resides in this very unevenness of neoliberalism, which is found in the ordinary everyday spaces of the city. By recognizing and questioning the machinations of statecraft, and creating frameworks for revalorizing the land, labour and livelihoods of the dispossessed classes, scholarship can hope to contribute to just and sustainable urbanization patterns. A more nuanced understanding of what neoliberalism does to cities will emerge from engaged and situated research in interstitial ordinary spaces. Future research should pay attention to mediating contexts and remain open to identifying nonlinear changes, in order to distinguish the predictable, the persistent, and the novel-hybrid condition. We expect the fine-grained analyses of this volume to go some way in illustrating the path on which such an agenda may travel.

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Part I
Dis/Locating Bodies

Chapter 2
Seeing and Governing Street Hawkers Like a Fragmented Metropolitan State

Seth Schindler

Approximately 500 street hawkers gathered at Jantar Mantar in central Delhi on 16 February 2014, and demanded the passage of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Bill.[1] By providing a framework that mandates how municipalities throughout India regulate street hawking, the bill provides protection against capricious local officials. Some of the hawkers announced that they were launching an indefinite hunger strike until the bill passed the upper house of parliament, the Rajya Sabha, and *The Hindu* (2014) quoted one of their leaders: "A strong law protecting our livelihood can only put brakes on the loot and the terror of the men in khaki and municipal officials. Such people need to be put behind bars".

This episode demonstrates that many street hawkers consider the state the primary threat to their livelihoods on an everyday basis, while it is simultaneously a potential benefactor. In this chapter, and in line with a similar argument made in the introduction to this volume, I seek to explain the state's dual role by demonstrating that in Delhi "the state" is in fact a highly fragmented entity whose power is dispersed among numerous interest groups. As a result, street hawkers' interactions with "the state" unfold in a range of places, such as court rooms, parks, bazaars, municipal government offices and roadsides. This chapter adds to a growing body of scholarship that dismisses the notion of a singular state that acts purposefully and with coherence. Instead, the state encompasses a range of actors that oftentimes pursue competing agendas and work in contradictory ways (Gupta, 2012;

[1]Hereafter referred to as the Street Vendors Bill.

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Anjaria, 2011). This is not to suggest that the state is a powerless or imaginary entity. On the contrary, the actions of governmental officials can profoundly impact the people and places they "see" and act upon. However, consequences are often unintended and outcomes are seemingly arbitrary (Gupta, 2012).

The nature of interactions between street hawkers and municipal officials across Delhi's regulatory and actual landscape varies greatly. In this chapter, I contrast the actually existing everyday interactions among municipal authorities and street hawkers in Delhi's markets, roadsides and parks, with the regulatory framework put forth in the Street Vendors Bill. Street hawkers frame the struggle as that of a malevolent state bent on producing public space that is free of unlicensed street hawkers, versus a benevolent state committed to the creation of inclusive public space. Instead, I argue that the *multiple* ways in which various officials "see" and act upon street hawkers comprise the art of fragmented metropolitan government, and the Street Vendors Bill has the potential to reorder this fractured governance. As a result of establishing elaborate procedures to enumerate street hawkers and allocate space, the Street Vendors Bill could encourage street hawkers to make lawful claims. Thus, the stakes in this struggle are over what mode of governance will emerge, and how street hawkers will be "seen" and engaged.

2.1 The Regulation of Street Hawking in Delhi

Street hawking has a long history in Indian cities. In spite of forays into the Indian market by global retail giants such as Wal-Mart, the retail sector in India remains approximately 90 % informal. It provides livelihoods to rural migrants who cannot sell their labour power for a wage in the formal sector (see Sanyal, 2007) as well as retrenched formal-sector labourers (Bhowmik, 2013). Street hawkers offer a wide range of affordable goods, yet in spite of providing a valued service they are often criminalized by municipal governments (Bhowmik, 2013). Authorities commonly explain crackdowns on street hawkers as a response to the threat they pose to public health and order (Te Lintelo, 2009). Arvind Rajagopal (2001: 94) has argued that rather than an imminent threat, street hawkers are viewed by authorities as "a symbol of metropolitan space gone out of control" and an aesthetic affront to ongoing efforts to transform the city. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi Act, 1957 (Sec. 322) empowers authorities to confiscate "any article whatsoever hawked or exposed for sale on any public street or in any public place". While enforcement is haphazard and seemingly random, the vast majority of Delhi's 250,000–500,000 street hawkers (Bhowmik, 2013; SEWA, 2012) are unlicensed so they face a constant threat that municipal authorities tasked with preventing encroachment could confiscate their goods. Obtaining a license is essentially impossible, as it requires hawkers to provide evidence that they have been operating in a particular area for a number of years, yet given the nature of their work this is impossible for the vast majority of hawkers.

The governance of street hawking is not so straightforward in practice. The power of municipal authorities to prevent street hawkers from encroaching on public space is hampered "from above" by the Supreme Court. In a landmark decision in 1985, the Supreme Court limited the power of municipal authorities to evict street hawkers if it would devastate their livelihoods.[2] This ruling was followed by a second important Supreme Court ruling that forced municipal authorities to balance the needs of street hawkers with those of the wider public.[3] This decision mandated the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) to create a comprehensive regulatory framework for street hawking. While municipal authorities sought to meet the requirements outlined by the Supreme Court, they steadfastly refused to recognize street hawkers as legitimate users of public space. The logic employed by Delhi authorities was encapsulated in the law that was finally proposed by the New Delhi Municipal Council in 2006:

> The hawkers are large in number, but the population of citizens is many times more than that of hawkers and, therefore, the fundamental rights of the citizens cannot be put in jeopardy by permitting hawkers and squatters to block roads, footpaths, public parks, etc… Consistent with the rights of citizens, if it is possible to provide any space to hawkers, squatters, etc., that may be done consistent with the policy to be framed by the concerned Authority.

This law is clearly out of step with the Supreme Court's balanced ruling, and it set the stage for conflict between municipal authorities and civil society organizations that support street hawkers. These conflicts unfolded in courts as organizations such as the National Association of Street Vendors in India (NASVI), the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Manushi accused Delhi authorities for failing to comply with earlier Supreme Court orders (see Schindler, 2014a). Municipal officials were forced to relent and establish committees—which included representatives of street hawkers—to identify spaces where licensed street hawkers could operate. These zonal vending committees (ZVCs) failed to identify a significant amount of space for street hawkers, however, and the committee members representing street hawkers claimed that municipal authorities actively subverted the ZVCs' mission. When the mandate authorizing the ZVCs expired in December 2011, a Delhi High Court judge disbanded them, claiming that "both NDMC and the representatives of hawkers/squatters/vendors are members of the Vending Committee. A Committee of adversaries cannot be said to be having adjudicatory powers".[4]

Street hawkers were occasionally able to obtain favourable rulings in lower courts, but this High Court ruling is important because it signaled the emergence of a consensus among authorities in Delhi. Importantly, it empowered authorities to unilaterally evict encroaching hawkers without trying to reach a compromise over how and by whom space could be used, and without considering how

[2] Olga Tellis & Ors v Bombay Municipal Council [1985] 2 Supp SCR 51.

[3] Sodan Singh & Ors v NDMC & Ors [1989] 4 SCC 155.

[4] NDMC v Usha Gangaria & Ors [2011] Delhi High Court No. 13647/2009.

their eviction would affect their livelihoods. This did not give authorities a free hand to evict hawkers, however, because they also faced pressure "from below", as non-state actors at the micro-scale protect street hawkers from authorities and facilitate their use of space in exchange for rent. These organizations include resident welfare associations, market traders' associations and local gangs. While in some cases these non-state interest groups seek to extract as much rent as possible from street hawkers, others are motivated by the prospect of regulating the flows of people and goods in their environs. This is the case in upscale colonies, where resident welfare associations license hawkers in an effort to regulate who enters their communities, what they sell and how much they charge. While these arrangements require street hawkers to subordinate themselves to powerful local interest groups, they do provide street hawkers with access to space and secure livelihoods (Schindler, 2014b, c).

In September 2013, the Supreme Court once again affirmed street hawkers' right to use public space, but it also empowered High Courts to hear cases concerning street hawking, noting that "it is virtually impossible for the [Supreme] Court to monitor day-to-day implementation of the provisions of different enactments and the directions contained in the judgments noted hereinabove".[5] This demonstrates the extent to which power is dispersed throughout "the state" with a number of agencies and officials struggling to regulate how and by whom public space is used. Meanwhile, non-state actors participate in the regulation of space on an everyday basis. Municipal authorities who would like to limit street hawkers' use of space *tout court* face opposition "from above" (i.e. the Supreme Court) and "from below" (the street). Instead of imposing a permanent and comprehensive regulatory regime, municipal authorities periodically assert their power to determine how and by whom urban space is used by raiding markets. These raids are violent assertions of sovereignty in which municipal employees confiscate the wares of unlicensed street hawkers encroaching on public space. It is to these raids that I turn in the next section.

2.2 Market Raids and the Street Vendors Bill

The first time I witnessed a raid was when I was eating lunch in a *dhaba* (roadside restaurant) at a market in south Delhi when two blue Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) trucks arrived each carrying half a dozen labourers. They were followed closely by two Ambassadors[6] with red lights flashing, from which officials in starched white shirts emerged. Their objective was to enforce zoning laws, and this meant confiscating hawkers' wares and shopkeepers' displays that extended

[5]Maharashtra Ekta Hawkwrs Union & another v Municipal Corporation, Greater Mumbai & Ors [2013] (9)SCC490; 2013(9)CPSC31(SC).

[6]This is a make of car commonly used by government officials in India.

onto walkways. Their arrival sparked pandemonium as hawkers fled into nearby alleyways and shopkeepers hurriedly dismantled their displays that were extending from their shop fronts onto the pavement. Most hawkers carried all of their goods and easily escaped, but some hawkers compromised their mobility by displaying their goods on the ground and they required more time to flee. The labourers in the trucks disembarked and they began confiscating things on the orders of the officials. A few unlucky hawkers who sold clothing had their inventory confiscated and thrown into the back of the truck, and then the labourers began tearing down storefront displays, such as mannequins displaying readymade *kurta*s (a kind of upper body garment). The trucks wound their way slowly through the market. There was a heavy police presence to restrain the crowd that gathered, many of whom were hawkers who had returned to the market to witness the raid after stashing their goods in nearby hiding places. At the centre of the market there was a small open space where some street food vendors typically gathered. One vendor abandoned his oven and escaped with the rest of his things, but instead of confiscating it one of the municipal labourers smashed it to pieces with a metal pipe.

While I photographed this incident I was approached by police. They first sought to confiscate my camera, but I produced a business card for an NGO with which I volunteered. After a rather lengthy discussion, I was allowed to keep my camera although I had to promise not to take any more photographs. They said that photographing the incident required permission from the officials, who, in the meantime, had worked their way to the other end of the market. Meanwhile a large crowd had gathered to observe my interaction with the police. I asked one of the officers why the police were involved in the operation because typically enforcing zoning ordinances is not their responsibility. "[We're here] because of the violence" he said nonchalantly. The only violence I witnessed was perpetrated by the municipal employees.

The police escorted me to the officials directing the operation, who were in the warren of alleyways behind the main shop fronts, ordering the labourers to look for goods stashed by street hawkers inside air conditioning units, under stairwells and cars. The atmosphere was tense as bodies jostled in close quarters and police slammed their *lathi*s (sticks) on the ground to keep the crowd at bay. The crowd was comprised of street hawkers who had returned to watch the raid after hiding their goods, and it momentarily recoiled with each swing of a *lathi*. The MCD official directing the raid introduced himself and then confirmed that bystanders were prohibited from photographing the incident because it was a "government operation". Nevertheless, the incident changed the way in which I was viewed by street hawkers, who had hitherto remained rather indifferent to my presence. Many of the street hawkers became eager to share their stories of harassment at the hands of municipal officials and some of them became long-term informants and contacted me whenever a raid commenced.

The street hawkers explained that in order to work in the market they pay a weekly fee to an intermediary, and they are strictly prohibited from harassing shoppers, charging too much for their goods and congregating in front of the entrances to shops. In return for rent the intermediary typically informs them of

impending raids, and prevents hawkers who have not paid the weekly fee from operating in the market. In other words, this informal system determines how and by whom space within the market is used on a daily basis, and it provides street hawkers with a measure of security. The first raid I witnessed was unique because the labourers from the city's enforcement department were accompanied by mid-level bureaucrats, and this most likely explains why there was no advanced warning. Furthermore, the hawkers explained that the labourers usually only make half-hearted attempts to confiscate their goods, and they are normally not pursued into adjacent alleyways.

The details given by these hawkers confirmed what I had been told on numerous occasions, that the MCD's mid-level bureaucracy posed a particular danger to street hawkers. One group of hawkers who operated small roadside stalls near Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium explained how they were removed:

> During the Commonwealth Games in India, we were requested to remove [our stalls] and we agreed, but there was no written agreement though, they told us, that once the Commonwealth Games ends we could start it again. But after the Commonwealth Games, they were not allowing us to put it back, and then we went to the MCD and to the police. They asked us to get it in writing. (Personal communication, June 2011)

In this instance officials explained that they could provide the written document for a fee. Thus, municipal officials are threatening to street hawkers in multiple ways. On the one hand they participate in the extra-legal web of negotiations and rent payments which determine land-use on an everyday basis, while on the other hand they occasionally enforce formal zoning ordinances.

A few weeks after the raid I went to the MCD's new headquarters opposite Ramlila Maidan in central Delhi. I was told that the enforcement of zoning laws was managed at another building near Chandni Chowk in north Delhi and I finally found the office in a municipal office at Civil Lines (north Delhi). I arrived in the morning as the labourers were lounging around awaiting assignments. I explained to the incharge that I was conducting research and would like to accompany one of his teams to learn about the enforcement of zoning ordinances in Delhi. He politely explained that I was mistaken, that I would not learn about enforcement from his office because he simply relayed orders from above. The phone rang and judging by his deferential tone the person on the other end was a superior. When he hung up the receiver he barked some orders to the labourers; apparently a car was illegally parked and he was ordered to investigate. This incident gave the impression that the enforcement of zoning laws is extremely haphazard. It was unclear where orders to enforce zoning laws at particular times and places originated, as was the logic of selecting those times/places.

The next time the market was raided one of the street hawkers phoned me. This raid was passé in comparison to the first one I witnessed. The labourers were not being directed by officials, and they did not make an effort to pursue fleeing street hawkers or to find the places where they hid their goods. Street hawkers gathered in the alleyway behind the shopfronts and lounged around, waiting for the MCD trucks to depart so they could resume their operations. Some simply disguised themselves as shoppers. One hawker explained: "They never take my stuff,

[because when] they come, I put it in my pack. Who will know whether I am a shopper or not?" Thus, for many hawkers municipal raids represent little danger, but the constant threat of a raid impacts their livelihoods because they must remain highly mobile. This typically requires a trade-off because they can only keep as much inventory on hand that they can quickly remove and/or hide in the event of a raid. Some hawkers have devised strategies that allow them to compromise their mobility and enlarge their stock. For example, some hawkers have standing agreements with shopkeepers, who, for a small fee, allow them to stash their goods inside their shops during raids. One hawker who operated a relatively large stand and sells cosmetics, combs and sunglasses, quickly dismantled his semi-permanent display into four parts which he moved less than ten metres into a nearby shop when a raid commences. Other hawkers have devised ingenious ways of hiding or disguising their goods. One group of hawkers who sold readymade *kurta*s kept a relatively large stockpile in an unused building nearby that had a security guard who was paid to watch over their inventory. This reduced their risk during raids, because at most the authorities could confiscate the items they had on display. One of my long-term informants was a member of this group, and one day she phoned and informed me that a raid had commenced. On this occasion this group of hawkers had been surprised and unable to escape. Six of them had their displayed goods confiscated. My informant explained that to compensate for this loss she would have to work longer hours in the coming days, but this was a contingency for which she was prepared. I walked to the nearby alleyway where a group of hawkers had congregated, and as we were speaking a commotion suddenly erupted across the street. The authorities had located the stockpile of *kurta*s in the vacant building and in an instant six hawkers lost everything. My informant was in tears, and some male hawkers whose goods were confiscated began accusing another hawker—a competitor—of informing the authorities about the existence of the storage space. He denied any role in the matter, and for a moment it appeared as if the situation was going to turn violent, but then an elderly woman who was among those whose goods had been confiscated put an end to it by shouting: "I don't know who said [where our things were], but [I hope] their children will get sick and die".

Street hawkers resent not being able to work legally. One street hawker in his early teens complained: "It's not allowed to walk around and sell. If I thieve and eat it's allowed but if I sell here it's not". Others expressed their anger at the state more emotively; to the delight of a group of hawkers in one focus-group discussion, a young male hawker insisted that MCD stands for "mother *chod* Delhi".[7] Street hawkers' resistance goes beyond astute vernacular discursive framings of municipal governance, however, and they (1) try to evade municipal authorities on an everyday basis, while they (2) reveal themselves in particular times and places in order to gain proof of their existence (e.g. official documents). Meanwhile, the authorities tasked with enforcing court orders commonly disobey them, while they

[7]This is an obscenity meaning "motherfucking Delhi."

try to avoid creating a paper trail which hawkers could use as a basis for future claims to space. In one example, a group of hawkers were evicted from a bazaar in 2007 and ultimately relocated to an alternative space and forced to pay Rs. 100 to the MCD. The authorities provided a generic receipt of payment, but they were careful not to indicate why this payment was made. Instead, the receipts listed the payment as a "processing fee". Given the scarcity of such documents, however, many of the hawkers laminated these generic receipts and continued to carry them at the time of my fieldwork in 2011.

The evaluation of claims to urban space based on the documentation of practice is similar to what Rao (2010: 409; see also Chap. 5 in this volume) discovered in a resettlement colony on Delhi's outskirts, where "legality is established not only through the instruments and institutions of the state, but through a whole set of formal and informal dealings that produce paper trails as visible signs of urban membership". These papers can be receipts of payment from the authorities for the legal use of space, fines for illegally using space, membership cards in street hawkers' unions, or recognition from NGOs that advocate on behalf of street hawkers. Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (2011) showed that in Kolkata, where street hawkers are well organized in comparison to Delhi, an organization called the Hawker Sangam Committee keeps meticulous archives which document its members' use of space. This serves to bolster claims that hawkers have historically been an integral part of the urban landscape, and it distinguishes them from populations without archival histories such as pavement dwellers. These practices point to a formalization of claims-making strategies, in the sense that marginalized groups assert a lawful claim to urban space (see Datta, 2013), rather than try to convince authorities to make an exception to the law (Chatterjee, 2004, 2011). According to Chatterjee's formulation of *political society* groups identify as a community whose moral attributes entitle it to space and services (Chatterjee, 2004, 2011). In many instances accessing these entitlements is in violation of the law—such as occupying land owned by the Indian Railways—but the claims of these communities imply that morality supersedes law. Morality has undoubtedly served as a fertile terrain for claims-making in Indian cities. For example, there was widespread agreement that refugees from Partition were entitled to a place to live, even if that meant suspending the law and allowing them to construct dwellings on public property. However, it makes little sense for street hawkers to demand or plead with officials to allow them to operate in violation of the law, because municipal authorities have made it clear that they simply refuse to recognize street hawkers as legitimate users of public space. Thus, while street hawkers may indeed feel morally entitled to use urban space, this cannot form the basis for staking a claim. As a result of their refusal to recognize street hawkers as legitimate users of urban space, municipal authorities forego the possibility to exert subtle forms of power over street hawkers. Thus, coercion is the primary tactic in authorities' disciplinary repertoire. The Street Vendors Bill could significantly change how street hawking is governed because it (1) establishes a codified terrain upon which street hawkers can make lawful claims, and (2) it seeks to involve street hawkers in the regulation and management of public space.

The National Association of Street Vendors in India (NASVI) is a pan-India federation comprised of street hawker organizations, and in addition to engaging in struggles at the urban scale it lobbies on behalf of street hawkers at the national scale. The governance of street hawking varies significantly from city to city, and NASVI was instrumental in pushing for a national law that would mandate how municipal governments regulate hawking. The Street Vendors Bill was endorsed by the National Advisory Council and at NASVI's annual meeting held in 2011 the Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Kumari Selja, endorsed the bill. It remained a recommendation, however, and municipal authorities in Delhi took little notice. Now that the bill has become a law municipal governments are required to develop a regulatory framework for street hawking. In theory, this curtails the power of local authorities and police, and the violence of market raids would be replaced by a bureaucratic licensing and redressal system.

The Street Vendors Bill (Sec. 21) mandates that "every local authority shall, in consultation with the Planning Authority, once in every 5 years, make out a plan to promote a supportive environment for the vast mass of urban street vendors to carry out their vocation". This would be achieved by authorities identifying certain times and places where street hawkers could legally operate, and street hawkers could apply for licenses which would guarantee their right to work within these zones. Municipal governments are given discretion in identifying these hawking zones, but their everyday management is the responsibility of a Town Vending Committee (TVC). Each TVC is chaired by a high-ranking municipal official and includes representatives from other concerned departments (e.g. traffic police, planning authority) and civil society organizations (e.g. market associations and resident welfare associations). Importantly, at least forty percent of the membership of TVCs must represent street hawkers, and at least a third of these representatives must be women vendors. The Street Vendors Bill charges the TVC with the task of managing a licensing system for street hawkers (Chap. 7): "Every Town Vending Committee shall maintain an up to date records of registered street vendors and street vendors to whom certificate of vending has been issued containing name of such street vendor, stall allotted to him, nature of business carried out by him, category of street vending and such other particulars which may be relevant to the street vendors".

In summary, the Street Vendors Bill calls for municipal governments to identify spaces where hawkers can operate, and empowers TVCs to manage a licensing system for street hawkers. By connecting individual street hawkers to specific places, an extensive economy that has hitherto operated in the shadows of illegality is rendered visible. Once street hawkers are recognized by the state they can be acted upon. Chapter 3 of the Street Vendors Bill is entitled "Rights and Obligations of Street Vendors". This chapter guarantees licensed hawkers' access to urban space, and it obliges hawkers to "maintain cleanliness and public hygiene in the vending zones and the adjoining areas", and to "maintain civic amenities and public property in the vending zone in good condition and not damage or destroy or cause and damage or destruction to the same". Furthermore, the Street Vendors Bill provides for the education and training of street hawkers (Sec. 34),

and calls for municipal authorities to "develop and organize capacity building programmes for street vendors" and to "undertake research, education and training programmes to advance knowledge and understanding of the role of the informal sector in the economy…and to raise awareness among the public through Town Vending Committee".

2.3 Moving Beyond the Benevolent Versus Malevolent State

The disjuncture between the everyday governance of street hawking and the Street Vendors Bill is apparent. The everyday governance regime fails to recognize street hawkers as legitimate claimants to urban space, and municipal authorities are the primary threat to their livelihoods. The Street Vendors Bill would create a bureaucratic system that enumerates street hawkers, connects them with a place, and acts on them in an effort to induce particular behaviour. To many street hawkers the latter is preferable, and this explains why street hawkers consider the state a potential benefactor. In the previous section, I demonstrated that rather than embrace a singular notion of "the state", a range of governmental actors participate in the governance of street hawking. While this dynamic is captured by the dual narratives employed by street hawkers, I caution against assuming that this struggle among governmental actors will ultimately be reconciled through the emergence of a coherent regulatory framework for street hawking. While policy shifts are to be expected, what is at stake is not simply the emergence of a benevolent or malevolent state and a concomitant regulatory regime, but rather the modes through which municipal authorities "see" and act upon street hawkers.

The imagination of the state as the supreme agent of social change is one of colonialism's legacies in India (Kaviraj, 2010). Hansen (2009) argued that it has such purchase that the state assumes mythological and magisterial proportions. These deeply rooted assumptions are shaken, however, when ordinary people are subjected to violence at the hands of low-level officials. Hansen (2009: 35) explains that this disjuncture is reconciled by the notion that the state is singularly profane and sublime:

> The ['profane'] encompass[es] the incoherence, brutality, partiality and banality of the technical sides of governance, and the rough and tumble of negotiation, compromise and naked self-interest displayed in local politics. These features stand opposed to 'sublime' qualities imputed to a more distant state: that is, to the opaque secrets and knowledge of the state's higher echelons, to its hidden resources, designs and immense power, and to the higher forms of rationality or even justice believed to prevail there.

While it is unclear whether Delhi's street hawkers harbour a "state idea" (Abrams, 1988) that adheres to this model of sublime/profane, their demand for the passage of the Street Vendors Bill is not an attempt to hold a sublime mythical state accountable for unfulfilled Nehruvian promises. Instead, street hawkers' demand to be recognized as legitimate users of public space is directed at a very

real, yet fragmented, state apparatus. They hope that this recognition and the codification of a regulatory framework will reduce the arbitrariness of their encounters with public officials (see Gupta, 2012).

There is a general consensus that the logic and modes of governance in India is in a state of flux. Corbridge and Harriss (2000: xxiv, 161) argue that an "elite revolt" is eroding the Nehruvian state's "mythologies of rule"—socialism, secularism, federalism and democracy—and as a result there is a "legitimation of violence around the processes of accumulation and regulation". Gidwani and Reddy (2011: 1640) argue that in the emergent urban governance regime "neither the apparatuses of the state nor an increasingly anti-poor urban bourgeoisie seek an *ethical* engagement [with the poor]". They stress that this does not mean that the state disengages from the poor, but rather its "practices of engagement—when and where they occur—are fitful, contractual, and individualized" (2011: 1640). This accurately describes how local authorities seek to govern street hawking; while authorities may tacitly allow street hawking in some places, their overriding goal is to maintain their status as the final arbiter when it comes to land-use. In rare instances when street hawkers enjoy the legal right to use space their relationship with authorities is contractual, and municipal authorities prefer to handle claims on an individual basis rather than negotiate with street hawkers as a population group. Thus, low-level courts may occasionally rule in favour of individual street hawkers, but this does not challenge the prevailing view among municipal authorities that street hawkers *in general* are not legitimate users of urban space.

This governance regime does not "see" street hawkers as a population group entitled to use urban space. On the one hand this validates Chatterjee's (2004: 137) claim that "an entire substructure of paralegal arrangements, created or at least recognized by the governmental authorities, for the integration of low-wage labouring and service populations into the public life of the city" is being dismantled. On the other hand, however, it calls into question his widely cited formulation of *political society* in which claims to entitlements are made on the basis of membership in a community—or population group—with moral attributes. Indeed, market raids leave street hawkers with little doubt that municipal authorities do not feel morally or legally obliged to entertain their claims to space. Thus, the everyday governance of street hawking in Delhi operates by refusing to recognize hawkers as a population group with legitimate claims to urban space, and while their presence in certain times and places is tolerated, elsewhere they are subjected to violence and dispossession.

This mode of seeing and acting upon street hawkers differs from the logic that informs the Street Vendors Bill in significant ways. As noted above, the Street Vendors Bill connects street hawkers to a "proper" place. Furthermore, it seeks to engender a sense of responsibility among street hawkers and enroll them as partners in governance. Each of these modes of governance—the refusal to recognize street hawkers and their classification as a population group with legitimate claims to urban space—is imaginable and could be implemented. Thus, rather than interpret the governance of street hawking as a struggle between a benevolent/malevolent state, or sublime/profane state, the stakes are over the mode and logic of

governance. The Street Vendors Bill would add coherence to the art of fragmented metropolitan government, as street hawkers would be enumerated, fixed in place and subjected to programs aimed at their "improvement". Each regime—everyday governance and the Street Vendors Bill—elicits particular behaviour among street hawkers. The former forces street hawkers to remain mobile and invisible, while the latter encourages street hawkers to secure some form of formal recognition that could serve as the basis for a lawful claim to space. Currently many street hawkers practice both of these tactics, depending on the situation. Street hawkers' ability to evade authorities and encroach public space on an everyday basis confirms preconceived notions of their inherent deviance that are deeply rooted among affluent residents. For example, in the course of my research I interviewed a candidate running for an elected position of a resident welfare association in an affluent area (see Schindler, 2014c). I said that the neighbourhood seemed very well-maintained and orderly, and I remarked that there did not seem to be many street hawkers. He quickly assured me that "the vendor menace is there". This demonstrates that the mobility of street hawkers has fostered a perception that they could appear anywhere at any moment and encroach on public space, so even in their absence they pose a threat to public order. Thus, rather than produce non-deviant subjects, the extant everyday disciplinary regime provokes responses and resistance among street hawkers which, in turn, justify the existence of coercive disciplinary measures.

2.4 Conclusion

Four days after launching an indefinite hunger strike, street hawkers at Jantar Mantar were greeted with the news that the Street Vendors Bill had been passed by the Rajya Sabha. On 5 March 2014 the Street Vendors Bill was signed by the President and it came into effect on 1 May 2014 (for a timeline, see NASVI, 2014). Perhaps in anticipation of the passage of the Street Vendors Bill, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation convened its first Town Vending Committee meeting on 13 February 2014. Representatives of both NASVI and the Self-Employed Women's Association are among the committee's members, as well as other local organizations that represent street hawkers.

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, numerous stakeholders influence the governance of street hawking on an everyday basis. Power to influence the governance of street hawking is exercised by these actors at certain strategic locations, such as in courtrooms, bazaars, municipal government offices, sidewalks, parks, NGO offices and so on. This dispersion of power has precluded the emergence of a singular coherent set of regulations, and this explains why the enforcement of zoning ordinances seems random and is ineffectual. It remains unclear whether the TVC—regardless of whether it is sanctioned by the Street Vendors Bill—can concentrate power and usher in the implementation of a citywide regulatory regime. The answer to this open-ended question will explain what type of

"post-development" urban governance regime will ultimately emerge in Delhi. The main point of difference between contemporary everyday governance and the regime envisioned by the Street Vendors Bill is that the former does not recognize street hawkers as legitimate users of public space, while the latter does as long as they agree to certain rules and operate in specific times/places. Both regimes engender resistance, but the former forces street hawkers to evade authorities and remain mobile. While unlicensed street hawkers would likely continue to operate after the implementation of the Street Vendors Bill, contestation would increasingly shift to courtrooms and TVC meetings. It would provide a platform for municipal authorities to engage street hawkers. While the outcomes of these encounters could be arbitrary and have unintended consequences (Gupta, 2012), street hawkers would have the opportunity to assert their presence in the city and advance lawful claims to urban space.

I have demonstrated that there is considerable tension within the state, regarding the governance of street hawking. This should not be considered a contest that will ultimately result in the emergence of either a benevolent or a malevolent state. Indeed, the supply of licenses that would be made available through any regulatory framework would surely fail to meet extant demand among unlicensed street hawkers. Instead, the stakes are over a fundamental mode of governance, i.e. how municipal authorities will "see", interact with and act upon, some of Delhi's most marginalized residents. The regime that emerges will determine whether Delhi's future includes a place for street hawkers or if they must remain permanently out of place.

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Chapter 3
Understanding Participation in a Heterogeneous Community: The Resettlement of Kathputli Colony

Shruti Dubey

3.1 Introduction

> The earth is cradled by the sky,
> Even the birds have a rest,
> The artiste however, who pleases your heart,
> Is homeless.[1]

The head of *Bhoole Bisre Kalakar Samiti* (*lit.*, long forgotten artistes committee, hereafter BBKS) and the *pradhan* (local community leader of the settlement) of the Kathputli colony in west Delhi pointed out ruefully in an interview conducted in October, 2012 that his community has been singing this song for several decades and has not been able to secure a permanent shelter in the capital city despite several assurances and attempts of resettlement by the state. The irony of the situation was not lost on me considering the fact that the colony has been chosen as the first site for implementing in-situ redevelopment in Delhi. The foundation stone for the scheme was laid in 2009 by Ajay Maken, then Member of Parliament (MP) of the area[2] (Dash, 2009) The Delhi Development Authority (DDA), owner of the land on which Kathputli colony is located, proposed to give community members housing

[1]The quote is taken from the group song written by the community of artists for the project of Nehru Kala Kunj. This was a resettlement plan conceptualized by designer and architect Rajeev Sethi for the weavers, craftsmen, folk singers and classical performers in 1989 along with *Anandgram* that was exclusively meant for the residents of Kathputli colony. The idea behind Nehru Kala Kunj was to rehabilitate all those who were left out of *Anandgram*.
[2]For a complete timeline of events for the Kathputli colony In Situ Rehabilitation Project, see (Dupont and Saharan, 2013) and for the overview of implementation of the scheme on ground vis-à-vis the legalistic framework see (Banda et al., 2013).

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in the form of multi-storeyed flats. As also emphasized in Chap. 1, the role of private developers was to be central, and the flats were to be constructed by Raheja Builders, whose incentive would be the commercial component allowed to them to make high-end residential flats (Choudhury, 2009). The builder was selected by DDA, through a tender process under a public-private-partnership (hereafter PPP). Kathputli colony, a *jhuggi jhompri* (*lit.* slum, hereafter JJ) cluster opposite Shadipur Depot, is at least 50-years old, which began with the settling down of nomadic puppeteers from Rajasthan. In the past 50 years, there have been several attempts to resettle them, but none of them have materialized. When the first residents started coming in the 1960s, the land where the JJ cluster is located, was nothing more than marshes at the Western fringes of the city. It has now become prime property with a high investment potential, located as it is at a distance of around 8 km from Connaught Place, considered the heart of the city, and has also been connected by a metro line since 2003. The industrial area in the north of the settlement is undergoing tremendous transformations with the closure of the old mills standing there and the development of a high-end residential complex called DLF Capital Greens project and an Information Technology Park in the vicinity (Choudhury, 2009, Dupont and Saharan, 2013). All of this makes the squatter settlement of Kathputli colony seem like an aberration and a grossly inefficient use of land. In fact, in the remunerative component of the scheme, the builder wants to construct his signature building, titled Navin Minar[3] that would be the tallest residential tower in Delhi in an alliance with Arabtec Constructions, the builders of Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world located in Dubai (Ramnani, 2011).

The plans of the builder can be understood in the context of the urban renewal and restructuring taking place in millennial Delhi as it aspires to become a “world-class city” (Dupont, 2011), a vision that involves the emergence of several Multi-National Corporations in the capital making it a node of global financial flows, large-scale investments in transport and urban infrastructure, building of huge shopping malls, tall multi-storeyed, gated condominiums and making the city “slum-free”. The demolition of the habitats of the poor and pushing them to peripheral locations to make way for these developments has almost been a norm since the liberalization of the 1990s, a process well documented and critiqued by scholars,[4] including Chaps. 4–6 in this volume. Delhi is, however, facing a paradox characterizing the twenty-first century metropolis where urban regeneration has to take place within the framework of inclusive cities and “participatory planning” (Roy 2009). The policy of resettlement of the poor has thereby exhibited a change in order to follow the participatory approach in planning. The DDA has

[3]Christened after the Managing Director of Raheja Builders, Navin Raheja.

[4]A lot of literature around the urban restructuring of Delhi through the anti-poor judgments from the Supreme Court and Delhi High Court has come out since 2000. It started from Nigam (2001) who called the Delhi of 1990s a third world city with a first world desire. Other prominent works regarding the changing nature of the city from the 1990s onwards are those by Ramanathan (2005, 2006), Dupont and Ramanathan (2005), Bhan (2009), Batra and Mehra (2008), Dupont (2008), and Ghertner (2011).

allotted serviced plots in the periphery, invited the private sector to build flats for the poor, and also included non-governmental organizations (hereafter NGOs) and community-based organizations (hereafter CBOs) (Dupont and Saharan, 2014). The policy document of Rajiv Awas Yojana (hereafter RAY) under which the current in situ rehabilitation is being implemented has an entire chapter dedicated to "community participation" that states the importance of involving the community as a stakeholder from planning to the implementation stage (GOI, 2013). The government of Delhi has been emphasizing that the in situ redevelopment in RAY is a pro-poor scheme that aims to give property rights to them and convert their dead capital to live by bringing them within the formal circuit of capital.[5] Despite this claim, when on 14 February 2014, the DDA announced the setting up of a camp in Kathputli colony to sign a tripartite agreement between the residents, the builder, and the DDA so as to seal their consent for the resettlement plan and give them slips for allotment of rooms in transit camps, it received a mixed response from the residents. Most of the residents, the artistes being the most vocal among them, but also including the non-artistes, challenged the participatory nature of the resettlement (TNN, 2014). Even though they jointly protested, the reasons for the protest were very different for the various groups. There were also a small number of families[6] that shifted to the transit camps, consenting to the plan of rehabilitation provided by the DDA, in the hope of a getting a flat for their children.[7]

The in situ scheme of Kathputli colony has drawn considerable scholarly attention with studies challenging the claims to the participatory nature of the resettlement plan (Dupont and Saharan, 2014) and pointing out the legal loopholes in the way in which the current scheme has been implemented (Banda et al., 2013). The gap between the intentions of the policy of RAY and its on-ground implementation that was marked by a number of discrepancies has been highlighted by Dupont and Saharan, (2014). They have criticized the approach of DDA as top-down, lacking proper consultation with the community, not recognizing its heterogeneous nature, not disseminating information in a transparent manner and exhibiting tokenism instead of citizen participation. The possible explanations given for these lacunae include intra-agency confusion, uncertainty in planning process due to multiplicity of agencies reporting to different tiers of the state and the inability of an institution like DDA to engage in meaningful participation. The

[5]The distinction between dead and live capital is deriving from the conceptualization of Peruvian economist DeSoto (2000) who believes that the poor all over the world own a lot of property in the form of dead capital because of not having legal property titles. He has been advising governments in developing countries to give titles to the poor so as to bring their property within the formal circuit of capital.

[6]This number was reported to be 100 till mid-April (Dupont and Saharan, 2014), a number that kept on increasing to reach around 500 in the subsequent two months.

[7]"Some Kathputli Colony residents keen to move: 'I want a flat for my children'". *The Indian Express*. February 26, 2014. New Delhi. http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/some-kathputli-colony-residents-keen-to-move-i-want-a-flat-for-my-children/ Accessed on 23 June, 2015.

chapter establishes its point of departure from the existing literature by looking at inadequate community participation as not just a failure of implementation by the state but as a contestation between two very different rationalities of efficient land use—the state and the market on one side of the divide and the heterogeneous community on the other. This does not overrule the coming together of these different rationalities for some groups within the heterogeneous community, but the divide is extremely important to understand the current resistance by the majority of the residents of Kathputli colony. The existing scholarship on Kathputli has not adequately emphasized the right of heterogeneous communities to determine the use of land that best secures their livelihood. This becomes extremely pertinent in the case of Kathputli colony where, as will be shown in the chapter, the formation and consolidation of the community has been intimately connected to the demand for their own land. The chapter argues that though the ideal of "community participation" is deployed by DDA in the in situ rehabilitation plan in Delhi, a resettlement plan intending to provide multi-storeyed housing using the "land as a resource" approach (DDA, 2007) will not be able to uphold the ideal of substantive participation by the community in which different sections look at resettlement differently. Instead of taking into account their historical specificities, and the varied ways in which their livelihood is related to land, this approach, which has a certain notion of "abstract space" (Lefebvre, 1991), ends up homogenizing all the groups and pushing for the kind of land use that is most rational, economic and amenable to capital accumulation by the state and the private developers.

This case study of Kathputli colony reviews the state-society interaction in the enactment of resettlement plans for the colony highlighting the changing nature of the state, the heterogeneous composition of "the community", and the importance of land in community formation and resettlement preferences. It marks the strategic shifts in the constellations of community formation by delineating the socio-spatial history of the settlement from the 1960s to the contemporary moment and emphasizes the gap between the artiste community's understanding of participation and that of the state. It identifies three distinct phases of community formation in Kathputli colony and their relationship with land ownership. The first one starts with the very formation of the colony as a squatter settlement in which itinerant performers from various parts of Delhi gather at one place in the early 1970s through the interventions of an organization working for traditional artistes called Sarthi that is headed by a prominent designer and scenographer, Rajeev Sethi. This is when the itinerants who described themselves as *ghumantu*[8] or *khanabadosh* until then, started calling themselves *Bhoole Bisre Kalakar*, or "forgotten artistes". This section describes how the identity of "forgotten artistes" was linked to the demand for their land and their own kind of resettlement that developed into the idea of an artistes' village, or *Anandgram*. The second one is an overlapping phase from 1980s to 2008, when the entry of other squatters on the land next to the artistes' settlement consolidated the category of non-artistes and played an

[8]Both *ghumantu* and *khanabadosh* refer to itinerants or wanderers.

important factor in determining the dynamics of resettlement plans for the colony. The artistes strongly opposed the entry of non-artistes whom they perceived as encroachers on “their” land that was to be entirely utilized for a plan designed exclusively for the artistes. The third and contemporary phase highlights the present situation in which some non-artistes have shifted but a majority of the artiste and the non-artiste community came together to protest against the in situ rehabilitation carried out by the DDA in order to emphasize their claim on land as opposed to the private builder recruited by the government. The methodology of the research includes conducting in-depth field interviews in 2012 and 2014, participatory observation in the meetings held between DDA officials and the residents and *pradhan*s themselves in February 2014. It also consists of textual analysis of the documents obtained from the private archives of Sarthi, newspaper articles and government planning and policy documents.

3.2 From *Ghumantu* to *Bhoole Bisre Kalakars* (From *Nomads* to *Long-Forgotten Artistes*): The Idea of *Anandgram*

It is interesting to note that the residents of Kathputli colony, presently fighting for their own land, were traditionally nomads who were one amongst the many groups flowing to the capital of the newly independent nation in search of better opportunities. They consisted of street performers who are puppeteers, jugglers, snake charmers, magicians, acrobats, animal trainers, healers, balladeers, story tellers, singers and dancers from Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Maharashtra. They were individual family-based performers who travelled from place to place in search of *jajman*s, or patrons. The community describe themselves as traditionally “ghumantu” or “khanabadosh” because of their erstwhile itinerant lifestyle. Initially, the traditional itinerant artistes used to camp at various places in Delhi that used to fall *en route* such as on vacant lands around Old Delhi, Ajmeri Gate, Mori Gate, Nizamuddin, Okhla junction and Bhogal (see Fig. 3.1 for a map of the different places in which they camped in Delhi). Being itinerants, they used to carry their entire luggage on donkeys and needed only three stones and a tent to mark their hearth. They used to earn their living by performing in markets, on the streets or in front of monuments such as Red Fort, Old Fort and Connaught Circus. The first group of people who came to Shadipur was the puppeteers whose tents were demolished around 1956 in Old Delhi. Consequently, they squatted in a low lying muddy area at the unfrequented Western fringe of the city opposite Shadipur Depot.

It is imperative to state the role of the intervention made by Rajeev Sethi through his NGO, Sarthi, and the drawing up of an exclusive resettlement plan for the artistes called Anandgram in order to explain the meaning of participatory resettlement for the residents of the colony in the decade of 1970s and 1980s. Sethi

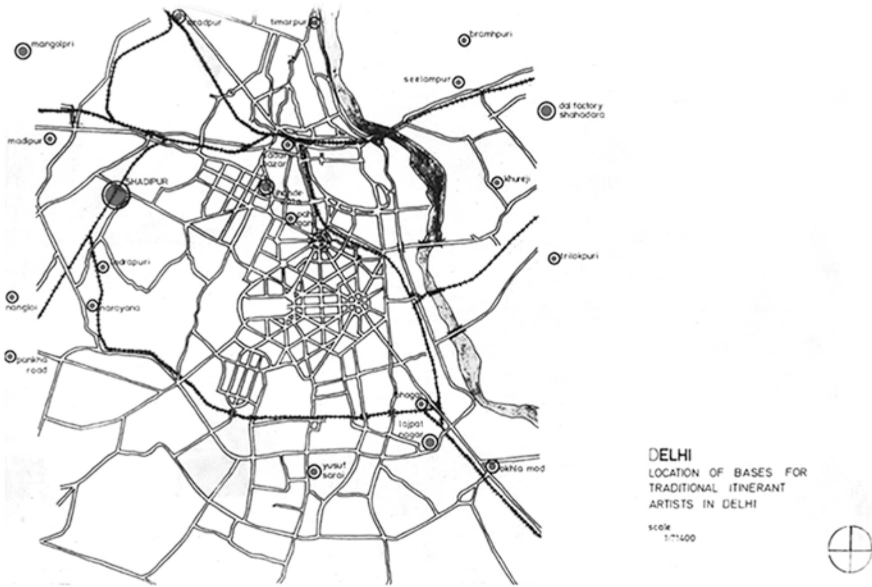

Fig. 3.1 Locations where itinerant artists camped in Delhi. Source and copyright: © Sarthi. Reproduced with permission

was working with Pierre Cardin[9] when Pupul Jayakar[10] invited him "to direct his talents to India",[11] and encouraged him to engage with the process of understanding and preserving the folk and art traditions of the village communities of India. That is when in the early 1970s he got interested in working with the itinerant street performers and got to know that the itinerant constituted a group of 12 kinds of performers known as *barahpal* who lived and travelled separately and clustered in various parts of Delhi. He believed that they were the reservoirs of the cultural heritage of India and deserved to be treated in a better way. He advised them to gather in one place instead of being scattered all over Delhi and learn the importance of organized action to be recognized as "artistes". Thus, at his behest street performers of various states started settling down in Kathputli colony. At that time there were around 60 families.[12] He also found work for them by organizing their shows for free in various hotels in Delhi, in Sangeet Natak Academy and All India Radio. Being influenced by the Gandhian ideals of Kamaladevi Chattopadhya who had spearheaded the cooperative movement in the country, he asked the street performers to organize themselves in an industrial cooperative, to preserve their skills

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[9]Pierre Cardin is a renowned French fashion designer.

[10]Pupul Jayakar was an Indian cultural activist and writer known for her contribution in revival of traditional art forms and handicrafts.

[11]"Rajeev Sethi," Rajeev Sethi website, accessed 19 October 2013, http://www.rajeevsethi.com/biographies.htm.

[12]Personal Interview with an employee of Sarthi, conducted on 9 November, 2012.

and improve their living conditions. The idea of a cooperative with groups of different skills did not find resonance with the itinerants immediately.

The *jhuggi*s in Kathputli colony were demolished for the first time on 25th May 1976,[13] as part of the beautification drive in the capital during the period of National Emergency, which is when the efficacy of organizing themselves in cooperatives became clearer to them. The DDA followed the usual sites and services programme of rehabilitation by allotting plots to the residents in the peripheral area of Sultanpuri. This practically meant a destruction of their existing livelihood opportunities because all their current and potential clients knew Shadipur as the key place to contact them. Unable to find work, and scared of being ignored to oblivion, they returned the allotment slips to the DDA, and started trickling back to Shadipur to live in makeshift tents and under the Patel Nagar flyover (Singh, 1977).

The artistes had remained disunited until the eviction in 1976, within 3 days of which they got together and wrote a letter[14] (with the help of Sarthi) that was signed by 138 heads of the families living in the colony and in which they outlined *their own alternative* to resettlement. The contents of the letter should be emphasized because it is for the first time that this group articulated itself as a policy object, and demanded its right to stay at Shadipur (see Fig. 3.2 for the text of the letter). The letter clearly showed the intervention that Sarthi made in making this group identify themselves as *Bhoole Bisre Kalakar*, artistes the society has forgotten in the wake of changing times, but who nonetheless preserve the ancient culture and art forms of India. The demands made in the letter reflected the early stages of an alternative resettlement plan combining their work and living spaces. The formation of a cooperative and demanding land rights at Shadipur where they were already residing constituted the first step towards it.

The letter began by complaining about "never been counted in the census" or "recognized as a special group". They were thus making a clear case for being framed as a census population group that should get the attention of policy makers. It claimed that from the beginning they had been "scattered and forgotten" (*bhoole bisre*) but now wish to have a home of their own since they have been staying at Shadipur for 14 years. It specified that some 300 families had come together as a collective and developed in such a way that they were able to "mesmerise not just strangers but the city dwellers of Delhi themselves". They emphasized that going to Sultanpuri would break their "community" and their "way of life".

Thus they stated,

> We feel it may benefit the government to build a culture and crafts centre and yet, with very little outlay, for where else would it find such skilled and centralized human resources. Maybe you the government can *help us to organize ourselves as responsible citizens* with land to live and work on. The question of resettlement itself would be no problem for us, but please let this not interfere with our aspirations. We the undersigned are willing to surrender the land allotments given to us as separate members in favor of an area *where we can live and work side by side* (emphasis added).

[13]"Bhoole bisre kalakaron ke sangh arsh ki saalgirah," *Hindustan*, 2 June, 1978.

[14]"Punarvyavastha: Hamara Vikalp," *A Statement from the people of Shadipur Depot Jhuggi Colony*, New Delhi, May, 1976. Source: Private Archives of Sarthi.

Fig. 3.2 Letter outlining alternative to resettlement. Source and copyright: © Sarthi. Reproduced with permission

This was the first time that land, livelihood and community were woven together by these people in a demand to stake their claim over a city space. This was the beginning of the formation of what is today known as the artiste community in Kathputli colony and their first articulation of the demand for their own land. Through the Bhule Bisre Kalakar Cooperative Indus (Prod.) Society Ltd. that was registered as an industrial cooperative on 2.12.1978 under the Delhi Cooperative

Society Act 1972, the residents articulated their demand for land at Shadipur itself for an "artistes" village', or *Anandgram*. This was a unique resettlement programme conceptualized by Rajeev Sethi with the help of several distinguished personalities in the field of art, architecture and culture. The modalities of the resettlement were worked out in a pilot plan titled "Three Stones Crafts Project". The work for the report started in 1978 and it was finally prepared by 1984. In 1979, Rajeev Sethi requested Hasan Fathy, an Egyptian architect, who was a proponent of Architecture of the poor, to draw a plan for the artistes (Sandal, 1985). When Sethi discussed the plan with the artistes, they rejected it because it did not take into account their peculiar ways of working, cooking, sleeping and socializing. He realized the need to actively involve the residents themselves to come up with a resettlement plan that would be acceptable to them. Thus, the residents articulated how the design of the space would affect their lifestyles and occupations. They did not want to passively accept the model of an outside architect and looked at the idea of getting their houses designed as per their own living practices as a need and right.

The source of the information presented in this and the following section are the private archives maintained by Sarthi. It includes the detailed plan of *Anandgram* and various letters written to the government departments ranging from the Prime Minister's Office, the Lt. Governor of Delhi and the various officials of DDA and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (hereafter MCD) for the implementation of this plan. The idea of housing in *Anandgram* came up after conducting extensive research regarding the way in which the residents were living and organizing space both in Shadipur, as well as their native villages, for their everyday activities.[15] Special care was taken to see how the space was divided on professional lines, with extended families of the same groups of artistes staying together. A comprehensive survey of the individual families as well as the land at Shadipur was carried by the team. All these studies were done to determine the size and plot the areas where the different performing communities would live, work and exhibit their talent.

Since Sethi knew that the artistes demanded active participation, he asked them to build a model of their own houses and its surroundings with cardboards to express their own imagination of a house in the city. The houses that they designed were very different from the Ground + 3 housing for the lower income groups proposed by the DDA. The distinctive features of their models included decorated

[15]To cover the cost of such efforts The Times of India Group had given Rs 1 lakh to the Vastu Shilpa Foundation- a non-profit organization set up by architects Joseph Stein and B.V. Doshi for undertaking the work for initial planning. The work was carried on under the direction of Rajeev Sethi whose office and services had been made available free of cost. The planning and settlement architects included Revati and Vasant Kamath. Revati Kamath, a postgraduate from the School of Planning and Architecture in Delhi was working with Stein and Doshi then and Anandgram became the first project of the Kamath Studio opened by Revati and Vasant Kamath in 1981. She is widely known as the pioneer of mud architecture in India (see Three Stones Crafts Project: Private Archives of Sarthi).

gates, varied roof forms and lofts made of mud for holding their instruments or large wooden poles and moulding it according to their need for a performing space. It also had a veranda and a women's courtyard as a separate space on the inside for all the women of the family to chat freely, arched doors resembling their villages, space for storing water in pots kept in front of the house and space for keeping animals as pets or professional partners. The organization of space within the cluster outside the individual houses also seemed to be an extension of home with men and children often sleeping outside. A tree belonging to the community whose fruits can be eaten by all and shade used as a public space was a central feature of the design of the clusters. As a focus of community space, the area of the courtyard depended on the spread of the tree. This was their expression of housing by the artistes. Evidently, this was a very different imagination of shelter and land use as compared to the modernist design of the DDA housing with a strict separation of housing and work, public and private and the most economic use of land in the form of multiple floors.

In the *Anandgram* plan, the houses were supposed to be designed by the householders themselves, on a self-help basis. The responsibility for implementation lay with individual members. It was based on participation of the members in organizing the neighbourhood unit, or *mohalla* under the supervision of a *mohalla* committee, guided by one architect, and three to five masons. The funds for the land had to be recovered from the members over a period of time. The members would also be in-charge of the maintenance of the houses and other facilities. The plotting had to be done by DDA. Sethi outlined several advantages of the *Anandgram* plan as compared to the housing by DDA. The houses had to be built by the people and assisted by DDA. There was no involvement of contractors and no major capital cost. The whole design was conceptualized and would have been maintained by active people's participation. The dwelling units were affordable and of low maintenance. The plan was designed with regards to preservation and nurturing of ethnic identity and lifestyle which is conducive to fostering social relationships and their art. The artistes would have a sense of possession with the dwelling units that would greatly reduce the chances of resale. Housing was just one component of *Anandgram* that was also supposed to have working space, open air theatre, shops to market the goods made by the artistes, hostels for those wanting to know more about the ancient skills prevalent in India and therefore had a potential to become a big tourist destination. Thus, it intended to provide opportunities for improving the economic status of poor artistes and for the nurturance and growth of their fast deteriorating art forms. Sethi was of the opinion that it could have led to initiating a national movement for the itinerants with no other collective so centrally located or organized. It had the potential of a unique project based on indigenous technology for projecting an international image.

What follows is an account of the interaction of BBKS, Sarthi and the other NGOs from 1981 onwards to discuss the possibility of implementation of *Anandgram* with the various officials of Slum Wing DDA and MCD responsible for the rehabilitation of the colony. These NGOs got involved at a later stage for implementation of the different resettlement plans that were proposed thereafter.

By then the composition of the community had also changed with the coming of newer squatters who were not artistes. Let us see how these dynamics played in formulating the resettlement plan for Kathputli with various groups in the now heterogeneous community trying to mobilize their interests through different lobbies in the state.

3.3 *Kalakar* Versus Non-*kalakar (Artistes Vs. Non-Artistes)* : The Contestation Over Land

The community residing at Kathputli colony became more heterogeneous by the early 1980s when people from other states and other castes, such as Biharis, Gujaratis, Marathis, Valmikis, and lepers started squatting underneath the Shadipur flyover at the encouragement of the local MP from the Indian National Congress. The *pradhan*s from these communities recall that the area beneath the flyovers had to be vacated for construction of an MCD office and the MP asked the newer squatters to make their *jhuggi*s in the vacant land next to the artiste section residing in Kathputli colony. He assured them that they will only be removed from there after an alternative arrangement had been made for them.[16] Any resettlement plan of Kathputli colony now had to account for a considerable section of non-artistes as well. The main conflict of interest between the artiste and the non-artiste community was over the sharing of land by the non-artistes in *Anandgram*. The artistes' village was supposed to be built on the entire land of the colony, most of which was vacant in the early 1980s. It was a part of this land, which was squatted on by the non-artistes. The non-artistes thus became a party staking a claim in *Anandgram*.

The BBKS met the then Lt. Governor, Jagmohan, in order to discuss the feasibility of the *Anandgram* plan who gave an encouraging response by constituting an implementation committee in 1981.[17] The MP of the area was also made a member of this committee. The presence of a non-artiste population having the support of the MP who was also there in the implementation committee for *Anandgram* made the situation complicated. This is because there already were two contradictory opinions about the resettlement of "the community" residing in the colony. One was held by Sarthi and BBKS, and had the support of Pupul Jayakar, the then cultural advisor to the prime minister, who believed that *Anandgram* was an exclusive programme that should only include the artistes and should have no place for the non-artistes. This view adhered to the specific architectural plan represented by *Anandgram* model. Pupul Jayakar in May 1983 submitted an *aide-memoire* to Rajiv Gandhi, then general secretary of the Congress, and bemoaned how a unique resettlement plan such as *Anandgram*, as opposed to

[16]Personal interviews conducted with local leaders from the non-artist community on 29 October, 2012 and 14 November, 2012.

[17]Order No. 33-42/82/81, Raj Niwas, Delhi, dated 3 January, 1981 signed by the Secretary to the Lt. Governor.

the single pattern housing with common facilities constructed by DDA, was being distorted by political pressure exerted in order to take over the project and implement it in the standard DDA style. The voluntary agencies that were a part of it, primarily Sarthi, were also being encouraged to move out of the project. Her main contention was that the list of 350 families that was submitted to DDA included non-artistes as well. She believed that this would greatly jeopardize the original intention of the project of integrating traditional artistes and valuable land will go to those who are not connected with art. In fact she told Rajiv Gandhi that this could be the first on-field creative project to be undertaken by the National Heritage Trust after its inauguration in July 1984.[18]

The other view was held by most of the officials of DDA and the MP of the area who did not want to make a distinction between the artistes and non-artistes or give a special treatment to the artistes in the resettlement programmes. They also wanted to follow the standard DDA model for planning the space. It is not surprising therefore, that the implementation committee stopped working after two or three meetings with the change of Jagmohan as the Lt. Governor. The officials in DDA were wary of giving valuable land in Shadipur for the building of *Anandgram*. Their way of looking at the situation can be deduced from an interview given to Sandal (1985: 50) by a DDA town planner who said, "We are wedded to social welfare, so let us say we even allot the rupees for the land, despite pressure from commercial lobbies- to the artistes. We would still require at least another 90 lakh rupees (INR 9 million) for housing alone. We just don't have those kind of resources. Don't forget we have to deal with dozens of other poor areas in and around Delhi". Thus, DDA was always concerned with tapping the growth potential of the land on which the colony was situated and wanted to shift the settlement to a relatively cheaper area. Meanwhile, Rajeev Sethi and the BBKS saw some other lands proposed by the DDA in South Delhi near Mehrauli, Said-ul-ajab and Lado Sarai, to allot for *Anandgram*.[19]

Among several other reasons, DDA kept stressing on budget constraints and lack of land for not undertaking the *Anandgram* project. Interestingly, according to a newspaper report, the project did not make much headway until a golf match was played between the Slum Commissioner DDA, Manjeet Singh, and the Chairman of Rotary Club Mid-West, Sushil Gupta in 1990 (Rajagopal, 1990). Gupta proposed to donate Rs 40 lakh (INR 4 million) for the execution of the project which would be called Rotary Anandgram. Thus, the early 1990s can be seen as the adoption of the participatory approach by DDA in the resettlement of the squatters by including NGOs having international donors for the funding and management of the resettlement process. This was the nascent stage of the withdrawal of the state in an active capacity for carrying out resettlement. It has to be understood in the context of a discursive shift in the housing policies of the developing countries

[18]*Aide Memoire* on Current Situation for *Anandgram*, prepared by Smt. Pupul Jayakar for Shri Rajeev Gandhi dated 12 May 1983 (Source: Private Archives of Sarthi).

[19]"Background Note on the *Anandgram* Resettlement Project for performing artists living in Pandav Nagar, Kathhputli Colony", Undated (Source: Private Archives, Sarthi).

due to the intervention of the World Bank that critiqued the existing housing policies which had heavy involvement of governments and an equally heavy dependence on subsidies in housing markets (Keare and Parris, 1982). The government's role was redefined in 1980s to become an "enabler" from a "provider" of housing to the poor. The government was expected to enable the market agents and civil society to perform better and encourage public–private cooperation in housing delivery (World Bank, 1993). In the interest of this cooperation the "institutional monopoly" of the government over the housing needs of the urban poor was to be replaced by the "institutional pluralism" (Sanyal and Mukhija, 2001) in order to promote "democratization" that had emerged as a prominent theme in the 1980s development discourse. There was therefore an effort to engage civil society institutions, community groups and NGOs in housing delivery. It was assumed that NGOs were not interested in social control like the government and in profits like the market. The role of the NGOs was to mobilize community resources to complement investment by private firms, to reduce the cost of information, transaction and enforcement of contracts making poor communities attractive for private investment. The NGOs were supposed to act as "catalytic agents" synergizing relations between poor communities and public and private institutions (Hasan, 1988). They were also supposed to help the poor in asset building.

For DDA, a participatory process of resettlement meant the involvement of NGOs that could work closely with the community, convince them about the efficacy of the resettlement programme, help them form cooperatives and provide financial assistance. These were the features that characterize the proposed plans for resettlement of the different sections in Kathputli colony in the 1990s and 2000s, most of which continued in the present resettlement plan as well. The first plan that was proposed in 1990 was that of in situ upgradation under the three-pronged strategy of Delhi Slum Policy. A Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter MoU) was signed with Rotary Club according to which they would undertake the upgradation by 30 June 1993.[20] However, the plan of in situ upgradation was changed within a month to 'sites and services programme' since the land was required by DDA for "Mass Rapid Transit System or some other purpose".[21] In order to make the process more participatory, the resettlement had to happen with the formation of multi-purpose cooperatives, whereby loans would be given to those allotted plots to construct their own houses. The architect Anil Laul was employed by Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) to design a

[20]"Minutes of the meeting held under the Chairmanship of Lt. Governor, Delhi on 5 May 1993 at 5.00 PM at Raj Niwas to consider the proposal for upgradation of Kathputli Colony—A JJ cluster in Pandav Nagar located opposite Shadipur DTC Bus Depot Under Patel Nagar Flyover", PM/1810/P-60/S/90/D-358, Slum and JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, 20 May 1993.

[21]"Minutes of the meeting held on June 9 1993 at under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Delhi at Raj Niwas for treatment to be given to Kathputli Colony—a JJ cluster located opposite Shadipur Depot under Patel Nagar Flyover", PM/1810/P-60/S/90/Pt./D-423, Slum & JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Policy, Planning and Monitoring Division), 28 June 1993.

plan for both the artistes and non-artistes (Rajagopal, 1990). The NGOs were given responsibility of forming multi-purpose cooperative society for the artistes while the DDA officers facilitated the formation of six more cooperatives of 200 non-artistes each called Siddhartha Vihar, Ambedkar Vihar, Azad Vihar, Jyotibaphule Vihar, Pandav Vihar and Shastri Vihar. The cooperative societies were to be formed keeping in mind the cohesiveness of families according to their professions so that the planning on *mohalla* concept could be facilitated. In 1992 another important actor, an NGO called Kalakar Trust, headed by the wife of Congress minister Capt. Satish Sharma, and her sister, got involved with the resettlement of Kathputli colony. Rajeev Sethi introduced her to the settlement hoping that the stalled resettlement work of *Anandgram* would move forward due to the political clout of her husband.

Due to the efforts of Sarthi along with Pupul Jayakar in the 1980s, the Slum and JJ Wing of DDA in the early 1990s acknowledged the existence of three major socio-economic groups in Kathputli colony and classified them as follows: *Bhule Bisre Kalakars*/traditional folk artistes/craftsmen representing India in various international cultural functions; squatters who came to Shadipur taking advantage of the situation; and lepers.[22] It stated that three different plans would be needed to resettle these communities. A land in Tughlakabad or some other area in south Delhi was to be finalized in consultation with all the three NGOs—Kalakar Trust, Rotary Club and Sarthi. The NGOs were also given the responsibility of ensuring participation of the community by organizing motivation camps to influence the *kalakar*s to resettle at a new place that would have amphitheatre and other shops along with a serviced site.[23] The squatters were to be rehabilitated through the usual site and services programme by identifying a plot of land for them. The leprosy patients in the colony were proposed to be shifted to the colony in Tahirpur in Trans-Yamuna area planned by Building Centres managed by Anil Laul. If that was not possible, they were supposed to be resettled under the normal programme of slum improvement undertaken for squatters other than *kalakar*s.[24]

[22]"Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June, 1993 at 3:30 P.M. under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary Delhi at Raj Niwas for considering the treatment to be given to the Kathputli Colony—a JJ cluster located opposite Shadipur DTC Depot Under Patel Nagar Flyover", PM/1810/P-60/S/90/Pt./D-423, Slum & JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Policy, Planning and Monitoring Division), 28 June 1993.

[23]"Minutes of the meeting held under the Chairmanship of Lt. Governor, Delhi on 5th May, 1993 at 5.00 PM at Raj Niwas to consider the proposal for upgradation of Kathputli Colony—A JJ cluster in Pandav Nagar located opposite Shadipur DTC Bus Depot Under Patel Nagar Flyover", PM/1810/P-60/S/90/D-358, Slum and JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, 20 May 1993.

[24]"Minutes of the meeting held under the Chairmanship of Lt. Governor, Delhi on 5th May, 1993 at 5.00 PM at Raj Niwas to consider the proposal for upgradation of Kathputli Colony—A JJ cluster in Pandav Nagar located opposite Shadipur DTC Bus Depot Under Patel Nagar Flyover", PM/1810/P-60/S/90/D-358, Slum and JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, 20 May 1993.

An MoU was signed between four parties, the Slum and JJ department of MCD, Kalakar Trust, which had now become the main coordinator of NGOs even though it had just recently started working for the colony, Rotary Club and Sarthi on 30th June, 1993. Kalakar Trust finalized the land at Tughlakabad. Sarthi volunteered its services free for planning the layouts for *Kalakars* in the Tughlakabad area under the relocation programme. A small portion of land near Qutab Minar was also to be used for project purpose for providing Open Air Theatre and display space. The funds from the Rotary Club were supposed to be utilized for environmental improvement of slums such as low cost sanitation, roads, street paving, electrification and drinking water supply.[25] Kalakar Trust also agreed to provide about 10 lakh (1 million) for the *kalakar* community and proposed to look into the non-formal health care and non-formal educational facilities and other needs that may be articulated from time to time by the *kalakar* community.

During this phase, the artistes were sceptical of the non-artistes being included in the *Anandgram* plan and wanted to maintain its exclusivity. Due to the delay in allocation of land elsewhere and rising scepticism about government's plan they emphasized the importance of the location of Shadipur for them. The artistes' conception of a participatory resettlement could be deciphered in the demands that they put forward to DDA. They requested that DDA should decide on the list of those eligible for being resettled in *Anandgram* made by Sarthi or any other organization *in consultation* with the residents themselves. *Anandgram* should be only for artistes and started as soon as possible in the first phase of the resettlement. The ownership of the plots should be in the name of individuals formed into *mohalla*s and various multi-purpose cooperatives. Architects and engineers should only coordinate decisions. The final design should evolve as people build it themselves. They also demanded that the plans and layout concept of Anil Laul should be shown to them and that it should not be realized through contractors but through appropriate *mohalla* committees. They wanted their homes to be single-storeyed that could be extended by one story and that they should be able to choose NGO partners.

But neither the demands made by the artistes nor the resettlement programme materialized. The funds from the NGOs were used for the Environmental Improvement of Urban Services in the colony at Shadipur itself. Kalakar Trust opened a school and a dispensary within the settlement. The land that was earmarked for the *Anandgram* scheme was taken over by Kalakar Trust where it constructed an Open Air Theatre, purportedly for the artistes, but registered it in the name of the trust. Rajeev Sethi asked the DDA for an explanation and filed a case in the Delhi High Court against Kalakar Trust in 1996.[26] The trust withdrew from

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[25]Copy of MoU amongst Slum & JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Rotary Club of Delhi, Mid West, Kalakar Trust and Sarthi dated 30 June 1993 procured from the private archives of Sarthi.

[26]A number of newspapers covered the report of the alleged land grab by Sterre Sharma and the tiff between Rajeev Sethi and Sterre Sharma. See Kalidas and Mukul (1996), Gopinath (1996).

the housing programme and the resettlement plan came to a halt. On 7th December 2000, the Slum Wing, due to the personal intervention of then Union Urban Development Minister, Jagmohan, proposed in situ rehabilitation scheme with the help of World Bank in *jhuggi* areas which were not project lands and need not be cleared, in the next financial year.[27] The non-execution of *Anandgram* despite some efforts demonstrates that the vision of the city nursed by DDA always had a fixed idea of the desirable form of urban housing and its value accruing from the real-estate potential of the land. It does not give enough importance to accommodating different habitats, lifestyles and communities that can increase the diversity of the city. The existence of an artistes' village in the capital could have been a value addition in several ways. It would have demonstrated a sensitivity of the city towards our cultural heritage that has been preserved by the itinerant artistes with a rural lifestyle, thereby improving its image on an international stage and contributing to the revenues of the exchequer by acting as a tourist destination. It seems, however, that the *Anandgram* plan became more obsolete in the new 'world-class' vision of the city that had no rooms for such endeavours and in 2009, the current resettlement plan in multi-storeyed flats was announced for everyone without any consideration of artistes and non-artistes.

3.4 Participation as a Claim to Land: Dilemmas of "Heterogeneous Community"

The trend that began in the 1990s of devolving financial responsibility to NGOs, international donors, and the cooperatives of residents instead of the state, materialized fully in the 2009 announcement of rehabilitation under RAY, which highlighted its feature of zero cost to the government. Although the emphasis on community participation has increased much more in the current policy which requires the involvement of the community through slum-dweller federations from the planning, survey, to the implementation stage, the current plan does not advocate different plans in accordance with the need of the varied socio-economic groups as was envisaged in the previous DDA plans. Also, unlike the earlier stage in which DDA had signed an official Memorandum involving all the three NGOs though in different capacities, this plan included only Kalakar Trust[28] in the initial survey process, hired an architect consultant who prepared a detailed project report and met with the representatives of the settlement. Compared to the earlier plans of DDA which took into consideration the differentiation in the community

[27] "MCD plans to relocate 30,000 slum families", *The Hindustan Times*.

[28] The meeting with the officials of Kalakar Trust regarding their role in the current resettlement could not be scheduled despite three attempts. Their personal viewpoint is therefore missing from this paper. The information that is provided in the chapter reagrding Kalakar Trust has been culled out of secondary sources as well as the documents obtained from the private archives of Sarthi.

and acknowledged the need for three different kinds of resettlement, the current plan by proposing to resettle all the communities in uniform housing, ironically appears to be a step backwards by DDA as far as the participatory aspect of the scheme is concerned.

DDA and the builders, however, claim to the contrary. DDA in the current phase of resettlement has tried its best to convince the residents about the efficacy of the entire project so that the residents readily accept their plan for the smooth execution of the project. Both the builders and DDA in their meetings with the residents have attempted to highlight the high value of the property that they are about to hand over to the poor. In order to emphasize its participatory process, DDA created a website dedicated to the resettlement of Kathputli colony after the initial protests by the residents in February 2014. The website contains documents such as the agreement signed by a selected few in the settlement as a proof of consensual resettlement and uploaded videos of all the *pradhan*s to claim that they have heard the opinion of all the sections of the community and conducted some meetings in the settlement to convince the residents to shift to the transit camp. It has also uploaded a video showcasing all the features of the proposed housing. The video features magnificent interiors, and space for a community park, metalled roads, and is quite similar to the various gated housing societies that are coming up all over Delhi. After the protests in February, DDA officials also conducted meetings with the community assuring them of including all the families that might have been left out of the scheme. Similarly, Navin Raheja, the Chairman and Managing Director of Raheja group, in a meeting with the residents tried to explain that it was in the interest of the residents to move to the transit camps and accept the idea of multi-storeyed flats. This would improve their lifestyles transforming them from being illegal slum dwellers to legal owners of luxury flats.[29] In fact in a meeting with Nayan Raheja, son of Navin Raheja, he expressed annoyance at the attention that this project was attracting from the media and civil society actors such as researchers, film makers and activists.[30] He could not understand the reasons for such resistance from the people of the colony. He contended that the people of Kathputli colony live in extremely unhygienic conditions and it is virtually impossible for someone to stand in the colony because of the dirt and stink that fills up the whole settlement. Raheja builders are planning to give them housing with world-class facilities. Thus, he believed that there is no reason for the poor to reject their model of housing and continue to stay in slums. In order to incorporate the special needs of the artistes they also assured them of giving an open space to practice and perform their arts. Since the plan by the builders proposes that the houses of the poor to be situated in the vicinity of the high-end housing for the rich with separate entry and exits, he claimed that the builders were providing solution to the problem of slums by merging the rich and the poor in one ecosystem.

[29]A video of the meeting was provided to me by one of the residents.

[30]Interview with Nayan Raheja on 10 March, 2014.

The vision of DDA and the builders did find some takers within Kathputli colony. Out of the total 3200 families, 400 shifted to the transit camp because they identified with the government's plan to rehabilitate them in flats, and considered it the best option. These were mostly from the non-artiste community. In the words of one of the leaders of the non-artiste section, "If we can come from Maharashtra to Delhi for work, we can easily go a few kilometres in order to get our own homes as well. The government is making this plan in our own interest and we should accept it being good citizens of this country".[31] Another resident remarked, "All of us eventually want a permanent roof over our heads in the capital city. I cannot afford it otherwise. I am unemployed".[32] Dupont and Saharan, (2013) has also pointed out that women, on the whole, are more supportive of the project as compared to men because they suffer the most due to the inadequate provision of basic civic amenities such as toilets in the settlement.

Admittedly, this kind of effort for proving the "participatory" nature of the resettlement is unprecedented in the history of the Delhi Development Authority. Thus, while we agree with Lisa Weinstein's (2009) conception of increasing emphasis on participation by the state in resettlement projects to avoid delays in the execution in an already fragile international real estate market, it seems that this notion of participation is limited to making the residents realize that the government's plan of resettling is the best option for them. It is, in a certain sense, wanting the poor to identify with the world-class vision of the city (Ghertner, 2011) whereby their own spatialities appear to them as aberrant and align their desires with that of the state. For this purpose, the government has been relying, post 1990s on the "civic governmentality" (Roy, 2009) of organizations such as SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres) that believe in "community-led" resettlement in which "rights from below" are acquired from "working with" rather than against the state. It, however, has limited space for understanding the formation of specific communities and their demands for resettlements that are of 'contesting spatialities'.[33] Solomon Benjamin (2004) has argued that most of the times, the shelter issues of the poor are articulated by the policy and activist circles in terms of housing. This overlooks the more important question of land ownership in productive locations of the city in different tenure forms, access to which is crucial for poor groups for their livelihoods and to secure real estate surpluses. The main urban contest is therefore between private multinational capital with big infrastructure projects and the poor who want access to the same land. Taking a cue from him, the resistance to the latest resettlement plan by the coming together of the artiste and non-artiste community can be understood in the context of urban contest over the control of precious land of the community.

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[31]Personal interview conducted on 13 October, 2013.

[32]"Some Kathputli colony residents keen to move: 'I want a flat for my children'", *The Indian Express*, 26 February 2014, New Delhi. http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/some-kathputli-colony-residents-keen-to-move-i-want-a-flat-for-my-children/ Accessed on 23 June 2015.

[33]I am borrowing this concept from Solomon Benjamin (2008).

Most of the artistes as well as non-artistes, therefore, decided to act together and protest against the government. There were different reasons for which they were unwilling to accept the government's plan for rehabilitation. The artiste community wanted their own land because it is integral to preserve their livelihood and a distinct way of life related to it that would not be possible in multi-storeyed flats. The non-artiste community preferred to be allotted a plot instead of a flat because it held a possibility of incremental development as per their needs. It also allowed them to use their house for various household occupations and opening small shops to supplement family income. The leper community claimed that the multi-storeyed building would be inaccessible for them, a number of them being handicapped. After three decades of the failure of *Anandgram*, the artistes have realized that they cannot possibly put a strong resistance to the government by remaining a singular special community. Thus, the alliance with the *pradhan*s of other communities became extremely important. Since the biggest rift between the artistes and the non-artistes has been the claim to artistry and special skills, the residents have tried to shift the discourse from a division between artiste and non-artiste to everyone being an artiste albeit in different ways and in their own fields. In order to prove this point, the residents organized a fair in March 2014, in which every community put up stalls to showcase their talent and claim a status of being artistes.

The contest over urban land by big capital on one hand and the poor on the other has become clear in the current plan of resettlement. The argument that the committee of *pradhan*s who are protesting the resettlement are putting forward is that they were duped by the government that sold their land to the private builder to make exorbitant profits without taking their consent. In a meeting of *pradhan*s in the BBKS workshop, the head of the committee briefed about the circumstances in which he had initially agreed for the kind of resettlement offered by the state.[34] He said that Ajay Maken, the MP of the area, had told him that the land was scarce as compared to the number of households residing in Kathputli colony and hence the only way to rehabilitate them would be in multi-storeyed flats. But then he found out that the land had been sold to a private builder called Raheja, who would construct flats for the rich and a mall on "their" land, proving that there is no scarcity of land. The 14-acre land that was worth thousands of crores was sold to Raheja for a pittance of 6.11 crores (61 million). He argued that the land of Kathputli belonged to all those who have lived there for so long and converted the deserted marshes into a habitable place, thereby increasing its value. The government should, therefore, allot them plots on the entire land instead of giving a portion of it to the private builder. Here are some of the reactions of the residents from the artiste community. A resident from the artiste community and recipient of a national award for puppetry remarks:

> We started out by living here in tents and have made this jungle into a habitable place over a long period of time. From tents we have built two storeyed houses without taking a penny from the government. What is more important to us is our lifestyle, livelihood opportunity and a platform to perform. Give us that and we will build our own houses. If

[34]Meeting held at BBKS office on 25 February, 2014.

> you just give us a flat which does not match our lifestyle and where we would not be able to work, which kills our culture, what will we do for work and living? You are taking it away from us. Also you yourself are creating a recipe for another squatter cluster. For instance, if I have one son, who is not married, he will want his own place once he is married and would squat at another place. The only way out is giving us land.[35]

Thus, they completely rejected the idea of multi-storeyed flats in the favour of cutting plots on that land where they could construct their own house. In fact they often claimed that the money that was given to the DDA by Raheja can be arranged by taking contribution from all the residents of Kathputli and also with the help of some organizations working with them. In the words of another artiste[36]:

> Leave our land with us. We will call our own architect and start our work. How can the government take such a big decision about our land and our fate without our participation? If the government will make a building of 150 stories then who will let dirty people like us stay here? We have a leper community in our settlement. How will they climb the stairs or take lifts and live in the multi-storeyed houses?

Thus, the artistes are now not just speaking for themselves but for all the residents diluting the discourse of artistes versus non-artistes in their negotiations with the government. The following statement by the residents from their demand charter highlights the way in which the demands of the artiste and the non-artiste sections have been articulated together to stake a claim to land:

> We have only one dream that we get our own roof right on the land of Kathputli colony so that our livelihood and our families stay intact. If we get shifted to flats then how will the woodworker, drummer, singer, musician, idol and chair makers, makers of 15 feet tall puppets, acrobats, rickshaw pullers, weavers, painters, construction workers, rope makers, toy makers, magicians, sanitation worker live and work? Our lives and the famous arts of India both seem to be on a path of destruction by this project.

3.5 Conclusion

The long-drawn resistance of the residents of Kathputli community to the DDA model of resettlement which has little space for the heterogeneity of the community and almost no provision for the occupation-related specificities of space and lifestyle points to the larger question whether the city in its present modern form is willing to accommodate lifestyles and livelihoods understood as inherent to existence by certain communities instead of forcing all and sundry to its own beat and rhythm effecting in the process an existence marked by loss and compromise rather than allowing space for alternative visions of life. The imperatives of the planners and the state derive from larger economic flows that visualize the city as a means and site for attracting global financial investments by becoming "world class"; whereas the aspirations of a majority of population living in Kathputli

[35]Personal Interview conducted on 16 January, 2014.

[36]Meeting with DDA officials on 22 February, 2014.

reflect the pragmatism of a marginalized community in carving out space keeping in mind their sustenance as a specific economic and social group whose socio-cultural dynamics has been overlooked in the formulation of the vision of the city. The gap plays itself out through the differential interpretation of the concept of "participation" by the two parties in question. Whereas DDA's idea of participation remains integrated to the larger model of development, advocating large-scale accumulation by private capital through the urban land markets, the Kathputli colony visualizes participation as the right to execute its specific spatial and social model which it deems integral to its identity and growth. The control over urban land remains at the centre of this negotiation. While the DDA is reluctant to make an exception for the residents of Kathputli in the wake of resource crunch and policy considerations, the residents with their accumulated experience of apathetic and erratic responses to their situation are equally reluctant to place their trust in DDA and the state at large. The state, at its end, has to constantly respond to the globalized economy and the diktats of its accompanying institutions like the World Bank. The central issue, however, is the way the relation of the various urban communities to the city space is mediated by the state which itself is in the process of flux in the changing geo-economic scenario.

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Part II
Claims at the Urban Frontier

Chapter 4
"Propertied Ambiguity": Negotiating the State in a Delhi Resettlement Colony

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on "corruption from below" in a Delhi resettlement colony—or residents' own attempts to re-establish political patronage and brokerage in response to perceived disenfranchisement from state benefits and institutional access—in an attempt to understand how this produces new and different relationships with the state. The rule of law and perceptions of (dis)order in the settlement are common topics of discussion, and often serve as key markers by which people, who have been forcibly evicted from informal settlements, or *bastis*[1] in Delhi, deem the resettlement colony to be outside of the purview of legitimate state institutions. In particular, respondents often portray the local political situation as one mired in avarice, self-interest, and outright corruption—a supposed far cry from their lives in Delhi and the perceived access to "honourable" state actors. Based on narratives of everyday corruption and brokerage, I argue that residents find ways to secure entitlements, such as ration cards, through their own channels and thus depict such endeavours as the necessary counter to state inattention and neglect.

[1]Recognising the often pejorative connotation of "slums," I use the word only when referencing the work of authors who also utilise it to describe a living situation. I henceforth will either use the word *basti* (in Hindi, "settlement") or "informal settlement" in this chapter, as I believe that it is important to challenge the idea that only the urban poor illegally build homes (Roy, 2009), which is not the case in Delhi. See Ramanathan (2005), Gilbert (2007), Menon-Sen and Bhan (2008), Bhan (2009) and Roy (2009) for further discussion.

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I begin my discussion by engaging with literature on "everyday corruption" and how forced eviction and resettlement can contribute to such debates. I then present case studies of political manoeuvers utilised by residents of the Bawana resettlement colony, which expands our theoretical understanding of experiences of the state from below. Bawana is a resettlement colony that mainly houses people who were forcibly evicted from Yamuna Pushta (informal settlements on the banks of the River Yamuna) and other centrally located *bastis* between 2004 and 2010.[2] Bawana is on average 35 km away from the previous homes of *basti* dwellers—eviscerating the labour links those resettled have cultivated and maintained for years as the cost and time of the commute (often up to 3 hours) are prohibitive. I conducted fieldwork between October 2011 and September 2012, starting with semi-structured interviews followed by oral histories of resettled residents, with the ultimate aim of understanding how lived experiences on the margins shape people's relationship to the city and with others. During this time, I also accompanied residents to various government offices in their attempt to procure rations and access to services—some of those experiences are reflected in the chapter.

4.2 "Seeing the State" and Everyday Corruption

Tracing the various debates introduced by political economists and cultural critics alike, Fuller and Harriss (2000) reject the idea of a master narrative of the state, where the state is conceived as a monolithic entity and perceived in predictable ways by ordinary Indians; instead, they encourage an exploration of "what the state variously means and does [and] what in short the state is for the people in India today" (p. 10). Bearing this in mind, I use accounts from Bawana that focus on the experience of partial citizenship and corruption as a frame for how the state is differentially experienced. Though issues of corruption existed (albeit in varied and less striking forms) for residents in their previous homes, I argue that displacement disrupts previous relationships with the state in its various manifestations, thus forcing people to navigate a new and different political terrain (a point also underscored in the chapters by Rao, and Aranya and Ulset in this volume). More specifically, resettlement has removed residents from familiar and known political channels, connections, and mediators, giving way to feelings of insecurity and further marginalisation as people struggle to navigate everyday administration and decide whom to hold

[2]Over 200,000 people in Delhi experienced forcible eviction between 2004 and the start of the 2010 Commonwealth Games (held in Delhi) through "urban beautification" measures (HLRN, 2011). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to engage with the beautification politics and "world-class" city ambitions that are often linked to Delhi's cleansing of the poor. Authors such as Baviskar (2003), Bhan (2009), Srivastava (2009), and Ghertner (2011) have analysed at length the legal and aesthetic discourses deployed by the state and middle classes against the urban poor, and instead I seek here to explore in greater depth the lived experiences of resettlement.

accountable for service delivery and legal benefits. Writing on corruption in and surrounding the Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh, Parry (2000) makes a similar observation of corruption becoming noticeably accentuated over time in popular discourse, and he sees "the widening *experience* of corruption [as] an almost inevitable corollary of the expanded reach of the state" (p. 52; original emphasis). For Parry, people hold the *belief* that corruption has increased since Independence, which may match reality, but what he finds more important is that the widespread condemnation corruption generates is a result of people having "internalized the universalistic and impersonal values associated with modern bureaucracy" (p. 29)—or the popular acceptance of the separation between private interest and public office.

As explored in narratives presented below, routine ways of dealing with the state are rendered ineffective in Bawana, and the experiences of when and how things should get done seem hyper-accentuated by corruption as people struggle to interpret workings of place-specific power structures. For my respondents, it seemed as though corruption, whether minor or not, was considered acceptable in Delhi since it was navigable through known channels. Following Parry's argument, residents in the resettlement colony desire an impartial bureaucracy because many are unable to harness corrupt political practices for their own benefit. I utilise Parry's findings to consider the discursive mapping of corruption onto a specific spatiotemporality, namely one that is uncertain and forced. If, as Gupta (2012) theorizes, corruption is a "diagnostic of citizenship", then how do narratives of endemic corruption from respondents in the resettlement colony speak to how marginalised people see and encounter the state, and experience urban citizenship?

However, it is not just corruption from "above" that I explore in this chapter, but also the illicit practices that resettlement residents often engage in themselves, or corruption from "below". Through this exploration, I seek to avoid replicating discourses of corruption either as a means for the poor to act in direct opposition to the state, or as a strategy for survival (cf. Anjaria, 2011; Jauregui, 2014). The turn to the mundane and interstitial, which this volume invites, allows for the alignment of my work with recent literature that has increasingly drawn attention to forms of "everyday" or "ordinary" corruption in Indian cities and towns (Anjaria, 2011; Witsoe 2011, 2012; Srivastava, 2012; Rao, 2013; Jeffrey and Young, 2014; Jauregui, 2014), and moves beyond corruption discourse to the actual practices and the claims that they (dis)enable. In different ways, and through different terms ranging from *jugaad* (shrewd improvisation), *hafta* (weekly payment), *ghus* (bribe), or *bhrastrachar* (corruption), the works cited above investigate how subalterns navigate new political terrains and possibilities through corruption, albeit in temporary and messy ways. "Corruption", as discussed by my respondents, has different moral registers depending on the agent involved and the particular circumstances in which "corrupt" practices take place. In this sense, my work extends discussions of "morality" and corruption especially as it changes (or is presumed to change) across space and time (Jauregui, 2014) and, following Anjaria (2011), I noticed that though many people expressed dismay over illicit practices on the margins, they did not always counter

such occurrences with more licit ones. Das and Poole (2004) argue that the desire for legitimacy amongst people living on the margins can reshape and expand the conceptual boundaries of the state; for instance, in the determined pursuit of legal benefits and services, people in Bawana challenge the notion that life on the margins automatically signifies disentitlement by the state. I suggest that local narratives of endemic corruption form a nuanced view of subaltern politics: while the state interprets the colony's "legality" ambiguously, for example by providing land titles but withholding ration cards, many residents repeatedly negotiate their legitimacy with the state through, and in spite of, "corrupt" practices.

4.3 The Realities of Resettlement

Researchers estimate that from 1997 to 2007, close to a million *basti* residents have been displaced (Ghertner 2010). Today, there are an estimated 52 resettlement colonies in Delhi (including those developed during the Emergency[3]), housing 2 million people (Hazards Centre, 2007). Like Bawana, colonies developed in the past decade are mainly located on the northwestern periphery of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD) along the Haryana State border; they are neither considered rural, nor are they fully integrated into the urban fold through transportation links. Indeed, scholars and activists have demonstrated that relocation of informal settlement dwellers leads to the loss of social and financial capital: residents are randomly assigned to resettlement colonies thus splintering communities and studies have found that following relocation, families need at least 2–3 years to recover from the financial shock (Khosla, 2007).[4] Despite the presence of the Bawana industrial area[5] in close proximity to the resettlement, and the sizeable number of colony residents who are employed in its factories—which include plants for processing recycled plastic, cosmetic manufacturing and packaging, and tire construction, among others—such jobs are seen by those resettled as exploitative given the low wages.

In terms of social capital, close-knit communities that were 20 to 30 years in the making have been destroyed, especially disadvantaging women who relied upon these informal networks for personal and financial support. Furthermore,

[3]The state of Emergency refers to when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi temporarily suspended civil and democratic liberties between 1975 and 1977 on the (dubious) grounds that India was descending into anarchy.

[4]I would actually argue that more years are required based on my interviews in the field as many of my respondents have yet to recover even after 10 years of resettlement.

[5]The Supreme Court ruled that by December 2002, 16,000 non-conforming (i.e. in violation of the Master Plan due to location in residential areas), small-scale industrial units were to be relocated to industrial zones in Bawana and other areas along the Delhi–Haryana border. The Bawana Industrial Area has been earmarked specifically for this relocation, with 1,165 acres of land developed (see Kathuria, 2001).

resettlement colonies are heterogeneous, with people from various regional and linguistic backgrounds, whereas settlements of the past, though not homogenous, were clustered primarily by regional groups (i.e. Biharis, Rajasthanis, Bengalis) followed by other sub-group divisions (caste and occupation). Authors such as Menon-Sen (2006) and Jervis-Read (2010) detail how various caste and communal prejudices emerge amongst those resettled, and I engage with the splintered sense of community articulated by residents in more detail elsewhere (Ramakrishnan, 2014a). The relocation has also slashed family incomes by at least half, if not more, and has significantly reduced the ability of many women who used to work as domestic help in neighbouring middle-class colonies to maintain independent incomes, as illustrated by Sonal Sharma in this volume. Many of the men were daily-wage workers (rickshaw-pullers, construction workers, and handcart-pullers) in Yamuna Pushta and other *bastis*, but the cost of commuting to Delhi absorbs a large share of their daily wages.

Furthermore, Khosla (2007) writes that resettlement sites are barely developed when those evicted arrive: the installation of water, sewage and toilet infrastructure happens on an ad hoc, temporary basis with no prior planning investment. Menon-Sen and Bhan (2008), in a well-documented study of the lived realities of those relocated to the Bawana resettlement colony, found that out of the 2,577 households interviewed, respondents had overwhelmingly had better access to public dustbins and reliable Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)[6] waste removal services in their previous *bastis*, as they also did to rationed essential items, and public provision of water and electricity.

In addition to the deficiencies present in the resettlement colony itself, a wide swathe of *basti* residents are excluded from even accessing resettlement plots because they either had no proof of residence—a ration card demonstrating that they lived in the squatter settlement before a certain cutoff date—or could not provide the Rs. 7000 "seed" investment to procure the plot. The cutoff date, an eligibility criterion for resettlement, was extended in 2000 from January 1990 to December 1998; families with cards bearing the earlier date were given an 18 sq m plot and those with the latter a plot size of 12.5 sq m.[7] However, many discovered that their ration cards had been destroyed or lost during the demolition process, thus excluding them from plots. Numbers of those deemed "ineligible" vary, with government estimates putting the figure close to 40–45 % of families, though independent researchers and activists point to higher levels of dispossession, especially in the case of the Yamuna Pushta evictions (Menon-Sen, 2006; Dupont, 2008). These residents are often hard to trace, with many either returning to their native villages, setting up shacks in other slums around the city, or renting rooms in resettlement colonies.

[6]The MCD is a local authority that is responsible for urban services; elected municipal councillors provide services within their respective administrative units.

[7]Resettlement plot sizes have been gradually decreased by the state over the years, from 80 sq m in 1960, to 21 sq m in 1976 to the current 18 or 12.5 sq m (Tarlo, 2000).

For those who do remain in the colony, the Rs. 7,000 upfront payment only guarantees a 5–10 year, non-transferrable lease (depending on the resettlement colony), with no form of housing provided. Residents are typically resettled, not rehoused,[8] meaning that an additional investment is required to ensure a roof over one's head—an investment that has crippled many under the high interest loans they are compelled to take. I term the now legal but temporary status of resettlement residents as that of "propertied ambiguity", something that I discuss in greater detail in the following sections, as a way of unpacking the inconsistencies in housing tenure and citizenship rights.

4.4 Local Officials

Corbridge et al. (2005) argue that researchers are "used to the idea of the state seeing its population or citizenry" (p. 15) through the many theories of power and governmentality previously articulated. Bearing this in mind, I attempt to trace the reverse: that is, how people themselves have encountered the continuum of the state, from the visible violence of eviction to the both corrupt and indifferent governance on the margins. In earlier work (Ramakrishnan, 2014b), I build on Gupta's (1995) notion of a "*maa-baap"*, or "mother-father" construction of the state by ordinary people— ,arguing that many residents in the resettlement colony would invoke former "ideal" politicians in their past *bastis*, and castigate local officials in Bawana for failing in their duty to provide and care for their constituents. More than neglect, resettlement colony residents, who are mainly Scheduled Caste, or Dalit, speak at length about the discrimination they face from the Jat[9] community native to the village of Bawana. The discrimination is seen as endemic in local government offices: encouraged by the local politicians from the top and perpetrated by administrators in day-to-day encounters in government offices. Furthermore, the difference in the quality of infrastructure between the resettlement colony and the actual village of Bawana is striking and adds to the belief that an active discrimination is taking place. Gauri, a Hindu woman evicted from Ramakrishna Puram (RK Puram), spoke bitterly about the preferential treatment Bawana villagers received, and what such a treatment meant for accessing entitlements:

[8]It is important to note that the current Delhi resettlement policy, in a shift from the resettlement case I researched, currently advocates in situ rehabilitation and includes relocation to flats constructed in Dwarka and Bawana. According to Mr. Kamal Malhotra, the Director at the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), which is responsible for informal settlements (both authorized and unauthorized), 16,000 flats have been constructed (Varma, 2013).

[9]The Jat caste is a community traditionally associated with agriculture, primarily located in the States of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Jats are a powerful caste in Bawana, as they are the main landowners and are well -represented in local government. For a discussion of relations between the resettlement colony and the village of Bawana, see Ramakrishnan (2014a).

> It is there … they hate the JJ [*jhuggi jhopdi*][10] colony's name. He [the ration card officer] makes Bawana people's cards earlier. Nobody listens if you are from the JJ colony. When we say we are from the JJ colony he doesn't entertain our query, doesn't even look at us and tells us to get lost. He talks so badly, the work which is done through the window; he talks so angrily and tells us to leave. If we are in the queue, they make us leave it too. [But] For people from Bawana [village], the work is done speedily.[11]

Despite the probable occurrence of discrimination in her previous *basti* in Delhi—perhaps perpetrated by people from a different regional and/or communal group, or those different in some other way—discrimination (described here as a form of corruption) is seen as antithetical to a functioning democracy. Returning to Parry's (2000) argument, Gauri emphasized the idea of a "fair" and "impartial" *bureaucracy* that does not differentiate between resettlement residents and Bawana villagers, while earlier she maintained the need for a more personal and caring *regime*, following Gupta (1995)—exemplary of the distinct roles people expect the state to play on an ideological versus an everyday level, especially in relation to the margins.

Many respondents interviewed would also castigate the local officials over the poor infrastructure and visible lack of improvement in the colony, which they saw as resulting from blatant corruption and a lack of concern for resettled residents. People often explained how the process of approaching, petitioning, and waiting for a resolution had become a standard part of their interactions at Bawana government offices. According to Adil, a Bihari Muslim man evicted from Yamuna Pushta, the issues could be easily addressed if there was a concerted effort on the part of the local bureaucrats:

> Even the MLAs[12] of this area or the people from the *panchayat*[13] pay no attention to this problem, and when we would go and complain to our MLA, he would not listen to us and directs us [instead] to some other person [such as the councillor[14]] saying that that this work belongs to him. And when we would go to the concerned person in a group of 20 to 25 people he would tell us, "I am not going to do anything about this, because I have won this election by buying the votes and you all haven't voted for me, so go and ask your MLA for this."[15]

[10]The formal resettlement colony is ironically still being officially termed as a *jhuggi jhopdi* (JJ) colony, or an informal settlement of the poor (see Ramakrishnan, 2014b).

[11]Interviewed on 17 August 2012. All names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.

[12]An MLA is a Member of the State Legislative Assembly, elected by voters from a particular electoral district, and is a separate position from that of the MCD councillor.

[13]The *panchayat* is a local government assembly that serves as the basic unit of administration for a locality, and is empowered by the Indian government. Depending on the level of the *panchayat* (village, block, or district), differing powers and responsibilities include that of implementing economic development initiatives and collecting taxes.

[14]The city of Delhi is divided up into administrative units called zones, which are further divided into wards, the smallest electoral constituency. Bawana is part of Ward-28 and the elected councillor is under the purview of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, which is itself under the larger MCD. Responsibilities of the councillor (and MCD) include maintenance of roads, parks, community centres, drainage and garbage, and operation of child immunisation programs as well as health centres, among others.

[15]Interviewed on 7 May 2012.

Thus, people from the colony are given the run-around in which neither the MLA nor the other officials in charge of the respective civic issue take responsibility for development projects. Adil complained that work would only be carried out during the period immediately before and after elections, which many colony residents would time and again see as proof that things would change. For Adil, the politicians took advantage of the relative desperation of people, who he believed would find hope in even the smallest gesture of improvement. Several minutes after he said this, Adil became more critical of other Bawana colony residents for accepting the incomplete and half-hearted attempts by the MLA, and other officials to appease those who had brought forth complaints:

> … they [the officials] would also visit our area sometimes and look around and would assure us that yes, we will start the work soon. But the real work only begins when the elections are close by, and also they would not do it properly – they would not put proper materials while repairing the roads or the lanes. It would be very much of a temporary nature, and while doing this work they would also eat up a lot of money sanctioned for this work, and when they are expected to construct a … lane, they would only work on [a portion of it]. This work would also take place only to earn votes and the public as usual, stupid as they are, would end up voting for these people. They have been doing work for the last six months but they have not even finished even one block so far.[16]

These personal encounters colony residents have with local state officials reinforce the belief of a government failing to work on behalf of some of its citizens—a view that becomes all the more pronounced when the state's "neglect" is seen in comparison to its supposed productive engagement with Bawana villagers. From accounts, it seemed as though people's expectations also transformed upon gaining a (pseudo) legality: if they were theoretically considered to have the same standing as people living in the surrounding areas, then it made no sense in their minds that a similar recourse to development efforts was lacking. Corbridge et al. (2005) point to the importance of context in the subjectivities of the poor, as in these varying contexts "… [people] will sometimes counter vernacular accounts of the state by advancing more rule-based understandings of [their] own" (p. 20). The norms of good governance invoked by people like Adil and Gauri demonstrate how they counter the withholding of infrastructure and rations; they also challenge the biases of the local bureaucracy against "slum" dwellers in spite of obtaining legal standing. This discourse of the state violating certain rights and failing in impartial treatment is deployed in various ways, shaping the actions of residents (as will be demonstrated in the following section) and their relationships vis-à-vis the state.

4.5 Propertied Citizens, Legal Ambiguities

During my research in Bawana, I noticed that people interviewed would frequently pull out a protective folder, tucked safely away under the mattress or fetched from inside a dusty suitcase, filled with personal documents. From such folders, I was

[16]Interviewed on 7 May 2012.

shown multiple forms of identity proof—, including ration cards, purchased healthcare plans (with accompanying photo ID), other employment and NGO issued identity cards (*pehechan patra*), and so on. However, residents expressed a particular anxiety over the validity of their ration cards. The display of such (often expired or unusable) documentation was accompanied, specifically in the case of ration cards, by the recounting of various experiences of either waiting for, being turned away from, or failing altogether in the card's procurement.[17] I have discussed in the previous section how people frame their expectations of the state: the ration card is emblematic of how people's (fragile) sense of legitimacy in the resettlement colony is continually undermined and violated by the state. Beyond legitimising the residents' standing and the state's accountability to them, possession of the card enables access to very real material benefits. Available to most residents in their previous settlements,[18] the ration card had been used as an identity proof in order to acquire the plots in the colony immediately after eviction. For some this proof was never returned, or if it was, people now face the arduous task of trying to update the cards with their current address. As a result, many people either are without a ration card altogether, or cannot access rations due to its expiration, resulting in an extra hardship on families who must now obtain sugar, kerosene, and flour at full price.[19] It is important to note that the law itself makes people jump through certain hoops—through extensive paperwork, passport pictures that have been signed/attested by the local MLA, and a deletion certification of any previous ration card,[20] all before submitting the required documents to the local office and often waiting for lengthy intervals for the processing outcome.

I further develop the idea presented earlier of "propertied ambiguity" that residents face: that is, exploring how people perceive both the differentiated forms of "legality" and law through their migrant trajectory. Drawing on work from a Delhi informal settlement, Das (2011) finds that dwellers still receive state-approved ration cards despite their "illegal" status. The state renders itself arbitrary through

[17]It is important to note that people struggled in particular to procure the "red" or Below Poverty Line (BPL) card, which provides food items and kerosene at costs highly subsidised from authorised "fair price" shops—in effect, a card targeted for those who meet certain "parameters" of deprivation, including access to water, proper sanitation, employment, and so on.

[18]According to figures from Menon-Sen and Bhan (2008), who write about people specifically evicted from Yamuna Pushta settlements and moved to Bawana, the numbers of those who had ration cards dropped by a third after resettlement: from 88 % (out of a sample size of 2,577 households) to 60.5 %. In terms of the "red" or BPL card, they similarly saw a significant decrease, from 74.6 to 50 %. Overall, they report only 11.6 % of respondents without any form of ration card in Yamuna Pushta, whereas these numbers grew to 40.6 % in Bawana.

[19]At the time of my research, the "red" or BPL card entitles a cardholder (given typically on a household basis) to the following: 25 kg of rice per month and 10 kg of wheat per month (or vice versa depending on "rice-eater" and "wheat-eater" designation); 1,200 grams of sugar per month; and 22 litres of kerosene oil per month at 9.08 rupees per litre (Department of Food and Supplies for the National Capital Territory of Delhi, 2012).

[20]These criteria are per the most recent instructions on the Government of Delhi website, which I assume to be similar to those at the time of my work: http://delhigovt.nic.in/dept/pubserv/rationcard.asp.

the distribution of ration cards: their possession by squatters legitimises their claims to tenure while also unravelling the state's role as "the upholder of the law" (p. 328). Bawana, then, represents the reverse scenario, of how people become "made" (propertied) and "unmade" (without ration cards) as legal subjects by the state, and are afforded different forms of, but never full, legitimacy during their time in Delhi. Thus, similar logics operate, albeit with slightly different deviations: the marginal status of residents works both ways in Das' *basti* and in the Bawana resettlement, as legality is simultaneously enforced and suspended. I focus on the ration card in this section, but respondents also point to other state provisions, including water and electrical infrastructure that they have been forced to acquire illegally in the "formal" colony.

Rao (2013), whose work, including Chap. 5 of this volume, focuses on life in the Savda Ghevra resettlement colony in Delhi, similarly finds that the ongoing negotiation of the licit and illicit divide is what drives improvisational practices amongst residents, particularly with regard to counterfeit ration documents. Building on Das (2011), Rao pins the emergence of such practices on the "inconclusive" struggles over infrastructure and rights between those resettled and the state. Describing the lives of her respondents as "saturated with illegalities produced at the conjuncture between needy citizens and fractured state interventions" (p. 419), Rao makes clear that it is not resistance that drives counterfeiting and the illegal sales of plots, but the pragmatic realisation that resettlement itself is flawed. I add to the work of Das (2011) and Rao (2013) by exploring how the urban margins come into being, through modes of negotiation deemed necessary to realise citizenship.

When unpacking the "material embodiment(s) of the rights to dwelling" (Das, 2011: 327), it becomes apparent that the "right to dwelling" does not remove illegal standing in other aspects of daily life. People, therefore, continually negotiate this "propertied ambiguity" in their daily lives even after "formal" resettlement through a particular tactic of "facilitating" ration card access for themselves: those who are able to successfully navigate their ambiguous legality within the new and different power structure rely on a *jaan-pehechaan*,[21] as "someone who can get things done". A *jaan-pehechaan* serves as a vital connection to acquire entitlements, and I introduce such a figure as another facet to understanding the role of a *dalal*, or broker. The former, based on its definition, implies a greater level of trust and a foundational relationship, though the point is not to necessarily counter the latter but to offer another contextual view. When utilising a *dalal*'s services, Parry (2000) notes that one should not overestimate the level of trust that exists between the two parties, and the service-seeker must be prepared for violence or retributive measures if the *dalal* does not fulfil the agreed upon transaction. This is not to say that the *jaan-pehechaan* and *dalal* are necessarily different actors: in one situation, depending on the strength of the connection, such an intermediary could be

[21]Literally, *jaan* means to "know" and *pehechaan* means to "recognise". When strung together, and as utilised above, *jaan-pehechaan* takes on a context-specific meaning of a "known person", who usually serves to connect people with various entitlements and/or infrastructure access.

considered the latter, whereas in another situation, the former. Also, the usage of the terms could be dependent on how the respondent wishes to represent the transaction: portraying the exchange through a *jaan-pehechaan* suggests a more "accidental bribery", a chance encounter with a connection who has the means to secure material benefits. However, it seemed that the majority of residents in Bawana were too financially pressured to develop and capitalise on these "known" connections. In two separate accounts below, Feroza and Chandra Bhan Singh detail the struggles that they and others have faced in procuring a ration card post-eviction; though both were eventually successful in their efforts vis-à-vis their respective *jaan-pehechaan*, they acknowledge the necessity of utilising a "known" intermediary when interacting with the state. As Witsoe (2012) notes, "[w]hen viewed "from below", then, brokers are an essential part of the ways in which many people experience the state" (p. 48).

4.6 "It Might Be Wrong … But Not for Me"

Feroza, a Bihari Muslim woman from a settlement near the Red Fort, sees the ration card issue as one of widespread concern in the colony. Though access to ration cards is used strategically by politicians as an election promise, Feroza remains doubtful that the situation will change in the colony; her scepticism is based on the perceived lack of commitment from officials in collecting accurate data on household size and family income, which ultimately feeds into top-level policies and decisions on ration card distribution. She explains the common experience of Bawana colony residents being excluded from ration card surveys due to minimal follow-up and carelessness by the surveyors:

> People went to them [the government officials] saying that they weren't home at the time of enquiry [survey]. They leave in the morning and return by evening. If they don't earn what will they eat? They [officials] could have asked the neighbours. They never enquired with the neighbours [either] … about the ration card. Now we are to keep hunting them [pursuing the officials]—in Punjabi Baag and everywhere else.[22]

Feroza herself was in possession of two ration cards: a "yellow"[23] card assigned in her name but not considered as valuable since it provided rations with lower subsidies, and the the "red" card, apparently bought from a man named Usman Ghazzemi. When asked for particulars on how she acquired the card, she replied that the man was a *jaan-pehechaan* with whom she was on good terms; in addition to

[22]Interviewed on 2 August 2012.

[23]At the time of my research, the "yellow" or APL card entitled a cardholder to the same rice/wheat quantities as the BPL card, but differed in that there was no sugar allocation and only 6 litres of kerosene was allocated per month (Department of Food and Supplies for the National Capital Territory of Delhi, 2012). To my knowledge, the distribution allotments have changed under the National Food Security Act of 2013, and the ration system is poised for changes with the introduction of the Aadhar Card (the current unique identification number project).

aiding with the ration card, this man had supposedly helped Feroza with "other matters". At the end of her account, Feroza became slightly defensive about receiving double benefits, and acknowledged that what she had done was technically illegal but justified in order to realise her rights to subsidised rations:

> It might be wrong before the MLA or the government's eyes, but not for me. I have bought this place after borrowing from people when before that I had no place to live. I should be getting my rights. This card can also be made but after paying four to five thousand [rupees]. He [the *jaan-pehechaan*] couldn't help everyone, only 2 to 3 people. So he gave [sold] this to me … it is poor folks, who can't even afford a meal of two times in a day, how can they bribe 5,000 rupees! This is the reason why they won't receive their cards.[24]

From Feroza's explanation, it becomes apparent that the *jaan-pehechaan* charged a lesser (unstated) figure than the supposed going rate of 5,000 rupees collected by officials at the local ration card office and/or *dalals*. Feroza thus embodies a particular response to the state's logic of "propertied ambiguity": one in which she counters the ambiguous position she has been forced into through her own interactions with extralegal intermediaries. Her articulation of a rights-based discourse speaks to Eckert's (2006) proposition of a "legalism from below", where she states that though citizens themselves might not consistently operate within the boundaries of legality through the use of unsanctioned practices, "they are at the same time engaged in a protest that uses legal terms against the transgressions of law by state agents and other bodies of governmental authority" (p. 45). Feroza's conversation highlights her particular frustration with the state's inability to uphold the law for the poor, and the measures she feels she must use to gain access to the ration card—a simultaneous protest of the actions of state officials and reassertion of her own agency.

4.7 "People Aren't Dead, Right"?

For Chandra Bhan Singh, a *pradhan,* or local leader, of one of the blocks in the colony, every step towards gaining access to the ration card post-eviction has been filled with needless lobbying and complaints issued to various Delhi-based government departments. He gives the example of his current situation, in which, despite his success in activating the "red" (BPL) card, its validity is uncertain given the expiry date on the card:

> I got this card after they [government officials] extracted [a bribe]; they had refused [otherwise] to give us rations. Even today, I am running [using] the card from 2004 … Even though the *basti* [colony] broke [was demolished] in 2006, I filed some RTIs[25] etc. And met

[24]Interviewed on 2 August 2012.

[25]The Right to Information Act (RTI) is a freedom of information statute passed by the Government of India in 2005, aimed at giving citizens greater access to information and, on paper, ensuring greater transparency.

> some officers also and told them that "Sir, this is the matter and I am not getting rations". They told me to do [complete] this [paperwork] and go straight to the ITO[26] office. So one [other] person and I went there. We said that we want our rights and our card for our circle [community] of 18 [people]. They said that "what will you do when even the *basti* has [been] broken [meaning: on what grounds can you defend your claim, when even your dwelling was considered illegal]?" I said that the *basti* is broken but people aren't dead, right? … Then there was one good known [*jaan-pehechaan*] inspector from old times … He saw the list and found my name there, saying that these people have shifted from this place to Bawana and their cards should be started. After that they activated our 2004 cards with which we take ration even today.[27]

From the conversation relayed, the government official assumed that the demolition of the settlement translated to an automatic cancellation of entitlements, and that any further claims made by Chandra Bhan Singh and his friend were invalidated by the "illegality" of their former existence. Since the state had decided to put an end to their squatting, the first official felt that, by extension, a similar judgment must be made on the possession of ration cards. Chandra Bhan Singh instead challenged this understanding and reminded the officials present of the state's responsibility to him, and the people on whose behalf he lobbied. Interestingly, the card was not properly renewed with his new address details but only temporarily extended, again placing Chandra Bhan Singh and others in a space of pseudo-legality and rendering the state arbitrary in its decision-making. The ration card thus became a document he was forced to procure through a difficult process of negotiation to gain yet another form of uncertain standing.[28] For Das and Poole (2004) this experience is emblematic of the state "continually both experienced and undone through the illegibility of its own practices, documents and words" (p. 10).

Chandra Bhan Singh acknowledged that he was lucky and knowledgeable: he was savvy enough to pursue the right avenues, and make a trip to ITO upon which he met the *jaan-pehechaan* who had apparently helped him before in other capacities. He pointed out that the system is stacked against others in the colony, especially those who do not know the correct person to approach or how to demand their rights:

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[26]ITO is the Income Tax Office, located near the Indraprastha metro station in Delhi.

[27]Interviewed on 1 September 2012. I recognise that this quote has many of my own additions for clarification purposes, which can raise concerns about the original meaning and equivalence. Drawing from Bassnett (2014), I am influencing the "expressive form" to increase understanding, while leaving the core meaning unchanged.

[28]This temporary extension of ration card services by the state has also been observed by Das (2011: 328) in her study of an informal settlement in Delhi facing the threat of demolition. She writes about the *pradhan* and other residents of the settlement who had been issued a *pradikaran patra,* a document that established a right to rations for three months. On the document itself, the fine print made clear that it was not a recognised ration card, and bore a clear end date. Similar to Chandra Bhan Singh, Das' respondents had been using the document since 2004 despite its expiration.

> And for illiterate people, who don't even know where the ITO office is… first of all they [the guards] don't even let them enter, the illiterate people. At the gate itself, the watchman will stop him and ask what's the matter? If one has to meet with the Commissioner then what will a poor person say? At the most, he will [be able to] say that "my ration hasn't started, Sir". So what is the fault in the card, what are the obstacles in [receiving] it, how will he tell them? So these kinds of complications are there.[29]

Similar to Feroza, Chandra Bhan Singh acknowledges that he was fortunate to have had access to the *jaan-pehechaan*: though this connection did not prevent a monetary bribe from exchanging hands, it served to facilitate a transaction that would have been quite difficult otherwise—as demonstrated through his quote about the various obstacles that a poor person is met with before and after entering the office. More specifically, the *jaan-pehechaan* provides a modicum of familiarity and trust between the two parties and, in this case, serves to validate Chandra Bhan Singh's story in the eyes of the sceptical ITO officials.

4.8 "They Always Said No"

I juxtapose the accounts from Feroza and Chandra Bhan Singh with that of Sandeep, a Hindu woman in her forties, evicted from Yamuna Pushta. She had found her ration card unusable at the ration shop because she did not possess an accompanying thumb impression to verify her identity. Upon approaching the ration card office, Sandeep was given the run-around and told to return later as it was not possible to collect her impression at that particular time. She describes the pattern of interaction at the office as having repeatedly visited to no avail:

> When the thumb impressions were being collected I was not well. I was suffering from typhoid. I went after 2 to 4 days, and after that I did many rounds. They told me to come after a week. Whenever they called me [from the reception area] I went [to talk to the officials] but they always said no, this is not the time. They keep on lying the same way and troubled me a lot. They are in the mood to take a bribe.[30]

Sandeep's experience at the ration card office is probably in line with that of many of the residents living in the resettlement colony, who have not been able to leverage and/or afford a *jaan-pehechaan* to work on their behalf. In the absence of such a figure, the situation can become one of constant appeal and rejection—a never-ending game of "come back tomorrow" that (re)produces a particularly skewed power relationship. The waiting room, according to Auyero's (2011) study of people waiting at a welfare office in Buenos Aires, is an "area of compliance", where actively pursuing one's documentation and benefits processing status with officials is frowned upon, or worse, "punished" by a permanent withholding of such entitlements. In the face of "propertied ambiguity" and the arbitrary issuance of ration

[29]Interviewed on 1 September 2012.

[30]Interviewed on 2 February 2012.

cards in the resettlement colony, people attempt to circumvent the waiting room and the associated indefinite waiting. Like Feroza, many frame the heavy investment they have made in becoming "legal" in the resettlement colony as the impetus for seeking out entitlements afforded to them while living in *bastis*. For some, like Feroza and Chandra Bhan Singh, this is successfully done through the *jaan-pehechaan*, while for others, like Sandeep, the only recourse is forced compliance with the wait.[31]

4.9 Conclusion

The empirical material presented above demonstrates that although the state interprets the colony's "legality" ambiguously, for example by providing land titles but withholding ration cards, residents often insert themselves into the vagaries of the law seeking to close loopholes or secure rights through their own channels. The simultaneous use of rights-based discourses and extralegal practices by many respondents to detail and counter their various grievances with the state speaks to a "more active engagement with domination" (Eckert, 2006: 68) and gives an insight into subaltern politics on the margins. Those who possess savoir-faire and are sufficiently well connected to find channels of circumvention defend their own illegal manoeuvrings or involvement with "dirty politics" on moral grounds, claiming such actions as the only viable challenge to their exclusion from state entitlements and employment opportunities post-eviction.

In this way, individual actions become contextualised based on perceived need, speaking to the reconstruction of a moral spectrum of corruption across new and forced social positions. Political agency, then, is closely related to brokerage and how people transition in and out of this role, depending on need (and in some cases greed), or are able to avail of the services of someone who performs this function. Witsoe (2012) finds that brokers importantly connect "diverse spheres", from local politicians to state institutions and criminal gangs, and that the "broker"—as a procurer of ration cards and political votes—is constantly "blurring" the boundaries between state and non-state actors. It could be argued based on the above empirical data that the "subaltern" and the "state" can have multiple (though uncertain) crossovers through corruption, especially if brokers are considered to be part of the state, following Witsoe. Without romanticizing corruption, such

[31]Peisakhin and Pinto (2010), in a randomised control field experiment amongst *basti* dwellers in Delhi, found that people who used a middleman for procuring a ration card had the shortest processing time (approximately 2 months), compared to those who had filed an RTI along with their application (4 months on average), those who submitted a letter of support from an NGO alongside their application (12 months on average), and those who submitted the application through the standard processing procedures (over 12 months). It is hard to say what the turnaround time for utilising a *jaan-pehechaan* would be, and whether it would be shorter or longer than the middleman in Peisakhin and Pinto's work, given the presumably closer nature of the relationship.

practices allow for a renewed consideration of how the state is theorized on the margins and of the multi-faceted and everyday experiences of corruption. I differ, however, from Witsoe's postulation that local power rather than individual citizenship defines the ways through which people approach the state—that it is the mediation performed by the landowner, politician and so on that dictates the experience of both corruption and the state for ordinary people. Instead, I conclude that, in Bawana, though brokerage in many cases came to redefine how an individual accessed the state, instances of illicit activity unfolded in an atomized manner. More specifically, a very individual sense of claims-making, entitlements, and privileges vis-à-vis the state influenced participation in different brokerage schemes and the lengths to which a person would go in their pursuit—a demonstration of securing an "incremental citizenship" on the margins, following Das' (2011) argument. Also, it was clear from my work that the recourse to pursuing extralegal avenues was not available to many, especially those restricted by finances or who did not "know" the "right" people. Amongst the latter, such forms of brokerage can potentially drain already meagre resources (Das, 2011).

In the spatial and temporal ruptures created by resettlement, new forms of politics replace the political interactions of the past, and people I interviewed largely complain about heightened corruption and their inability to "get things done" when compared to the settlements of their past—while others (a minority) find political opportunity amidst the uncertainty. The sense of outrage conveyed by respondents over corruption can be mapped directly onto fractured social and political networks that prevent the "system" from working in its usual manifestation—one that maintains manageable and navigable levels of corruption. The demands for impartial administrators and institutions are driven more by the realisation that the system performs only for a few, making the distinction between private interest and public office a more desirable bureaucratic change. Yet, ironically, as individuals seek the rights they believe are entitled to them through brokerage, given their newly "formal" status, many residents rely on a political configuration that itself "blurs" the state-society divide.

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Chapter 5
Urban Negotiations and Small-Scale Gentrification in a Delhi Resettlement Colony

Ursula Rao

My first day back at Savda Ghevra was on 14 February 2014, after a year of absence. I had observed the making of this resettlement colony, in the western fringe of Delhi[1] over a period of several years (Rao, 2010, 2013a, b). The place accommodates large numbers of former squatters whose hutments in central Delhi were demolished to make space for the infrastructure of the Commonwealth Games in 2010. Five years after resettlement, the frenzy, fear and disruption associated with relocation have settled a bit. People have built houses, NGOs have established a number of programmes, some services are available and journalists are now rare visitors. People have adjusted to their new neighbours, made friends and established new routines. However, life remains precarious for many who have not been able to find jobs locally. They struggle to make ends meet or commute long distances to the inner city.

On that sunny February day in 2014, I walked through the colony to visit my pharmacist friend Akshay and stumbled over a new, very large, vegetable garden. "This is new!" I said turning to Akshay. "This is a demarcated park space? Why is there a garden here?" Akshay shrugged his shoulder and said, "They are poor. He is a local mullah." I tried to extract more information. The garden was planted by his neighbours. Unlike most other families in the colony who live in brick houses (*pucca makan*), the family with the garden still stays in a mud house (*kachcha makan*). The plot, originally allotted to the family, no longer belongs to them.

[1]The resettlement colony of Savda Ghevra is one among many founded during the first decade of the new millennium when close to one million slum dwellers were forcibly evicted to make space for the Commonwealth Games held in 2010 (Bhan, 2009; Dupont, 2008). Savda Ghevra is located near the Rohtak Road (Highway Nr. 10) near the border to Haryana.

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They sold it shortly after the relocation for a very low price in order to make ends meet, when all family members had lost their jobs. Now they rent their place from the new owner. The financial situation continues to be strained. Thus, the family secures food through informal means. They have a few goats for milk and harvest vegetables and fruit from the new garden. Rice and lentils are obtained from relatives in the countryside or are bought at a subsidized rate from the government's fair trade shop. During these hard times the family relies on skills associated with the subsistence economy of the village. Their occupying of the public land is tolerated because the horticultural labour has transformed the barren land into a lush, green space. Through personal investment the garden-turned-park looks much more like the park it was supposed to be in the first place. Where no government or housing society maintains public gardens, private initiative makes the land blossom. The significance of this observation became fully apparent during a re-visit in spring 2015 when many more families had followed the lead and turned the spaces in front of their houses into rich gardens.

This chapter speaks about people's engagement with land and the effort to shape a new urban neighbourhood. The need to survive motivates multiple forms of territorial engagement that turns the suburb into an urban home, while also prompting complaints about its unfinished character. By analysing the contested activities of homemaking in a new labour class neighbourhood, I propose a different approach to studying urban gentrification. I move beyond the analysis of middle-class activism (Bhan, 2009; Ghertner, 2011; Rajagopal, 2001) and the disempowering effect of unequal state-citizen relations (Das, 2011; Rao, 2013a). While critique of urban governance—and the unequal power relations that structure it—remains an important task, it narrows the gaze to highlight almost exclusively the agency of professionals and salaried citizens. By default poor people appear only in their roles as victims. While the market-friendly restructuring of urban space has affected poor people negatively, squatters and members of the labour class continue to live in cities and shape them.

How do people live at the new urban margins? How do they survive relocation? What are their talents, constraints, pertinent conflicts? I will answer these questions by portraying people's creative engagement with land, their worries about limited resources and anger about insufficient infrastructure. Creative or desperate improvisations by individual families, lucidly detailed by Ramakrishnan in Ch. 4 of this volume, bring into collision the various interests of personal survival, upward mobility, healthy living and future sustainability. It throws into sharp relief class differentiations between people usually clubbed together under the category of "poor" or "vulnerable". The notion of "small-scale gentrification" captures the processes and ruptures that emerge when economically weak people begin to act in a situation that challenges them collectively to turn agricultural land into a functioning suburb. The desire to build a "green and clean" city proves to be not only an interest of well-off families or a project of top-down governance. The imperative of environmental improvement organizes also the daily lives of poor people. An analysis of tensions that arise when disadvantaged citizens structure their new habitations demonstrates the shortcoming of typical urban analysis that adopts

broad economic classifications as basis for theorizing. Urban improvement has many faces and produces conflicts not just among members of different classes, but among neighbours, friends and partners.

I will structure my discussion around the central issue of sensual perception and its impact on landscaping. The first section of the chapter explores the dynamic relations between the normative restructuring of cities and hegemonic sensual regimes. Sensory studies scholars (Bull, 2000; Bull et al., 2006; Howes, 2005; Montserrat, 2008) have demonstrated that urban upgrading sets out to reduce the disturbing intensity of smell, sound and visual clutter typical for urban contexts. By the beginning of the twentieth century the intensity of urban life is blamed for what appears to be physical weakness and signs of moral decline of the urban working class. There are intriguing similarities and continuities between the early twentieth century urban reform movements in Europe and the USA (Hall, 1988) and contemporary neoliberal gentrification observed across the globe (Peck et al., 2009). While cleaning drives highlight and problematize class differentiation they cannot be reduced to it. The quick growth of urban density also at the margins of megacities provides an ideal ground for observing the anxieties that shape negotiations for a proper life among the less affluent. Thus, the second ethnographic part of this chapter follows the activities of making a resettlement colony at Delhi's fringes. I show how resettled slum dwellers address concerns of cleanliness and moral purity in their daily lives. As a site of state neglect and advanced privatization of services, life in the resettlement colony illustrates most astutely the costs of urban living and makes visible the concerns, experiences and frictions that organize ordinary struggle for an environmental ethics.

5.1 Sensually Pleasing Landscapes

The rapid gentrification of cities since the 1990s has attracted much scholarly attention and has been largely seen as driven by strong middle-class interests for social distance and security as well as by the pro-market restructuring of urban landscapes into consumer friendly spaces (Ghertner, 2011; Mitchell and Staeheli, 2006; Smith, 2002; Low, 2003; Low and Smith, 2006; Peck et al., 2009; Wacquant, 2008). More recent studies have moved beyond questions of social distinction and capitalism and paid attention to the impact of upgrading projects on the character of places. Sensory studies scholars in particular (Wise, 2010; Montserrat, 2008; Zardini, 2005) point out that reform often manifests as efforts of reducing the sensual intensity of urban quarters. They aim to reduce noise, smell and create visually pleasing landscapes. Reforms address deep sensibilities about health, hygiene and mental tranquillity that underlie gentrification as part of and also beyond class concerns. By picking up these findings, I demonstrate continuities in urban planning and show how the sensual experience of urban cohabitation organizes quotidian struggles about environmental behaviour.

The dystopian image of bodies rendered weak and feeble through exposure to excessive noise, smell or dirt can be traced through more than 100 years of urban reforms globally, and continues to play a role today. It is underscored by disturbing sensual experiences,[2] moral imperatives and scientific findings about the human–environment impact. At the turn of the twentieth century in Europe, the public housing movement addressed issues of poverty and urban congestion (Hall, 1988). Sound turned from a “dystopian symptom into a problem” that demanded a technical solution (Donald, 2010: 33). Underground sewages were built to bury the filth of the city firmly beneath a strong surface of stone (El-Khoury, 1996). In Haussmann’s Paris,[3] spacious corridors, paved roads, broad boulevards and modern railroads replaced twisted lanes and poor people’s living quarters (Donald, 1999). Outside Europe, colonialists and post-colonial governments built new spacious habitations for their elite away from the dirt and density of the traditional parts of the city (Chakrabarty, 1992; Hall, 1988; Legg, 2007). Aesthetic displeasure and moral outrage only partially explains these interventions. More importantly, they were founded on a profound shift in classificatory practices pertaining to the clean/unclean opposition. The individual physical body and the urban social body were now seen to be under attack by substances rendered legible through modern science, such as bacteria or mould. They motivated technological innovation for protecting the social body through environmental upgrading. Success meant a reduction of stench, noise and visual congestion. The removal of dangerous substances through the eradication of their sensual signs was both informed by and contributed to a recalibrating of sensual perceptions, shifting the border between what counted as positive/negative stimuli (El-Khoury, 1996).

The connection between shifting sensual habits and urban reform re-emerges strongly in contemporary discussions of global cities. Consider Singapore, the lighthouse example of a first-world Asian city. Joshua Comaroff (2007) discusses state interventions that aim to establish order by taming both nature and culture in Singapore. The application of advanced techniques for social and physical engineering created a widely appreciated sparkling garden city as the symbolic expression of a well-ordered society in which ethnic groups and classes too are assigned definite places (Comaroff, 2007). There are many other examples from around the

[2]Simmel (1950) sees the city as a place of overstimulation and overcrowding. The shock of the growing density of the city, its vibrancy and chaos, forces a retreat into the self. People packed tightly into public transports lower their gaze to avoid eye contact with those strangers whose bodies are uncomfortably close. A blasé attitude becomes a precondition for survival. Benjamin (1989: 55) illustrates the moment of ambivalent surrender: “Condemned to live in the capital day”, the flâneur turns an inevitable pain into an art. He is able to enjoy himself in the crowd, because he ignores it. He is lost in the crowed and sedated by the buzz so that the dense co-presence of bodies, manifold characters and relations do not overwhelm him.

[3]Georges Eugène Haussmann, the Prefect of the Seine under Napoleon III undertook extensive works in Paris during the middle of the nineteenths century. He had numerous densely built inner-city living quarters demolished and replaced them with broad boulevards and large representative buildings.

world. Montserrat (2008) traces the process of turning Barcelona into an attractive hub through a reform of its "sensescape". By "eradicating the recent tangible past, decay, the smells, the dirt that have covered a "valuable" history of place" the city is transformed from a "decaying landscape into a future image of promotional brochures" (Montserrat, 2008: 133). Loughran analyses the struggle of new white middle-class inhabitants against "quality of life crimes" at Mt. Pleasant Street in Washington, D.C.:

> I would say Quality of Life Crimes are the ones that aren't the robberies, the burglaries, and guns and stuff or violence, even knives. Quality of Life has to do with, and they are different for everybody so you have to approach it in a way that… ok, quality of life could be garbage there's too much garbage on the streets. So you try to find out where the garbage is coming from, why it's there and try to get rid of it. The drunks were the same way. I mean, we weren't trying to cure alcoholism and homelessness, but we wanted to do what we could … (Loughran, 2008: 131–32).

The struggle between the old and new inhabitants over appropriate behaviour at Mt. Pleasant Street leads to a ban of live music seen by the newcomers as the main reason for attracting loitering drunken crowds. The suburb traditionally known for the Mariachi music of Mexican migrants goes silent and in this new incarnation is ready for incorporation into a heritage trail. Tourism information boards invoke the romantic past of Mariachi music that—after being expelled—could now signal history and identity (Loughran, 2008).

Similar processes of sensual cleansing as means for physical and social reform also animate the re-engineering of the Indian city, where a proliferating number of citizens' groups mobilize for clean and spacious neighbourhoods with first-class amenities that are devoid of hawkers and squatters (Baviskar, 2009; Fernandes, 2006; Schindler, Chap. 2 in this volume). Their battle against the poor and against "state apathy" is formulated as the right of tax paying citizens to live in pleasing, spacious and quiet surroundings (Anjaria and Rao, 2014; Chandola, 2012; Rajagopal, 2001). It also manifests as environmental activism that blames pollution, overcrowding and clogging of the urban system on poor masses. The removal of slums appears as the precondition for a good life possible only at a significant distance from congested environments and contagious poor bodies (Anjaria, 2008; Baviskar, 2003).

However, the process of reform is not confined to reshaping posh neighbourhoods. I have argued elsewhere (Rao, 2010) that it reaches deep into locations of extreme poverty. The right to the city is coupled with an expectation for a particular kind of lifestyle. This is obvious in the new resettlement colonies of Delhi. To retain the assigned plots new landowners are mandated to build structures on the allotted land within three months, and abstain from agricultural activity and animal husbandry. The municipal officer periodically inspects the neighbourhood and orders the demolition of illegal encroachments on public land, such as pit latrines, wood stacks or small shops. The new policy to allocate readymade flats rather than plots to former slum dwellers creates further constraints. Within the small spaces of the 23 sqm flats family size is restricted, informal economic activity is thwarted and small-scale manufacturing forbidden.

In this chapter I expand the focus beyond an interventionist lens. While top-down governance and public outrage have strong impact on urban sensescapes, they are only the most visible manifestations of a wide range of quotidian negotiations about conditions of urban living, which concern all social strata. I propose to view gentrification as a broad set of human interventions aiming for securing health, peace and moral order. While worries about urban hygiene frequently animate the reproduction of class stereotypes, they are not the privilege of upper class people, but pervade all urban neighbourhoods. People victimized by urban upgrading too must confront questions of overpopulation, congestion and pollution. In fact, while affluent citizens can rid themselves of certain dangers and displeasures through segregated living and the use of functioning infrastructure (Waldrop, 2004), poor people face very basic issues of cleanliness, hygiene and safety on a daily basis. At the bottom of the social hierarchy activities of survival are entangled with acute anxieties about a neat home, safe toilets and clean water. Solutions are tentative and require regular readjustment between desperately poor, upward mobile families, social workers and state agents.

5.2 Urbanizing the Margins

> These people have no civil sense. Look at this resettlement colony. We have given them a park in each block. Every colony needs parks for people to walk in and kids to play. But what do they do? Encroaching is all they can think off. It is their own fault that they live in such congested, unhealthy, filthy conditions.

I recorded the above quote in 2009, a year after beginning work at the resettlement colony of Savda Ghevra. I collaborated with Ankur, a Delhi-based NGO. Its members introduced me to people in the community, generously opened up the Ankur archive to me and supported data collection. After my visit to the municipal corporation I walked through the colony again, this time adopting the officer's point of view. I tried to see what state representatives would see and found the colony dotted with myriad encroachments on public land. Tiny sheds near roads and parks functioned as bathrooms or toilets. People used the open space to dry onions and wheat. Some parks had turned into garbage dumps. Others served as vegetable gardens, storage places for firewood or grazing grounds for cattle, goats and pigs. When I recounted to Renu—a 40-year-old mother who lives in a humble *kachcha* house near the park in C-Block—the officer's statement, her response was defiant. "What does he mean by park? Do you see a park? I see fallow land! They did not even bother to sow grass, let alone plant a tree? Don't parks have trees?" The rant was repeated and expanded by others, who insisted that the state did not give them anything. They had turned this desert into a human habitation, a home for themselves and their families.

Making a home meant tackling a number of urgent concerns, such as securing food, protecting the modesty of female family members, ensuring cleanliness of the house, building relations of exchange and trust and shaping a sensually

pleasing neighbourhood. Food security was an acute problem. In their former homes in central Delhi, most families had a regular income and received subsidized food and cooking gas from state outlets. However, due to relocation income was reduced and entitlements for food rations had ceased. To many people's dismay the Delhi government showed no sign of handing over fresh ration cards to the new plot owners. In this situation of desperation, people relied on relatives in their home villages as well as on their knowledge of the land. They cut wood, built clay stoves, bought animals or grew vegetables. Rations arrived from relatives after the harvest and required drying in the sun before they could be stored away. Milk for tea was supplied from locally held goats and buffaloes. Animals were a good investment too. They could be slaughtered during a festival or sold in case of an emergency that required large amounts of cash. Following explanations of these activities of making ends meet, I now saw the landscape through different eyes. People in Savda Ghevra did not see a neighbourhood dotted with parks; they also did not see barren land, or unruly encroachments. They perceived the enabling quality of the land that held answers to some of their problems.

However, the harvest of natural resources had limits. There was very little land for too many people. Wood collected locally had to be complemented by fuel bought at the local timber factory. And cattle destroyed people's carefully tendered gardens. The main worries concerned hygiene and water. Houses in Savda Ghevra did not include bathrooms. City planners had envisioned that people would use the state-run central toilets operating in each block. However, people found these facilities unpleasant and unpractical. The hygiene conditions were dismal. Toilets stank, were clogged and poorly maintained. Sometimes the operators demanded bribes when people wanted to use them. Moreover, people found the bathing facilities inadequate and could not use the toilets at night times. Many families saw a self-sacrificing investment in a legal and permanent house in a resettlement colony as an effort towards upward mobility. How could a family command respect, if family members were unable to keep their bodies clean and protect their women from the public gaze or potential attacks when relieving themselves at night? Local bathrooms and in-house toilets became a must. The lack of a functioning sewage system was an obstacle. Some families circumvented the problem by building a pit toilet in front of their house, on the road or in the park. More ambitious families constructed bathrooms inside their homes and linked them to small self-built sewage canals that ended somewhere outside their own lane. Because these canals did not lead into any greater network, they would fill up with stinking, unhygienic slush and overflow after even the slightest rainfall. An immediate solution was bribing municipal works to empty them regularly, while people still hoped that in the long run the state would complete a fully functioning sewage system.

This simultaneous experience of land as enabling force and limited resource marks the terrain for vigorous negotiations about urban spatial arrangements. People's improvisations—underscored by cultural techniques learnt in the village—facilitate survival and simultaneously lead to pollution and threaten to deplete the limited resources of wood, open land and clean water. Here, then,

emerges the daily struggle for what I call "small-scale urban gentrification", of keeping green and clean, healthy and hygienic, an overpopulated space decoupled from even the most basic urban services. Being part of the formal city turned out to be an expensive affair and productive of new disciplines.

Savda Ghevra is a mixed neighbourhood. It hosts desperately poor people who never really made it in the city or lost everything during relocation. There are ambitious families investing in upward mobility with uncertain outcome. There are winners of relocation who together form a new stratum of local patrons and intermediaries. And there are first-time house owners who have bought plots in this new suburb that in this condition of becoming offers land and housing at affordable prices. Together, they produce a cacophony of voices reflecting on the environment. While some inhabitants simply use the natural resource of the colony, others are concerned about environmental degradation and appeal to their neighbours to act more responsibly. This latter group argues that all people must learn to care for the commons in the same way as they cultivate their own private homes. Only then could this landscape be transformed into a proper colony. Critics blame the insufficient civil sense of some neighbours on their lack of education or unsocial character. The accused counter that harvesting wood, keeping animals, or using public land as toilet are crucial means of survival. Negotiations about proper care for the environment are raw in a setting haunted by poverty that is only loosely organized by state regulations. Gardens are exceptionally serendipitous spaces that permit different values, desires and needs to coexist. These green spaces manage to connect those who struggle for survival and those who seek a beautiful neighbourhood in a common discourse about greenery as asset.

More trying are negotiations about sharing the (financial) burden of cleanliness and hygiene. Just like toilets, the management of garbage causes anxiety. Without municipal garbage service the resettlement colony is left to organize itself. "Did you see M-Block? They throw their waste into the park. Here we don't do that." This comment from Priya, the wife of a local builder and shop owner, who lives in a beautifully decorated three-storey house in C-Block, demonstrates typical rifts in the community. The location of garbage had the potential for daily arguments between neighbours. "Don't throw it here, throw it there!", "You always dirty our courtyard!" were typical complaints. The perplexity about neighbours' behaviour regularly turns into outrage when the fumes of burning plastic bags pollute the air, faeces land in front of people's homes or parks turn into garbage dumps. In the eyes of the more affluent inhabitants, such behaviours expose the callousness of poor neighbours. Such voices of reason echo modernists' concerns—of colonial and post-colonial governance—that associate disorder, stench and visual chaos with danger to the body and society. "For the modern state … "public health" is the basic condition of existence, for there is no vigorously productive and efficient capitalism without a healthy workforce and increased longevity. And the better in turn, require disciplined, regulated "public places"" (Chakrabarty, 1992: 544).

Anti-waste activism illustrates this environment-hygiene-discipline assemblage and the typical faultlines it produces. In Savda Ghevra several NGOs run programmes for waste management. For a fee of Rs 5–10, families can sign up

for daily door-to-door waste collection. Sweepers cart the rubbish away and in more ambitious projects use the organic waste as fertilizer for a vegetable garden and sell the recyclable material in the market. The initiatives have produced mixed results. Many families disregard the programme, preferring to spend money on food, clothing or school books rather than on waste removal. Others wonder why they should pay for garbage service when their neighbours simply throw their waste into the commons. Others question the rationality of those who reject waste management. Clearly, they are too “ignorant” to understand the most basic facts of hygiene. Management of resources embroils the settlement in fights between those who embrace scientific narratives about health, environment and sustainability and those who fail to see the point; those willing to pay for their dream of utopian ordered environment and those who disregard the disciplining narratives of responsibility.

Chakrabarty (1992) illustrates how effortlessly social scientists align with the voices that celebrate the superiority of the educated mind capable of making the link between good health and control of garbage, sewage and body hygiene. The question of whether “the “non-modern” have the freedom to die in their “ignorance”” (p. 545) is deeply unsettling. Asking this question, Chakrabarty draws attention to the condition of knowledge that demarcates particular positions. The move is important because it helps draw attention to the unspoken conditions that facilitate superior engagement with hygiene. Those who have the money and education to invest in toilets, private waste removal often also maintain private wells. It improves their living standards and secures a high level of hygiene at the cost of exploiting a scarce resource. However, unlike the issue with waste, wood and sewage, the uncontrolled extraction of ground water leaves no traces easily perceivable by the eye or nose.

The struggle for a high quality lifestyle is buttressed by the extractive capitalism of the private industry. Savda Ghevra is not (yet) connected to a water pipeline.[4] Bore water is extremely high in saline content and not drinkable without prior processing. To supply inhabitants with a limited quota of fresh water the municipal corporation sends water trucks on a daily basis. Yet, service remains irregular and insufficient. To alleviate the problem, the Delhi Water Board floated a tender for decentralized drinking water services. Sarvajal won the Savda Ghevra bid and received permission to drill wells and build filter stations. In 2013, the site was ready for sale of privately treated water now available to paying customers at a rate of Rs. 0.15 per litre. The endeavour failed economically. Even in the hot month of May 2014, only 10 % of families purchased the card necessary to draw purified water from the privately owned water ATMs. A year later in March 2015 hardly anyone of those who possessed the Sarvajal card had uploaded any money onto it, after purchasing it for an initial price of Rs 100 for withdrawal of

[4]As of 2015, construction for a water pipeline to the newly constructed flats for economic weaker sections near the original resettlement colony is under way. There is hope in Savda Ghevra that the pipe will also get extended to the older part of the colony.

approximately 660 litre of water. The Chief Operations Manager of Sarvajal reacted to such figures with a mission statement invoking the need for education.

> The challenge in a resettlement colony, where quality is not a priority, is to change mindsets. We have been educating the residents. We tell them that if they choose this water they can save on medical bills. There is inertia and people don't want to come out of their comfort zone. They feel they are anyway getting tanker water supply and so why go for something new (Amit Mishra, cf. Polanki, 2014).

Newspapers adopted a different rhetoric. They vigorously denounce the outrageous downloading of development costs on economically depressed people through the selected liberalization of the water market in sites of acute poverty (Bhattacharjee, 2014; Kumar, 2014). Here, I am particularly interested in the relation to resources. Curious about the Sarvajal Company, I interviewed local operators about their water management system. How did they treat the brackish water that was left as waste product after the desalination and purification process? The reply was prompt. The company has no waste management system, but feeds the brackish water directly back into the groundwater system.

The behaviour of private investors and upwardly mobile residents follows a double standard which Baviskar (2011) has called "bourgeois environmentalism". Not only do salaried citizens blame pollution of the environment on poor people, but they also feign ignorance about the negative impact of their own extractive relationship with nature. They create segregated areas, away from spaces of pollution for healthy and peaceful living, while remaining oblivious to the destruction caused by their own affluent lifestyles. People in Savda Ghevra are the victims of the drive for a "green and clean" Delhi in the central districts inhabited by the powerful and rich. Yet, they too must face the same issues that animate urban renewal more broadly. Their struggle for health and safety is complicated by economic marginalization, state neglect and multiple social divisions. Here emerges most clearly the Janus face of urban living as opportunity and dystopia (Davis, 2006; Prakash, 2010). In this location of marginality we see multiple divisions between those who dream of inclusion into the project of twenty-first century urban living and those who in the process of city-making are stigmatized as being unfit for participation in the project of gentrification, and whose bodies remain stigmatized as producing pollution.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter addresses predicaments of life at the urban margins. It engages with the agency of those who shape the new habitations, and thus moves beyond a focus on the interests that drive slum demolition. I have also abstained from a direct analysis of the way state agencies fail poor people. While the situation in Savda Ghevra is strongly framed by class-discriminatory politics and uneven investment in urban infrastructure, it does not determine all aspects of people's lives. People experience their environment and aim to structure it. Inhabitants of

Savda Ghevra cherish the sense of space the open landscapes afford. Many former squatters disliked the narrow lanes of the inner city slums. The cramped spaces made them feel trapped. The resettlement colony is different. Here their gaze can wander over green fields and they have fresh air. However, aesthetic appreciation captures only part of the way people read the new location as a place for homing. Agricultural gardens, pit latrines and domestic animals secure survival while also signifying a lack of civil sense, self-discipline or education. Privately organized infrastructural solutions are a lining of hope for building a pleasant neighbourhood. They impose a strict division between those who (can) afford to care and those who struggle for bare life.

This context provides a different take on the questions of "social struggles over meaning and values associated with different spaces" described by Bhan (2014: 19) in a recent article on Delhi. There he notices that the Delhi government maintains a fine-grained distinction in its documents not just between legal and illegal neighbourhoods, but also between different legalities. Thus, we find that "planned colonies" are listed separately from "regularized unauthorized colonies" and "JJ [*jhuggi jhompri*] resettlement colonies". These distinctions not only keep intact the fantasy of Delhi as a planned city, but also inscribe into urban space a strict separation between desired and undesired neighbourhoods. It superimposes hierarchical inequalities onto legal citizens and thus constitutes a form of categorical violence. My chapter has focused on material inequalities and the struggle for urban sanity in spaces of compromised legality. I showed that these differentiations between the legal and illegal have more than symbolic value. Unlike planned colonies, resettlement sites (just like regularized unauthorized colonies) are not the priority of state investment. They are not only symbolically but materially distinct, since here lobbying for urban infrastructure is a decades-long struggle.

The dystopian reality of dense living motivates collective action for environmental safeguards. It heightens social distinctions between well-settled families greatly motivated to invest in civil order and those who exploit the land for survival. However, the division is ambivalent. Everyday environmental negotiations superimpose an additional set of legal/illegal divisions on a space with an already compromised legality. Extracting water is legal. Animal husbandry is illegal. Keeping gardens is illegal but legitimate, while throwing rubbish is legal but illegitimate. Resettlement produces multiple, shifting notions of legality, legitimacy and morality related to territory (Rao, 2013a). Homemaking practices in a place of poverty that nevertheless aspires to a status as a modern urban suburb is embroiled in raw negotiations structured by modernist discourses of hygiene, health and order, contemporary environmental concerns, dystopian experiences of extreme urban density, and land as valuable resource. The resettlement colony as a site—in which using the land and protecting it are crucial routes to survival—disturbs the habitual ignorance of pollution and extraction caused by humans so typically found in affluent quarters. At the margins, the reassuring experience of land as granting life and terrifying insights into the limits of its exploitability bubble to the surface and produce social stratifications on the basis of urban consciousness, economic opportunity and future orientation. In the process, legitimate, extractive

middle-class desires are delineated from stigmatized forms of uses of the land associated with the village. While the distinction invokes the scientific knowledge of medicine and urban planning, it remains at odds with other scientific calculations about long-term environmental sustainability.

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Chapter 6
Incipient Informality in Delhi's "Formalized" Suburban Space

Rolee Aranya and Vilde Ulset

6.1 Introduction

> In Delhi's new master plan, effectuated in 2007, the poor are meant to be cleared away or incorporated into the rationalised city (Gandhi, A. 2012 p. 53 in Colin McFarlane (ed.)).

Over the last decades, global neoliberal trends have shaped and formed the way the world is governed and how policies and developmental practices are executed. Good governance has become the dominant form of "policy motto" in most cities, and there is a general opinion that public–private partnerships fill the gaps in societal planning and cater to the needs of the people (see Chap. 1). Governments in the urban south have, to a certain extent, retracted themselves from welfare duties, and left service provision and functions, such as social housing, to civil society organizations, NGOs or market actors. The conceptual framework of "good governance" often assumes that these services are better catered for by interested actors and that it leads to a more inclusive and just society.

In Delhi, these policies have also become the modus operandi for city (re) development. One of the most recent programmes that illustrate this is the relocation of central squatter settlements on the fringes of the city, to enable infrastructural improvements and beautification. In the period from 1990, marked by the opening and liberalization of the Indian economy to 2007, 218 slums (*jhuggi jhompri*, or JJ, clusters) were demolished and families relocated (Bhan, 2013; Dupont, 2008). However, taking into account the large number of families that were not eligible for compensation, the actual figures of evicted squatter settlements are believed to be much higher. Ghertner estimates that a total of 1 million

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slum dwellers might have been affected by the demolitions in Delhi (Ghertner, 2010: 202, see fn. 32 for calculations) to make way for the construction of new metro lines, a bus transit system as well as infrastructure for the Commonwealth Games held in October 2010.

The plots and main infrastructure in the resettlement sites were provided, but several NGOs were invited to the sites in order to compensate for the lack of health care services and schools, and to enable the livelihood transitions of the residents. However, leaving this responsibility open to private actors and civil society organizations can often lead to uncertainties and ambiguity of responsibility for service provision (Beall, 2004) and may cause lacks and deficiencies in the overall progress (Verma, 2002).

In this chapter we use a case study of the Savda Ghevra resettlement colony to illustrate how *incipient informality* and *insurgent space making* follow in the wake of a formal act of planning, filling the gaps of service provision and opening up opportunities for entrepreneurship and downward raiding. We use empirical evidence from Savda to define *incipient informality* as emergent, spontaneous and necessary acts by citizens for survival, and *insurgent spacemaking* as adaptation of space to accommodate livelihoods when displaced (explained further with examples later in the chapter). We also show that this form of incipient informality and space making is by no means inclusive or just. Stronger and well-connected households emerge as winners, displacing others that are not able to capitalize on the new opportunities. It is therefore imperative that the safety net functions of the state are revaluated and emphasized. With regard to informality, we argue for an integrative approach that moves beyond the artificial dualism of the formal and the informal and the conceptualization of informality as a continuum, rather than disparate occurrences. Incipient informality has a reflexive relationship to formality and its existence is dependent on the negotiations of exceptions through the mobilization of social networks. The strength of these networks varies among households leading to unequal outcomes.

Savda Ghevra is one of many commonplace examples on the fringes of Delhi where previous squatters have been relocated (see Chaps. 4 and 5 in this volume). We carried out a study in the summer of 2012 in Savda Ghevra through daily interaction with residents, shop owners and NGO workers. The quest was to understand the coping strategies that people undertake to transition to new livelihoods.

6.2 The Recent History of Eviction and Resettlement of the Poor in Delhi

Official records, reported by several scholars, state that around 65,000 families were relocated between 1990 and 2008 by the Slum and JJ Department of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Dupont, 2014; Bhan, 2013). This accounts for 11 % of the total squatter population in the city during the same period. While

these are official numbers, conservative estimates also hold that half of the families evicted from various locations were actually not offered resettlement owing to the eligibility criteria enforced by the policies (Bhan, 2013). The evictions post 1990 are attributed to infrastructure projects for implementation of the Master Plan, city beautification and riverside development, construction of a city-wide metro rail and, most recently, projects undertaken for the Commonwealth Games held in the capital in 2010 (Dupont, 2008; Dupont and Ronique, 2011; Bhan, 2009; Baviskar, 2011; Kundu, 2004).

Land development agencies in Delhi, viz. the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and more recently the Delhi Government (or GNCTD—see later) have, since the 1960s, acquired land in and around Delhi with the intentions of "restraining the spatial segregation of the poor, and prevent speculation and vast inequalities in the land and housing markets" (Bhan and Shivanand, 2013: 58). The Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1956 and the Land Acquisition Act, 1984 provide the legal basis for policies for acquiring land, addressing encroachments, eviction and consequent resettlement for purposes of public good.

Policies based on the legal provisions made by these Acts have been enacted by various land development authorities listed above, and the responsibility for slum improvement has been with different agencies over time. The MCD's Slum Wing was in charge of implementing programmes for slum improvement from 1956 to 1967, followed by the DDA from 1967 to 1991 before returning to the Slum and Jhuggi Jhompri (JJ) Department of the MCD from 1991 to 2010. However, last in the series of enactments is the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Act, 2010 which paved the way for setting up of the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) under the purview of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi—GNCTD (previously referred to as the Delhi Government).

The significant policy/scheme that enabled resettlement and relocation to Savda Ghevra has been the "three-pronged slum policy" adopted by the MCD in 1990, which paved the way for eviction and relocation of squatters, in situ upgradation and continuation of an earlier policy of Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (DUSIB 2010) . In the scheme from 1990, the eligibility criteria for a right to resettlement in case of eviction, was the ability of squatters to establish existence prior to 31 January 1990. This date was later revised to December 1998. Resettlement for the eligible few constituted a serviced plot of 18 sqm (plus 7 sqm open area) in a location on the periphery of the city. The plot was initially allocated as a leasehold tenure of 99 years. However, this policy was revised in 1993 and further changed in 1998, allowing only "licensed" tenure which disallowed sale or transfer by the licensee.

Eligibility criteria were also differentiated such that families that could document residence before 1990 were entitled 18 sqm and families possessing ration cards post January 1990 and up to December, 1998 were allocated 12.5 sqm (Risbud, 2002; Dupont, 2008; Kundu, 2004). The DUSIB Act, 2010 and the Master Plan of Delhi 2021 (enacted 2007), however, mark the shift of policy to in situ rehabilitation and resettlement in built up accommodation/flats. In the last

phase of development at Savda, the policy for allocating plots has been discontinued and flats have been constructed instead. Large projects such as Bawana resettlement colony that followed the development of Savda now only exclusively offer flats in compensation for eligible relocated families.

In addition to the policies and plans enacted by MCD, GNCTD and DDA, central policies such as the Draft National Slum Policy of April 1999, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) implemented in 2005 and the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) of 2010, have called for a more humane approach to dealing with the issue of slum proliferation and squatter settlements. These policies and plans call for progressive thinking regarding tenure rights and in situ rehabilitation where feasible. However, several researchers have illustrated that these policies have had only marginal impact in Delhi and eviction and resettlement is still the dominant approach (Menon-Sen, 2008a, b; Dupont, 2008; Bhan, 2009; Koshla, 2009; Ghertner, 2010; Rao, 2010; Dupont, 2011; MHS, 2011).

The RAY for example calls for a shift towards thinking about slum improvement at city level in the form of "slum-free city planning" as well as the use of public-private partnerships in slum redevelopment. A shift to a more governance-based citizen partnership was also seen in the "Bhagidari Initiative" launched by the then Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dikshit in December, 1998. The initiative promoted setting up of resident welfare associations (RWA), which would interact with the MCD and DDA for efficient delivery of services. Although RWAs were set up in all DDA recognized colonies, including JJ resettlement colonies, their impact has been marginal (Dupont, 2008).

"Housing for All by 2022", implemented by the current BJP-led government, has set the base for an enablement approach for housing for the urban poor. These rely heavily on public-private partnerships. The focus is on making land available through cross-subsidization by private developers in exchange for extra development rights and the easing of regulations for housing finance. The government's estimates suggest that there is a housing shortage of 18.78 million units in 2012, which includes houses for 13.75 million households living in slums (MHUD, 2014). The impact of opening up private investment in housing for the poor remains to be seen in real practice in Delhi.

6.3 Project: Savda Ghevra Resettlement Colony

Savda Ghevra is a 250 acre resettlement colony located in the outskirts of Delhi, 30 km away from the city centre. It was established in 2006 during the recent spate of Delhi evictions and houses about 10,000 families. When fully occupied it will be the biggest resettlement colony in Delhi and be home to more than 20,000 families (King, 2012). The initial relocations provided the evicted slum dwellers with 12 or 18 sqm plots on which to construct their houses. If the inhabitants could prove residency in Delhi, as evidenced by ration cards, before 1990 they received a plot of 18 sqm. Those who could prove residency from before 1998 received a plot of 12 sqm. Beneficiaries were required to contribute Rs 7,000 as payment for the licence

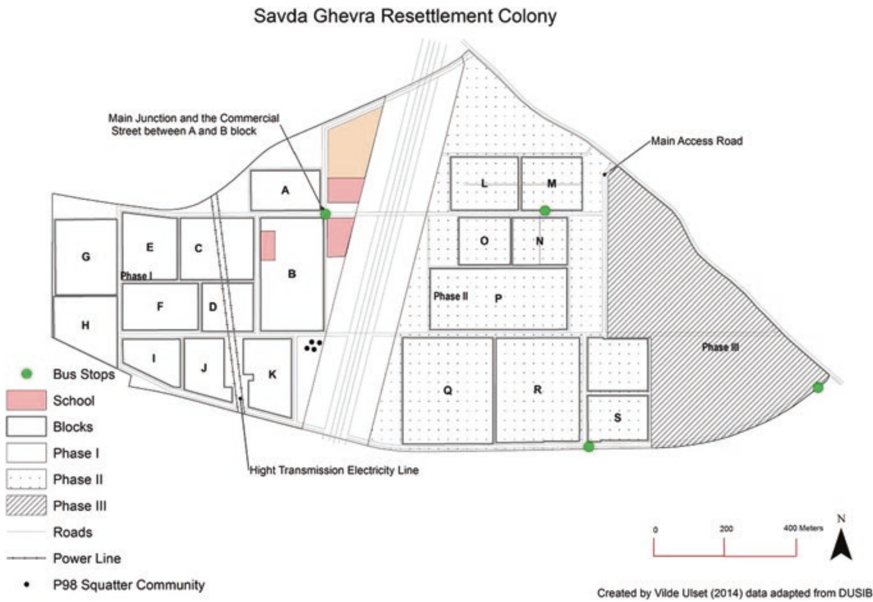

Fig. 6.1 Layout plan of Savda Ghevra resettlement colony. *Source* Created by Vilde Ulset (2014), adapted from DUSIB data

documents, establishing that they had been granted a plot. The MCD, the slum department and the other land owning agencies were expected to cover the remainder of the cost for infrastructure provision (Goodman, 2008). The majority of the evictees came from the banks of the Yamuna river, where a large transit system and highway network have been built, in addition to new metro lines, a park and a village to house athletes during the Commonwealth Games (Bharucha, 2006).

The inhabitation of Savda has taken place in two different phases, Savda I and Savda II (Savda III is currently under construction, but the new areas will be government-built apartments. Refer to Fig. 6.1 for the physical layout).

The criteria and conditions that governed the allocation and use of land in the resettlement project "described the allottee's limited rights, asserting that he or she does not have any ownership rights, and cannot sell or rent the plot. The agreement also restricts plot use. Using the land for any non-residential purpose voids the allotment" (Sheikh, 2014: 5). This has been revised and updated by the new policies adopted by the establishment of DUSIB in 2010 and in relation to the construction/provision of flats instead of plots.

Some of the current key criteria for allocation of the plots/flats are:

- The annual income of the family of the JJ dweller should not be more than Rs. 60,000 as is also the criterion under Basic Services to Urban Poor, Government of India.
- The JJ dweller will be entitled for one residential flat only even if he/she is occupying more than one *jhuggi*.

- The allotment of the flat will be made by DUSIB on licence basis, initially for 15 years, which may be extended. The licence is not transferable in any manner. The licensee shall not rent out and part with the possession of the flat and the same will be exclusively used for his/her family members only.
- The licensee shall use the flat for residential purpose only (DUSIB, 2012).

After receiving the allotment the people were expected to construct their houses within 3 months. Failure to do so would lead to a cancellation of the plot (Rao, 2010).

The main actors involved in the project were the Delhi Development Authority, who aggregated the land and sold it, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), who purchased the land, and the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (now including the slum and JJ wing of the MCD). The project is implemented by the MCD and now includes both plots and flats being constructed under the JNNURM.

People have continuously inhabited the area from the initial stages in 2006; however, the other infrastructural components that were required took longer to come into place. There were no roads, toilets, transport, schools, and nowhere for the residents to acquire groceries or buy materials to construct their houses. The physical infrastructure was provided later, but it took hard negotiation from one of the NGOs in the area before the residents got access to a public transportation system and were provided with schooling for children. For a long time schooling was provided by the NGOs. The building materials and other commodities that the residents needed sprung out from insurgent space making. The vignettes from the story of Savda presented here only represent the 50 % of the initial allottees that had the resources to cope with the terms of the resettlement. Rough estimates (see for example Rao, 2010) suggest that half of the people that arrived in Savda did not have the financial capital to construct houses and left immediately, "selling" their plots to others. Others who were promised land by a local elected representative still camp by the site in temporary shelters—their future is uncertain.

6.3.1 Incipient Informality

The following is an account of the process of recovery and reinstitution of livelihoods of resettled families in Savda. The sequential logic of the account illustrates the factors that determined the "success" of individuals and families in recovering from the shock of displacement and gradual conversion of an isolated existence into a thriving and vibrant informal economy. The juxtaposition of an act of "formalization" on the one hand with the incipience (emergent, spontaneous and necessary) of "informality" is characteristic of the typical processes of urbanization in cities of the south. Several studies on the impact of resettlement in general (Khosla, 2005; see Chaps. 4 and 5 in this volume) and specifically in resettlement projects related to the last wave of evictions in Delhi (Dupont, 2014; Menon-Sen,

2008a, b; MHS, 2011), have found that the economic cost of resettlement is borne by the loss of livelihoods of the poor and the majority of them never recover from the shock. While we do not mean to belittle the negative repercussions of resettlement, we present a grounded view of the process of building back, to varied degrees of "success", and the strategies employed by those who were able to establish themselves. We present an insight into the processes of reconfiguration of economies and spaces that take place once the hand of "formal" planning is dealt.

6.3.2 *The Story of Savda: At the Very Beginning*

When the people arrived in the middle of the summer they started by chopping down the bushes in the fields to find their square metres of land. There were no buses going anywhere and no government rations to collect. The first business that opened in the area was the *chaiwala* (tea vendor). He used to work as a construction worker in Yamuna Pushta (a riverside slum).

> I put my things in an open space close to the tree and built a tent with my belongings, to protect us from the rain. Every morning I woke up and started making tea, which I had brought with me while packing. The people around me started asking if they could have some. After a while they came regularly every morning to have tea. They called me the *chaiwala*. After a while I set up a small stall with my stove on a box under the tree. As the people came back from the villages around, having looked for work and materials to build houses with, they gathered around my stall in the shade to discuss and share their experience. People started talking about what had to be done to improve the situation, what they had learnt or found out and how to best come out of the situation we were in.[1]

The rebuilding of livelihoods was dependent on three significant factors—mobility, connectivity and mobilization of social networks, and flexibility to alternate livelihood options.

6.3.3 *Mobility*

The second shop to open offered bicycle repairs. There were no roads, just fields filled with stones and all the wheels had punctures.

While the first concern of the people was to regroup and make a strategy, illustrated by the need for a meeting place by the *chaiwala*, the next significant concern was that of mobility. Initial capital and savings helped them pull through the first month but activating networks to re-establish livelihoods was critical.

> When we came to Savda we bought a bicycle from a person in need of money, and used it to cycle to the nearby markets and villages to look for employment and contact. Investing time on making relations to the people in the villages enabled us to borrow money from

[1] Interview conducted 11 June 2012.

> moneylenders, and take up loans to start our business and open a shop (E-block family). The bicycle made us mobile and we could cycle to the market and buy groceries which we started selling in Savda.[2]

Many studies have been done to evaluate resettlement schemes, and many scholars acknowledge that livelihoods are broken in these situations because people are moved away from where their jobs are, and the journey to return is either too far or too expensive (Payne, 2002). In the case of Savda, there was no provision of public transport by the municipality from the resettlement areas to the city centre, and the nearest village was 3–4 km away.

It was vital for people's survival to be able to come in and out of the area for sourcing materials, food, potential new customers and employment, but this was completely reliant on the actors either having physical capital such as bicycles or cars or having the financial capital to buy them. It was therefore only the people with this physical/financial capital who were able to source materials and bring basic supplies for sale to the settlement.

For some, means of mobility were essential for their livelihood. It is estimated that 1,000 people still travel out from Savda every day to go to work. With only one bus service that connects Savda with the city centre, it takes more than 2 hours for a one-way journey.

We found people from Savda in Gandhi Nagar and Laxmi Nagar, areas in central Delhi where some of the Savda residents have lived and worked earlier. Most of them go to the city centre to keep the jobs they had. One of them has a Coca-Cola stand that he leaves at the Gandhi Nagar junction every night. From the stand he sells tobacco, soft drinks and biscuits. He leaves Savda with his sons at 5 a.m. every morning and returns at 10 p.m. every night.

6.3.4 Connectivity and Mobilizing Social Networks

The third shop to open was the mobile phone recharge shop. People had to call their boss and ask for work.

The next critical concern was that of communication and access to information about alternative employment opportunities. The mobile phone became a key means of connecting to friends, family and previous employers in search of jobs and options for entrepreneurial ventures. For some, existing social networks were critical in establishing legitimate claims to the land. New networks established within the geographical proximity were essential for regenerating livelihoods.

Kamlesh used to be a *chaiwala* in Laxmi Nagar. In 2006, his house was demolished. He and his family did not get papers even though they had been told they were supposed to be resettled. They then moved back to the village in West Bengal

[2] Interview conducted 4 June 2012.

where their families are still residing, and rented a house. The minister who was elected from their slum gave them political help and brought their case forward in court. After 6 months they received a phone call from a friend who told them they had been allotted a plot in A-block after all. They borrowed money from their family and this enabled them to go back to Delhi. When they reached Savda they realized they had to build their house themselves. This they did not have money for. In despair they went to Savda village to look for a temporary solution and a job. In Savda village nobody really wanted to talk to them, because they knew they came from the slums. However, they met a woman who put them in touch with a shop owner who needed help. They got permission to stay on the 2nd floor of the shop, if they ran the shop for the owner for free. They did this, and little by little they started their own small businesses on the side, to earn their own money. Gradually, they then built the house in A-block. The elected politician also came to Savda to help them and the others from Laxmi Nagar. He provided building materials such as bamboo poles and mats for the community. In 2007, they opened a grocery store in Savda on the back street from the main chowk.[3]

The story about the Kamlesh family shows a positive outcome, where people could mobilize their social networks gainfully. The reality was not like this for everybody though. On the outskirts of the residential area in Savda, in a small forest, there is a group of around 100 people who are squatting in tents in the forest. These families have squatted under the trees since people started moving to Savda in 2006. They are awaiting the processing of a court case against the government. They were not at home when the government came to register them for allocation of plots. Their papers are in order, their houses have been destroyed and they have now squatted for 8 years. An elected politician from the previous settlement is representing them in court.[4]

Interviews and life stories from Savda show that people used their closest networks—kinship ties in situations of stress, especially in the aftermath of the eviction. Following this, they used their non-kinship ties to previous employers and business contacts to gain information on opportunities. Client-patron relationships to local politicians also played a critical role in negotiating rights to allotment of plots and other critical infrastructure. In addition to this, people found it valuable to build networks with the people in the villages around Savda—geographical proximity playing an important role. These networks were attained naturally through direct interaction and religious meetings and gatherings. Another means of interaction was through the moneylenders in the villages.

[3]Interview conducted 8 June 2012.

[4]This group of families has often been called the 'P98'. They have been living under some trees in makeshift shelters for 8 years, waiting for justice to be served. For a detailed account of their struggle, see Rao (2013) and Srivastava (2012).

6.3.5 Flexibility, Endurance and Alternating the Income Base

The final factor identified as significant to rebuild livelihoods was the ability to be flexible and enduring. There are many examples that show how the people of Savda had to alternate and change their businesses several times until they found and established one that was feasible:

Vimal started with groceries, then opened a tour and travel shop and later moved on to work for a property dealer. He started working there because his business in tours and travel wasn't working out. ("No good business in Savda"). He used to have a tour and travel business in the location before resettlement. In the beginning when they were resettled, he worked as a factory supervisor in Badli. He used to get picked up on a scooter to go there. They produced cistern tanks for toilets, but it was a 45 min travel time to go there, so he quit.[5]

When they moved to Savda, Abishek started working in the Relaxo shoe factory on the Tikri border. He heard about the job from a friend who also worked there. After a little while he quit his job in the shoe factory because they were given no holidays or days off. After he quit the factory, he worked as a bed-sheet seller from his bicycle in the nearby villages. While doing this, he saved money for a wooden cart, from which he started selling shoes. To buy shoes he goes to wholesalers in Nangloi and Inderlok that his father and grandfather have told him about. They used to have a shoe store in the city centre. He sold shoes from the cart for about 5–6 months. Now he runs the family shop, which they moved from Nangla Masti to Savda—his father has stopped working in the city.[6]

The fact that people alternate their business or activity until they find one that works shows great robustness and strength. However, it also tells the story of how people use their capital and assets actively and that the success of people is dependent on how flexibly they use these assets when in situations of crisis. Livelihood choices were made on the basis of availability of assets and social networks and their corresponding business opportunities. Those that were successful in doing this were quick to respond to demand in the local market and react with ingenuity to capture unexplored opportunities. The incremental rebuilding of livelihoods and habitat was a common story, but those that stand out are the most resourceful and entrepreneurial.

Previous experience/skills as well as locally made partnerships were important. The absence of competitive businesses gave the start-up ventures a head start. Ample availability of cheap labour and the "captive market" made it easier

[5]Interview conducted 19 June 2012.

[6]Interview conducted 10 July 2012.

to establish local businesses rather than to seek wage employment outside the settlement:

> My previous settlement was Khan Market. I work now as a contract worker. When I moved to Savda I met other people that came from Khan Market and made ties/linkages with them. We started a building contracting company together. Five people form a group and do work. We get work through families in Savda, building houses for them. We build one house first; if the family is happy then more offers come. We work from contract to contract, expanding staff if necessary. All the labourers and construction workers work under contractors, there are uncountable men who would like to do labour work in Savda.[7]

Another example of networking activity based on skills is the tailor shop on the corner in C-block. This is a family-run business that came to Savda from Gandhi Nagar. When they moved to Savda they started making friends and linkages with the people of the same occupation. Before, they had run a tailor shop that had two sewing machines and delivered to customers in the city. After they moved to Savda they expanded their business because of higher demand and less competition. They bought three sewing machines more, and now have three employees. Their employees are from other blocks in Savda, they started working with each other after finding out they had the same skills. The small factory provides prefabricated shirts and women's dresses for costumers at Nangloi industrial area. They go there to sell their clothes and deliver orders, but they also have customers in Savda.

Others chose to invest in their human capital before moving to Savda. They understood that there would be limited opportunities in this new area and chose to stay behind in a rental apartment close to where their old homes and workplaces were, until things were settled and established in Savda.

In 2006 the Sharma family were allotted a plot in Savda, but chose to rent a house in Laxmi Nagar until the daughters had finished school. In the meantime they went to Savda once in a while to build the house little by little. The father was working in a factory. In 2010, after 4 years, the daughters had finished school and the whole family moved to Savda. They then opened a small grocery store on the ground floor of the house, and the daughters became teachers and tutors in Savda.[8]

The account of regeneration of livelihoods is far from exceptional. It is a very commonplace story of the struggles and efforts of people to make the best out of challenging situations. As has been firmly established by the Livelihoods Framework (Rakodi, 2002b), with its origins in the basic tenets of deprivational poverty, the combination of a range of assets determines the livelihood choices of people. The relative success of households was determined by their ability to mobilize their social networks and to employ their stocks of financial and human capital to adapt to their new environment (for a theoretical review of the livelihood-asset complex, see Moser, 1998; Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002a). As mentioned here, physical mobility, mobilizing of social networks and flexible livelihood choices were key factors. The examples also illustrate the dynamic nature

[7]Interview conducted 20 June 2012.

[8]Interview conducted 23 June 2012.

of relational social capital for the poor. The significance of communication (particularly physical mobility) in using networks for gathering information and finding opportunities was almost as important as the basic needs of food and water. The stories presented here also confirm the findings of others such as Menon-Sen and Bhan (2008a, b) from another resettlement project in Bawana that increased expenditure and lower incomes result in a fall in wage employment and an increase in self-employment. The instability in income base and the uncertainties in livelihood choices have pushed people into debt traps, worsening their already precarious status (Rao, 2013).

The vignettes of livelihood strategies presented above display a classic juxtaposition of intended formalization of the lives of the poor and the emergent and necessary informality that it results in. We term this "incipient informality"—informality borne from the necessity to survive in a hostile urban periphery, where physical and social isolation overshadow the gains from a promised prosperity and legitimate urban citizenship. The incipient informality that Savda has experienced is by no means limited to the poor. As we show in the next section, the displacement that occurred through eviction was not final. As an informal economy became established, the news of business opportunity in a new and emerging suburb reached others through the social grapevine. This started a new cycle of exchange of property rights and sub renting, intensifying the well-documented process of downward raiding and tenure continuum (Payne, 2001).

6.4 Insurgent Space Making

The layout for Savda Ghevra was prepared by DDA before resettlement; however, the spatial reality that met the people on arrival was far from planned. The plots had not been demarcated and no roads or basic infrastructure, such as water or drainage/sewerage, had been built. The site was divided by a high tension electricity line and a vacant tract 80 m wide, where a highway had been planned. Provisions have been made in the plan for a local convenience shopping centre but no development has been initiated. On the other hand, almost 8 years since its inception, Savda Ghevra is a thriving lower middle-class community, which has become a new suburban "colony". Insurgent space making actions of the poor, negotiated infrastructure from formal and informal service providers, informal land transactions, advocacy and welfare functions provided by NGOs, and an incremental spatial development have made Savda a settlement which has moved beyond its stigmatized origins. In the following discussion we present the various facets of insurgent space making at Savda.

In a manner reminiscent of Nabeel Hamdi's bus stop (Hamdi, 2004), the setting up of the *chaiwala* acted as a trigger for strategic change in the settlement. People recognized the business opportunities and the "captive market" at Savda and set up small, temporary shops which supplied the essentials to the people. While the conditions of the resettlement plots forbid any form of commercial establishment, the

MCD failed to provide for basic shopping needs, forcing people to fill the service gaps by means most often deemed "illegal" by the terms of resettlement.

The tree where the *chaiwala* set up his tent has become the main gathering place. This is where the buses stop, or where one takes a "magic"[9] to the metro station. The chai stall is where the government workers and the bus drivers take their breaks and where the vegetable vendors place their vending carts. The area around the *chaiwala* tree is the main street corner in Savda and the access point for anyone who comes in and out of the settlement. People move to and establish their businesses on the main streets and access lines where others pass. The barber has set up a roof, stool and mirror on the pavement where he runs his shop. The scrap dealer, the butcher, the chicken seller, the brick seller and many others have also set up their shops on the pavement. The rest of the business owners have vending carts along the main street.

In the absence of basic infrastructure, people were forced to negotiate for services from formal and informal actors. It was initially planned that piped water supply would be arranged by the Delhi Jal Board (semi-private water supplier) from a canal that was to be diverted to flow north of Savda. However, the canal was never diverted and no alternate arrangements were made. The residents get drinking water from tankers supplied by the Delhi Jal Board on a per bucket basis. The wealthier residents have water tanks on their roofs and private bore wells. Common bore wells installed in the area do not function or are contaminated by leached land pollutants. The MCD provided public toilet blocks that were not sufficient and too expensive to use. The people have built almost 100 small private bathing spaces/washrooms that offer some amount of privacy for bathing and laundering clothes (Jeffries, 2008). Although an electric grid exists, supply of electricity is erratic and not uniform in all the blocks. As mentioned before, the terms of resettlement prohibited commercial establishments in the houses. However, small shop owners have negotiated for the instalment of commercial electricity meters in their homes, which has granted them quasi-legitimacy for a violation of building use. Out of 55 shops, 33 had commercial meters in 2012 (our interviews in Savda).

> The licensed pharmacist in Savda used to work for a Health Care Centre as a store manager before, and wanted to open his own shop. He was looking around for the best place to open a shop and decided to open it in Savda because the market was good there. There were no other licensed pharmacies in Savda and it is close to where he lives, Nangloi. He also saw the opportunity of helping people to be the best in Savda, because of the lack of other proper clinics. Last December he rented the shop from a farmer and property investor from Rohtak, Haryana. He claims that his shop is now formal as he got help from the government [DUSIB] to convert his plot to a commercial plot by the conversion of his electricity meter from residential to commercial.[10]

Two NGOs, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Grameen Bank, together arranged a transport link (a motorized rickshaw that seats 10 passengers) to the nearest public transport terminus and the surrounding villages. The Centre for

[9]Minibus that runs on natural gas, which commutes to and from the nearest centres.

[10]Interview conducted 5 June 2012.

Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) negotiated with the MCD for the extension of the bus line, making Savda the end stop. The bus only runs two times a day and most residents use the motorized rickshaws to reach other nearby bus stops.

While infrastructure was a negotiated commodity with formal and informal actors after people had arrived in Savda, tenure security functioned as the basis for informality even before the actual resettlement took place. Households that were only renting to newcomers in the evicted slums mobilized in order to stake their claim to plots. The plots represented a valuable asset in the form of a secure tenure. This asset has become a tradable commodity, around which an informal capital economy has been set up.

During the registration of owners for allocation of plots, an elderly couple managed to ensure themselves a double allocation by letting in government officials twice into their shack. This enabled them to have two plots in Savda that they have aggregated and constructed to accommodate their children and their families. They use one plot for a house and the second has been converted into a shop for groceries and clean water:

> My father came to Delhi from the village in 1987 and bought a *jhuggi* in Kailash Nagar. He has worked in Chawri Bazar for 25 years and has built more and more houses. In the end we had 5 houses in the slum, but we rented them all out to other families. We stayed in a flat in Shastri Park. It was a DDA flat. My sister is married and she still lives there. When we got the allotment we decided to move to Savda, but we lived in the DDA flat first.[11]

The above two examples show that even though the terms of resettlement are very clear on multiple allocation and owning other property in the city, people claim their rights through falsifying or withholding information. Unconfirmed reports of local politicians having secured multiple plots in the area, some up to 14 plots, show the manipulation of the allocation process by powerful actors.

Following the allocation, there emerged an informal market for land transactions which reconfigured the ownership structure at Savda. In the first phase, those that were not able or interested in building on the plots they were allocated "sold" their plots to others looking to expand their houses to accommodate large families. In one such example, Rao (2013) tells the story of Mohan who could not afford to pay the Rs. 7,000 for the licence document and was then forced to borrow money from another family who had also been allotted a plot. This second family then decided to sell their own plot to Mohan. He is now paying back the second plot at market rates. The only proof of the sale is that Mohan now has possession of the licence documents from the second plot.

In another case, Amit, who still commutes to the location where he used to live, a slum near Gandhi Nagar, to maintain his business, was allocated a plot in C-Block. However, he also bought a house in B-Block to make room for everyone in his family. It costs him Rs. 500,000. He says: "Buying an extra house was the safest thing to do, because Gandhi Nagar is the next slum to be cleared. There is no point buying a house there. Commuting is better in the long run".

[11]Interview conducted 10 July 2012.

Savda has also become an attractive residential area for outsiders. Slum residents from nearby areas buy houses in Savda. They invest illegally in Savda because it gives a much higher tenure security than staying in the slum areas where they live now. When asked why they moved to Savda, they also state that the low property price in Savda was a pull factor.

One of the families that have moved into Savda from the outside is Vandana´s parents, with their four children. They live in one room that is furnished with a bed, a fridge, a kitchen counter and a TV. Vandana's father is a shoemaker and her mother is a nurse in areas about 10 km from Savda. They prefer to travel 10 km every day and to own their own house, than to live in the slum next to their work, because it is more secure.

Accompanying the rapid rise in land transactions was the influx of property dealers and brokers. In Ibrahim's case, the move to Savda was because of the market opportunities:

> In 2006 people moved here. I had a property company in Sultanpuri. People used to come all the way to my office in Sultanpuri to ask for plots in Savda. The market is good here, prices are low and people are interested in buying houses. I therefore closed the shop in Sultanpuri and moved to Savda with my business.[12]

Prices are increasing though. Interviews with several property brokers confirm that the price of a house has multiplied in the last couple of years. The plots on which the allotted people paid Rs 7,000 instalments have now transformed to houses that sell at Rs. 400,000–500,000.

It is estimated that around 35–40 property brokers and offices operate in Savda. One of them says that the business is better in Savda than anywhere else. Most of the houses in Savda have been built with the possibility to run a business on the first floor, with a sort of carport/double door that opens on the ground level and a living area upstairs. This offers the opportunity for conducting livelihoods as well as a dwelling in a mixed use building. Outsiders invest in housing property to capitalize on the livelihood potential generated by the creation of a new suburban community.

For example, the manager of a hardware store in the main street of Savda moved to Ghevra Village with his family from Agra (a city 200 km from Delhi) in 2008. His relatives have a hardware store in Lajpat Nagar (an upper middle-class neighbourhood in south Delhi) and called him because they saw a business opportunity for him in Savda, having read about the colony in the newspaper. He now rents a shop in the main chowk in Savda, from another family member that owns it.

While the "insurgence" conceptualized by Holston (1995), Sandercock (1998), Friedmann (2011) and Miraftab (2009), among others, has been described as counter-hegemonic actions of marginalized groups that challenge the status quo, we argue that insurgent action need not proceed through grand and often violent acts. Everyday practices of people that aim to adapt their physical surroundings and fill service gaps through negotiated common goods also constitute an

[12]Interview conducted 9 July 2012.

incremental challenge to status quo—this is what we term “insurgent space making”. As argued elsewhere (Aranya, forthcoming), the scale and form of insurgent action by the poor is contingent on local politics and the culture of social mobilization. In the South Asian context, incremental insurgence is more often observed in squatter settlements, rather than large-scale counter-hegemonic actions.

The insurgence of these space making actions is in face of the rules and terms determining the resettlement. The prohibition of resale and change in use of residential plots for commercial purposes is flagrantly flouted by the residents, sometimes in collusion with formal actors. As stated by Miraftab (2009):

> Analysis of squatter movements in the global south reveals how informal settlements as embodiment of citizens’ insurgency also serve to stabilize the system. By virtue of their illegality, squatter settlements that provide affordable shelter for the majority poor are the state’s opportunity for political manipulation in exchange for much needed services. Yet at the same time they breed counter-hegemonic and insurgent movements, mobilizing beyond the state’s control and claiming their right to the city.

Borrowing Miraftab’s (2009) distinction of the invited versus invented spaces of participation, the people in Savda have participated in the invited spaces of participation as facilitated by the NGOs and elected representatives. At the same time they have invented spaces for action through negotiating “deals” with formal institutions to gradually legitimize the violations of the terms of resettlement. The process has not been painless. Others (Rao, 2010, 2013) have documented how local MCD engineers have demolished unauthorized structures and commercial establishments regularly, laying vain the meagre investments made by poor families. Yet, what meets the eye today is a new suburban community, a transformed space, which has been reconfigured and re-planned by the incremental insurgence of its residents. As argued by Read (2014), the remaking of the “home” or the dwelling is as much the everyday politics of citizenship as is the rebuilding of family and domestic life. The residents of Savda have displayed that very same insurgent citizenship in their attempts to negotiate and rebuild their lives.

Another discussion of relevance here is that of “informality”. We have presented a rather uncritical view of informality, implying it represents the self-generated, creative and spontaneous in terms of livelihood and the negotiated exceptionality, illegality and creative manipulation of the formal, in terms of rights to land and infrastructure. Our apparent ideological flux is representative of the conflicting positions and false dichotomies that are prevalent in literature. We concur with Altrock’s (2012) conceptualization of informality as a matrix defined by two axes of complementary and supplementary roles. The levels/scales of informality can be mapped on these axes as a spectrum from the informal to the formal, ranging from illegal, implicit, verbal to notary certified on the complementary axis and illegal, tolerated, permitted and registered on the supplementary axis. The matrix makes it possible to map various forms of informality that exist in spheres as diverse as drug deals to exceptionalism practiced by the state in governance networks. We call for integrative approaches to informality to not only move beyond the dichotomous separation but to acknowledge how deeply linked the spheres of informality are in the everyday practices of space making by the state, civil

society, communities and the market. Acts of formalization by the state, such as the resettlement project presented here, are based on an informalized "unmapping" of the valuable land occupied by the poor in central locations (Roy, 2009; Baviskar, 2011; Bhan, 2009; Menon-Sen, 2012; Ghertner, 2010; Follman, 2014). This triggers an informal and illegal trading of the rights to land by those who are unable to capitalize on the opportunity (see Rao, 2010, 2013; Dupont and Vaquier, 2014; Srivastava, 2012; Bhan and Menon-Sen, 2008a, b for detailed accounts of informal land transactions). These are followed by the loss of formal livelihoods and the reestablishment of informal options for income generation (as illustrated in this chapter). At the same time, people negotiate for the infrastructure to support these livelihoods, acquiring a quasi-legitimate status for actions that are unauthorized within the formal structure. The consolidation of the new community and the consequent incursion of outsiders that want to exploit the economic opportunity, both for livelihoods and land, further fuels the informal land market. And so the process of formal-informal transactions continues in a complementary and supplementary mix of informalities. Recognition of this cyclical and reflexive nature of urbanization is essential if good governance is to become a real option for the cities of the south.

6.5 Is Governance Still a Relevant Policy Option?

In a recent article, Balbo (2013) asks the question whether it is time to go "back to government" as the only feasible option for the "emerging city", i.e. the mega cities of emerging economies. He asks the question on the basis of arguments that substantial economic growth in some leading economies of the south has made cities so critical to national development that it was imperative that governments rethink their welfare functions to ensure a basic quality of life for all its urban citizens. He suggests that self-provision or market solutions have been proven inadequate as a means for providing basic infrastructure and affordable housing and it is time for governments to take affirmative action if they are to maintain the competitive positions of the emerging cities in a global economy. Devas et al. (2004) have also concluded through the study of the performance of urban governance with respect to poverty alleviation in ten cities of Asia, Latin America and Africa that "bad governance" in fact undermines the position of the poor. Increasing local government autonomy through effective decentralization combined with wide ranging democratization that enables a shift from clientalism to giving the poor real political bargaining rights should be the aim of urban policy.

Urban policy in India seems to have emerged from the vacuum of the 1990s, where the only option for accommodating the poor in cities was self-provision and a tolerance of informality to a recognition of affordable housing and livelihood opportunities for a marginalized being the responsibility of the State. Policies such as the JNNURM, RAY, "Slum-Free Cities" and the most recent "Housing for All by 2022" are indicative of this recognition. Research has contended that these

policies are only neo liberal covers for promoting exclusionary policies (Baviskar, 2011; Dupont, 2008), expelling the poor from cities. In spite of the massive investments made by the State, the means of achieving large housing are still entrenched in the governance models of public–private partnerships (MHUD, 2014). Our chapter illustrates that the current belief in the facilitation of urban common goods rather than "provision" works at best to the benefit of the most robust and well-connected groups. Reliance on self-provision or the civil society to fill service gaps opens up for clientalistic relationships and not a uniformly just solution. We do not claim to offer solutions but would like to raise the same question as Balbo (2013)—is it time to re-examine the concept of "governance" as a panacea for unequal development? Has governance now run its course and should policy discourse return to "government" as the safety net for those that cannot compete? We think the answer lies in building on the strengths of the creativity that lies in informality, while ensuring the uniformity and access to opportunity available for self-improvement.

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Part III
Informalization and Investment

Chapter 7
Between Informalities: Mahipalpur Village as an Entrepreneurial Space

Surajit Chakravarty

7.1 Evolution of Urban Villages

A small village at the outskirts of Delhi, Mahipalpur had changed little until the 1960s. As Delhi grew in terms of both physical size and economic influence, development pressures became stronger in outlying villages. The Mahipalpur agglomeration emerged as part "urban village" and part "unauthorized colony". This study attempts to trace the evolution of urban villages, not only as spatial artifacts created by rapid urbanization, but also as a subject of bureaucratic categorization. How have "urban villages" been produced under the combined influence of opportunistic entrepreneurship and state de/regulation? What can the case of Mahipalpur tell us about the visions and values guiding urban planning and governance?

The British government, as part of wide-ranging administrative reforms following the formal annexation of India in 1858, sought to improve efficiency of agricultural tax collection in the villages around Delhi. In 1908 the residential components of villages, also known as the *ababi* (inhabited) areas, were delineated from the surrounding farms, to facilitate the determination of taxes on agricultural land. The farmland, considered the productive part of the village, was subject to tax. The residential *ababi* areas of villages were duly demarcated, enclosed within a pocket drawn with red ink, which earned the moniker "*lal dora*" or "red thread" (ECLD, 2007). It was further mandated that planning and building regulations would not apply to the land within the *lal dora* area. This system, like many other

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laws and regulations installed under British rule for the benefit of the Raj, was not revised after independence.

The East Punjab Holding (Consolidation and Prevention of Fragmentation) Act of 1948, in response to the large influx of immigrants after partition, attempted to arrest the haphazard development of village lands. The act was also applied to the Union Territory of Delhi, and along with the Delhi Land Reforms Act of 1954, extended the *abadi* areas of villages and attempted to provide financial support to the Village Panchayats (ECLD, 2007).

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) came into existence in 1957 "to promote and secure the development of Delhi according to plan" (Delhi Development Act, Chapter II, Section 6). Also in 1957, the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, formally institutionalized the "urban village" category (Dhamija, 2006). Overlooking the opportunity to rid urban villages from colonial policies, and rationalizing the development of these areas as integral parts of the city, and in line with the expectations of the communities, DDA began acquiring and consolidating village land in earnest (Baviskar, 2003). In successive waves of "notification" hundreds of villages were classified as "urbanised". "As soon as the village is notified as urban, the *Panchayat* is superseded and the DDA becomes responsible for development of the urban village" (Dhamija, 2006: 40).

Adding fuel to the fire of rapid unplanned growth, a DDA notification, passed on 24 August 1963, exempted persons living in *lal dora* areas from the requirement of obtaining prior approval for building plans. In the absence of any meaningful planning, and liberated from the approvals process, urban villages exploded with private-sector entrepreneurship geared towards speculation and rent maximization.

Agricultural hinterland was acquired at modest prices after demarcation of *lal dora* boundaries. DDA was not able, however, to deliver on its promises and obligations of providing civic amenities to these nascent urbanized areas. The villages and surrounding farmland, also continued to grow through private investment, outside building and planning regulations. With the natural growth of population, and the added pressures of development, inevitably the *lal dora* boundary was breached, indeed rendered quite meaningless, by urban growth in and around the village.

Rent gaps between the urban village and the rest of the city kept increasing over time, and became extremely high after economic liberalization. It is useful to remember that after liberalization of the economy in the early 1990s rents in New Delhi have risen sharply and sometimes elicit comparisons with Manhattan. Urban villages, despite their lack of services, continued attracting businesses and low-wage residents in ever-larger numbers. Eventually, even the extended *lal dora* boundary was not able to reign in the growth, as villagers took lucrative deals from developers and sold off their remaining farmland. Developers continued to build more housing without adherence to planning regulations. These developments, mushrooming in settlements all around the city, were outside the planning system, though, arguably, construction of this kind was not in direct contravention of established laws. These "technically illegal" (Lemanski and Lama-Rewal,

2013: 91), yet largely tolerated developments, abutting urban villages, came to be known as "unauthorized colonies". All sorts of planning issues were rampant in both urban villages and adjacent unauthorized colonies. No sewage systems were put in place prior to construction, structures were aggregated at a high density with no open spaces or civic facilities, and the narrow lanes were prone to flooding and not equipped to handle motorized transport.

The growth of extra-legal settlements was out of control and no agency had the means or incentives to restore order. DDA looked away. The reasons for DDA's inaction are a matter of speculation. Pressure from elected representatives may have played a role, or perhaps the authorities had no response to the rapid growth of these settlements, and no viable alternatives for housing to offer to incoming rural migrants whose labour was needed in the expanding economy. Although these developments were categorized as "unauthorized colonies", nothing was done to disassemble them or discourage more from coming up.

The notion of an "unauthorized colony" reveals a complex Faustian bargain through which (i) the DDA was able to absolve planning institutions of responsibility for these pockets of unplanned urbanization; (ii) elected representatives, by virtue of preserving the status quo, did not have to lose face (and votes); and (iii) the city continued to thrive on migrant labour. Institutional space was thus created to acknowledge—but not fully accept—spatial formations that would not fit the rulebooks. Furthermore, the economy of precariousness came to be used systematically to garner votes. Thus incentivized, clientelism and preservation of the status quo came to constitute a vicious cycle. Recognition and legitimacy were handed out in instalments—acceptance of addresses for identity cards, electricity connections, water supply, street improvements, provisional certificates, etc.—as tokens in exchange for political support.

As early as 1984, Aurobindo Ghose had found that "anti-encroachment" bills, which sought to regularize unauthorized colonies on one hand, while simultaneously criminalizing migrant "squatters" on the other, were violative of the rights of the poor and the middle class.

> Once they come to cities, the logic of and dynamics of present-day urban planning - where the urban working poor are looked at merely as inputs in the capitalist production process rather than as human being having human needs of work, food, clothing, shelter, water, health facilities, sanitation and education - will necessarily push them into unplanned and unintended and illegal settlements (Ghose, 1984: 1566).

7.1.1 Tejendra Khanna Committee, May 2006

In 2006, the Union Ministry of Urban Development set up the Tejendra Khanna Committee, to study unauthorized colonies in Delhi. The committee's report estimated that 55 % of Delhi's residents were living in non-regular settlements (Tejendra Khanna Committee Report, 2006: 22). Unauthorized colonies, reported to number in the 600s in the 1984 (Ghose, 1984), had grown to more than 1500 in

the next 10 years (Tejendra Khanna Committee Report, 2006), and were home to millions of residents.

The Tejendra Khanna Committee squarely criticized the DDA for all-round failure in planning, monitoring and implementation. Further, the committee submitted that villagers had been placed at a disadvantage as their land had been acquired for very low prices, and promises of planned development of their settlements had been forgotten thereafter. The committee astutely recommended the preparation of special building bye-laws and Local Area Plans for urban villages and unauthorized colonies. Detractors, however, did point out flaws in the committee's report.

Ashok Kumar (2006) finds the Khanna Committee Report to be elitist and disconnected from principles of planning and justice. Kumar argues that the committee, suffering from various conflicts of interest (for example, members assessing policies that they themselves helped draft), condoned unplanned development, and encouraged policies that unjustly and irrationally benefitted upper class citizens. Regularizing existing code violations across the board would certainly lead to more pecuniary benefits in Tier I ("better off") neighbourhoods, than in Tier III settlements. Kumar argues that by framing the unauthorized commercialization of South Extension (a major upscale retail district) and construction of unauthorized colonies on farmland or public land, as the same kind of problem, the committee failed to appreciate the precariousness of everyday life in Tier III settlements. Blanket amnesty to all kinds of unauthorized development benefitted transgressors in elite districts disproportionately.

The Khanna Committee report is an artifact in itself. It reveals how urbanization is regarded and understood by many of the experts in Delhi (and perhaps more widely in the country). State officials and professionals seem to favour a framing and vocabulary of legislation and enforcement to understand and describe urban issues. When they disagree, it appears to be about the strictness of legislation and the degree of enforcement, rather than about how to create planning institutions and instruments that are sensitive to people's needs and grounded in the local experiences of everyday life.

7.1.2 Expert Committee on Lal Dora (ECLD), January (2007)

Following up on the recommendations of the Tejendra Khanna Committee Report of May 2006, the Union Ministry of Urban Development constituted the Expert Committee on Lal Dora and Extended Lal Dora in Delhi (also known as the Shrivastav Committee), in July of the same year. The Shrivastav Committee studied *lal dora* and extended *lal dora* areas as a subset of the broader category of "unauthorized developments", which was the focus of the Khanna Committee.

The Shrivastav Committee agreed with many of the Khanna Committee's findings.

> Villagers have seen the fate of the villages -135 of them - that have so far been declared as *Urban Villages,* consequent upon their inclusion in the expanding urban limits. Conditions there hardly improved. Habits and practices of pre-urbanisation days continued to persist – out of ignorance or by design…. Market forces generated by acute land-hunger of urban Delhi have been pushing up real estate value skywards and this has proved too strong to resist, especially by the enforcement agencies (Shrivastav Committee Report, 2007: 20).

The Shrivastav Committee report does well-expressing good intentions, especially through a variety of planning interventions that could potentially be very helpful, but does not provide a credible action plan. Unfortunately, in the hands of administrators, the committee seems to have preferred to provide general guidelines on all issues and left the actual planning for later. Action and innovation seems to have been left up to future local area plans (LAPs) to be prepared by "qualified experts from the open market" (2007: 46) to be commissioned by public agencies. For example, the Shrivastav Committee acknowledges in the most serious terms the risk of fires in the dense and improperly built developments in and around urban villages.

> God forbid, if a disaster like fire or earthquake occurs, the narrow roads and the twisting streets would seriously hamper fire-fighting, emergency rescue, relief and casualty evacuation operations (Shrivastav Committee Report, 2007: 20).

Given the grave concern, the committee's report is unexpectedly curt in terms of solutions for the problem, one that has proved to be one of the most intractable and bothersome for residents.

> The Local Area Plans should address the common acute problems of villages, which include the following….
>
> (b) Absence of proper access, narrow roads and twisting very narrow streets and a cramped layout with no access even for emergency vehicles (ambulances, Fire Tenders and Rescue Vehicles)….
>
> (e) …jumbled and exposed power-lines close to buildings posing danger of electric shocks, electrocution and fires (2007: 46–47).

It is a matter of conjecture how narrow winding lanes in dense neighbourhoods will be "remedied" (p. 42), or how exposed power lines will be covered up. There is no mention, for instance, of a coordinated action plan that might include emergency response procedures, along with other measures such as smaller fire-fighting vehicles, response units parked around the community, helicopters, mass installation of fire-fighting equipment, promotion of fire-repellant building materials, community training and specialized insurance plans. In fact, even though well over half the residents of the city live in areas with high exposure to fire hazards and difficulty of access, there is no comprehensive and customized strategy for fighting fires in these spaces.

On 5 December 2014 (during the writing of this chapter) a fire gutted the godowns of an "e-commerce giant" in Mahipalpur. Given the size of its operation,

this storage facility was located on one of the wider streets that could allow access to small cargo vehicles. Luckily, therefore, a number of fire trucks could be rushed to the spot, and apart from the damage to goods, only one person was seriously injured (The Hindu, 2014; The Indian Express, 2014).

To its credit, the Shrivastav Committee blames “colonizers and builders” (Shrivastav Committee, 2007: 13) for the present condition of urban villages and surrounding agricultural lands (including DDA). According to the committee, villagers had no real options but to sell off their lands to developers once they saw the trends of urban growth, and found their traditional means of sustenance—agricultural and animal rearing—were no longer economically feasible. The committee seems very keen for economic development of village lands, insisting that

> … [t]he solution to the problems of rural villages lies in finding ways that would inspire the villagers themselves, at least the younger generation, to demand that they be permitted to enhance the value of their property by making as intensive use of their lands as feasible through redevelopment.… Creation of good modern housing and commercial areas in multi-storey complexes would mean substantial enhancement in the value of their property (Shrivastav Committee Report, 2007: 13).

This attempt to initiate large-scale redevelopment is problematic. It can hardly be expected that small land owners, with their limited means, would be the ones undertaking these massive projects. It would be the elite amongst them, and (again) developers from outside, who would buy out properties to create the “good modern” (2007: 13) megaprojects to be sold or leased. Hidden behind the language of helping the weaker sections of society (“our rural brethren”, 2007: 13) is an invitation to entirely uproot urban villages for more expansive elite urban development. Needless to say, the local economy, culture, everyday life and precious affordable housing options are likely to be eliminated.

Paradoxically, though, it appears the committee had some misgivings regarding the destructive potential of its own recommendations. An economic growth model is proposed for urban villages, but there also seems to be some anxiety in this regard. Divergent themes are evident. For example, the Shrivastav Committee seems to return to a romanticized conception of urban villages. They recommend that consultants should

> … reflect village characteristics in the LAP and retain heritage and residential character of the village. To promote traditional crafts, a suitable site should be reserved for the development of the village haat where the craftsmen can display their skills and also own shops to sell their products. A food bazaar may also be incorporated in the complex to attract tourists and enhance business (Shrivastav Committee Report, 2007: 47).

It is not clear how this would be reconciled with the multi-storey complexes being recommended alongside. Further, it is ironic that heritage and tradition are invoked only to complement the rest of economic programme based on real estate development.

The committee seems unsure of the social and economic characteristics of urban villages.

Most of Delhi's urban villages are no longer "villages" in the sense of having a rural economy and way of life. Residents in these villages, who arrive from all parts of the country (and some from abroad), work in the urban economy, and village lands are under intense urban housing and commercial use. The economy is headed in the direction of fuller integration with the city's industries. These are hubs of employment in logistics, hospitality, IT, creative industries and other sectors. Various studies in Delhi's urban villages have confirmed these trends, including *Hauz Khas* (Tarlo, 1996), *Shahpur Jat* (Govinda, 2013) and *Khirki* (Taraporevala and Negi, 2014). Local youth, too, aspire to join these industries, and the rustic past is a distant memory. In this situation, attempts to promote "traditional crafts" and "food bazaars" appear antiquated and condescending. One can only wish, retrospectively, that actual practitioners of traditional crafts like puppeteering had established themselves in a different kind of informal space (an urban village rather than a squatter settlement), since their merciless uprooting from Kathputli Colony recently (Sikka, 2014; and Chap. 3 in this volume) did not seem to bother the state's tradition-and-heritage sensibilities very much.

Even though actual planning for urban villages was left to private-sector consultants, the committee did dedicate a whole chapter in their report (2007: 20) in defence of DDA and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), in what appears to be an apologia in response to the Khanna Committee's criticisms. The Shrivastav committee would have done well to write a policy statement that respected the needs of the community—mainly municipal services and tenure—and delivered implementable small-scale solutions along with administrative reforms. Instead, the experts appear to have been undecided about the how to frame the issue. Unable to reconcile realities of informalization with narratives of modernization, they focused on positive intent, while deferring planning and implementation to another date and other actors.

7.2 Introducing Mahipalpur

Mahipalpur can be understood in the context of multiple informalities and planning practices disconnected from ground realities, some of which have been discussed above. The village is predominantly a Jat-Sehrawat settlement, who are still the primary land owners, although immigrants from all over the country now reside within Mahipalpur. Sehrawats are represented in the local offices of all major political parties. All election outcomes covered, and community members are working for development of the village regardless of affiliation.

The 900-year-old Mahipalpur (see The Hindu, 2013a) remained an ordinary village until 1908 when it was subjected to the *lal dora* policy which separated the residential (*abadi*) area from the agricultural land. DDA acquired land from the village in the 1960s and set about the process of urbanization. In 1982 Mahipalpur was formally declared an urban village. In the subsequent decades farmers sold off agricultural land within and outside the *lal dora* boundary. From the 1990s

onwards, in conjunction with the development of the neighbouring Indira Gandhi International Airport, commercial uses have grown rapidly in Mahipalpur. Meanwhile, most of the settlements (i.e. the parts outside the original *lal dora* boundary) remain "unauthorized". The latest Master Plan of Delhi has gone so far as to classify Mahipalpur on its maps as "Government Land (Use Undetermined)", entirely disregarding its history and population of over 50,000.

As used in this chapter, "Mahipalpur" refers to the agglomeration of the Mahipalpur *abadi* (residential) area, Mahipalpur extension—an unauthorized colony surrounding the *abadi* area, and Mahipalpur Village, also an unauthorized colony, across Abdul Ghaffar Khan Marg. A school named after Param Veer Ashok Sehrawat is situated on the Abdul Ghaffar Khan Marg which runs between the two sides of Mahipalpur. Many of the blocks of Mahipalpur have been proposed for regularization. Figure 7.1 shows these areas and nearby thoroughfares and landmarks. Mahipalpur is located in Southwest Delhi, in the Bijwasan Legislative Assembly constituency, and Zone J of the Delhi Master Plan 2021. National Highway 8 (henceforth NH-8) defines the western edge of Mahipalpur, while on the east and north the settlement is bounded by the Mahipalpur Bypass. To the south Mahipalpur merges into the continuing fabric of Rangpuri Village, which is similar in appearance, and is beginning to take on many of the same economic functions. Mahipalpur directly faces the Indira Gandhi International Airport and the Aerocity Metro Station is a short walk away on the other side of NH-8. Mahipalpur is also very close to Aravalli Biodiversity Park and the elite sectors of Vasant Kunj.

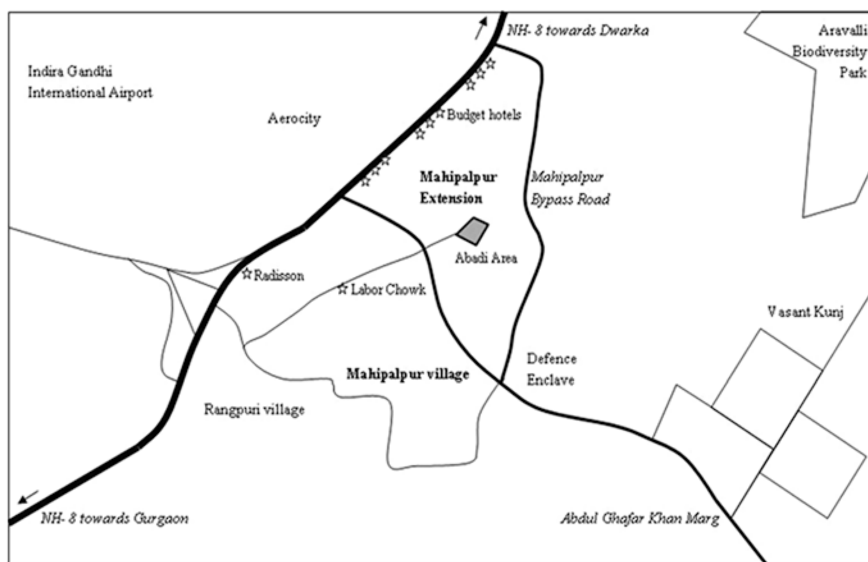

Fig. 7.1 Indicative map showing landmarks around Mahipalpur (not to scale)

The northern part of Mahipalpur comprised the original village *abadi* area and new construction on former farmland, known as Mahipalpur Extension. This part of the settlement predominantly is under intensive commercial use, including office space, retail outlets, warehouses, hotels and rental apartments. According to real estate agents in the area, more than 90 % of the plots in Mahipalpur Extension are being used for commercial purposes. These include budget hotels and logistics firms, which have grown in conjunction with the airport, and small-scale services and retail mainly to support the large population renting space.

The southern side of Mahipalpur, also built on farmland, has a different character. This part of the settlement, too, has intense commercial use, but most of it is limited to the main streets—the NH-8 and Abdul Gaffar Khan Marg on the periphery, and the Old Rangpuri Road (also known as the Mahipalpur-Rangpuri Road), the main internal street. Stepping away from the busy main streets (The Hindu, 2009) one finds a number of quiet residential lanes and neighbourhoods. There are far fewer logistics businesses on the southern side, but more semi-formal educational centres offering English language classes, training in computers, technical and vocational courses and classes in special interests, for example dance. Residential buildings, too, are more modest, with numerous small one- and two-storey houses. The lanes are wide, clean and well maintained. A conscious effort to preserve community character is evident. Indeed, south Mahipalpur could be compared favourably against many planned developments in the city.

Old Rangpuri Road is the major commercial spine of southern Mahipalpur. Retail outlets line the street front, and informal sector vendors use all available space on the edges of the street. A niche has been carved out for a dedicated produce market. Several of the buildings on the street have been demolished and reconstructed, for instance, as a large "commercial centre" accommodating office space and residential uses. It is only one among several massive "mixed use" buildings (G+4), constructed by combining three or four regular residential plots. Informal sector vendors, onlookers, shoppers and pedestrians fill the street in the evenings. Although cars are allowed on this street, there is scarcely enough room for one to drive through. Every morning a crowd of daily-wage workers gathers at a prominent intersection on Old Rangpuri Road. They are picked up in small trucks by construction agents offering work. This intersection is now known as "labor chowk" (see Fig. 7.2).

Land owners are trying to maximize rent, either through budget hotels or affordable apartments. A barber (Muslim, male, about 50 years of age, from Uttar Pradesh) who has been living in Mahipalpur for about 10 years, has seen the monthly rent for a small shop (no more than 6 sqm in area) rise from USD 20 to more than USD 90 (current values and exchange rates).

> It was a different place 10 years ago. It's all about rent now - Jat property and money. Most sales are made within the community. Renters are from everywhere. Many are from UP. People living here work everywhere including Central Secretariat. They cannot find anything affordable anywhere closer. Also some students, airport staff, and people working in Gurgaon. 10 years ago, when I started my business, rent was 1200 Rupees. Now its 5500 Rupees. I could not buy a place for myself in all this time. It's a very expensive area and it's very difficult to buy or build.

Fig. 7.2 Men at labour Chowk waiting to be hired for the day (*Source* Photograph by author)

The barber has it figured out. "*Saara rent ka khel hai*" (The whole game is about rent.). Others, too, testify to the furious pace of construction. One tea shop owner, who has been there for more than 12 years, complains of the decline in his business. He recalls that the streets were widened in 1992, and the warehouses took off closer to 1995. As recently as 2000 there were farms inside Mahipalpur, he insists" *Ab sab kuch bakwaas ho gaya hai"*. (Everything is rubbish now.) He is unwilling to lease the shop out to someone else, because he fears they may not leave. "*Phir chale jao court mein"*. Then one can go to the courts, he says sarcastically.

CBRE, a multinational real estate consultancy, in a 2014 report on rents in India's logistics market, confirm that the

> … [d]emand for warehousing space along NH-8 remained buoyant during the review period. Owing to their strategic location and ease of connectivity to prominent residential and commercial hubs (CBRE, 2014: 3).

At a juice stall in Mahipalpur Extension, a smartly dressed man was observed at about 8 pm on a weekday, aggressively asking the stall operators for identity documentation. The operator at the stall and his elderly assistant (both from Uttar Pradesh) claimed not to have any kind of identity papers. According to the juice vendors the former is the landlord of a number of properties on the street. As the elderly assistant put it, "*karoron ka maal aata hai*". (He collects millions.) The landlord's complaint was that if the tenants do not produce ID he would have to deal with the policeman, who had been authorized to impose fines if documents were not collected from all renters. The landlord in turn threatened his tenants with eviction if they did not produce ID. The juice vendors, at least, seemed to be sticking to their story. They express surprise and indignation."*Pehle to kabhi nahi maanga aise*". (They have never asked for identification before in this way.) Policemen rode through the neighbourhood on heavy motorcycles, as everyone else stood around confused. By the next day it was business as usual.

Mahipalpur, like most urban villages, has grown within an institutional vacuum characterized by layers of informality, indecision and half-measures. Uncertain of the future of the settlement, but keen not to miss out on the commercial potential of land, owners followed market forces. While some land owners added to their holdings, others redeveloped their land, or sold it off. The next section traces the evolution of the village into a thriving entrepreneurial space. The "phases" of growth reported below overlapped significantly. The purpose is to show how the local economy evolved in response to the changing context.

7.3 Entrepreneurial Space

First phase of commercial growth—logistics and "factory price" retail: When the Indira Gandhi International airport was inaugurated in 1986, the main approach road passed right through Mahipalpur. The village suddenly found itself in the role of gateway to the national capital, setting off a frenetic search for investment opportunities. The first phase of development consisted of "factory price" shops, mainly for shoes and sports apparel. The goods were cheaper ostensibly because of the lower rents at the outskirts of the city, and reduced transportation costs because of the proximity to where the cargo flew in.

The airport's cargo terminal also created other business opportunities for Mahipalpur. Proximity to the airport, cheap rents and the lack of implementation of planning regulations led to a growth in logistics firms (specializing in receiving, storing and shipping cargo). Logistics firms first began concentrating in the neighbouring village of Nangal Devat (on the airport side of NH-8). Land in Nangal Devat was first acquired for airport expansion in the 1960s and 1970s (Telegraph India, 2007). In 2007, the villagers lost a legal battle for better compensation than the prices fixed in 1972. Nangal Devat was relocated, and Mahipalpur became the location of choice for the logistics business.

Logistics firms in Mahipalpur (concentrated in Mahipalpur Extension, but also located in other parts of the Mahipalpur) pick up consignments in trucks, and bring them to warehouses that are typically located in basements, or on larger plots inside the neighbourhoods. When orders come in, the goods are shipped to all parts of the country. Large parking lots for trucks have been created at the outskirts of the settlement, near main roads. About 40 freight vehicles—mostly 6- or 10-wheel trucks—are parked on "DDA's land" on the northern end of Mahipalpur extension. Another large truck parking accommodates about 70–80 vehicles at the Southern edge of Mahipalpur, just behind the Radisson hotel. Yet, another truck parking is at the edge of Rangpuri village, which also has a few logistics businesses. Drivers sometimes sit for hours inside their trucks waiting for pickup or delivery instructions.

The airport, one of the best in the world in its category, is an important piece of Delhi's "world city" ambitions. Paradoxically, though, the state's vision of a modern airport relies on the availability of cheap land in underdeveloped and

unplanned urban villages. Planning agencies have not intervened in the commercialization of village and agricultural lands, and the expansion of unauthorized construction. The airport's success has been based on the office space, housing, storage, parking and hospitality businesses located in and operating out of "unauthorized" Mahipalpur. This symbiotic relationship is what underpins the phenomenon of informality and determines the state's interest in continuing to keep people in states of exception. While the original land-owning community of Mahipalpur has benefitted tremendously from the new rentier economy, the money has not translated to improvement in infrastructure and facilities, nor led to permanence of tenure.

Second phase of growth—hotels: With the expansion of the airport, and the significant increases in air traffic after economic liberalization (beginning in the early 1990s), the Western edge of Mahipalpur on NH-8, facing the airport, started becoming a hub for hotels. Hotel Shanti Palace, in Mahipalpur Extension, was amongst the first to open. Through the 1990s and 2000s hotels filled out all of the plots facing NH-8 in Mahipalpur Extension. Most of 30–40 hotels in Mahipalpur Extension fall in the "budget" category with regular rooms at about INR1200–2000 (USD 20–30). The industry received a major push in the early 2000s, with the opening of the high-end Radisson Hotel in Mahipalpur Village, facing NH-8, south of the Abdul Ghaffar Khan Marg intersection. In the evenings, the hotels display an impressive array of neon-lit signs along NH-8. The hotel agglomeration thrived because of its accessibility for transit passengers, tourists and airline guests. Figure 7.3 shows the neon lights of the hotels along NH-8.

Young men of the Jat community have been hired in large numbers to work in the hotels. The industry serves as an employment and upliftment project for the youth. It appears, at some of the establishments, that there are far too many employees, many with little to do. This might be a reflection of the modest wages offered to this group of workers, many of whom are retained in an informal

Fig. 7.3 Neon-lit hotels along NH-8 (*Source* Photograph by author)

capacity. Figure 7.4 shows an advertisement inviting applicants for positions in the hotel industry, some paid on a daily basis. Further, not all of these employees are equally well trained. They are, however, gainfully employed and off the streets. Hotel bars and restaurants on the main road have a significant number of local patrons in addition to hotel guests. Tripti Bar, one of the most popular in the area, has live music every evening. Tripti has been around for about 15 years, and the musical programme began about 7 years ago. The place is full in the evenings. Local businessmen mix with tourists, business travellers and transit passengers.

At least a part of the success of hotels in Mahipalpur can be credited to the construction of the flyover on NH-8. The flyover eased traffic conditions at the busiest intersection in the area, and improved accessibility of the village, especially from the airport. It also increased the visibility of the emerging hotel "district". One resident emphasized the role of the flyover in changing the character of Mahipalpur. The flyover over Mahipalpur *chowk* (intersection), which opened in 2007, cut off the airport side of the street from the village. Before the flyover, the other side of the road was used for "morning rituals". After it was constructed the other side was cordoned off as part of airport land, and the hotel industry on the village side grew by leaps and bounds thanks to the improved access and visibility.

The economic specialization of the hospitality niche has reached a point where hotels are being established well inside Mahipalpur Extension, on plots that are

Fig. 7.4 Advertisements for positions in Mahipalpur's hotel industry (*Source* Photograph by author)

not visible from the main road (NH-8). Offering lower rates, these hotels rely mostly on online reservation websites to attract customers. Some of the hotels on the main road have "sister" establishments on the inner streets. Guests are transferred to the satellite hotel as needed. In some cases kitchens and dining facilities are located only in the main hotel.

In 2014, the hotel industry became even more competitive with the opening of a specialized hotel within the airport campus, known as Aerocity, on land that was acquired from Mahipalpur farmers. Aerocity offers hotels by international brands such as JW Marriott, Holiday Inn and Ibis amongst others. With more expensive rooms, and professionalized services, these hotels are not in direct competition with the budget hotels on the other side of NH-8. Yet, they draw a response of indignation from those on the other side. Not only is Aerocity located on farmland acquired from villages, having been given over to private parties, it pushes the meaning of "public purpose". Meanwhile, the villagers themselves have had to make do with modest compensations and are still living without basic amenities.

Third phase—professionalized housing, expanding logistics businesses: Through the 1990s and 2000s rents in Delhi rose sharply, as did the migrant population that flocked to the city looking for opportunities in the new economy. The demand for cheaper housing skyrocketed. Most of the residential neighbourhoods in the city became unaffordable for the low-wage workers, including millions working in the lower echelons of the service sector. Urban villages and unauthorized colonies absorbed most of this unmet demand. Developers in Mahipalpur responded by building increasingly professionalized housing services for different market segments at lower rent levels. In addition to existing housing stock being placed on the rental market, and the new rentier economy featured, new "developer flats" (built by small developers on cleared plots), special dormitory-style buildings to cater to the demand for shared accommodation (i.e. specifically for students, singles and small family with low wages), and shared "quarters" for daily-wage labourers on added floors, rooftops, and in subdivided units. Figure 7.5 shows a

Fig. 7.5 Developer flats on consolidated plots (*Source* Photograph by author)

relatively new block of developer flats. Located on one of the wider internal streets, these apartments would be on the higher end of the rental housing market.

Anmol Apartments, on the other hand, is not a typical apartment building. A simple corridor runs the length of the building, with rows of rooms on either side. Rooms are tight, at about 8–12 m^2. The first floor (G+1) is set up the same way. A "no vacancy" sign hangs on the front facade, inhabited by low- and medium-wage professionals, mostly from outside the national capital region (NCR), and families with kids in some rooms. Monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment with en suite bath is about INR 7000 (USD 120). One can add one's own air conditioning unit, but it does not come included with any of the rooms. No one has added air conditioning thus far. Many residents have been living in Anmol Apartments for four years or more and have not left. Another housing facility, "Star House", is even bigger and bears a striking resemblance to a hostel. The large structure, on one of the major internal streets, features small one- and two-room sets. Along with other similar buildings, Star House represents a unique and efficient market response to the demand for small and affordable accommodation. This kind of housing is not common in the numerous new apartment complexes or "builder projects" in the formal districts of the city.

The "usual" G+4 or G+5 structures on narrow plots are found along all "major" lanes inside the village. These include both single-family houses, with additional floors added afterwards, and plots where the existing structure was demolished to build new multi-storey apartments specifically for the rental market. The ground floor is usually under commercial use, most of it oriented towards local demand for everyday services—internet cafes, telecom, groceries, salons, stationers, restaurants, etc. Typically the businesses are leased to "outsiders", but some of the original residents of Mahipalpur also run small businesses out of their own properties. Meals can be had at one of the numerous street-side eateries for less than INR 100 per person (USD 1.5). Available options include regional cuisines.

7.4 Narrative of Discontent and Loss

Residents from within the *lal dora* area report that there are no sewer connections in any of the houses. One woman explains that sewers could not be laid out because of rocky soil. Everything goes into the open drains, which have to be cleaned periodically. Black sludge is left on the streets after every cleaning. Safety for women is another everyday problem (The Hindu, 2013b). Another woman resident agrees about the security issue. "*Ab aap ko to pata hi hai kya chal raha hai Dilli mein*". (You know the situation in Delhi these days.)

> Someone snatched my mother-in-law's chain some months back. From inside her house. On Sunday at about 10:30 am. The men were out. I was at the shop. Other women were on the roof. He came in and introduced himself as someone's son. Asked a lot of questions. Snatched the chain and ran off with his friend who was waiting outside on his bike. We called the police. What can we do? Street lights were put in by the government. Now

> the bulb has died and no one comes for repairs. Agencies don't come here for anything. This is the *lal dora* area. Some of us have hung our own bulbs for light at night.

She continues:

> We have lived here for 30 years. We are not jats. We belong to the Baniya community. We raised three sons here. The oldest has had a son of his own. He works with computers, in a company, in Gurgaon. He would like to move out but these days you need 1 crore to buy a place. We don't have that kind of money.

She uses the word "*hayseeyat*", which translates to purchasing power and also social standing. The word captures how unaffordable housing has become in Delhi, and also the frustration of not being able to escape one's life, despite education, regular jobs and years of saving.

A common and dominant narrative in Mahipalpur, which has appeared in various mass media outlets and was confirmed through interviews, is that of the villagers having been robbed of their land (see, for example The Hindu, 2011, 2013c and Times of India, 2012). It is possible that the narrative of loss has been accepted universally after having been endorsed by both the Khanna and Shrivastav committees.

Devinder Sehrawat, community member, retired colonel of the Indian Army, and Secretary of the Delhi *Grameen Samaj* (Rural Society) at the time of publication of his article on *Tehelka* magazine's website, claims that:

> Delhi villages are the first and worst victims of the Land Acquisition Act…. It is a matter of great concern that no village development plan has been made with the forcible acquisition of land, and a meager compensation is paid to land owners. In the absence of planned development, village are devoid of basic civic amenities; the allocation of resources for facilities like hospitals and educational institutions and sports facilities is much less in comparison to non-village areas of Delhi (Sehrawat, 2011).

Col. Sehrawat, representing the Aam Aadmi Party, is currently a member of the Legislative Assembly of Delhi, winning the seat in the Bijwasan constituency in the 2015 elections.

Mr. Krishan Sehrawat, contesting as an independent candidate (after not having received a ticket from BJP), was elected Councillor of Mahipalpur Ward, in the 2012 South Delhi Municipal Corporation elections. He is another prominent advocate for the village, and also expresses a sense of loss in a personal interview.

> *Humari zameen chheen li gayi, aur wapas kuch nahi mila.* (Our land was snatched and we got nothing in return). In urbanized villages Gram Sabha land is taken over by the DDA. In Mahipalpur DDA has provided no facilities. *Tab hi to urbanized hoga.* (Only upon receiving services could a village be considered urbanized.) Nothing has been done in Mahipalpur… Electricity poles and lights have been put up at places. But there is no guarantee that they will light up. But there is no sewer. Water connections have also been put in by the government. But there was no water for a very long time. Jal Board has taken a "development charge" for the work. The connections have been given, but there's no guarantee of water (Sehrawat, 2014).

Further, Sehrawat invokes a narrative of justice through ethical profit-sharing. Acutely aware of the high stakes of land development in South Delhi, especially

near the airport, the community leader inquires whether or not the government is obliged to share profits with villagers who were the original owners of the land.

> You are making shopping malls and 5-star hotels, you will make thousands of crores, and you will do nothing for the children and people? It became commercial land later, first it belonged to the village. You are about to auction the land, and put it to commercial use, you should put some of that money back into the development of the village. The government and courts insist on public interest, are you going to pursue public interest or just personal interest (Sehrawat, 2014).

Contrasting Mahipalpur with the neighbouring upper middle class residential blocks of Vasant Kunj, Sehrawat laments the village being excluded from the benefits of land development.

> They made an objection of our colony being on the ridge - now we've had the objection removed. But think about it - our people make a flat and it is said to fall in the ridge area. And right next to it, in Vasant Kunj, flats worth crores are being bought and sold - is that not in the ridge area? Actually Vasant Kunj is in the ridge area. Ours was agricultural land. They are making malls and flats on the other side. Today, even if we sell everything we have we cannot buy a flat in Vasant Kunj. And you keep creating more and more facilities for them. Nothing for the community from where you took the land in the first place (2014).

The trend (mentioned earlier) of handing out signifiers of legitimacy (in the form of facilities and improvements) in instalments near election time is well established and is practiced across party lines. Criticizing the bureaucratic rigmarole in which he finds the village caught up, Sehrawat (2014) expresses concern for the residents and property owners living without tenure.

> *Aam aadmi to aise hi maara gaya na.* (The common man loses out.) We can't make our houses, they won't pass the plans, all agencies will descend upon it to charge money. If you weren't going to authorize it, why did you let it grow to this size? You should have stopped it when it had started. Now after all this work has been done you are not willing to authorize it. Yet you are charging house tax and all kinds of fees. So what is left? What more do you need [to award tenure and authorize the settlement]? (Sehrawat, 2014)

Discontent regarding taxes is a recurring theme. Even though Mahipalpur and Mahipalpur Extension remain unauthorized colonies, they are nevertheless subjected to property tax. This appears to residents as double standards, since the properties are considered taxable, yet not legitimate enough to receive full authorized tenure. Since there are no proper records, however, the property tax system ends up working mostly on a voluntary basis. As one property owner puts it, *"jo sharafat se bhar raha hai usey har saal bharna padega"*. (Those who pay voluntarily must keep paying every year.) Those who pay once get entered into land record system, and can be tracked for annual payments. In one instance, 77 hotels were served notice for defaulting on Property Tax payments in 2012 (The Hindustan Times, 2012). Those who have never paid are not in the system, and can get away with not paying at all. From their perspective, taxes should only be levied once tenure has been granted.

7.5 Bal Vikas Kendra—A Microcosm of Spatial Contestation

The negotiations between community leaders and DDA offer another example of state agencies incrementally (un)planning spaces. The recent case of the Bal Vikas Kendra (Children's Development Centre) clearly shows the nature of contest and negotiation over space within the in/formal governance arrangements that are now established in urban villages.

According to a local village representative (personal interview, name withheld), the village approached DDA with a request for various infrastructure facilities, including a community centre. The village claimed that it urgently needs this space to organize its weddings and other events. In the absence of such a facility, community members have to bear the expense and inconvenience of renting facilities outside the village. At the meeting, which took more than a year to arrange, DDA representatives responded that such a facility required a 6- to 8-metre-wide approach road according to the current planning standards. The approach road is required for the purpose of providing access to fire trucks. Village representatives were informed that the fire department would not provide a no-objection certificate (NOC). Since the only site available and suitable for a development of this size does not have an approach road that meets these standards, a community centre could not be approved.

Upon having the application rejected, the village representatives decided to change his request to a Bal Vikas Kendra instead. "*Main to humein use se hai na. Naam mein kya hai, humein kaam to wahi karna hai*" (We're mainly interested in the use. What's in the name, we can still put it to the same use.) "*To hum ne unhein option de diya*" (So we suggested the alternative.) According to standards and bye-laws, a children's facility has very different uses than a community centre. Among other things events involving large-scale cooking, or fireworks, are not expected. Consequently, a children's development centre is not perceived as a fire hazard of the same kind, and the regulations do not require a wide approach road fit for a full-size fire truck. The request for the Bal Vikas Kendra was promptly taken under consideration and the village representatives are hopeful that the site will be approved for this use.

This example of negotiated use and configuration of space, although not strictly in violation of rules (at least until the facility is put to any proscribed use), indicates that there is a disjuncture between established "standards" and the actual needs of urban villages and unauthorized colonies. The conditions and circumstances for which standards are developed are not typical in the narrow, dense and highly irregular forms and spaces of urban villages and unauthorized colonies.

Fire is a real concern in these conditions. Not only is the urban form dense making it possible for fire to spread rapidly (Fig. 7.6), but also the electrical cables

Fig. 7.6 Densely packed buildings often separated by 1 m or less (*Source* Photograph by author)

are exposed, having been installed incrementally and haphazardly (Fig. 7.7). But one must ask whether the responsibility of the planning agency stops at *not* authorizing a fire hazard. If a majority of the city's residents live in "informal" settlements, their safety, access to facilities, property rights, and general well-being, cannot, infinitely be locked behind elusive no-objection certificates.

The village representatives tried their best to bring back an assurance of infrastructure and investment from the meeting. When permission for a Community Centre could not be obtained, they preferred to negotiate for another kind of facility rather than return empty-handed. In an earlier meeting the village had requested a recreational area near a local water body.

> They've agreed to a boundary wall but not completed the work. The pond area was to be improved. A children's playing area is to be created near the pond. The work has been left half done. We asked them to develop it nicely. We would get a park, water body, recharge etc. (personal interview, name withheld).

Their strategy is based on the assumption that state investment would be considered an additional measure of legitimacy for the community. Public works committed to the village would make it less likely for the state to undo its own efforts by declaring the development unauthorized at a later date.

Fig. 7.7 Exposed cables are a perennial fire hazard (*Source* Photograph by author)

7.6 Socio-Spatial Mediation of Neoliberal Urbanization

What is the utility of the urban village designation today? How do we go about integrating urban villages, and the settlements that have developed around them, with the city? How do we make space within our modernities for such a socio-spatial formation? Certainly, regularization without concern for safety is not the answer, nor can the status quo be considered an acceptable equilibrium.

As shown by various studies Delhi contains a variety of informal housing typologies (Bhan, 2013; Risbud, 2012; Sivam, 2003; see Chap. 8 in this volume). Restating Roy's (2009) argument, Bhan (2013) argues that urban planning in Delhi is informalized, in the sense that large parts of the planning jurisdiction fall under different kinds of informal zones. The settlement of Mahipalpur has gone from being a rural village to a dense urban neighbourhood inseparable from politics and economy of the rest of Delhi. Administratively, however, it is an amalgam of the "exceptional" categories "urban village", "unauthorized colony", and, most recently, "Government land—use undecided" (Times of India, 2013). The terms that describe the space constitute an admission of incomplete understanding, indecisive planning, insensitive outlooks and insidious un/mapping.

Assessing the diverse effects of neoliberalism, scholars have argued that Indian cities are becoming bourgeois (Chatterjee, 2003), neoliberal (Ahmed, 2011; Banerjee-Guha, 2009) and informalized (Bhan, 2013; Roy, 2009), and falling prey to aspirations of becoming "world class" (Dupont, 2011; Ghertner, 2011; Baviskar, 2006, 2011; Rao, 2010). Many would agree that the "world class" city discourse, comprised of intangible indicators of an improbable "status", has been designed (or co-opted) to legitimize neoliberal business policies, particularly those related to urban space. These analyses are astute in explaining the role of the state in enabling the "spatial fix" of capital (Harvey, 2001). And yet, as Chapter 1 of this volume asserts, the processes and proclivities of neoliberalism only partially explain the condition of Indian cities, and the nature of its planning and administration.

The production of interstitial spaces like Mahipalpur is deeply intertwined with the spread of neoliberalism. The uses to which land is put, the availability of finance, investors' strategies, the context of urbanization within which these spaces exist, and the state's developmentalist outlook, are all influenced by the neoliberal paradigm. Yet, as we see from this study of Mahipalpur, neoliberal urbanization is mediated and localized by Delhi's specific political and economic conditions, and by local history, needs and aspirations. These elements of planning culture or aspects of governmentality were at play well before neoliberalization, with all its attendant policies and institutions, was embraced in the 1990s. Clearly, they are still at play now. Four factors can be identified from the Mahipalpur case. First, peculiarities of party politics have two effects on urbanization. (a) Politicians at the state and municipal levels attempt to garner votes by handing out small measures of improvement or legitimacy before the elections. (b) Inter-party competition means that the incumbent at the state level blocks or slows down projects in the constituencies of opposition party members, at both the state assembly and municipal levels.

Second, elected representatives and planners are still committed to modernity in a narrow sense. This outlook is manifested in entire settlements being interpreted as matters of legality (as argued by Ramanathan, 2006) because they cannot be reconciled with textbook modernity of zoning and land use. Further, we see the same dynamic of "narrow modernity" when planning is reduced to a matter of imposing standards, rather than finding innovative solutions to problems.

Third, continuing from above, planning becomes disconnected from local context and ground realities. Making a city modern is seen as making it look like other modern cities. This objective is fetishized to the point that it overrides concerns for improving overall justice and welfare, making planning truly inclusive, or addressing basic needs of the community in a timely and effective manner.

Fourth, not unlike politics at the national level, the local planning process is caught between divergent economic and political motivations, unsure of its own stance. Based on observations in Mahipalpur, for example, the state's own interests in providing affordable housing to lower income groups are hurt by, say, state-supported airport expansion or encouragement to private-sector development projects. The state wants to support private enterprise in housing, but lets

it happen, for decades, in unauthorized conditions. The state wants a city that welcomes and accommodates global talent and capital (ostensibly for promoting the growth of the nation's wealth and well-being), but in the process it willingly uproots communities. The state wishes to promote equity but will not share windfall profits in land value with those from whom the land was bought. The state gets in its own way because its efforts lack cohesion and coordination.

The four factors mentioned above constitute the bedrock of urban politics on which neoliberalism is overlaid. The situation compounds the already well-acknowledged problems of insufficient resources, multiplicity of agencies, lack of deep expertise, opaque outdated institutions, internal corruption and external manipulation by politicians. As a result, planning in Delhi is becoming confused—vacuous and prosaic in its mission, reactionary and half-hearted in its policies, and toothless and informalized in implementation.

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Chapter 8
Unpacking the "Unauthorized Colony": Policy, Planning and Everyday Lives

Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda

8.1 Introduction

According to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), only about a quarter of Delhi's residents are estimated to be living in planned colonies (GNCTD, 2009a: 169). By definition then, three quarters of Delhi's residents are housed in unplanned settlements.[1] Unauthorized colonies (UACs) are one of seven "unplanned" settlement types designated by the GNCTD. In this chapter, we will attempt to unpack the unauthorized colony, by conducting an analysis of the legal and policy framework for regularization of these colonies; as well as present

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[1]According to policy documents of the GNCTD, there are seven types of settlements besides "Planned Colonies" in Delhi. These include the following: slum designated areas, *jhuggi jhompri* clusters, unauthorized colonies, regularized unauthorized colonies, resettlement colonies, urban villages and rural villages.

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narratives based on interviews conducted with residents and key actors in Delhi's largest agglomeration of unauthorized colonies in Sangam Vihar.

The next section will set the background by explaining, in the context of Delhi, what an unauthorized colony (UAC) is and what is meant by its "regularization". Thereafter, we will explain the current policy on regularization, followed up with an understanding of how this policy has been administered.

In the second half of the chapter, we will present the specific case of Sangam Vihar, most blocks of which are UACs. After introducing the context of Sangam Vihar, narratives of residents, including those of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) are presented. The narratives reveal that though the blocks of Sangam Vihar made varied progress on their ladder to being regularized, day-to-day negotiations between residents and various state actors continue on issues of service provisioning.

8.2 Background: What Is an Unauthorized Colony and What Is Meant by Its Regularization?

Unauthorized colonies (UACs) are labelled as "unauthorized" because they are "built on land not included in the development area in the plan or one built on land within the developmental area but not yet zoned for residential use" (Bhan, 2013: 61). GNCTD's most recent estimate of the population living in unauthorized colonies of Delhi is four million people[2]; this would be about a quarter of Delhi's urban agglomeration population, which was close to seventeen million in 2011 (GoI, 2011).

The literature on unauthorized colonies in Delhi sets out their two distinguishing features (Kundu, 2003; Zimmer, 2012; Bhan, 2013). First, these areas, originally zoned for non-residential land use by the Master Plan such as agricultural use, have been illegally subdivided into plots either by the original landowners or intermediaries. Second, buying and selling of these plots has happened through documentation and residents continue to possess these documents, which prove some form of tenure, which might be characterized as "semi-legal".

UACs are demographically heterogeneous. Bhan (2013) describes them as home to both, "working poor" families as well as "elite single families". This diverse population is matched by a heterogeneous built environment (there is a similar process at play in Delhi's Urban Villages, as highlighted by Chakravarty in the volume's Chap. 7): tiled bungalows could stand next to *jhuggi*-like structures. UACs in Delhi have often stood for two decades or more and include two or three storey brick structures, which have been built incrementally over time. The plots, sizes of which are quite varied, appear to have been cut quite neatly at the time of sale; lanes in between rows of plots are also of varied widths.

[2]Public communications of the GNCTD prior to the Delhi State Assembly Elections (2013) and various media reports quoting the GNCTD.

Living in an unauthorized colony has two significant consequences for residents: they cannot legally transfer their house or plot of land and nor can these be mortgaged, and provision of basic services is low, insufficient and often unreliable. Unlike *jhuggi jhompri* clusters,[3] almost no UACs have been demolished in recent decades (Bhan, 2013). On an everyday basis, the "unauthorized" status often exposes residents of these colonies to rent-seeking behaviour by state actors.

A process for regularization of unauthorized colonies in Delhi was initiated in the 1960s. The governing agencies introduced this process to recognize unauthorized colonies and to, ex-post, include them within the broader legal realm.

The Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) 2021 explains that regularization of UACs must provide physical and social infrastructure, as well as minimum necessary services and community facilities (DDA, 2007). Additionally, such a process ought to enable its residents to transition from "semi-legal" to secure tenure of their land. In other words, ensuring clear title for residents in unauthorized colonies is expected to be a two-step process: first, involving settlement-level regularization and second, involving individual-level registration of deeds.

8.3 The Policy for Regularization

The phenomenon of an "unauthorized colony" in Delhi is not new, neither is the process of "regularizing" these colonies. Between 1962 and 1984, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA)[4] undertook several waves of regularization of UACs.[5]

However, in 1993 when the then GNCTD was looking to regularize 1071 such colonies, an NGO named Common Cause filed a case in the Delhi High Court alleging that a clear, transparent process was not being followed by the governing agencies in regularizing UACs. The Court responded by putting an embargo on the regularization of UACs and directed the GNCTD to prepare guidelines for the process.

[3] *Jhuggi jhompri* clusters, or JJCs, are another one of seven unplanned settlements; they may be defined as non-notified squatter settlements, mostly on public land, which have been built without permission of the concerned land owning agency.

[4] The Delhi Development Act 1957 (Parliament of India, 1957a) established the DDA as Delhi's "main land management body" with its primary mandate being to undertake land use planning and to develop housing in Delhi. It is also the public agency with the highest land ownership in Delhi, owning about a quarter of Delhi's land (Sheikh and Mandelkern, 2014).

[5] During that time, first the MCD would pass a resolution to regularize an unauthorized colony (or a set of unauthorized colonies in) Delhi under Section 313 of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 (Parliament of India, 1957b) after considering the layout plan (or plans) of the concerned colony (or colonies). Once the resolution was passed, it would be forwarded to the Technical Committee of DDA, chaired by the Town Planner, who would then ensure that the regularization would be in consonance with the Master Plan and the final approval would be given by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India.

Subsequently, a set of guidelines in 2007 (called "The 2007 Revised Guidelines") and regulations in 2008 (DDA Notification titled "Regulations for Regularization of Unauthorized Colonies", under Section 57 of the DDA Act, 1957) for the process of regularising unauthorized colonies in Delhi were formulated. These guidelines and regulations together form the present policy for regularization of UACs.

The 2007 guidelines and the 2008 regulations outlined the following: criteria for regularization of unauthorized colonies; procedure for regularization; procedure to be followed by the urban local body,[6] DDA, and GNCTD for regularization; and parameters and bases for regularization. Notably, the GNCTD is supposed to coordinate and supervise the process.

To apply for regularization, an unauthorized colony must first establish and register a residents' welfare association (RWA)[7] under The Societies Registration Act, 1860. In addition, the colony must prepare a layout plan[8] of the colony and a complete, detailed list of residents with plot numbers and plot sizes; and submit these along with land details and undertakings by the RWA stating that they shall abide by the layout plans as may be approved (with or without conditions), and they shall transfer any available land to the DDA or urban local body, free of cost, for provision of social infrastructure (DDA, 2008a: 9).

The 2008 Regulations explain a step-wise procedure to be followed by the urban local body, DDA and GNCTD for regularization. Overall, there are eight steps with a time period indicated for each step. The entire process of regularization of a UAC, after affecting the change in land use, is supposed to be completed within 9 months of the submission of a layout plan by its RWA (DDA, 2008a: 9).

The most crucial criterion for an unauthorized colony to be considered for regularization is that it should have been "in existence" in 2002 and at least 50 % of the colony has to be built up, by the date of formal announcement of regularization (GoI, 2007; DDA, 2008a, b). However, there is little elaboration on what would be considered as "in existence". This confusion was highlighted and a decision was taken that "at least 10 % of the area of the colony should have been under recognizable cluster-type habitation, as on 31.3.2002; and 50 % by 2007" (GNCTD, 2010).

There are four parameters or bases for regularization mentioned in the Regulations 2008 including: title of land, planning norms and mixed use as per the MPD 2021, and recovery of cost of land and development charges (DDA, 2008a: 9).

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[6] Earlier, this was one of three: Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB). In 2012, MCD was trifurcated into: South Delhi Municipal Corporation, North Delhi Municipal Corporation and East Delhi Municipal Corporation.

[7] The Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) or Residents' Welfare Society has been defined by the 2008 Regulations as follows: "a society registered under The Societies Registration Act 1860, comprising members of the unauthorised colony/habitation which will be responsible for coordination, preparation of layout plans, and for liaison with the concerned agency in respect of various issues pertaining to the regularization process" (DDA, 2008a: 7).

[8] The layout plan has to include information such as boundaries of the colony, names of streets and neighbouring areas.

8.3.1 Administration of the Policy for Regularization

After the formulation of the 2007 Guidelines and 2008 Regulations, the GNCTD resumed its call for applications from UACs for regularization. In response, the Unauthorized Colonies Cell of the Department of Urban Development of the GNCTD received 1639 applications from Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs) of these colonies. Applications of some of these colonies ran into more than two hundred pages.

Further, in June 2008, an addendum to the Regulations 2008 was introduced which stated, "Soon after the requirements of Clause 4 of the Regulations are fulfilled by the residents of the colony, the GNCTD may issue a provisional regularization certificate (PRC) to that unauthorized colony" (DDA, 2008b). This effectively empowered the GNCTD to issue a PRC to those UACs whose RWAs had submitted requisite documents including land details, certificates, layout plans, and the undertakings. The addendum also mentioned that the formalities mandated for formal regularization of a UAC would be completed within 12 months from the issuance of PRCs.

A typical PRC for a UAC mentioned the name of the colony, the name of the president of the RWA, and file numbers for earlier applications for regularization submitted by that colony, and was signed by the then Minister for Urban Development of the GNCTD.[9] As many as 1218 UACs of those which had applied for regularization received PRCs. Apart from a list of these 1218 UACs which was available on the GNCTD's website, no formal government orders explaining the basis for selection of these colonies, out of 1639 applicant colonies, are available. These PRCs were distributed a few months before the Delhi State Assembly Elections in November 2008. The timing was perhaps not coincidental, as pointed out by the Lokayukta[10] in 2013; the release of PRCs was possibly motivated by the then upcoming elections since many UACs which had been issued PRCs had submitted incomplete documents (GNCTD, 2013c).

Later, in 2011 the PRCs of 40 UACs were cancelled and in early 2012, 127 UACs which had received PRCs were issued "Show Cause Notices". Again, the formal orders for these steps are not available on GNCTD's website. However, several media reports that appeared on the subject at the time quoted GNCTD officials saying that these cancellations and notices had been issued because these colonies did not meet the criterion of the built-up areas revealed by satellite images of 2002 (Bhatnagar, 2011; The Indian Express, 2012).

In comparison to the 1 year timeline set, after nearly 4 years since the issuance of PRCs, on 4 September 2012, a GNCTD order announced a list of 895 UACs

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[9]PRC for K Block, Sangam Vihar viewed by researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on 9th May, 2013.

[10]Lokayukta is an anti-corruption ombudsman authority which is constituted by different states in India. Its main mandate is to investigate allegations of corruption and poor administration in public offices and provide fast redressal to public grievances.

that were found "eligible for regularization." Here, it is crucial to emphasize that although this order lists these colonies as "eligible for regularization", the then government and many media reports spoke of these 895 colonies as de facto *regularized* (Sheikh and Banda, 2014a: 7).[11]

A closer look at this order reveals that only 312 of the colonies, located on private land, stood regularized on the date of the order; and the remaining 583 colonies listed, which are partly or fully on public land, would be regularized from the "date of recovery of cost of public land by GNCTD on behalf of land owning agency to be notified from time to time" (GNCTD, 2012: 1).

The fact that 65 % of the UACs found to be "eligible for regularization" were partly or wholly on public land, suggests that in contrast to the wide understanding that UACs are mostly on private land, many are actually on public land. Since these lands were not in the physical possession of the respective public agencies, and were instead inhabited, implies that the illegal subdivision would have taken place either after notification that the land will be acquired by a public agency or, after award of the compensation for this acquisition was issued but before the entire process had been completed.

8.3.2 Consequences of Regularization

Neither the 2008 Regulations, nor the 2007 Guidelines clearly state the consequences of regularization. However, as noted earlier, the definition of regularization in the MPD 2021 implies that one of the consequences is provision of settlement-level services including roads, water, sewerage through "development works", and social infrastructure such as schools and hospitals.

However, the 2008 Regulations indicate that complete regularization was not a pre-condition for "development works". They state, "GNCTD may commence the development works and augmentation of infrastructure facilities in colonies soon after the receipt of layout plan if it is satisfied that the colonies or part thereof fulfil the general principles contained in the Revised Guidelines 2007" (DDA, 2008a: 9). In other words, the government can provide services before the UACs have completed the regularization process.

Indeed, in 2009, the Department of Urban Development of the GNCTD published an order outlining instructions for agencies executing development works in UACs (GNCTD, 2009b). Subsequently, in 2010 and 2011, administrative approvals for development works in UACs that appeared on the list of 1639 applicant UACs were issued.

Data on GNCTD's website indicates that, as of 31 March 2013, agencies had been allocated for "development works" in 830 of the 895 *regularized* UACs, and works had been reportedly completed in 461 of them. The only information on actual service delivery available from the data is that, as on the date, "water

[11]Italics used to refer to this wave of regularization, as claimed by the GNCTD, in (2012).

has been released" in 606 of these UACs. It was unclear whether this meant that: water pipelines have been laid, or that water delivery has been sanctioned, or that supply has begun. An early 2014 news report cited a draft CAG report on the subject saying, "in the absence of utilization certificates and physical and financial status report … the status of development work cannot be verified" (Rahman, 2014). Another news report quoted the final CAG report on the subject as saying, "GNCTD has failed to provide basic services like sewer lines, water lines, roads and drainage to all the 895 unauthorized colonies despite incurring an expenditure of Rs. 3,029.21 crore up to March 2013." (Kant, 2014).

The 312 UACs which stood regularized as on the date of the 2012 government order could not automatically register their individual plot deeds. In this context, an order of the GNCTD on registration of deeds in these colonies, issued in March 2013, defined that "private land" could belong to either of four different categories (GNCTD, 2013a, 2013b).[12] Only the residents of UACs which were in the first category of "private land owned by private individuals" could register their plot deeds. Residents of UACs which belong to other categories would have to wait for necessary steps to be completed by the state, such as withdrawal of land acquisition notifications and amendments in revenue records, before registering their plot deeds.

8.4 The Case of Sangam Vihar

"Regularization" has been the main policy process with regard to UACs in Delhi. However, this process had been interrupted for 15 years from 1993 to 2008 due to a court case. Thereafter, while applications for regularization were received within a few months, the first announcement for a list of UACs found "eligible for regularization" came only in 2012. During this nearly 22 year period, the populations in various UACs continued to grow and RWAs of these colonies continued their efforts to climb the ladder of regularization.

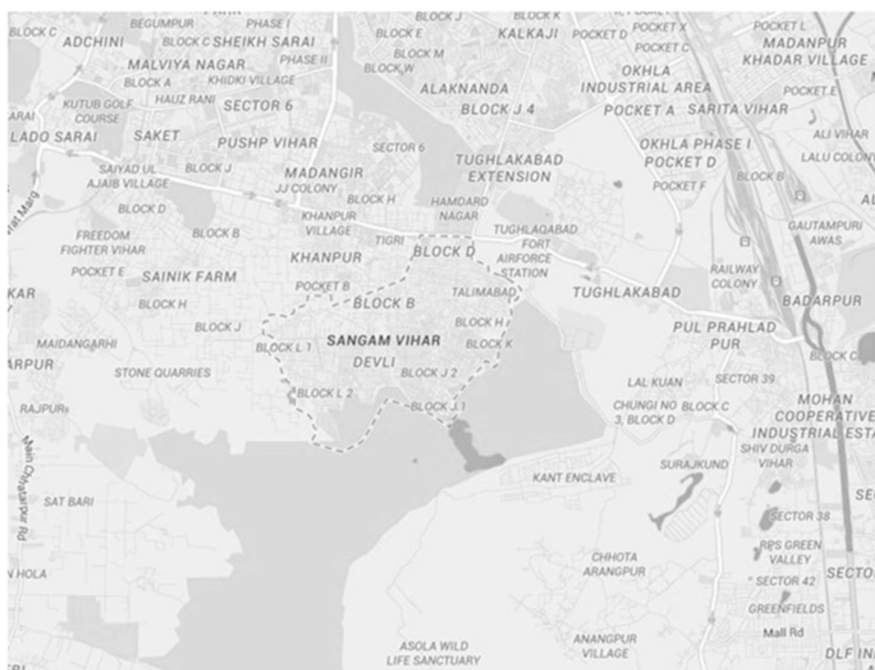
In this section, we present the specific case of Sangam Vihar, which was considered a single UAC in the 1980s and now, is a collection of several blocks, each of which is a UAC. After explaining the context of Sangam Vihar with an emphasis on the place as it evolved and the key actors in the area, narratives of residents will be presented. These narratives are based on fieldwork undertaken in various blocks of Sangam Vihar in the second half of 2013, during which more than fifty in-depth interviews were conducted. The narratives reveal that the lack of progress on the regularization front by the state was manifested in the continuous negotiations that residents (including RWAs) have on a daily basis with various state actors, especially on issues of service provisioning.

[12]Category A: private land owned by private individuals; category B: notified land for acquisition but where no awards have been made by the collector resulting in a lapse of acquisition proceedings; category C: land that has been notified for acquisition and award with respect to the same has also been made by the Collector; however, the possession of such land has not yet been taken over; and category D: land "vested with the Gaon Sabha" under the Delhi Land Reforms Act but where physical possession is with private owners (GNCTD, 2013a).

8.4.1 The Place

Sangam Vihar is the largest agglomeration of UACs in Delhi. About thirty of these colonies had applied for regularization. These colonies are blocks, and in some cases blocks within blocks, of Sangam Vihar. Sangam Vihar is spread over an area of nearly five square kilometres and about a million people are estimated to be living in the area.[13] Since the GNCTD's most recent estimate pegs the number of residents of UACs in Delhi at four million, about a quarter of these are estimated to reside in Sangam Vihar.

Located in South Delhi, on Sangam Vihar's north side is the Mehrauli–Badarpur road. The Asola Wildlife Sanctuary is located on the south and east sides of Sangam Vihar; while on its west is a locality called Tigri, followed by Deoli and Khanpur—all of which are erstwhile villages.



Map showing Sangam Vihar and its surrounding areas, Google map as on 7 November 2014.

Sangam Vihar came into existence in 1979 though it significantly grew in size during the 1980s. The land, mostly agricultural in use, originally belonged to four

[13]MLA of Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency (2008–2013), in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 10, 2013. Further, since 200,000 voters are estimated to be registered across all blocks of Sangam Vihar according to the residents and local political party workers, a million as the population estimate appears accurate as many residents living on rent in Sangam Vihar are not registered voters.

villages: Tigri, Deoli, Tughlaqabad and Khanpur. One of the original residents of Sangam Vihar, who continues to stay in the colony explained that the colony that came into existence was called Sangam Vihar because "the colony was like a coming together of the four villages."[14] Those who bought plots in the 1980s recall that they were sold to them by either the original land owners, who belonged to the Gujjar or Jat communities, or intermediaries—referred to as "property dealers". One of the residents explained that, "The DDA had put out a notice in 1979 that they will acquire this land...but they actually did not do so. Some private dealers bought the land from agricultural owners and they cut it into several plots and sold them to people."[15] Residents estimated that by the end of the 1980s, about 100,000 people were living in the area.

Plots of sizes of either 50 or 100 square yards were neatly cut in a grid format with spaces demarcated for roads and lanes though they were *kachcha* and hand-pumps were provided. At the time, these plots were sold at a rate between Rs. 30 and 50 per square yard.[16] In comparison, the rate increased to about Rs. 2000 per square yard by the mid 1990s and the current rate is in the range of Rs. 20,000–100,000 per square yard.[17]

Other existing literature (Vedeld and Siddham, 2002; Gupta and Puri, 2005) on the emergence of Sangam Vihar in the 1980s documents that the main demand for these plots came from labourers, who had migrated from states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar and Rajasthan to Delhi to either work in the preparation of the Asian Games in 1982, or to work in the Okhla Industrial Area situated a few kilometres from Sangam Vihar. These labourers and their families were in search of affordable housing. However, the DDA, responsible for creating affordable public housing, had been unable to create sufficient housing stock. For instance, by 1986, out of the total of 240,387 households that had registered for DDA flats, only a little over 35 % had been allotted DDA flats (DDA, 1987 quoted in Maitra, 1991: 345).[18] In such a situation, plots in Sangam Vihar would have fulfilled some demand for affordable housing or affordable land on which housing could be built.

Even today, the population living in Sangam Vihar is from several states of India though those from Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar form the majority. Indeed, an elected representative from Sangam Vihar explained the rationale for the name "Sangam Vihar", "*Sangam* [is] the point of confluence of three holy

[14]Former President of the RWA of A Block, in conversation with researchers from the Cities of Delhi research project at CPR, New Delhi, on August 5, 2013.

[15]Former President of the RWA of B Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on July 11, 2013.

[16]Various residents of blocks of Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, during field visits in 2013.

[17]Various residents of blocks of Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, during field visits in 2013.

[18]These housing schemes belonging to following categories: Middle Income Group (MIG), Lower Income Group (LIG), Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and SFS (Self Financing Scheme).

rivers—Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. In a similar manner, Sangam Vihar is where there is a confluence of people from all over the country."[19]

Plots were bought and sold, in the 1980s and thereafter, using general power of attorneys (GPAs). The GPA was originally designed as an instrument through which an individual could give another the power to manage his or her affairs; however, the GPA has been widely used by individuals with property of "imperfect title who cannot or do not want to execute registered deeds of conveyance".[20] GPAs have become popular because while undertaking these transactions, buyers and sellers avoid paying stamp duty and registration charges. In 2012, the Supreme Court clarified that the "power of attorney is not an instrument of transfer in regard to any right, title or interest in an immovable property".[21] Hence, though the GPA is a documentary proof of transfer of the land (and/or built-up structure), it is not a proof of the property title—which remains with the original owner of the land.

There continue to be several "property dealers" who operate and are proficient in doing the necessary paperwork to facilitate transactions of plots and built-up houses. Most residents are aware that GPAs do not give them clear title to the land; however, upon buying a plot, a buyer routinely refers to himself (or herself) as the "owner" of the plot. However, not all residents are "owners", often the second and third storeys of built-up houses are inhabited by renters.

Presently, two main *pucca* roads run north-south of Sangam Vihar: Ratiya Marg and Mangal Bazaar Road—the entrance of both is on the Mehrauli–Badarpur Road. These roads are lined with shops on both sides selling household items such as clothes, kitchen vessels, electrical appliances and furniture. All inner roads in various blocks of Sangam Vihar start from either of these two main roads; as a result, during peak hours these roads can have much traffic. No public buses ply inside Sangam Vihar and the closest bus stops are near the entrances of these two main roads. Residents use diverse modes of transport including cycles, cycle rickshaws, e-rickshaws, scooters, motorbikes, auto rickshaws, small cars and big cars, to navigate in and out of Sangam Vihar.

Most of Sangam Vihar is built-up; each plot has two or three storeys, some even having a basement. While the inner lanes of some blocks of Sangam Vihar are *pucca*, others remain *kachcha*. Blocks of Sangam Vihar which were among the first ones to get populated such as A, B and C are on flat ground; however, the more recent blocks including L, K, I and J are on undulating land, located on the foothills of the Aravalli hills. Residents explain that today there are broadly four types of land in Sangam Vihar: private land, government or public land, forest or ridge land and Gram Sabha land.[22]

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[19]MLA of Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency (2008–2013), in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 10, 2013.

[20]Suraj Lamps & Industries v. State of Haryana—(2012) 1 SCC 656.

[21]Suraj Lamps & Industries v. State of Haryana—(2012) 1 SCC 656.

[22]Various residents of blocks of Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, during field visits in 2013.

Walking through the blocks one observes that housing structures have been built overtime in an incremental manner—while some houses are huge structures having large sit-out areas spanning a plot area nearly 200 square yards and having four or five storeys, there are houses which have been built on modest plots sizes of 50 or 75 square yards; there are also houses which are *kachcha* and resemble *jhuggis* built on plots of sizes of only about 25 square yards. Implying, in some cases the original plots have been aggregated, while in other cases they have been divided. In the inner parts of blocks, one can find a few vacant plots.

8.4.2 The Key Actors

Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs) exist for almost all blocks of Sangam Vihar. In some blocks there are even contesting RWAs which has led the block to be divided into sub-blocks. The presidents of these RWAs are often referred to as *pradhans*.[23] A few of these RWAs were registered in the late 1980s but most were registered in the 1990s or early 2000s; office bearers describe the process of registration as relatively easy. These block-wise RWAs were preceded by the Pragtishil Welfare Association of Sangam Vihar, which was an RWA formed in the early 1980s for the whole of Sangam Vihar, then a single UAC.[24]

Here, it is worth emphasizing that RWAs are not a phenomenon specific to UACs. As Lemanski and Tawa-Lama Rewal (2013) explain, in Delhi's planned colonies such as those established by the DDA, RWAs are linked to the occupation process following the construction and/or sale of plots by the DDA. These non-profit associations are funded by monthly resident subscriptions, and claim to represent the residents of their respective colony, while being primarily concerned with infrastructure in their colony including roads, parks, water, electricity and solid waste removal (Lemanski and Tawa-Lama Rewal, 2013).

The process of selection of office bearers of RWAs varies across blocks in Sangam Vihar. In few blocks, such as Blocks A and B, there is an extensive election process which includes formation of an election committee constituted by gazetted officers who reside in the block, symbol allotment to the candidates, and campaigning by the candidates; residents who are eligible voters and "owners" of plots vote for candidates through a secret ballot.[25] On the other hand, there are blocks where office bearers are chosen by "consensus" or by an election where the

[23]The pradhan is an unelected, widely recognized, informal representative of a significant number of residents in a community.

[24]Based on documents submitted as part of applications for regularization by different blocks of Sangam Vihar.

[25]Office bearers of the RWA of B Block, Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on September 2, 2013; and President of RWA of A Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on August 5, 2013.

voters are only members of the RWA. Most RWAs include no women office bearers and only a few have women members.

Apart from undertaking all documentation and follow-up regarding regularization, across blocks, office bearers of various RWAs explained that their role is of raising issues and representing the concerns of the residents of their blocks. As the president of one of the RWAs expressed, "As an RWA, we can only put up issues, the MLA and the Councillor are responsible for getting the work done. Wherever we go we raise our voice, the work has to be ultimately done by the elected representatives only."[26]

Various blocks of Sangam Vihar belong to either of two Delhi State assembly constituencies (ACs): Sangam Vihar AC (number 49) and Deoli AC (number 47); with the majority of the area in the former constituency.[27] Further, four municipal wards are part of each assembly constituency. Three of the four municipal wards (numbers 186, 187 and 188) in the Sangam Vihar AC include blocks of Sangam Vihar, with each ward having six to eight blocks of Sangam Vihar[28]; and two of the four municipal wards (numbers 177 and 178) in the Deoli AC include blocks of Sangam Vihar.

During the time of our fieldwork in the area, the Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) of the Sangam Vihar AC was from the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and the MLA of the Deoli AC was from the Indian National Congress (Congress); three of the five municipal councillors belonged to the BJP, while one of the remaining belonged to the Congress and the other was an independent with no political party affiliation. Residents and local political party workers estimated that across the two ACs, there are about 200,000 voters from Sangam Vihar.

8.4.3 Negotiations Surrounding the Process of Regularization

The first efforts by residents of Sangam Vihar, spearheaded by the then Pragtishil Welfare Association of Sangam Vihar, to get their colony regularized began in the mid 1980s. In 1987, in response to their applications and petitions, the MCD councillor from Tughlaqabad ward (a rural municipal ward at the time) as a Member of the Standing Committee of the MCD, wrote a letter to the then Minister of State for Urban Development. The letter stated the following, "...[Sangam Vihar]

[26]President of RWA of A Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi on August 5, 2013.

[27]At least eighteen blocks of Sangam Vihar (such as blocks D, F-1, F-2, K, K-1, G-2, H, I, I-2, J-1, J-2, J-2B) are included in the Sangam Vihar AC, and about ten blocks (such as blocks A, B, C, F-3, L-1, L-2, M, N) are a part of the Deoli AC.

[28]Office bearers of the Sangam Vihar Vikas Samiti Mahasangh, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 31, 2013.

situated on the right of Mehrauli Badarpur Road and opposite Hamdard Hospital came into existence in 1979 and at present it has population of more than one lac.[29] Without regularization the Colony is lacking in basic amenities like water, electricity, Post Office, Bus Service etc. I shall be grateful if you kindly get the matter looked into for necessary action."[30]

However, residents started making block-wise efforts to submit applications for regularization in the mid 1990s as they did not receive any concrete responses and experienced little change on the ground. Government agencies had informed them that the single UAC could not be regularized because the colony was situated on varied types of land. Thus, residents at the time believed that they were likely to meet with greater success on the regularization ladder if they applied for regularization of smaller, block-wise plots of land. It remains unclear as to how exactly the boundaries of blocks were decided.[31]

The president of an RWA of block which submitted its first application for regularization in 1994 said, "Since then [1994] our RWA is trying for regularization but all efforts are going in vain. We talk to our elected representatives about regularization but it remains fruitless talk."[32] Further, he explained that the reason they wanted their block to be regularized was because they wanted civic amenities provided by government agencies. He expressed their willingness to pay various taxes as, "we are ready to pay house tax, water tax, and all other taxes because we will get government services easily such as sewerage system, water, school, and road."[33] Other RWAs, while explaining why they would want their block to be regularized gave similar reasons.

As a result of the delimitation of Delhi's assembly constituencies in 2008, the blocks of Sangam Vihar were split across two assembly constituencies: Sangam Vihar AC and Deoli AC. Office bearers of RWAs have considered this as a step on part of the state to disunite the residents of Sangam Vihar in their efforts to be regularized.[34]

Further, in 2009, RWAs of blocks falling in the Sangam Vihar AC moved beyond the jurisdiction of their specific blocks, forming the "Sangam Vihar Vikas Samiti Mahasangh". When the Mahasangh (or Confederation of RWAs) was formed, thirteen RWAs were a part of it and now there are eighteen. Office bearers

[29]One lac or one lakh is 100,000.

[30]Letter dated 30th January 1987, written by Kishan Chand Bainiwal, Deputy Leader, Congress (I) Party in MCD, Member, Standing Committee, Municipal Corporation of Delhi to Dalbir Singh, Minister of State for Urban Development, Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi.

[31]Various office bearers of RWAs of Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, in 2013.

[32]President of one of the RWAs of K Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on April 14, 2013.

[33]President of one of the RWAs of K Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on April 14, 2013.

[34]Former President of RWA of F-3 Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on November 26, 2013.

of the constituent RWAs are members of the Mahasangh and from among them, office bearers of the Mahasangh are chosen.

The rationale for the formation of this Mahasangh was that the RWAs believed they needed to have a forum where they could come together and raise issues which individual RWAs were unable to deal with. There was (and continues to be) an acknowledgement that since most blocks of Sangam Vihar colony are unauthorized colonies, they face similar issues but some blocks have more experience in dealing with certain issues. The President of the Mahasangh explained, "There are quite a few office bearers of the Mahasangh who are from the F-2 Block RWA—the reason is because the F-2 Block RWA is one of the only RWAs in Sangam Vihar which has quite a lot of experience in working for its block and we understand the procedures and processes quite well so we are able to guide the other RWAs of Sangam Vihar."[35] Office bearers of the Mahasangh have helped RWAs of G-2 and K-1 blocks, both of which are a part of the Mahasangh, to prepare their applications for regularization.[36] Hence, the members of the Mahasangh help each other to navigate through the contours of the state, especially the process of regularization.

A few RWA office bearers believe that receiving a PRC indicated to them that they had completed half their journey towards regularization.[37] However, others explained that after being issued PRCs, no funds were sanctioned for development works, nor was there any change on the ground; and the distribution of PRCs was "merely to get votes in the 2008 elections".[38] A former office bearer of another RWA of a block which did not appear on the list of 895 UACs found "eligible for regularization" in 2012 said, "Why did they give us the PRC if they were not going to regularize our block?"[39]

RWAs of blocks in the Sangam Vihar AC, none of which appeared on the list of 895 UACs, allege that the reason that none of them were included was because their MLA belonged to BJP whereas the majority political party in the state assembly at the time was the Congress. One of the office bearers of such an RWA expressed, "The reason why our block has not been regularized by the Delhi Government is because the MLA from here is from BJP and the Congress-led

[35]Office bearers of the Sangam Vihar Mahasangh, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 31 2013.

[36]Office bearers of the Sangam Vihar Mahasangh, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 31 2013; an office bearer of the Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the Cities of Delhi research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 23, 2013.

[37]Office bearers of RWA of K Block, Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 9, 2013.

[38]Former President of the RWA of B Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on July 11, 2013.

[39]Former President of RWA of F-3 Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on November 26, 2013.

GNCTD does not want to regularize colonies which are under BJP MLAs. You can see—blocks K, K-1, G-2, H, G and D are all under this MLA and none of them have been regularized."[40] He further went on to explain, "The blocks of Sangam Vihar which have been regularized are blocks like A and B which come under a Congress MLA".[41] Indeed, a look at the list of 895 UACs reveals that Blocks A and B of Sangam Vihar, belonging to the Deoli AC, appear on it.

Even if as per the parameters and bases for regularization in the 2008 Regulations, it was valid that certain blocks be *regularized*; however, since the GNCTD did not clearly spell out the reason for other blocks not being *regularized*, the RWAs of these blocks directly link it to the political affiliation of their MLA. Hence, the lack of transparency in the process of announcing the list of UACs which received the PRC and those that were *regularized* which led to such speculation.

Regularization of UACs has been a key election issue for at least three consecutive Delhi State Assembly elections, including the one held in December 2013. While residents and RWAs acknowledged that their elected representatives have promised that they will ensure regularization of their blocks, they have failed to deliver; hence, there is a growing scepticism on whether this promise will ever be actualized. In the run up to the December 2013 elections, one office bearer of an RWA expressed, "they [the government] have just made us a vote bank they can rely on. They are just saying all this about regularization, but nothing will happen."[42] More generally, another resident while talking about electoral promises expressed, "Just before elections they give us lollipops such as water, hospital, cleanliness—all the things that are impossible to do they promise to us. The political parties don't make any new promises to us—it is the same, old stuff that they talk about—they will regularize the colony, they will lay sewerlines. They told us they will lay sewerlines in this area but then you can see, nothing has been done."[43] Another resident concurred and said, "we don't care much about the regularization of this unauthorized colony. We just want the issues of water, electricity and toilet to be solved."[44] Some changes were reported by residents after the Aam Admi Party (AAP) came into power: water borewells were managed better, frequency of water provisioning increased, water and electricity tariffs were decreased, and commitments to provide services to UACs grew louder.

[40]President of one of the RWAs of K Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 9, 2013.

[41]President of one of the RWAs of K Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 9, 2013.

[42]President of one of the RWAs of K Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 9, 2013.

[43]Resident of I Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on October 30, 2013.

[44]Resident of I Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on October 30, 2013.

8.4.4 Negotiations in Everyday Lives

While the process of regularization has been one towards which RWAs of various blocks have committed themselves; on the other hand, often the residents of these blocks are unaware of the progress (or lack thereof) of their block on the ladder of regularization. Most of the residents are aware that theirs is a "*kachchi* colony" (in local parlance), which is manifested in poor service delivery that they experience on a daily basis (Sheikh et al., 2015).

Indeed, the MLA of Sangam Vihar AC expressed that he was not optimistic about regularization and his priority was instead, the provision of basic services to the residents. He said, "I don't think this colony will ever be regularized. Unless they amend Master Plan [of Delhi] 2021, there is no chance of regularization of this colony. Today, I am not bothered about regularization. I am bothered about provision of basic government services for the people like roads and drains."[45] However, he explained that until recently an MLA was not allowed to spend his founds on "development works" for UACs and he brought up this issue in the Delhi State Assembly where he claims he said that though his voters were authorized, he was an unauthorized MLA because MLAs cannot spend their funds in unauthorized colonies and his entire assembly constituency was an unauthorized colony.[46] Similarly, one of the residents pointed out, "The elected representatives tell us that we live in *kachchi* colonies—it is very ironic that at elections time we are looked at as voters and there is a *pucca* State assembly constituency here and at the time of doing work, they tell us that the colony is *kachchi* and hence, they can't put any money towards development works in the colony."[47]

In the context of provision of services, residents recall that during the early 1980s there were only handpumps in various blocks and there was no provision of electricity.

8.4.4.1 Electricity

By the second half of the 1980s, residents started the practice of hooking by tapping into the main electricity lines running along the northern border of Sangam Vihar. At the time, Pragtishil Welfare Association Sangam Vihar made requests for the colony to be formally electrified.

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[45]MLA of Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency (2008–2013), in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 10, 2013.

[46]MLA of Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency (2008–2013), in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 10, 2013.

[47]Resident of I Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on October 30, 2013.

In reply to requests from residents for electricity, the MCD councillor from the then Tughlaqabad municipal ward wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking (DESU) in January 1987. This letter said the following, "[Sangam Vihar] came into existence in 1979 and at present there are about 25,000 dwelling units. Without electricity, people are suffering a lot. I shall be grateful if you kindly look into the matter at your personal level and arrange to get the needful done, at an early date."[48]

By November 1988, a reply from DESU intimated the Pragtishil Welfare Association Sangam Vihar that the area of Sangam Vihar as existing on 1st January 1981 (according to the layout submitted by the Association in its application for electrification) had been considered eligible for electrification and an electrification scheme was being formulated.[49] Further, it stated that an electric sub-station would have to be established, for which the Association would have to make a plot available.[50] Since the cut-off date of 1981 excluded a large number of residents, the practice of hooking continued.

In the mid 1990s, the Chief Minister of Delhi attempted to "legalize" these electricity connections and fixed a rate of electricity per household, based on plot size.[51] It was only in 1999–2000, that a new system of formal electrification called the Single Point Delivery System (SPDS) was extended to various blocks of Sangam Vihar. Residents informed us that in this scheme, block-wise, a "development charge" (in the range of Rs. 140–160 per square yard) was paid to DESU—with a minimum of about Rs. 350,000. Additionally, every household who wanted to have an individual electric connection paid a few thousand rupees for it. Thereafter, a DESU electric transformer (the "Single Point") was installed in the block and a contractor was appointed by the respective RWA to manage the transformer and provide electricity connections. In each block, individual electric connections with metres were installed and the user charges for the electricity were negotiated between the RWA and the contractor. Residents reported that during the SPDS they received bills in the range of a few hundred rupees based on their usage and were mostly satisfied with the service.

In the late 2000s, the BSES Rajdhani, the private electricity distribution company for South Delhi, extended the formal electricity network to Sangam Vihar

[48]Letter dated 30th January 1987, written by Kishan Chand Bainiwal, Deputy Leader, Congress (I) Party in MCD, Member, Standing Committee, Municipal Corporation of Delhi to Kuldip Singh Gujral, Chairman, DESU, Shakti Sadan, New Delhi.

[49]Letter dated 15th November 1988, written by R. K. Gupta, Commercial Office—II, DESU to Pragtishil Welfare Association Sangam Vihar, New Delhi.

[50]Letter dated 15th November 1988, written by R. K. Gupta, Commercial Office—II, DESU to Pragtishil Welfare Association Sangam Vihar, New Delhi.

[51]Former President and General Secretary of RWA of A Block, Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on July 9, 2013. The rates were: Rs. 100 for a 50 square yard plot, Rs. 200 for a 100 square yard plot and Rs. 400 for a 200 square yard plot.

and households were to shift from the SPDS system to this. Another round of "development charges" and certain individual connection charges had to be paid by residents and office bearers of the Mahasangh negotiated regarding these with representatives of BSES.[52] While residents acknowledge that the supply of electricity is now more reliable, they believe this system is over-charging them.

8.4.4.2 Water

Across different blocks, water continues to be the service that is most negotiated; with little public provisioning. After the handpumps went dry in the late 1980s and in some cases in the early 1990s, government bore wells were installed in the second half of the 1990s and the then MLA is credited to have got this done. Finding the supply of water from the government borewells to be very insufficient, a few residents who had sufficient money to invest, dug their own private borewells.[53]

Presently, a few residents identified water from government borewells is drinkable, while others disagreed and said that they only drank it because there was no choice. Residents explained that they have to incur costs to connect their houses via pipelines to borewells and after that it costs Rs. 50 or Rs. 100 per month to get water for 1 hour every 15–16 days from a government borewell; whereas it costs between Rs. 1,000 and 1,500 per month to get water from a private borewell—when, for what duration and how much depends on negotiations between a particular household and the operator of the private borewell. Across all blocks, in addition to the paltry water supply, residents allege that these government and private borewells have been "captured" by supporters of the MLA and they operate these borewells and part of the money collected is shared with the MLA too. One former office bearer of an RWA while talking about those who run the borewells expressed, "[They] are a bunch of mafia, they are fearless–their own people run the borewells."[54]

None of the residents living in blocks in the Sangam Vihar AC spoke of water tankers of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB)[55] as a primary source of water; we also did not observe a single DJB water tanker during our field visits. In cases where they acknowledged that a few DJB water tankers came to their block or neighbouring blocks, they alleged that these tankers would only serve those households who

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[52]Office bearer of the Sangam Vihar Mahasangh in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 23, 2013.

[53]The operation of these private borewells has been documented by Dasappa-Kacker and Joshi (2012).

[54]Former President of the RWA of A Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on July 9, 2013.

[55]The DJB is an agency of the GNCTD that is responsible for provision of water and sewerage services in Delhi.

were "close to the MLA". One woman resident claimed, "DJB Tanker goes where the MLA recommends it be sent."[56] Another woman resident explained that though the MLA listened to their water woes, he did not do anything to improve the situation, saying "When we went to the MLA's office and spoke to him about our water problems, he said call me anytime...when we called he never took our calls."[57]

While most residents spoke of the MLA as the main person in-charge of water supply (or lack thereof) in the blocks of Sangam Vihar, a contrasting narrative was shared by residents of B Block, which is a part of the Deoli AC. Residents explained that they contacted their councillors, who were aligned with their MLA, in case they wanted a water tanker. One woman resident explained, "Sometimes when water is too scarce, we ask him [the councillor] to send the government water through private tankers. This way we get government supply of water through private water tankers, for which we pay the private water tanker suppliers' rate."[58]

Trunk water pipelines, linking Sangam Vihar to the Sonia Vihar water treatment plant have been laid by the DJB but no network water pipelines have been installed to serve the blocks of Sangam Vihar. The issue of insufficient and unreliable water supply impacts all residents to such an extent that in the run-up to the Delhi State Assembly Elections 2013, political party workers as well residents believed that the election in the Sangam Vihar and Deoli ACs would be fought on the single issue of water.[59]

8.4.4.3 Sanitation

Most households have built individual toilets. However, since there are no sewerage lines in the area, every household has a "septic tank" connected to its toilet. When these tanks are full, the households have to call for "private bowser truck services", which are tanker trucks that use suction technology to empty sewage from these tanks.

Further, a few residents explained that most often these "septic tanks" do not have adequate septic arrangements making them essentially cess pits, and seepage from these tanks into the ground takes place. This is important to note especially because residents use groundwater from borewells for daily household chores, including drinking. One of the residents expressed, "Here everyone's toilet's septic tanks are below our houses—if there is an earthquake, we will all just fall through into the underground into a swamp. We have our borewells underground and then

[56]Woman resident of K Block Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 9, 2013.

[57]Woman resident of K Block Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 9, 2013.

[58]Woman resident of B Block Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on November 19, 2013.

[59]Various residents of blocks of Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, during field visits in November and December 2013.

the septic tanks are underground too—the ground water must be soaking the contents of the septic tanks and getting polluted."[60]

All the blocks of Sangam Vihar which have *pucca* roads also have drains running alongside. However, during our field visits we observed most of these drains to be either clogged with garbage or overflowing. There were varied responses from residents on how frequently the drains are cleaned by *safai karamcharis* (cleanliness staff) of the MCD.

Interestingly, we observed construction of drains in October and November 2013 in blocks C, I and J of Sangam Vihar, none of which were on the list of 895 UACs. Again, this timing—a few weeks prior to the then upcoming elections—was perhaps not coincidental.

Though most residents acknowledged that the MCD vehicle would come to the main lanes of various blocks to collect garbage—they said that this vehicle would never go into the inner lanes. Residents of a few blocks had engaged a private contractor for door-to-door collection of garbage for a payment of Rs. 30 per month; while others threw their garbage on empty plots or in the neighbouring ridge area.

8.4.4.4 Other Negotiations

During our several interactions with residents of Sangam Vihar, they explained that another consequence they faced of living in a UAC was rent seeking by state actors when they would improve or rebuild their houses.

Despite the insufficient supply of basic services, the police presence is significant in the area. There is one police post at the entrance of Ratiya Marg and a police station on the Mangal Bazaar Road. Office bearers of the Mahasangh explained that they have observed that usually five or six policemen are allocated to each block, who take regular rounds. Since the blocks are UACs, policemen ask for rents ranging between Rs. 10,000 and 30,000, negotiated on a one-on-one basis, when residents add a floor in their houses and/ or undertake renovation of their houses—the penalty for not paying this sum is that it would be demolished by the police and/ or MCD officials.

Residents recalled that over the past 5 years, MCD officials have also started routinely monitoring if building norms are being followed. A former office bearer of an RWA alleged that policemen and MCD officials have an arrangement with the builders, contractors and shopkeepers who sell house construction material and hence, they find out where new construction or housing improvement is being undertaken.[61]

[60]Resident of I Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on October 30, 2013.

[61]Former President of the RWA of A Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on July 9, 2013.

To articulate the issues of insufficient and unreliable levels of basic service delivery, a few RWAs have associated themselves with the Bhagidari Scheme of the GNCTD[62] as well as with the District Development Committee (DDC).[63] Office bearers of these RWAs have invested significant amounts of time and money on attending the associated meetings; however, they mostly felt that their expectations of "getting work done" were not met. A former President of an RWA explained, "There hasn't been much advantage of being a part of the Bhagidari scheme. Nothing happens during the meetings. We used to go there and drink tea and eat something...no work used to get done."[64] A current President of the RWA of the neighbouring block recalled a Bhagidari meeting that the former Chief Minister of Delhi had called for. He claimed that he asked the Chief Minister, "Bhagidari for what? No one even talks to us."[65] Further he claimed to have said, "What is Bhagidari about? You just call us to collect a crowd and you feed us one meal. You finally give all the control to your own people."[66] In our interaction with the then MLA of Sangam Vihar AC, he admitted that the "DDC was a toothless committee".[67]

Six months prior to the Delhi State Assembly Elections 2013, when we interviewed office bearers of various RWAs, most of them maintained that they were "not political" and their main mandate was only to work for the residents of their block, without aligning with any political party.

However, prior to the elections, office bearers of few RWAs claimed that they could highly influence the voters in their block with promises of better levels of service provision by the MLA candidate they supported. On one hand, RWAs of blocks in the Sangam Vihar AC, committed themselves to campaigning to

[62]Office bearer of the Sangam Vihar Mahasangh in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 23, 2013. *Bhagidari* (partnership) was a scheme launched by the GNCTD which aimed at participatory governance by establishing a dialogue between various stakeholders: departments of the GNCTD, citizens groups like Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and Market and Traders Associations (MTAs) to work out solutions to common civic problems.

[63]District Development Committees, established by the GNCTD, were intended to encourage decentralized decision-making and to provide responsive and responsible administration by involving elected representatives of the area (MLAs and Municipal Councillors), RWAs, Deputy Commissioners and district level officers of the various GNCTD departments and civic bodies.

[64]Former President of the RWA of B Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on July 11 2013.

[65]Former President of the RWA of A Block, in conversation with researchers from the Cities of Delhi research project at CPR, New Delhi, on August 5, 2013.

[66]Former President of the RWA of A Block, in conversation with researchers from the Cities of Delhi research project at CPR, New Delhi, on August 5, 2013.

[67]MLA of Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency (2008–2013), in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on May 10, 2013.

mobilize voters to vote for a candidate (or a political party) who they believed would deliver on promises of better service delivery.[68] On the other, RWAs in the Deoli AC did not actively campaign but instead, got together a few days prior to voting day to strategically decide on whom to vote for to disable a splitting of their votes.[69]

8.5 Conclusion

An extensive and seemingly clear policy process for regularization of UACs had been worked out by governing agencies of Delhi by 2008. However, the administration of this process has been marked with a lack in transparency as well as considerable delays. This chapter has presented the specific case of several blocks of Sangam Vihar which are UACs. The narratives of residents of these colonies reveal that while different blocks made varied progress on the regularization front, the residents of these colonies have continued to make negotiations in their everyday lives, particularly relating to provisioning of basic services. It appears that the state is present in a very selective manner in Sangam Vihar. While police presence remains high and there is close monitoring of house building and improving activities and consequent rent seeking; the state is largely absent in its main role as a service provider, especially in terms of water and sewerage, for both of which, residents rely highly on private actors.

A May 2014 office memorandum of the GNCTD revealed that the date to complete the regularization process for UACs has been extended to 31 March 2015 (GNCTD, 2014). This memorandum was accompanied by a disaggregated list of the UACs falling in separate categories based on the extent of built-up area and the objections to be resolved before regularising. Minimal progress has been made by various governing agencies such as the MCDs, DDA and the GNCTD, months after this deadline has passed.

Policymakers need to take a step back to contemplate what regularization should *really* mean. Rather than viewing it as an end goal, it should be considered as a significant step in including several thousands of residents of Delhi within the larger legal realm where they lead less negotiated lives. Most importantly, the conversation about regularization which affects the everyday lives of these residents should be a sustained and transparent one; not one that waxes when it is election time and wanes from public discourse in the interim period.

Current and future governments in Delhi will have the opportunity to set things right by taking certain steps to promote transparency in the regularization process (Sheikh and Banda, 2014b). First, once the process has been completed, it

[68]Office bearers of RWAs of Blocks F-2 and K in Sangam Vihar, in discussion with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, in November 2013.

[69]Former President of RWA of F-3 Block, Sangam Vihar, in conversation with researchers from the *Cities of Delhi* research project at CPR, New Delhi, on November 26, 2013.

could release a public notification of which UACs have been regularized and why. Further, the notification must disclose shortcomings in non-regularized colonies, and specify whether they are remediable. If the regularization is conditional, it should specify what subsequent actions will be required and by whom. Secondly, the benefits of regularization in terms of "development works" have to be explained, including what works are to be undertaken and by which government agencies. The physical and financial status of these works should be periodically disclosed. Thirdly, after settlement-wide regularization, the process of registration of deeds by individual plot owners has to be detailed. In colonies where this registration is contingent on action by government agencies, processes and timelines for the same should be specified.

Maharashtra has shown us a way of doing this. In 2001, they promulgated the Gunthewari Act that laid down a process for regularization of unauthorized colonies in cities of Maharashtra. This has allowed for a clear statement of what benefits the colony will receive on regularization; allowing for the government to be held accountable if it does not satisfy this mandate. One of the most striking aspects of this Act is that its "Statement of Object and Reasons" clearly states that Gunthewari developments, i.e. plots formed by unauthorized sub-dividing of privately owned land, come into being "because the formal housing market has failed to meet the demands of economically weaker sections of the society for shelter in terms of both quantity and price" (Maharashtra Government Gazette, 2001: 1).

In Delhi too this is the case, since the DDA has time and again fallen short of meeting its own targets of public housing for Middle Income Group (MIG), Lower Income Group (LIG), Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). A quick review of DDA's own annual reports indicates that for the time period of 2003–2004 to 2009–2010, the DDA has only met its target of housing only twice—in all other years, the DDA only constructed between 28–78 % of its total targeted housing (Sheikh and Mandelkern, 2014). Further, allotments have also been delayed: the annual reports indicate that between 2003 and 2010, the DDA aimed to construct and allot 42,655 housing units but it only succeeded in building and allotting 13,955—leading to a shortfall of 29,200, as against DDA's own projections (Sheikh and Mandelkern, 2014). These shortfalls continue to be met by Delhi's "unplanned", informal settlements such as the unauthorized colonies. Delhi's governing agencies need to acknowledge this and administer a transparent and genuine process of regularization of unauthorized colonies, to ensure that residents of unauthorized colonies truly feel integrated into the realm of the city.

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Chapter 9
The Shape/ing of Industrial Landscapes: Life, Work and Occupations in and Around Industrial Areas in Delhi

Sumangala Damodaran

In the early days of theorizing industrialization strategies of underdeveloped countries (UDCs) in the immediate post-Second World War and post-colonial contexts, rural-urban migration, stimulated by the better conditions of work and wages in urban areas, was considered a mode by which the labour surplus in these countries could be harnessed to promote industrialization and increase employment at the same time (Lewis, 1954; Ranis and Fei, 1961). An unlimited supply of labour, seen to exist in developing countries—where population is so large relative to capital and natural resources, and where the marginal productivity of labour is negligible, zero or even negative—it was argued, could be used to provide a large labour force for industrialization, through the movement of people from the traditional sector in the rural economy to the modern sector in the urban economy. In later theories which aimed to understand actual processes of migration, it was argued that migration reflected the expectations of finding urban jobs, even if the actual numbers of people who found such jobs with better wages and working conditions dwindled (Harris and Todaro, 1970). Thus, it was argued that the migration decision was based on expected income differentials between rural and urban areas rather than just actual wage differentials, implying that rural-urban migration in a context of high urban unemployment can be economically rational if expected urban income exceeds expected rural income. Over time, such migration was seen to have contributed to the overcrowding of urban areas and the growth of the informal sector, phenomena analysed extensively for more than 30 years now by the vast literature on the urban

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informal sector[1] (Hart, 1973; Bhattacharya, 1996, 1998, Breman, 1996). Over this period, the study of migration patterns, its relationship to industrialization and urbanization and its consequences has given rise to a massive body of literature that has tried to understand the logic for, trends in and implications of migration in developing countries.

In recent years, it has been documented in studies on industrialization and labour processes that industrial work in varieties of local contexts is increasingly getting done by migrant labour (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003; deHaan, 1999; de Haan and Rogaly, 2002). There is seen to be an explicit preference for migrant labour in labour markets, influencing substantially the ways in which urban spaces and social identities in urban areas are being structured and are changing. Further, the vision for industrialization in cities, that is, how industrialization is conceptualized and hence organized, broken up into different spaces, relocated and reorganized within the larger vision, has had varying impacts on actual industrial location and the coming up of settlements around industrial locations. These, in turn, are influenced by the presence of migrant populations and patterns of migration. Even while there have been major changes in large cities in developing countries with attempts to create "world class cities", major anxieties about the extent of migration and fears of its impact have been seen, leading to demands for "disciplining" migration and the migrant workers in different parts of the world. The expectations from the move to the city, in other words, and the responses from the city, are seen to be determined by complex factors that determine how migrant activities take place and how migrants experience life in the city.

In the Indian context, it has been argued that rural-urban migration from the poorest segments of society has declined between the 1991 and 2001 census period and that this might suggest a decline in the expectations of a betterment of conditions with the move to the city (Kundu and Gupta, 1996). Whatever the overall figures for migration might be, it has been seen (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009) that even if high productivity agricultural areas, that is, the "green revolution areas", continue to be important destinations, rural-urban migration is the fastest growing type of migration within existing migration streams as more migrants choose to work in better paying non-farm occupations in urban areas and industrial zones. Within this, Delhi and the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra are top destinations for inter-state migrant labour. It has also been documented in case studies (e.g., Mezzadri, 2006) that for different kinds of industrial work, migrant workers are preferred because they do not pose the threat of unionization. The workers stay in the city, in the case considered by Mezzadri, for the production cycle and then return to their villages, in typical patterns of circular migration. However, there are also industrial activities where migrants move to the city for long periods of time, often becoming like local residents, but at the same time retaining distinct migrant identities.

[1]By implication, how long such migration would continue and whether it would be because of the high expectations that the Harris–Todaro framework suggested becomes a crucial question to ask.

In the context of all the above, what is the way in which the vast labour surplus in India and migration—a particular manifestation of this—gets related to processes of industrialization, especially in the context of the neoliberal developmental paradigm, that is, where the fact of labour costs being low is advertised as a specific advantage? Who constitutes the industrial workforce and what are their expectations and experiences of industrial work and of the city on the other? How have industrial production, relocation, migration and employment patterns constituted the landscape around industrial activity? How do the production and employment systems around industrial work constitute a specific kind of urban landscape and how do those who inhabit this landscape in turn co-constitute the possibilities for and conditions of production and employment? How has the city's landscape been affected by the changes mentioned above? How can we understand urban spaces, in this case, industrial areas and settlements around them, as getting structured and configured by larger policy decisions on the one hand but also the perceptions of and expectations from the city by workers and the nature of their relationships with localities and spaces that they operate in?

This chapter discusses some of these questions for the city of Delhi in the context of the changes in the policy vision for industrialization in the city. It traces the locational and spatial dynamics of two industrial areas, Wazirpur and Patparganj, through the lens of industrial work and its relationship with migration patterns.

The chapter makes the following arguments: Delhi's spatial landscape has had industrial relocation as one of its key determinants, driving important arguments for an ostensibly "clean and green" vision for the city (Sharan, 2014; GNCT(2010); GNCT(2014)). Given the drive for relocation in an already existing spatial configuration, there are interesting contrasts in the way in which the industrial landscape has got constituted around such imperatives. However, there is also remarkable uniformity in the nature of industrialization, the production processes and the structuring of work under older and newer industrialization visions, generating particular conditions of work, livelihood options and expectations of workers. The dynamics of migration and the expectations are also important determinants of how industrial work gets structured and helps perpetuate a "low road" to industrialization, characterized by informal production and employment structures and precarious conditions of work.

We define an "industrial area" as that which is formally constituted by a "core" consisting of designated industrial estates and a "peripheral area" around the estate consisting of scattered industrial establishments and residential settlements, which together define a typical industrial landscape. Through an account of kinds of activities in the areas, migrant aspirations, experiences and conditions of existence, the chapter puts across what industrial areas reveal about urban space and urban life more generally, and what processes are articulated here. It also seeks to draw contrasts between Wazirpur, which is an example of an old industrial estate, and Patparganj, which was set up when the vision of "cleaning up" Delhi was beginning to take shape. It points out the differences and similarities in the making of localities under different kinds of industrial work and objectives of industrialization.

The empirical evidence presented in the chapter is based on preliminary analysis of questionnaire- and in-depth narrative-based information collected in the two areas over the period of a year between May 2013 and July 2014. The analytical frame within which the chapter is located is one of understanding urban spaces, in this case, industrial areas and settlements around them, as getting structured and configured by larger policy decisions on the one hand but also the perceptions of and expectations from the city by workers and the nature of their relationships with localities and spaces that they operate in.

9.1 The Industrialization Scenario in Delhi: Re-configuring Urban Spaces

The industrial sector profile of what is administratively identified as the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has undergone major changes in recent times, with the reconfiguration of spaces as a result of major industrial relocation initiatives. These initiatives reflect the changed objectives of industrialization in the city and have generated extensive debates and concerns over the past decade, centering mainly on the aspects of pollution and negative environmental impact of industries, the existence and continued growth of industries in non-conforming areas and the issue of classification and permissibility with reference to household industries.

The Delhi Industrial Draft Policy (2010–2021) and the National Capital Region Plan 2021, which presently govern the industrialization vision for the city, aim to deflect, restrict and disperse "unhealthy" development within the core of the metropolis. It also envisages the gradual emphasis away from old and "dirty" industries to "clean" ones like information technology (IT) and information technology-enabled services ITeS, as part of the closure and relocation drive mentioned above. The Delhi Industrial Draft Policy (2010–2021) sets out the specific objectives, of setting up non-polluting and clean industries, promoting high technology industries that require skilled labour, to keep migration of unskilled labour to the minimum, develop world class infrastructure within planned industrial estates and regularized industrial structures, and promote an industrial cluster approach[2] and "walk to work" concepts, wherever possible.

Unlike other metropolitan centres like Mumbai and Kolkata, where the industrial structure has been dominated by large industries, industrial development in Delhi has always been dominated by small-scale units. By the end of the 1960s, Delhi had emerged as the single biggest centre of concentration of small-scale

[2]According to this, similar kinds of industries are to be located within one geographical area. This type of structure will help in creating economies of scale, utilizing shared resources, attracting common pool of skilled talent and creating more efficient industrial wastage treatment mechanism.

industries in the country with the small-scale industries constituting 99.2 % of the number, 76.3 % of the employment, 53.50 % of the investment and 55.62 % of the production of all industries in the capital (Mazumdar, 2000). In fact, the setting up of large-scale and heavy industries in Delhi was ruled out by the 1962 Master Plan for Delhi. The present Master Plan for Delhi, in keeping with the industrialization vision from the 1960s onwards, visualizes industrialization in the city as being restricted to small and medium enterprises. Small-scale industries were so designated on the basis of an upper ceiling on investment in plant and machinery and not on the basis of employment or actual size of establishment; it does not mean that all of them had small numbers of workers[3].

The growth of small-scale units over time has been explosive. The fifth economic census conducted in 2005 in Delhi estimated that there were 0.75 million enterprises as compared to 0.68 million in 1998, of which less than a tenth were located in planned industrial areas or comprised permissible household industries, which meant that the largest number of industrial units was functioning in what came to be referred to as "non-conforming" areas. In 1996, the Supreme Court of India observed that non-residential activities taking place in residential premises and areas had been permitted only under certain conditions as laid down in the Master Plan, and on that basis ordered the relocation of certain polluting industries. This order was in continuum with its earlier order dated 24 March 1995, when the Court had issued orders to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) directing it to issue individual notices to some 8378 units, indicating that these industries had to stop functioning in Delhi and be relocated elsewhere. Subsequently, very large numbers of these "polluting" units were closed down or relocated to the outskirts of the city, in new industrial plots in Patparganj, Bawana, Jhilmil, Narela and Badli.

The main industries that have operated in Delhi are readymade garments, paper and paper products, rubber and plastic products, steel product fabrication, engineering goods, electrical machinery, repair services and automotive equipment. The industrial workforce in the city, prior to 1951, came mostly from the adjoining districts of Gurgaon, Rohtak, Bulandshahr and Meerut, http://www.indialabourarchives.org/publications/IndraniMazumdar.htm-_ftn3 but over the years, migrants have entered the city from a widening radius, but dominated by the vast Hindi heartland of the country. The northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh consistently provided the largest contingent of migrants into Delhi, their share rising to more than 50 % between 1971 and 1981 but after this, the share of the eastern state of Bihar went up substantially, now consisting of the second largest migrant population in the city. According to a study done by the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi (Mitra, 1996) around 27 % of the working population of the migrants was engaged

[3]The term "small scale" often hides the fact that these units sometimes employ hundreds of workers. Mazumdar (2000) notes that at a time when designated large-scale units such as Delhi Flour Mills employed about 250 workers, some of the units designated as small-scale industries employed up to 500 workers. However, for the large majority of units, a door-to-door industrial survey (cited in Economic Survey of Delhi, 1999–2000) conducted in Delhi in 1988 found that an average unit employed 9 workers, while 30 % of the units employed 4 workers or less.

in manufacturing and construction. Manufacturing, as mentioned above, is seen to be mostly small scale and low skilled in nature, unlike the adjoining areas in neighbouring states like Faridabad, Gurgaon and Noida, which also have a significant presence of large-sized industrial units, sometimes employing thousands of workers.

Given the above background to the "vision" for industrialization in Delhi, we focus below on how the actual spaces that constitute the two selected industrial areas have got configured and constituted.

The study on which this chapter is based has utilized mixed methods, and draws upon data collected through a combination of survey research, personal testimonies and focus group discussions.[4] A survey-based exercise of 213 workers, using detailed but open-ended questionnaires, was conducted for locating larger socio-economic trends, migration patterns and conditions of employment. An open-ended questionnaire was used particularly because a significant aim was to arrive at *processes* that go into identity creation (as workers, as migrants), which in turn become crucial in creating a sense of *place* in constituting the spaces that are inhabited by migrant workers. The spatial context of workers' lives and questions related to work identity and livelihood strategies were investigated through personal testimonies of 40 workers identified through the process of canvassing the questionnaire and focus group discussions.[5]

The sampling technique used for identifying workers was a combination of purposive and careful snowballing. Within a larger settlement/urban village with diverse livelihood profiles, we sought to capture only industrial workers. Our definition of an industrial worker was not restricted to mean only those who were currently employed in the industrial estate. Based on what we encountered in the field and given that our research also relied on the use of life/work history interviews, we followed a far broader definition to capture workers who may not be currently employed in any industrial work, but have had some past experience of working in the industrial estates. We also captured workers across a spectrum of work profiles in the two estates—those working on the shop floor, supervisors and labour contractors, and those involved in ancillary services such as loading and unloading of goods, factory sweepers/cleaners and crane operators, to name a few. Of

[4]The mixing of research methods, particularly the two binaries of quantitative and qualitative methods, also known as triangulation, is being increasingly recognized in the social sciences as a useful methodological tool to understand in greater depth the social phenomena being studied.

[5]As most field-based researchers would acknowledge, the conceptual distinctions between various methodologies often get blurred on the field, given that one cannot anticipate what will be encountered in the field. At various points of time during the field study for this research, thus, a particular method was often complimented with other methods, depending upon the situation in the field. For instance, interviewing a particular woman worker alone proved to be difficult during the first couple of meetings, since other women in the neighbourhood would also join in. But such a situation was often beneficial for the researchers involved in this study, as the conversation only grew richer and deeper with the other women joining in, and the spur-of-the moment situation allowed us to create focus groups for the next phases of our visits, which allowed us to have diverse perspectives.

related interest were also people who were not directly working within the estates, but were involved in manufacturing work in some capacity, either as home-based workers, or as workers in small workshops on the periphery of the estate.

9.2 The Industrial Areas of Wazirpur and Patparganj—A Profile

Delhi has 28 planned industrial estates and four flatted factory complexes, of which 21 are under the ownership of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), while the remaining 11 are under the DSIIDC (Delhi State Industrial and. Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd.) and Department of Industries (DI).[6] Wazirpur industrial area, spanning an area of 210 acres, was developed under the second master plan for Delhi in 1966. At present, it is owned by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), and its operation and maintenance is under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). Though initially designed for plastic, hosiery and electronic industries, today steel utensil units overwhelmingly crowd the area. Other units like wool dyeing and copper wire drawing have also sprung up. In total there are about 2,000 units, though 80 % of them are nameless, existing only as plot numbers on paper. Barely 20 % are registered.

The Patparganj Industrial Estate was developed in the 1990s and at present covers a total area of 130 acres, of which 50.37 % is under Industrial use (DSIIDC, 2011). In October 2006, the Patparganj industrial area was one of the sites for the relocation of industrial plots under the Delhi government's industrial relocation scheme, following a 1996 Supreme Court order for relocation of polluting and non-confirming industries under Delhi Master Plan 2001.[7] The relocated plots in the Patparganj industrial area are owned and managed by DSIIDC (Industrial Policy for Delhi 2010–2021). The industrial profile of the Patparganj estate is diverse, consisting of units engaging in the manufacture of garments, auto-parts, tobacco products, incense material, paper products, food products and those involved in operations like packing, packaging and printing. In addition, there are vehicle service centres and call centres within the Patparganj estate.

The industrial profiles of the two estates and the specific time periods in which they emerged are different, as outlined above, as well as the spatial organization of the two estates and the surrounding worker settlements. The Patparganj estate is a well-planned and well laid-out estate, with neatly demarcated spaces for industrial plots, green areas, parking spaces, etc., and can be accessed through two entrances. A visit to the estate brings forth these dimensions very clearly. The

[6]Brief Industrial Profile of NCT of Delhi, 2012–13, Govt. of India, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises.

[7]The other sites were Bawana, Jhilmil, Narela, and Badli.

workers largely reside in the settlements of Ghazipur, Bhowapur, Hasanpur and JJ (*jhuggi jhompri*) clusters—Indira Camp (in Madhu Vihar) and Indira Camp (in Khichripur). The Patparganj industrial area is an example of the newer areas that are ostensibly being developed for "cleaner" industrialization, where worker settlements are spatially separated from the sites of formal industrial activity.

In contrast, in the Wazirpur industrial area, we see the intersecting worlds of the steel rolling units and the worker settlement. The industrial area and the surrounding Wazirpur *basti* (slum settlement) seem to converge in a manner that resonates with accounts of industrial towns in historical/anthropological literature. As one walks pasts the different blocks in the industrial estate, it is hard to overlook the grey/black waste material from the steel factories that lie on either sides of the roads/lane. The air is filled with soot and dust and rickshaws carrying hot sheets of metal, and either loading or unloading the material at the factories abound in every nook and corner. The industrial estate is subdivided into blocks, surrounded by clusters of *jhuggis,* marked by deplorable living conditions. To the onlooker, while it appears entirely like an industrial settlement, the inhabitants here are not only workers in the estate, but those undertaking a whole range of occupations in the city—rickshaw pullers, fruit/vegetable vendors, owners of small shops, etc.

The rough brick structures in the Wazirpur *basti* resemble a house of cards, with one floor heaped on top of the other and no support structures in sight. There are no stairwells either and the top floor of houses is accessed by means of a bamboo ladder leaning against the walls of the house. Slightly well-off families have wrought iron staircases but these are rare and again outside the house. A small patch of concrete outside each house serves as the entrance, the common area and also a place to wash clothes in.

The settlements surrounding Patparganj stand out in contrast to those around Wazirpur. Most workers in Patparganj reside in Ghazipur, an urban village in East Delhi, which also houses a major fish and chicken market and a fruit and vegetable market. It is also a major landfill site. Typically, as in urban villages in Delhi, there are shops selling basic provisions, stationery and garments, as well as *dhaba*s (roadside eateries). Specific lanes in the village are worker tenements, which are primarily buildings consisting of two or three floors, each having several small rooms. The sewage arrangements are poor, as there is water overflowing on the sides of the buildings, as also within the cramped insides of the buildings. Mostly inhabited by migrant workers, the settlements are owned and controlled by local landlords, who charge exorbitant rents, and exert varying forms of control over the migrants, such as imposing conditions to buy groceries from shops operated by the landlords and denying them any form of proof of residence. Narrow lanes and by-lanes consisting of worker tenements co-exist alongside broader lanes, housing the landed and the well-off, with imposing well laid-out houses that stand out in stark contrast to these settlements. The worker tenements consist of blocks of small rooms, each one occupied by 5–7 workers, with common toilet and bath facilities. The area is also marked with several small manufacturing units, engaging in work such as jeans dyeing, electrical wiring and printing, which can be visibly spotted

in a continuous line in a particular lane towards the outer end of the village. Many of these also spring up as single units in several lanes of the village.

Given the profiles of the two industrial areas, how do the phenomena of the nature of industrial work and that of migration influence the coming up of the industrial landscapes described above? How do migrant industrial workers contribute, through their working conditions, aspirations and nature of interaction with the city, to the way in which the spaces that they inhabit are constituted?

9.3 Industrial Work, Migrant Identity and the City

It can be seen unequivocally that industrial work is overwhelmingly done by migrant labour. In both industrial areas, workers consist mostly of migrants from Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh, followed by those from Haryana and a sprinkling of those from Bengal, Orissa, and other states, as Table 9.1 shows. Table 9.2 shows the distribution of migrant workers by length of stay in the city. It shows that the overwhelming majority of workers (about 60 %) have stayed in Delhi for more than 9 years.

This is contrasted by the composition of the workforce involved on construction sites, where the overwhelming majority, again migrants, comes from the states of Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, with Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh accounting for only small proportions of workers (Prosperi, 2013). What is interesting to note, therefore, is the strong regional clustering within migration streams, demarcated by type of activity, in this case manufacturing and

Table 9.1 Distribution of sample workers by gender and state of birth

State of origin (birth state)	Number of workers		Share in total (%)			
	Female	Male	All workers	Female	Male	All workers
Bihar	**16**	**58**	**74**	**37.2**	**35.6**	**35.6**
Haryana		1	1		0.6	0.6
Himachal Pradesh		1	1		0.6	0.6
J & K		1	1		0.6	0.6
Jharkhand		1	1		0.6	0.6
Madhya Pradesh		6	6		3.7	3.7
Nepal		1	1		0.6	0.6
Orissa		1	1		0.6	0.6
Rajasthan		2	2		1.2	1.2
Uttar Pradesh	**25**	**81**	**106**	**58.1**	**49.7**	**49.7**
Uttarakhand		3	3		1.8	1.8
West Bengal	**2**	**7**	**9**	**4.7**	**4.3**	**4.3**
	43	163	206	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 9.2 Distribution of sample workers by year of first migration to Delhi

Year of first migration to Delhi	Number of workers	Share in total (%)
1976–1980	3	1.5
1981–1985	18	8.7
1986–1990	15	7.3
1991–1995	29	14.1
1996–2000	32	15.5
2001–2005	33	16.0
2005–2010	54	26.2
2011–2012	14	6.8
2013	6	2.9
No data	2	1.0
	206	100.0

construction, both within the secondary sector. The construction site and the factory (or workshop), thus, as distinct workplaces, seem to attract workers from different regions, perhaps reflecting the nature of the activity and the expectations from the workforce and of the workforce from the city.

The migrants who arrive in the city to do industrial work, thus, in contrast, usually arrive with distinct expectations about their work and the city. They know that factory work can become available because local people are not employed in the factories and that factory employment, even if it is hard, establishes a certain credibility for the worker, as an industrial worker.

In response to a question about why there were hardly any local workers in the industrial estate, Ram Kumar, a security guard at a factory in Patparganj estate, replied: "Local men will never work in factories. They know that factories make you work harder and pay less … if you look at it, Delhi's factories are being run by us Biharis and UP-wallahs".

Tejeshwar Sharma, a steel rolling factory worker who has studied up to class 8 (senior school), spoke about the dignity ascribed to industrial work in Delhi:

> Whenever I go back to the village, I am treated with great honour … it is a big thing in the village to be working in Delhi's factories. If I continued to work in the fields with my education, people would never respect me. Since I work in a factory, and that too, in Delhi, it is a big deal.

Pushpender, another steel worker who is educated up to class 7, stated:

> Here, even if I am educated, irrespective of what work I do, my dignity goes up in the village. But if I do farm-work in the village, what will people say, why did I study if all I needed to do was to work a plough. Better than that is to work here as a worker or helper, I will certainly get dignity in the village. When I go back to the village, people say Look, he works in a factory in Delhi!.

Industrial or "factory" work in the capital city, thus, becomes a distinct source of a superior identity, even if the actual work that is done is degrading and arduous.

In both Wazirpur and Patparganj, workers had arrived through both contractors known to them as well as with “bridgeheads” in the form of a relative or acquaintance having been established, lowering potential risks and costs. Unlike with construction workers, these workers did not arrive in groups, but as individuals. Detailed personal testimonies reveal that the need to arrive through someone known and to establish contact in an established area of the city was very important for these workers, in contrast to the workers in the large construction sites. Thus, the workers stress their desires to live in already established residential areas, even if these areas were inhospitable, and not in makeshift settlements around workplaces at the behest of the employer. Almost all the workers interviewed stated this emphatically, of wanting to live in a proper “colony” rather than in makeshift tenements like those around construction sites. This seems to be true irrespective of the actual poverty level of the workers and their families in the villages with the emphasis on where they reside being an important aspect of identity creation. This is an important point to note about the relationship of the migrant industrial workers with the city, which in turn is related to the aspirations for upward mobility from their jobs, even if it did not materialize in actual terms.

9.4 The Shaping of Residential Spaces for Industrial Workers

The contrast in the nature of worker settlements between Wazirpur and Patparganj is interesting to note with respect to how residential spaces have got structured under older and newer visions for the city. Wazirpur, as stated earlier, consists of far more ramshackle worker residences which merge into the industrial production spaces, resembling a typical “industrial *basti*”, unlike Patparganj where the worker residences are like dormitories with common facilities. While living conditions in Patparganj are better than Wazirpur, it is not possible for the workers in the former to become owners of even small property, given the dynamics of ownership in urban villages in the city, whereas some workers managed to become owners of *jhuggi*s, making that a possibility for “moving up” in the latter. Given that the Patparganj estate came into existence at a time when industrial activity was to ostensibly be part of a “clean” vision for the city, it can be seen that working class migrants no longer have the possibility of self-provision of affordable housing in JJ colonies, like in Wazirpur, however, poor the latter might be, and have to negotiate the difficult terrain of renting rooms in the urban villages in highly difficult circumstances.

In turn, significant changes were effected in the urban villages themselves. For example, Ghazipur village transformed after the advent of the Patparganj Estate and with the arrival of the migrant workers. The residents were transformed from being cultivators (sharecroppers) to landlords. Further, with the setting up of the estate, other infrastructural developments began taking place, which implied

transfer of ownership of land from the residents of Ghazipur village to the Delhi Government, for which they received compensation. This money was then channelled to build accommodation for the migrant workers of the Patparganj estate. Also with the drying up of the local lake, it was known that cultivation could no longer be undertaken, but on the contrary if the land was utilized for building rooms for the worker population the earnings would be much higher.[8] Most of the original settlers of Ghazipur, who belong to the Jat and Gujar community, are thus landlords whose primary source of income is rent. Some of them rear buffaloes for additional income. The attractiveness of the earnings from renting out rooms was lucidly put by one of the respondents: “Why does the local person (original inhabitant of Ghazipur) need to work? He eats his rent and is happy”.

It was made clear that the construction of rooms for workers took cognizance of their limited paying capacity due to being landless or small peasants. Typically, what are seen are three-storied concrete structures with as many as 60 rooms with two bathrooms and toilets on each floor. In order to utilize the space optimally, rooms were constructed in such a fashion that no care was taken to provide for ventilation or natural light. Further, no heed was paid to the sanitation and sewage system, with choked sewers and small heaps of rubbish around every corner.

Similarly, in Bhowapur village as well, agricultural land was annexed by the state government (in this case Uttar Pradesh). The compensation received by the locals for this was channelled into building of worker tenements, rented to people coming to work in the industrial estates of Patparganj and Sahibabad. Here, there are three- or four-storied buildings, with 20–25 rooms on each floor.

In Wazirpur basti, rooms are either owned by the workers or rented for Rs. 1500–2000 and each room has its own meter for electricity. Water is available either through MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) connections or through bore wells owned by the landlord. Toilet complexes, which are outside the residences and have been constructed by the MCD, require the workers to pay for using them. Each block has one toilet complex, thereby often forcing people to defecate in the open and women having to bathe inside their rooms.[9]

Apart from very little control over conditions of living, the migrant industrial workers seem to hardly have any agency in terms of lobbying for their needs or improving their living conditions. Ghazipur village is endowed with better facilities like adequate water supply and uninterrupted electricity supply because the local MLA resides there and this also means no harassment by government officials and agencies. This advantage spills over to the workers as well in terms of a higher probability of finding employment either in the estate or in the workshops functioning in the village. The MLA has also ensured that most of the residents have their voter IDs with the help of the landlords, but very few have been able to obtain a ration card despite living in Delhi for more than 5 years, because landlords do not trust them. It was argued by landlords that they do not repay or

[8]Field notes, Anushka Rose, June–July 2013.

[9]Focus group discussion, Raja Park, Wazirpur, June 2013, moderated by Anushka Rose.

abscond against loans that are taken against ration cards and are thus untrustworthy. What needs to be noted is that apart from the patronage system that might provide some advantages to the migrant workers, there appear to be no other means of lobbying or organizing for ensuring better conditions of existence.

Given the contrast between the worker settlements in the two areas, is there a difference in the conditions of industrial employment? Spatial agglomeration in an industrial estate allows for informal employment norms to be sustained by regular availability of workers for industrial units and of employment for workers. With highly unstable possibilities for occupational mobility because of the informal nature of work, workers negotiate the informality through a variety of spatial strategies that relate to the realities of migration and industrial production.

First, the agglomeration of industrial units along with informal employment conditions means that there is always a pool of jobs available in the specific industry that work is being sought in. Fieldwork shows that workers tend to specialize in terms of sectoral work, that is, a steel rolling worker only looks for work in steel rolling units, and similarly for garments and other industries, even if his/her job is casual. This also means that the identification with the work being done is quite strong, even if conditions are very difficult and occupational mobility is restricted. The following narratives from three steel rolling (*garam rolla*) workers demonstrate this.

> The first job I got here was that of a helper. I had contacts in a *garam rolla* unit. Today I work as a *mistry* (master worker). It's been 8 years. You have to learn the work on machines while you are a helper, and the owner soon makes you a *mistry*.… Yes, I have changed factories. It has been to get a hike in wages. *(Worker 1)*

> You can become a *kaarigar/mistry* (artisan/master worker) as soon as you learn to work on the machine. There is no training needed. You need to observe and ask around for help. If you are smart enough, you might also become the foreman. But the chances for that are a lot more rare. Most people spend a decade or two as *kaarigar/mistry*. *(Worker 2)*

> I started working in 1984. I have been working on the machine for 17 years. Today I run two machines. I can also make moulds for the utensils. We don't have theoretical engineering degrees, but we have to master practical engineering to be eligible for being a foreman. But I can't be that, because I am not too close to the owner. *(Worker 3)*

Second, the conditions of work are uniformly informal, quite irrespective of industry or area, with the distinctions between workers being on the basis of whether they are regular or casual workers, whether remuneration is time-rated or piece-rated and whether or not they receive remuneration on the basis of their status in employment. Typically, in large units employing larger numbers of workers, there is a pool of what are referred to as "regular" workers, where the only mark of being regular is that they are in continuous employment with the same unit for long periods of time. Thus, in Wazirpur, in units that manufacture steel utensils or in the garment factories in Patparganj, about 50 % of the workers employed had been working in the same unit for 10 years or more, in some cases more than 20 years. In most of these cases, the wage paid is the monthly equivalent of an unskilled worker's wage, ranging from Rs. 200 to 270 per day, without any benefits that are associated with a minimum wage, such as Provident Fund (PF) and

Insurance (Employees State Insurance, or ESI), even if for unskilled work. In such cases, with very long working hours that stretch from 10–12 h on an average, male workers receive between six and eight thousand rupees a month. Sometimes, this is negotiated as a lump sum amount between the owners and workers. In both cases, the statutory payments that are required to be made, like Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance, are not made by the employers. In the garment industry, warehousing and some engineering goods, unions have come into existence in the last few years, which are beginning to put pressure on employers to make these mandatory payments to ensure security to the workers. Women workers, who are employed in packing and cleaning work, earn just about half of what the men do.

In a large number of small units, especially in Wazirpur, which employed not more than 10 workers on an average, the pressure for making statutory payments for worker security hardly exists and in this case, it is lump sum monthly payments that predominate. Surprisingly, the average amount of money that workers receive, whether or not they are statutorily entitled to such benefits, is the same, around Rs. 6,000–8,000. Thus, regular employment does not denote the existence of a formal employment contract, of clear records of employment by the firm concerned, or of the long-term benefits associated with stable employment. All it ensures is that the employment has been available for long periods of time for this category of "regular" workers.

Third, the workers fully recognize the violations of employment norms that are committed by employers, but also emphasize that conditions in the city are better than in the villages and importantly, in addition to this, the fact that becoming an industrial worker is a matter of prestige when they go back to the village. Further, the links with their villages of origin and to land are important factors that influence strongly both their identities as city dwellers as well as the movement between the village and the city.

Migrant workers move frequently between the city and their villages with no discernible pattern that might enable them to be classified as seasonal or circular migrants, but frequent and symbolically significant enough to be a regular feature that identifies them. Tables 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 on the links of the workers with their villages and with land show the following: one, that most of the sample workers own land or belong to families that own land in the village; two, that the frequency of visits to the village range between once and four times a year for the majority of sample

Table 9.3 Distribution of sample workers by ownership of agricultural land

Ownership of agricultural land	Number of workers			Share in total (%)		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Workers who either own land or belong to families that own land	25	107	132	69.4	84.9	81.5
Workers who neither own land nor belong to families that own land	9	17	26	25.0	13.5	16.0
No data	2	2	4	5.6	1.6	2.5
	36	126	162	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 9.4 Distribution of sample workers by frequency of visits to village

Frequency of visits to village	Number of workers			Share in total (%)
	Female	Male	Total Workers	
1. Once/twice a year	**14**	**70**	**84**	**40.8**
2. Three to four times a year	**7**	**45**	**52**	**25.2**
3. More than four times a year	5	22	27	13.1
4. Only on special occasions	4	2	6	2.9
5. Once in a few years	7	9	16	7.8
6. Do not visit	3	5	8	3.9
7. Have not visited in past few years	2	2	4	1.9
8. New workers who have arrived in less than a year and made no visits		6	6	2.9
9. No data	1	2	3	1.5
	43	163	206	100.0

Table 9.5 Distribution of sample workers by occupation and work during visit(s) to village and ownership of agricultural land

Occupation/work in village	Ownership of agricultural land			Total workers
	Workers who either own land or belong to families that own land	Workers who neither own land nor belong to families that own land	No data	
Agriculture (own/ family land)	64			64
Agriculture (others' land)	1	1		2
Non-agricultural work	4	3		7
Both agriculture and non-agricultural work	2	1		3
Neither agricultural nor non-agricultural work	87	33	3	123
No data			1	1
	158	38	4	200

workers; about a third of sample workers go back to the village frequently to do agricultural work, while the majority extend support to their families in other ways.

Some narratives revealed interesting dimensions of the relationship of the workers with their village of origin and with land. Shiv Prasad, a casual worker in the Patparganj Estate, stated: "In Bihar and UP, there are floods during every monsoon and the crops get spoilt before they are cut. Once the flood comes, we can't do anything for 3 months. What we earn from here can cover for that."

Pappu Pal, who works in the Patparganj estate said

> … a poor worker's real wealth is his land. No one can understand the pain of one who does not own his land. This (land) is one of the reasons why people migrate to earn—they migrate either to be able to earn so as to cultivate their land, either to increase the size of the landholding in case it is small; or in order to repay debt and get land back from seizure… For now we are able bodied, but once our bodies no longer have strength to work in the factories … then our it is our land that will keep us alive.

Paresh Yadav, who lives in a tiny room in Ghazipur village along with four other workers, has built and rented out similar kinds of rooms back in his village, stated: After working in Delhi, I have constructed rooms on one part of my land and rented them out. Like the Gujjars who have rented rooms out, I have done the same in my village. I will manage my old age with that.

These narratives point towards particular aspects of the relationship between the city and the village in the minds of the migrant industrial workers which help them negotiate with hard conditions of life and employment. An important point to note from our study is that despite the very different scenarios of residential arrangements in the two industrial areas, both sets of workers express the need to live in settlements or "colonies" with other kinds of people, reflecting what I suggest, is a desire to be known as city dwellers, even if under precarious conditions. This would stand in contrast to groups of construction workers, who reside as an exclusive group around construction sites, not in proximity to other residents of the city. The city, for the migrant industrial workers, becomes a space of adjustment but also a space of change and hope, as some of the narratives below demonstrate.

> Now I like Delhi more than the village—I don't feel like going to the village anymore. Firstly, the time does not pass there and on top of that, there's nobody to talk to or television with cable connection. In Delhi, there are people I know. Here, we just sit around and chat. If nothing, we can just watch TV. Here, one does not realize how the time passes by… Now Delhi is our home. We will continue to stay here in future. There is nothing to go back to in the village. Home is here [in Delhi], family is here, work is here, so what will we go back for? (Kamlesh, 42, factory worker, Wazirpur, migrated to Delhi in 1986, starting work in 2001).

Further:

> As far as it is a question of coming from another state, then the ones who live and work in Azadpur and Wazirpur all hail from outside [Delhi]. If I am from another state, then it is not the case that my neighbor or co-worker is from Delhi—they have also migrated from elsewhere. We have all come here out of compulsion (*majboori*). Since we are working here under compulsion, it does not matter to us who is from where, is of which caste—we are all busy with our own work. Neither do we say anything to anyone nor does anyone say anything to us. I think that this is the specialty of Delhi that any person can come here to earn for themselves.

> There is some difference [between working in village in fields and working in city in factories]: there [in village], you cannot go and work by yourself as you by yourself cannot handle the field. Here, you can go out to work by yourself, finish your work and come back. There, you work through the day in sun. Here, you work in shade. In village you get everything fresh but with a lot of physical hard-work. One has to wander around like mad in village [while working]. Sometimes you are busy harvesting, taking out weed or carrying heavy weights on head around. (Premwati, 38 factory worker, Patparganj, hails from Bihar)

9.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how urban spaces, in this case, industrial areas and settlements around them, are structured and configured by larger policy decisions on the one hand but also the perceptions of and expectations from the city by workers and the nature of their relationships with localities and spaces that they operate in. The informal conditions of employment in the factories of Wazirpur and Patparganj are given in the lives of the workers, but at the same time co-created by the conditions of migration and the pulls from the villages of origin of the workers. It is thus a combination of two spatial features, the need to regularly visit the village and the existence of a pool of jobs, even if informal ones, due to industrial agglomeration, that are taken advantage of by employers to reproduce conditions of informality that keep labour costs low. Migration into industrial work, it appears, does not happen from the poorest segments of rural society, but from contexts of some landholding, in turn with very high symbolic value. The need to visit the village regularly, whether or not to cultivate land themselves, or to facilitate an increase in landholding through remittances, or to claim back seized land, becomes possible because of the nature of informal work in the estates. Irrespective of the imperatives of industrial relocation and the creation of "cleaner" industrial estates, thus, the conditions for a classic "low road" to industrial development get created through the phenomenon of migration. Further, despite the "low road" conditions of work as well as residence for migrant industrial workers, migration does seem to present perceptions of betterment of life conditions for the migrants, forcing them to negotiate harsh conditions as urban dwellers.

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Chapter 10
Megaproject, Rules and Relationships with the Law: The Metro Rail in East Delhi

Bérénice Bon

10.1 Introduction

Today, 22 metro rails are planned in metropolitan cities in India. They represent a booming sector involving tremendous market potential for local and foreign economic actors. By May 2014, 190 km of the network was operational in Delhi, serving 146 stations, and transporting about 2.5 million passengers every day. In mid-1990s in a context of structural and organizational changes, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) was set up as a joint venture between the Delhi Government and the central government and funded with a soft loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. The DMRC was conceived as an administrative and implementing body of the metro in Delhi, but is also the prime consultant for all the metro projects in India and recommends the organizational and management arrangements for each case. This megaproject in Delhi has incurred huge financial investments and enjoys a "special regime", i.e. it has a specific regulatory and legal framework with its own procedures, rules and norms, determined at the level of the central government. This state-led model with an exceptional framework excludes other urban actors, such as the municipal authorities, in the name of operational efficiency and effective decision making.

This situation echoes the particularities of urban governance in Delhi and the implementation of megaprojects. The Delhi state remains in a structurally subordinate position vis-à-vis the central state, which interferes directly in Delhi urban affairs, and the municipalities have the smallest portfolio (Ruet and Tawa-Lama, 2009). Furthermore New Delhi has an important role of "signalling"

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both to international actors and also to regional governments about the "rules of the game" beyond formal rules and regulations—as it is the case for transport megaprojects—even if State governments experience an enhancement of policy space within their territorial boundaries (Kennedy, 2013). Lastly the organization in Delhi in 2010 of the Commonwealth Games was the context in which numerous large-scale urban development projects were put in place (Dupont, 2010; Baviskar, 2011). This mega sporting event acted as a facilitator and an accelerator for taking decisions, for example for the land acquisition process for the metro rail project.

My focus here is not the transport component of the megaproject, but its real estate component, which has been much less discussed in the literature. Indeed, the construction of the metro in Delhi is not just synonymous with the development of a transportation network. Since 1999, the DMRC is raising funds by selling the developments rights to land developers around the metro stations and depots. Property developments of the DMRC do not fall under the specific rules and regulatory framework of the operational structure of the transport component. The proportion of DMRC's net income from property developments between 2004 and 2012 was 30 %. In the last few years, the financial contribution of real estate developments has significantly decreased, due particularly to conflicts in the public sphere and strong rivalries between state agencies vying for influence over urban development. This underscores that due to the absence of a "special regime" for the property development component of the megaproject, urban actors external to the project and excluded from the decision making process of the metro, have the power and the capacity to interact with their knowledge and their rules over the real estate component and not over the transport component. This chapter reveals precisely through the issue of the rules and the relationship(s) with the law, the implications of this new funding mechanism for the control of urban development by specialized agencies under central government ministries within the city limits. It also emphasizes at the highest levels of decision a rise in the legitimacy of "technicizing" urban problems and their management, which remain controlled by a model of public governance.

In this chapter, as a way of approaching the volume's problematic linking space, planning and contestations, I study the issue of rules and the relationship(s) with the law on the basis of a specific example, a DMRC project bringing together transport and property development activities on the banks of the river Yamuna in East Delhi, adjacent to very dense and low-income residential areas. This project enables the evaluation of the manner in which the rules and the legal and illegal categories formulated at the city level are redefined at the local level and confer powers on the actors over and in a space. The chapter's first main argument is that the local actors who are in a position to interact with each other, formulate the validity of the rules and the legal qualifications (zoning, ownership, transfer, concession). Outside the perimeter of the megaproject, where the risks and the direct impacts are keenly felt by the local residents, the stakeholders are absent. They delegate the social issue directly related to the megaproject to lower scales of decision. These bring to the second argument that the rules for managing problems related to the megaproject are reliant on the formation of local political arenas.

The local residents lack any means of taking recourse to law (such as the right to property, petitions, mediation by institutions), but intermittently, through very local politics, question the legal qualifications of the urban space as defined by the stakeholders of the megaproject. Then, this study brings information about the way local democracy works in Delhi.

10.2 The Territory of the Megaproject

The megaproject is associated in scientific literature to a process of individualization of a space within the city, which the architect Genestier (2001) expresses as a new "focalization of sight", which has dominated contemporary thought. It involves maximizing the assets and the advantages of specific spaces defined and delineated beforehand. The space of the megaproject is a space where actors, both public and private (Harvey, 1989) whose interests, vision and capabilities can differ, seek a compromise around a project negotiated and applicable in a certain geographical perimeter delineated as per this strategy of individualizing a space within the city. The space of the megaproject is thus a resource that can be termed as a social resource: the actors can intervene and mobilize specific rules with the aim of controlling this delineated space. Conceptualization and implementation of megaprojects take a very long time and entail technical devices, specific procedures, regulations and contracts. Thus, the rules and relationship(s) with the law are the result of an incessant process of "production, negotiation, adaptation" (Bourdin et al., 2006). Rules and the law bring about a separation between the legal and illegal actions, but these categories are defined and redefined, "updated" (Melé, 2009) by the stakeholders who interact over and in a space. With regard to the metro rail project in Delhi and the building-up of a regulatory framework, it is important to note the dominance of a special agency, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, acting under the central government.

For each phase of construction of the network, the DMRC receives a mandate from the central government to generate funds through its property development activities. The DMRC has a department mainly responsible for planning commercial spaces (premium brands, hotels, commercial complexes) located inside and in the immediate vicinity of the stations, and residential projects (like condominiums) developed on land originally granted for constructing depots. Only the DMRC selects the private developers and sets the lease terms.[1] The sale of development rights to developers leads to the production of multifunctional spaces delineated in the heart of urban space, with residential buildings, economic zones, commercial complexes near the depot and stations. Table 10.1 summarizes the capital raised from property development for each phase of implementation.

[1]The spaces within the stations are leased for a period of 3–4 years to private players and the external spaces are largely granted to property developers for periods ranging from 20 to 50 years, and 90 years for residential projects.

Table 10.1 Funding from property development and length of Delhi metro phases

Phase I (1995–2006, 65 km): 770 crores (7 % of the capital cost of the project)
Phase II (2006–2011, 128 km): 850 crores (4.35 % of the capital cost)
Phase III (2011–2016, 112 km): 1600 cores (4.5 % of the capital cost)

Source Fieldwork, DMRC, 2013

It shows that if in absolute terms the mandate (expressed in terms of percentage of the total investment cost of the metro) is less between phase I and phase III, the amounts to be raised are much more, as the investment cost increases. For phase 4 (2016–2021) the figures estimated are very high, about 10000 crores.[2] My analysis of DMRC's net income share reveals that between 2004 and 2012 real estate accounted for about 30 % of the total and traffic operation for about 51 %.

The rules and norms of the metro rail's financing instrument are different from those governing the operational structures of the transport component: property development activities do not enjoy exemption from certain permissions such as those required for change in land use, building rules or payment of land taxes. The adjustments and the changes in the rules applied to the property development activities are carried out within the perimeter of action of the megaproject decided at the central government level. First, I demonstrate that this perimeter within the city represents "a specific scene for negotiation" (Dubois, 2006) for a specialized agency under central government ministries, which assert its position over a delimited space and the use of an exceptional legal and regulatory framework. Secondly, I show that the real estate component of the megaproject is planned in a very technical manner, precisely like the transport component. Those aspects will jeopardize the management of the megaproject outcomes at a local scale.

Between 1999 and 2013, the property development activities of the DMRC were characterized by an unclear judicial and regulatory framework and the absence of tools, which could be easily mobilized by the engineers coming mainly from the Railways. Indeed, in 1999, the mandate to generate funds from property developments was not carried out concurrently with the setting up of a specific legal and regulatory framework negotiated and decided by the various authorities. In 2002, the Delhi Metro Railways Act which put the DMRC under the authority of the central government, dealt with the property development activities in a very general manner and corresponded to the logic of reaffirmation of the mandate given to the DMRC, but did not correspond to a political will to define a legal and regulatory framework (Bon, 2014). The process of legitimization of the instrument in case of conflicts and disagreements between the urban actors (and mediated by the Ministry of Urban Development at the level of the central government) put in place regulations in an ad hoc manner. The Master Plan 2021 prepared during the period 2007–2008, i.e. many years after the DMRC took up its first property development activities, defined the first technical parameters for these projects. The Master Plan was then amended to redefine the permissible floor area ratio

[2] B. Bon's interview with DMRC.

for the property development projects of the DMRC and the land use modified on a case to case basis. The DMRC engineers considered the property development projects as a secondary component which was added on to the operational structures. Three actions guide the planning of each real estate project: define the perimeter of the station and the depot, assess the land available after the operational structures are constructed and finally set up the parameters for the property development plans. These three actions are carried out in a space demarcated for the transport megaproject, with technical engineering knowledge adapted in an ad hoc manner to the constraints (e.g. Master Plan regulations, approvals to be obtained from other urban actors). The example of the Shastri Park project located on the banks of the river Yamuna underscores the specific way of planning the real estate component of the megaproject.

In November 1999, 65 ha of governmental land were granted to the DMRC for the construction of a depot and a station, without, however, defining or assessing the land required for property development activities. In the beginning of the 2000s, following a period of major financial constraints imposed by the funder,[3] the DMRC identified a 16 ha piece of land within the perimeter of the megaproject for launching a residential project which was the preferred type of property development as it generated important and immediate profits.[4] In 2001, a tender was floated by the DMRC, but no private real estate company responded. The reasons put forth[5] were the severe recession in property prices during that period,[6] and the reticence of the real estate developers for a project located directly on the banks of the river and in the vicinity of a residential area inhabited by very low income groups. The property development activities are described as compulsory programming due to the land available after demarcation of the operational structures, but on a site which, as the DMRC engineers were aware of, did not find much favour among the real estate companies and potential clients. In 2003, an engineer from the Property Division of the DMRC was in direct contact with a high ranking official from the department for industrial development of the Delhi government. The negotiations and exchanges termed as hushed, "behind closed doors" led to a proposal of an interest-free loan from the Delhi government to the DMRC such that it could directly undertake (i.e. without involving any private concessionaire) the construction of a business park for high tech companies (IT Park) at the site of residential project which did not have any takers. Thus today the project involves, apart from the infrastructure projects directly related to the metro, residential buildings and a training institute for the DMRC personnel, three other office

[3]For each construction phase of the network, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation granted a loan to the DMRC.

[4]An upfront payment is made by the private concessionaire to the DMRC for a period of 90 ans.

[5]B. Bon's interview with DMRC, Delhi, 2013.

[6]Between 1996 and 2003 property prices (sale and rent of property in the commercial as well as the residential sector) fell by 40–50 % as compared to prices in 1995 and 1996.

buildings leased to private companies with a capacity to cater to about 6000 persons and spread over an area of 6 ha. There is also an amusement park which is being developed. Figure 10.1 is a map of the Shastri Park project. Figure 10.2 shows a panoramic view of the completed construction.

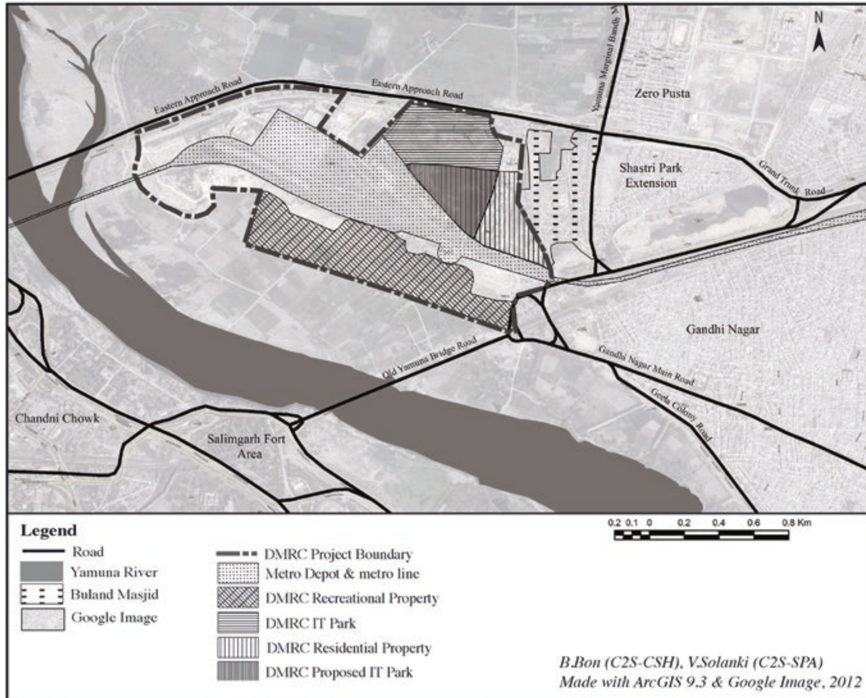

Fig. 10.1 Schematic map of the Shastri Park project (*Source* Previous publication by Bon and Solanki (2015), reproduced with permission)

Fig. 10.2 Panorama of the Shastri Park project. *Left* to *right* the station, the maintenance buildings, the formation centre, the IT Park, the residential component (*Source* Photograph by author)

The Shastri Park project shows clearly that the metro rail project enables a parastatal agency under the central government in charge of transport to exercise rights as land developer within a defined perimeter in Delhi. The issue in this process is that all the stages associated with the real estate component are decided within the DMRC without prior interaction with other urban actors and by mobilizing rules and legislation, which remain very general. It is important to note that the real estate component is executed in an ad hoc manner depending on a logic of a secondary evaluation of the land, then the financial logic behind the choice of the residential complex, as also the response time to constraints (response to a financial constraint at the city level, decision regarding another type of project after the failure of the first tender notice). This process leaves little space for negotiation while deciding on the expertise which will draw upon the local specificities of the areas demarcated for the land valuation projects. Significantly, the main consultant for the DMRC projects[7] added that these land valuation projects are based on knowledge and favour short term financial packages, in order to quickly respond to the financial imperatives and with the discipline and the managerial practices, and the knowledge of the Railways engineers of the DMRC organization in the backdrop. It is by placing the projector at the local level that forms of adjustments, redefinitions of the legal and illegal categories based on the specificities and resources of the urban space become visible.

10.3 The Rules Behind the Closed Doors of the Megaproject

Metro rail projects are implemented through higher levels of government in conjunction with specialized agencies and increasingly with private sector actors. Since 1999 the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has applied a model of land value capture. The entry of the DMRC in the real estate market in Delhi is fraught with consequences because land policy, management of land and master planning remain controlled by another parastatal agency under the central government, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) (see Chaps. 1 and 7). In this context it is very interesting to note that the proposals made by DMRC for changes in land uses, approvals of building controls, and other clearances have been customarily held up for more than 2–3 years by the DDA. Thus, the "turf wars" and rivalries between state agencies vying for influence over urban development appear clearly at the local scale, where real estate projects are subject to numerous blockages and delays. I demonstrate with the case of the Shastri Park project that these special agencies make a differentiated treatment of spaces, depending on the context and their own interests, adjust the rules and change the legal and illegal categories at

[7] Architect residing and working in Delhi. Interview with B. Bon (Delhi, 20 May 2013).

the local scale, through the project where metro rail infrastructure cohabits with real estate projects. The first important issue is that these changes by agencies acting under the central government enable other actors to give legitimacy to their own practices of by-passing laws for urban development. Secondly, the negotiations and contestations between actors around a delineated geographical space are still based on technical parameters without taking into account local urban issues, and this make it difficult to control in a democratic manner the implementation of megaprojects, where the opposition plays a very weak role in the decision making process.

I focus here on the role of the DMRC and DDA but several actors are involved in the Shastri Park project: government actors at the national level (such as the Ministry for Environment and Forests, Ministry for Urban Development and the Ministry for Tourism), non-governmental organizations involved in environmental protection, regulation committees under the Central government such as the SEZ (Special Economic Zone) Board of Approval, legal institutions such as the High Court of Delhi and the Supreme Court and finally environmental experts such as the Yamuna Standing Committee. However, the timeline of the project and the narratives of the stakeholders indicate that it is only the DDA, and not the relevant authorities of the Yamuna area and the organized civil society, which has a say in the implementation stages of the Shastri Park project. The numerous legal exemptions from established rules are facilitated thanks to the resources of the site where the megaproject exists, here in the environmental zone of the river Yamuna. The banks of the river Yamuna are a site targeted by the government agencies for large-scale projects. These natural spaces in the city have to deal with the process of privatization by the mega projects, admittedly through public infrastructures but some of the components also pertain to the promotion of private real estate projects (Gidwani and Baviskar, 2011). These are the spaces, which were earlier abandoned as it was a flood risk zone, occupied by low-income groups and was meant for ground water recharge. This zone became the target for megaprojects, which benefited from the legal decisions that were favourable to real estate projects in areas where previously no construction activity was allowed.

Table 10.2 shows the major events involving the DDA and the DMRC around the IT Park of the Shastri Park project.

The first point revealed by the timeline of the IT Shastri Park implemented by the DMRC is that other actors have given their consent to or are participating directly in the project and legitimize the position of the DMRC and its practice of not following the established rules, which appears to be arbitrary at the local level. Indeed, in 2005, the project was inaugurated with great fanfare and in the presence of the Chief Minister of Delhi. The fact that the DMRC undertook the construction of the business park without waiting for the change in land use, which came about only at the time of the inauguration of the first building, undeniably benefited from the political legitimacy acquired by the involvement of the government of Delhi. As for the SEZ Board, it approved the status of special economic zone for block 2 and block 3 of the business park whereas the building plans of block 3 were not approved by the DDA. Moreover, the DMRC circumvented the

Table 10.2 Timeline of the Shastri Park project

Dates	Events
1999	Concession of 40 ha of land to the DMRC for the purpose of a depot
2001	Tenders for residential development (16.4 ha) within the perimeter of the project, but no takers
2003	Interest-free loan from the Delhi government to the DMRC to build an IT Park
October 2003	Approval of the Yamuna Standing Committee for 6 ha IT Park but "No further developmental activities shall be taken up in the flood plains"[1]
November 2003	The DDA changed the land use for the transport component of the megaproject (from "River bed, Green" to "Transportation")
December 2003	Start of the construction of the IT Shastri Park block 1
March 2005	End of the construction of the block 1
April 2005	The DDA changed the land use for commercial activities for 6 ha within the perimeter of the project
April 2005	The Chief minister of Delhi inaugurated block 1
December 2005	Start of the construction of the IT Shastri Park block 2
June 2006	Request from the DMRC to the DDA for the extension of the IT Park from 6 to 12 ha
June 2006	Request from the DMRC to the DDA for land use change for 12 ha
January 2007	The Yamuna Standing Committee permitted the DMRC an increase of the IT Park from 6 to 12 ha but with the approval of the High Court of Delhi
March 2007	End of the construction of the block 2
May 2007	The SEZ Board approved the request of the extension of the IT Park
March 2008	The DMRC submitted the plan for IT Park block 3 to the DDA
June 2008	The DMRC started the construction of block 3
August 2008	The SEZ Board notified block 2 and block 3 of the IT Park as SEZ.
August 2008	The DDA rejected the plans of block 3

Source Fieldwork, Delhi, 2011–2013
[1]Yamuna Standing Committee Report, "Proposal to increase the size of IT Park at Shastri Park", 2003

process of obtaining permissions regarding the extension of the business park, by requesting beforehand the regulation committee to confer the status of SEZ for the estimated 12 ha of the business park whereas the extension plans (from 6 to 12 ha) were refused by the DDA.

The second point is that conflicts in the public sphere around the real estate component at the scale of the city, such as between the DDA and the DMRC between 2007 and 2009, have impacts at the local level where plans and procedures more or less formally approved by the actors are subsequently stalled, in spite of the construction of property development projects being at an advanced stage. Yet the stalling is not based on new studies, arguments or a change in the rationale regarding, for example, preservation of the river and the immediate or long-term risks for an environmentally sensitive area. To block the monopoly of the DMRC over the real estate component of the metro rail project, the DDA uses

regulatory tools (land use and floor area ratio) at the scale of each project. There is no space for negotiation between the actors, and experts intervene only to give approvals but not to deliver studies in the first stages of the project.

The last point is that these state agencies treat the illegalities exercised by them as issues of conflict, and this in time enables them to legitimize their own position for large-scale projects being planned in the river area. The change in land use from agricultural to public and semi-public for the Shastri Park project (which happens 4 years after the concession of the land to the DMRC) and for projects further south on the banks of the river allowed these agencies to gain legal provisions in their favour, by mobilizing political connections at the highest level and putting pressure on the legal authorities. The DDA is critical of the changes in land use by the DMRC on an ad hoc basis for property development projects where at times construction is already underway: the DMRC exerts strong pressure on the other actors, and does not wait for the notifications in the Master Plan.[8] However, at the local level, the DDA obtained a similar waiver, and redefined the legal and illegal categories, based on similar forms of political legitimization through experts' decisions and legal institutions. An emblematic example is the Commonwealth Games Village developed by the DDA on the Yamuna banks. At the beginning of the project, during the conceptualization phase, the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the Central government authorized only temporary structures for the Games Village. This decision was questioned by the DDA via a second appraisal conducted a few months later, which ultimately led to the change in the Ministry's position. Petitions were filed by NGOs before the Supreme Court, questioning the decision of the DDA. This decision was ultimately re-legitimized by the favourable decision given by the Supreme Court for non-temporary structures a few months before the Commonwealth Games, hence allowing the construction of a real estate project in the river zone. Significantly, the DDA's stand is criticized by the DMRC's engineers who consider it to be arbitrary. The flexibility of the categories "legal/illegal, authorized/unauthorized" echoes the analysis of Roy (2005), which shows that informality is not a feature restricted to the habitat of the poor, but might be also a characteristic of megaprojects in so far as they bypass regular planning practices.

These three points illustrate the power of non-elected bodies in urban land management in Delhi under the control of the central government. The confrontation of the urban actors at the local level over the real estate component remains decontextualized from the urban space, which appears to be paradoxical with the idea of adjustments of rules mobilizing the resources and the specificities of the land. Indeed, the state agencies such as the DDA and the DMRC draw on the specificities of the land in order to assert their position, change the rules, lay down a legal definition to the space (zoning of megaprojects in environmentally fragile zones), but not to adapt the megaproject to its urban environment, or to impart meaning to it in a specific urban space. For the DMRC, the law is a technical

[8]According to DDA planners (interview with B. Bon 2012 and 2013).

Fig. 10.3 Main gate of the IT Park (*Source* Photograph by author)

step to guide decisions and review the financial arrangements. Other urban actors negotiate with the DMRC by focusing on the building rules and the technical procedures. The external players intervene through these technical parameters which do not redefine the property development component in relation to its environment or to the urban issues, nor do they question, for example, the demand, the mobility, the local economies and the local impacts. The megaproject is a tool to assert control over space, and reinforces the power of the DMRC in its capacity to get legal exemptions and influence the legal regulatory procedures. In the dynamics between the megaproject, the rules and the relationship with the law, the articulation between the different scales is one of a power struggle. Figure 10.3 is a picture of the main gate of the IT Park.

10.4 The Rules Outside the Wall of the Megaproject

The metro and its instrument of land value capture are emblematic of technocratic governance, where critical decisions on urban development are taken outside elected bodies. The execution of the Shastri Park project is spread over a very long period with substantial direct impacts on the surrounding areas: change in land use, increasing cost of land, road improvements, land sinking and pollution (particularly water pollution). Meanwhile, the new infrastructure has protected the whole area from floods caused by the river Yamuna. These repository spaces are dense residential areas with varied land status. The level of per capita income is low, and the main economic activity is garment manufacturing.[9] The problems directly or indirectly linked to the Shastri Park project are not managed outside the

[9]The majority of jean manufacturing units are informal units and are located on the ground floor of dwellings.

perimeters of the project by the stakeholders. The stakeholders delegate the obligation of this management at the local scale to the elected politicians. The decision making process at the highest level and activation of rules at the local scale effectively exclude social issues, especially access to information, the management of risks and the direct impacts on those living outside the perimeter of the megaproject, and who are neither users of the property development projects nor of the metro. What are the recourses that the inhabitants living outside the perimeter of the megaproject can avail of? Are these governed by specific rules?

The forms of recourse of the inhabitants are linked to the formation of local political arenas that decide the rules for managing the problems arising from the megaproject but which only partially make up for the absence of stakeholders. The law is not mobilized as a legal tool but is used to establish and legitimize the positions of these local political figures. I shall talk about the role of two local politicians, two MLAs (members of the Legislative Assembly) who represent the north and south zones affected by the project. These elected members have the possibility to interact at various levels (at the metropolitan level and at the level of their constituency), as opposed to the local residents. The MLA of the south zone was the minister of Education and Transport in the Delhi government till 2013 and currently holds the position of the Delhi Congress Chief. As for the municipality and its representatives, they are the weak link in this space. The MLAs are very experienced, respected and influential, unlike the current municipal councillor who has very limited knowledge about the transport project and the local stakes involved such as the environmental risks. He has lost all credibility at the local level, does not have any specific training, whilst sharing the same political space as the MLAs.

The residential zones adjoining the Shastri Park project are unauthorized regularized colonies, i.e. residential areas which do not comply with the urban planning laws of the Delhi Master Plan and were regularized in 2012 (see Chap. 8).[10] The Buland Masjid colony located to the west of the project comprises a large vacant land belonging to the DDA and private agricultural lands on which houses came up gradually. A part of the colony, just behind the wall of the megaproject, is made up of a slum area. If the legal classification of zoning determines the arena of negotiation and interactions of the stakeholders within the perimeter of the megaproject, the political scene also requires an act of foundation which helps in strengthening the position of some actors, ensuring their legitimacy and their rights to deal with the problems of the megaproject. One of the first facts which indicate the new power relations and the intervention of the MLAs pertains to the drawing of the boundaries of the Shastri Park project and led to the mobilization of the local politicians. In 1999, the DMRC and the DDA included a part of the land occupied by a Hindu temple arguing that this was not a private land. The demolition of the temple walls resulted in violence with religious groups clashing

[10]The process of regularization, which confers a legal status to the colony, is expected to increase the value of plots and houses, provide access to bank loans for the residents, and should lead to the improvement of public infrastructure of the colony (Zimmer, 2012).

Fig. 10.4 The project in its urban environment and the land sinking area (*Source* Photograph by author)

with the police forces. The political response to the reorganization of space was quick: the Muslim MLA of the north zone of the project went on a hunger strike on the site as a mark of protest.[11] He called off the strike only when Sheila Dikshit, the Chief Minister of Delhi intervened and after the DMRC agreed to redraw the limits of the project. If the manner in which financial compensation is awarded remains vague,[12] this mobilization has undeniably thrust the MLA into the limelight as far as any DMRC projects in this area are concerned and thrust him into the role of a protector of the local residents. The initial stages of the megaproject, i.e. the land acquisition phase and the delimitation of the perimeter, were marked by great confusion due to the opacity of the programmes of the DMRC and that of the other authorities: the inhabitants of the colonies were afraid that their houses would be demolished because of their status and their geographical location (on the banks of the river, which, in principle, is a no construction zone), fears fed by regular visits by the DMRC engineers for field measurements. The MLA is quoted by the residents as the main spokesperson since then,[13] the one who has the information, who conducts meetings with the DMRC and who ensures that there would be no demolition. This highlights that the mobilization by the political figures brought to fore, but only for a short time, the claims and social questions not only at the local level but also at the city level (Figs. 10.4 and 10.5).

If this kind of mobilization happens only episodically, the rules *for managing problems pertaining to the megaproject are produced in an implicit manner* on a day-to-day basis, in relation with the organization of the local residents. The practices should be seen in the context of the local political cultures, illustrated here by the tactics of the *pradhan*s and the MLAs, and the exclusion of certain inhabitants.

[11]According to the MLA (B. Bon interview, August 2012).

[12]According to the Temple Guru (B. Bon interview, August 2012).

[13]Interviews conducted by B.Bon in residential areas adjacent to this megaproject (in 2011, 2012 and 2013).

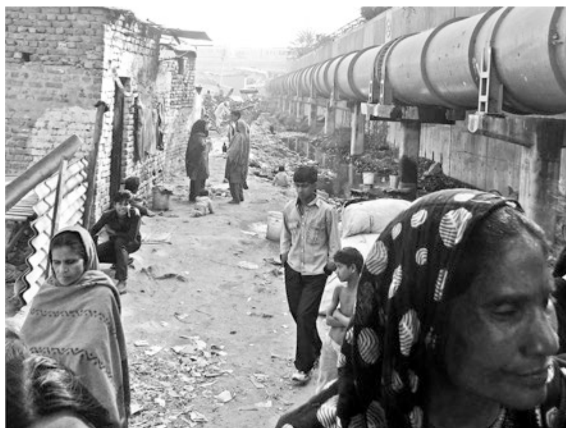

Fig. 10.5 Residents of the Buland Masjid are living in the immediate vicinity of the DMRC wall and the pipelines (*Source* Photograph by author)

Today, we observe a triangle of information comprising the MLA, the two local leaders of Buland Masjid known as the *pradhan*s, and the resident welfare association (RWA) as regards the circulation of information pertaining to the process of regularization of the colony, the extension of the roads leading to the project and the subsequent water pollution and land sinking. The two *pradhan*s have an economic capital more important as compared to the rest of the inhabitants and have grabbed the legitimacy of the political talk. The General Secretary and the President of the RWA are members of the same family (father and son). They are central to the process of regularization of the colony and are well connected to the DDA and the municipality because of the official status of the RWA. However, their authority and credibility among the inhabitants of the colony are lower than those of the two *pradhan*s. The resident's association does not have any office, so the paperwork that it does takes place in the one room house. It is in front of a jeans manufacturing unit belonging to one of the *pradhan*s that political exchanges take place: debates, exchange of information, meetings with the MLAs.[14] In this space (see Fig. 10.6) with very high social inequality, controlled uncertainty or speeches based on rumours are strategies deployed by those who have information about the project: it is to gain trust and respect, to strengthen one's position in preparation of elections and to protect one's alliances. The delegation of the management of the problems at the local scale takes place in this divided political landscape where different actors exercise power by withholding or sharing the different information that they have due to the position they hold; and the acquired power by the MLAs as they have the possibility to interact at different scales. At the scale of the city, during meetings with the different stakeholders, the arguments are put forth, the state of progress of the project is presented. There are thus

[14]Emma Tarlo (2000) uses the notion of "translation" while referring to the existence of several "intermediaries" at the level of residential colonies who act "professionally" to bridge the gap between urban society and political discourse.

Fig. 10.6 Residents sitting in front of the Pradhan's jeans manufacturing unit in Buland Masjid (*Source* Photograph by author)

three registers of information pertaining to the project: those transmitted selectively by the MLAs and disseminated by *pradhan*s; those held by the representatives of the residents' association, for example by virtue of their connections with the DDA; empirical knowledge of the slum dwellers who mostly lived where the project was implemented[15] and on a daily basis face the risks that the project entails. For example the water pipes laid down by the DDA for the megaproject pass through the slum: their installation has caused land sinking along the boundary wall and stagnant water bodies have formed under the pipelines and in the sunken parts. The slum dwellers report the indirect effects: proliferation of mosquitoes and snakes, water contamination, risk of children drowning. During the municipal as well as the assembly elections certain candidates seized upon the issue, promising to use part of their budget for land filling and lighting of the colony, and to compel the DDA to ensure maintenance of pipelines.

But these questions of planning and engineering are a part of the political agenda only at election time, and are the subject of political one-upmanship between the various parties. The elected representatives then intentionally spread uncertainties about the action of the DDA, the stakeholders concerned, and the budget allocation. At the local level, there is thus logic of withholding information,

[15]The megaproject was built on agricultural land. Most residents who came from villages of the state of Uttar Pradesh were employed as agricultural workers on the land occupied today by the megaproject; and now live in huts or in small one room house in the immediate proximity or against the wall of the megaproject.

dictated by the calculation of political interests of one or the other. It also shows that the "compartmentalization", which takes place within the urban space by defining the limits of the megaproject and the activation of the rules, also manifests itself within the residential colonies. There is a pragmatic sharing of knowledge and of political talk, shaped by the political legitimacy of each, the economic and cultural capital and the interpersonal relationships. This process, which is the basis for framing the legal remedies and rules, also results in the exclusion of the inhabitants who have been made the most vulnerable by the megaproject, those who are in an illegal settlement in the immediate vicinity of the wall of the megaproject where the impacts are most keenly felt. The megaproject and the rules shaped by political cultures, both at the scale of the city and at the local scale, are reshaping zones of uncertainty in a space with a complex organization.

10.5 Conclusion

The construction of the metro mobilizes an instrument of financing, whose regulatory and legal framework is not the same as that for the transport infrastructure. The major difference is that the other urban actors, i.e. the agencies in charge of urban policies or municipal authorities may intervene in the property development component of the megaproject. The interaction then occurs around rules, which is more a process of authorization, sanction and exemption around technical parameters, rather than a process of negotiation around urban issues raised by the particular implementation of this instrument. Behind the closed doors of the building sites where real estate projects are becoming junction points between the rail and the city, a state-led model is, however, imposed for effective decision making and to control private investments. This model reveals a never-ending state centralization as well as permanent professional framework that cannot easily be changed. They impose their ways of considering project management, skills and norms that are remaining in this case rooted in the Indian Railways.

The analysis has shown that at the local scale there are multiple adjustments; rules are bypassed and the categories of the legal and illegal are redefined in order to carry out the construction of the megaproject by the stakeholders in areas that "normally" do not allow such projects. These adjustments are part of how urban actors interact with each other, when compromises cannot be reached by a process of reflection and negotiation around the programming of the megaproject and its meaning in the urban space. In addition, the rules and legal remedies target different components of the megaproject, by disregarding the risks and the impacts of these megaprojects in urban areas. The social issue which is not dealt with at the city scale then falls to the local scale. This leads to two more questions. The first is that of "coherence" at the scale of the city when the megaprojects are not looked at in terms of institutional arrangement in the long run, their programmes remain opaque and local urban actors are not involved in the decision making process. The second is that of the tools and resources that can be mobilized by the actors at

different scales. The actors who are confined to the local scale of these megaprojects do not have the opportunity to reformulate at another scale the problems they face. So it does not allow them, unlike, for example central government agencies, to resort to other rules and tools to address them.

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Part IV
Gendered Mobility

Chapter 11
Housing, Spatial-Mobility and Paid Domestic Work in Millennial Delhi: Narratives of Women Domestic Workers

Sonal Sharma

11.1 Introduction

In the existing discourse on paid domestic work in India, various studies examine work relations and their role in transforming the geography of the intimate space of an employer's home into a site of power and control (Qayum and Ray, 2003). However, there is little in the existing scholarship that looks at the spatial connections between the activity of domestic work and the geography of the city. The increasing participation of urban women in paid domestic work and its interconnections with the urban processes are very well established—this chapter attempts to broaden the web of relations between the gendered occupation of paid domestic work and the spaces of the city. The attempt here is to demonstrate how places like gated neighbourhoods, working class housing settlements, public transport and toilets collectively shape the experience of women domestic workers and to explore the precise nature of the processes involved therein. For example, the chapter explores how the issue of housing for the urban poor crucially impacts the micro realities in paid domestic work in the context of provision of servant quarters by employers or in the case of eviction and resettlement of informal settlers.

The experiences of housing and urban space are not explored much in the existing ethnographic accounts of domestic work.[1] One common, generalizing observation has been that geographic proximity between middle-class neighbourhoods and "slums" has sustained the growth of domestic work. But imagining domestic

[1]Coelho et al. (2013) remains an exception in this regard, who explores the connections between housing for the urban poor and paid domestic work in Chennai.

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workers as urban poor living exclusively in slums in contemporary Delhi has serious implications for the theorization of the phenomenon. By moving "beyond the stereotypes of slums"[2] we can begin to see the range of possibilities through which urban poor try to negotiate the scarcity of housing.[3] In Delhi, the term "slum" can represent only one type of housing, namely the *jhuggi jhompri* clusters. Based on a survey, only slightly less than one-fourth of the total population of the national capital region lives in "planned colonies" while the rest lives in seven other types of settlements[4] with varying degrees of informality. Such a large majority of a city's population living in "non-planned" colonies hints at the complexities with which city dwellers inhabit the city space. Experience of citizenship can vary across these different types of settlements. For example, the dwellers of "Resettlement Colonies", "*Jhuggi Jhompri* Clusters" (JJCs),[5] "Unauthorized Colonies"[6] access basic services like water, electricity, roads, transport on a daily basis through various informal networks and everyday struggles (see Ramakrishnan, Sheikh and Banda in this volume).

There are various accounts which show how women's relation to space is subject to constant negotiation (see, for example, Phadke et al., 2011). There is abundant empirical evidence that demonstrates how spatiality not only determines women's mundane experiences in daily life but also has a significant impact on their work-related choices to the extent that a gendered pattern in economic geography emerges (see, for example, Hanson and Pratt, 1995). However, women's experience of city spaces can be further differentiated based on intersection of other identities, e.g. caste, class, race and religion. Shilpa Phadke et al.'s pioneering work on Mumbai demonstrates that all women generally negotiate the constraints the city imposes on their daily life. However, their strategies and ability to negotiate the city spaces vary across the diversity of social groups that they belong to. It is in this context that this chapter attempts to construct a gendered account of the city through an exploration of women domestic workers' experiences of spatial-mobility in relation to work, and the inherent vulnerabilities of class and gender therein. While the narratives of "mobility" highlight the gendered experience of the city (see also Chap. 12), the issue of "housing" allows us to ground these narratives in the politics of class that characterizes the millennial city. Such an exploration of housing

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[2]The introduction of the journal *Environment and Urbanization 1*(2), which discusses the need to move beyond the "slums" because of the multiple types of housing settlements for the poor that exist across the globe. For details, see *Environment and Urbanization* (1989).

[3]One figure representative of this scarcity is reported by the Economic Survey of Delhi, 2012–13. According to the survey, the city has a shortage of 1.65 lakh "residential houses"(p. 197).

[4]Delhi Economic Survey, 2008–09 cited in Bhan (2013). The other seven types of settlements include: (1) Rural villages; (2) Urban villages; (3) Resettlement colonies; (4) Unauthorized colonies (5) Regularized unauthorized colonies, (6) Slum designated areas, and; (7) Jhuggi Jhompri Clusters (JJCs).

[5]JJCs are what are usually known as "slums", which are characterized by fragile housing structures and poverty (for details see, for example, Bhan, 2009).

[6]These three categories are out of the eight official types all the human settlements in Delhi are classified into. The three types of colonies are inhabited mostly by the working class in the city.

and mobility, through the lens of gender and class, unveil how the two constitute domestic work relations. In the contemporary discourse on domestic work, the vulnerabilities of domestic workers have overwhelmingly been attributed to the "private" nature of their workplace. This chapter, while not disagreeing with this crucial understanding, unpacks these vulnerabilities as also emanating from the larger socio-economic inequalities constituting the urban fabric of Delhi. By looking at individual experiences of domestic work together with wider entitlement issues, this chapter dislocates the power that produces vulnerability for domestic workers from the immediate place of work and locates it at multiple sites in the city.

11.2 Paid Domestic Work in India: A Context

Paid domestic work has expanded exponentially in India over the past few decades (Ray, 2000; Neetha, 2004). The growth in the sector is attributed to push factors including the agrarian crisis, migration, loss of industrial jobs and increasing informality. In addition, growing urbanization alongside the expansion of the urban middle class in India has fuelled the demand for paid domestic work. In fact, domestic help is understood to be so intrinsic to Indian middle class life that some scholars identify it as one of the defining features of the class (Mahapatra, 2009; Ray and Qayum, 2010). Over the past few decades, the sector has not just grown in size, but has changed in composition as well. The government figures from the late 1970s onwards have captured the increasing participation of women in domestic work (Ray, 2000; Neetha, 2004). As per the statistics of the NSSO (2004–05), there are 4.75 million domestic workers in India, of which 3 million are "women in urban areas".[7] It has been claimed that these figures are a gross underrepresentation of the magnitude of paid domestic work in the country.[8] Increasing participation of women in the sector is attributed to feminization of urban poverty and prevalence of the part-time arrangement in the sector that allows poor urban women to do paid work in others' homes while they also take care of their own homes (Neetha, 2009).

The introduction of neoliberal reforms beginning in the 1990s has turned Indian cities into sites of complex politics along the lines of class and other distinctions. One of the ways in which class politics in India has unfolded is in conflicts over scarce urban space (Fernandes and Heller, 2006), and Delhi is no exception. Over

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[7]Minister of State of Labour and Employment in a response to question number 649 on 9 December 2013, asked in Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Indian parliament), last accessed on 7 June 2015, link: http://labour.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/Parliament/LS%20USQ%20649.pdf.

[8]ILO in its report on domestic workers worldwide notes the same and mentions that the estimates for India vary between 2.5 and 90 million. The figure of 90 million is a widely cited figure, however, in the light of the other figures like total labour force participation by women in the country, the figure comes across as an unrealistic one. For details see *"Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection" (2013).*

the past decade, Delhi's goal of becoming a "world city" has been manifest in intense political struggle over urban spaces and projecting the urban poor as the "encroacher" to the space (Baviskar, 2011) guided by an ideology "rule[d] by aesthetics" (Ghertner, 2015), consumption and hygiene (Bhan, 2009; Brosius, 2013; Baviskar, 2003). In Delhi, this contestation over space—imagination of its legitimate usage and aesthetics being key elements—has unfolded in hostility towards the urban poor, resulting in the eviction of a number of informal and poor settlements across the city (See Chaps. 4–6 in this volume).

Despite all the hostile campaigns to push the poor away from the city, the middle class and the city as a whole depend on the working-poor for their survival. The working-poor as security guards, hawkers, domestic workers among other service providers sustain the privilege and status of the middle class in the city. It is not a coincidence that every study that lists the occupations for women living in the poor and informal settlements of Delhi includes paid domestic work as a major source of livelihood for these women. With the increasing antagonistic politics and socio-spatial segregation, domestic work relation is one of the ways through which the rich and the poor in Delhi interact with each other. It is an activity through which spaces that are not otherwise accessible to the poor become so, at least physically. However, it is much the same notion of space—in which the poor are encroachers on space that the middle class believes to be its own—that runs beneath the dynamics of the domestic worker–employer relationship and shapes the everyday experience of domestic workers in the city.

The chapter draws upon an original study that consisted of twenty in-depth interviews and three focus group discussions with women domestic workers from different parts of the city. The study primarily focused on part-time workers' experience of workplace, which is their employers' home. Part-time domestic workers, who work in more than one household,[9] are a different case to study as they have multiple workplaces to work in on a single working-day. The study attempted to understand their access to basic amenities and relationship with their employers given that they spend relatively less time at one workplace. However, full-time and live-in workers were also interviewed, as during the course of my fieldwork I realized that they also had interesting perspectives to offer on the part-time arrangement. The diversity of workers enabled me to capture perspectives contrasting different arrangements. Workers were selected in such a way that there was a diversity based on social identities such as caste and religion since these identities, as the existing scholarship shows, shape domestic workers' experience of work. Domestic work is generally used as an umbrella term to describe a wide range of tasks that are performed daily within and around the household. Some of the subcategories under "domestic worker" include gardener, driver, security guard, maid,

[9]The usage of term "part-time" does not necessarily mean that the workers spend only a small fraction of their day working. They are part-timers for an individual employer who may employ them for a specific task and the workers may have many such employers. Though workers themselves may be spending as much as a full-time worker spends on a usual working-day.

nanny and cook. These categories are not gender neutral and reflect gendered patterns and social hierarchies.[10] The workers in my study were mostly cooks and maids, performing tasks such as cooking, chopping vegetables, doing dishes, sweeping, mopping, dusting, washing clothes and cleaning toilets.

Workers were approached through two types of networks. First, some employers were approached using my personal contacts and in turn they introduced me to their workers. These interviews with the workers were conducted at the employers' homes (i.e. the workers' workplace) in the employers' absence, except in one case. Second, two organizations working on the issue of domestic work, Domestic Workers Forum and Jagori, were approached to introduce me to their groups of workers. In addition, I relied on field notes documenting interactions with several other workers and employers, observations in employers' homes, workers' housing settlements and gated communities.

11.3 Home, Paid Work and the City

In general, women are tied to the space of the home, or "spatially embedded" in the home, because of the everyday reproduction of the household that is their primary socially assigned task (Massey, 1994; Herod, 2003). In this section, I discuss the narratives of domestic workers to explore, on the one hand, their embeddedness in their domestic reproductive role, and, on the other hand, their contingent experience of paid domestic work, which happens outside their own home. Concurrently, these stories are also an exploration of the workers' negotiation of the city space through their movements, perceptions and discursive practices. For women, the decision to take up paid work outside the home involves crossing social boundaries (of marriage and family)—which are internalized and based on social location—in addition to crossing the material boundaries of home and locality.

Stories of taking up paid work are in many cases also ones of juggling home and workplace. Lalti (45) had to start working because her husband fell sick and could no longer support the family. At one point, she started working in a factory, but her husband, who was then bedridden, asked her to continue doing domestic work as it was near their home and allowed her to look after their children. In her initial days of part-time domestic work, Lalti would go to her first workplace as early as 6 a.m. and be back home by 7 a.m. From 7 until 8, she would do her household work, including sending her children to school, and after finishing all this, she would go back to work in other homes. Around 10 a.m., she would come home and do household work again. Lalti used to complete 5 h-long shifts each day. Like Lalti, other women confirmed that they took up part-time work because of its flexibility, facilitated by the geographic proximity of the workplace. Bano (60), who moved to

[10]Neetha (2009) while analysing the official national figures on the number of domestic workers mentions that men are more likely to be drivers and guards than cooks and house servants.

Delhi from Assam[11] after her husband's death, shared that there was nobody to look after her children when she started working. She would lock them inside the house and go to work in the nearby neighbourhood. In the afternoon, she would come back to feed her children before she went back for a second shift.

Financial distress remains a major push factor for workers taking up domestic work. Lalti and many others in this study look at their work as a result of helplessness. This reflects the widespread sense that this kind of work is a last resort, a feeling derivative of the hegemonic idea of domesticity, according to which normally women should not work outside the home and should be financially cared for by their husbands. Bhagwati (60), who started working as a maid when her husband became extremely ill, told me, "*apne ghar se bahar jaana kise acchha lagta hai?"* (Who likes to go out of home?) She also had to hide the fact that she was a domestic worker from the extended family, because she feared they would look down on her for working in another home. When performed by a woman in her own household space for her own family, domestic work produces "respectability" (Ray, 2000), but the same work when performed as labour in someone else's home may cause shame.

Change of socio-spatial location—from one's own home to others'—changes the meaning and worth of the work significantly. Workers talked about the shame in working in others' home and how people would deplore that they were working as a maid in others' homes. Meenu (45) broke down into tears while sharing the circumstances under which she began as a domestic worker. She was five years old when she lost her father and consequently stopped going to school. After that she started travelling with her mother from their home at Bhoomiheen Camp in Gobindpuri to her job as a domestic worker in C. R. Park. The two areas are very close to each other, which allowed Meenu's mother to not only continue working but also to take her child (Meenu) along. At the age of ten, she started work as a live-in maid in the same area. Meenu's mother married her off at fourteen. She thought this would mean the end of domestic work outside home: "I used to think that I would not have to work after my marriage. Actually, my mother married me off with the same hope. But I had to start working again [as a domestic worker] because there were financial problems in my family".

Meenu's narrative embodies an idealized femininity that entails being at home and being taken care of financially while committing to the household work of one's own home.[12] However, the compulsion to do paid work and to go out of the home unsettles this ideal. It is the unsettling of hegemonic gender norms that some, like Bhagwati, negotiate by hiding the reality of their work. Others use the rhetoric of *majboori* (helplessness) to deal with the shame and embarrassment[13] that marked, to varying degrees—based on caste, religion, age and marital

[11]Assam is a state in the north-eastern India. It is approximately 2000 km from Delhi.

[12]This is similar to Raka Ray's (2000) observation of subaltern femininities and notions among women domestic workers in Kolkata.

[13]Pande (2010), in the context of how commercial surrogate mothers negotiate the stigma of surrogacy, observes that women gestational surrogates constantly downplay their agency in the choice of their work by attributing it to their helplessness and poverty.

status—the narratives I heard. Further, while geographic proximity allows women workers to do both paid and unpaid work, they constantly struggle to balance the home and workplace, a physically and psychologically strenuous task.

The constant reference to *majboori* shows the low regard that domestic workers themselves have for this work, a perception shaped by their sense of what the appropriate scaling of female labour is—one's own home. In addition, the stigma associated with paid domestic work due to its connections with caste and servility makes them see themselves as inferior beings. Looking at this aspect of work is essential as it shows workers' sense of their own status in the society, and an individual's experience of spaces is mediated by their location in a social hierarchy (Bondi and Davidson, 2005; Khan, 2007). The prevalence of practices of caste is a defining element of domestic work relations in contemporary India (Raghuram, 2001; Froystad, 2003; and others). Women, particularly those from non-Dalit castes, looked at the idea of doing the household work in someone else's home as derogatory, primarily because some of the tasks they were performing as domestic workers were lower in terms of caste occupations than their own caste.[14] Not being able to tell relatives, in-laws or people back in the village about their work was not unusual. One observation that merits mention in this context is that the city as a space also gives anonymity and "freedom" to these women to do this work in spite of its reported stigmatized nature. This would not have been possible for many of them burdened by the practice of caste and status. Had they been in their village, they could have faced social boycott by their caste community—"*hukka pani band kar dete hain*" (the community ends social and economic ties [if it is found someone works as a domestic worker]).

In addition, concerns of family honour on the part of male members in the family (mostly husbands) severely constrain choices. Before they took up domestic work, many of the women had the option to do jobs like segregating vegetables in wholesale markets, cleaning offices, factory labour and so on. Although the women themselves were not particularly afraid of these workplaces, their husbands decided they were unsafe and forbade them from taking the jobs. The women suggested that their husbands were anxious about the increased interaction with strangers these relatively public workplaces would lead to. Husbands were also angered by women's long commutes, doubting their character/loyalty, when their commutes kept them out of the house after dark. These quarrels often resulted in women leaving the jobs to do domestic work that allowed them to return relatively early. Availability of domestic work within walking distance and in part-time arrangement allows women domestic workers to manoeuvre social control on spatial movement in addition to managing both paid and unpaid work. Kalawati (60) here said how she managed to work when the earnings of her husband alone were not enough to run the family but he still did not want her to work outside: "In the morning, he would leave for his work, after that I used to come

[14]The findings of the larger study confirm the association of domestic labour with shame and stigma. There are narratives which offer insight about workers' notion of the work. However, discussing those narratives is beyond the scope of this chapter.

out for work by making some excuse. Sometimes taking a bag with me and pretending to be going to the market for buying vegetables. In that duration, I would do the dishes in two houses. It did not take much time to do dishes in those two houses".

While the need to balance paid and unpaid work is an important factor in women's labour market choices, the narratives in my study add another layer of "spatial constraint", hinting at the link between women's familiarity with places and work. In a focus group discussion held in Taimoor Nagar, an informal housing settlement along a drain in the South-East of Delhi, women shared that the only place they knew in the city was their own housing settlement and the adjoining neighbourhoods where they were working, most of which were within 2–3 km of their homes. Anand and Tiwari (2006) note that in Delhi poor women's movements tend to be very local, usually within the radius of a few kilometres. Usually, these distances are walkable and this remains true even for their commuting patterns for work (Anand and Tiwari, 2006). The narratives show that women workers' geography of everyday life is very small and fairly local in nature. Kala, a mother of two teenage children, has been in Delhi for more than 15 years and started work in the housing societies of Mayur Vihar area of Delhi 3 years ago. Kala lives in Trilokpuri, an old resettlement colony, almost 3 km away from the area where she works. She recalls how one day, one of the women from her settlement suggested that she take a shortcut in her daily commute, but doing so, she lost her way:

> Once I lost my way [while returning from work] … [and] started crying in panic. I used to come to work through one way and go back through the same route … [that day] I kept walking around the area in an effort to find my way back. Then I happened to see a man, who was also from Trilokpuri [the place where she lives]. He asked me what was happening as I had already passed through that area thrice. He said he was going home to have lunch. I told him that I was also on my way back home after work. Then he dropped me home on his bicycle. After reaching home, I told him that I had lost my way and urged him not to share it with anybody.

Losing her way heightened Kala's sense of vulnerability in an unknown place. This particular experience shows how spaces can become threatening when women lose a sense of familiarity with a space. Such experiences can make women "retreat to the perceived safety of their homes, whose walls serve to reinforce their own weakened boundaries and fragile sense of identity" (Bondi and Davidson, 2005). In general, most of these women have explored the city very little, even if they have lived in it for long time. It is women's lack of socialization with public spaces and embeddedness in the space of the home and family that explains such experiences of alienation with the city. In addition, the narratives also demonstrate how the choice to work is deeply embedded in space. What also emerges is the fact that women workers do not only face constraints passively but they also try to manoeuvre them. In the next section, I examine some of the ways through which women domestic workers attempted to do so.

11.4 Manoeuvring Fears and Scarcity of Housing: Case of the Servant Quarters

Women interviewed as part of this study lived in urban villages, resettlement colonies and servant quarters within middle-class gated colonies. With the scarcity of space in India's cities, having live-in workers has become rare but has not disappeared altogether. It is still common for many government colonies to have servant quarters attached to senior bureaucrats' residences, of which there are many in Delhi. However, this arrangement is not confined to government colonies; many upper-class private colonies have similar arrangements.

The arrangement of servant quarters in Delhi, I argue, is not just about the convenience of the employers but also an example of how women domestic workers, as urban poor, try to negotiate the scarcity of affordable quality housing in the city also in their attempt to overcome the constraints pertaining to spatial-mobility.

My sample included several workers who were either living in servant quarters or had lived in one at some point. Their narratives reflect a complex role such quarters play in a worker's life, as both a valuable benefit and a limiting force. Maria, a migrant from Jharkhand, was one of the workers living in servant quarters. She had been working for her present employer for 7 years, initially as a full-time, live-out worker. She used to commute a distance of 8 km from Okhla, her place of residence, to Defence Colony, where her employers lived. She justified her choice of moving into the servant quarters saying that she used to go back home around eight, travelling by bus in a supposedly unsafe area. Also, her daughter was growing up and Maria was concerned about her safety in that area. So, she just accepted the facility of the servant quarters when her employer made the offer. However, Maria also acknowledged that ever since she had moved in with the employer, who lived in a gated colony, her ability to bargain for better wages had gone down: "…[Every time I ask for a raise] madam says 'I have given you accommodation in such a good area. That quarter itself is worth a lot of money' ". While moving into her employer's house reduced Maria's commuting time and costs, it also gave the employer more control through constant surveillance and power over Maria, as she was at her beck and call throughout the day.[15] By moving in with the employer, Maria rid herself of the vulnerability that the city had imposed on her as a woman, while simultaneously making herself more vulnerable to her employer as a worker. Hanson and Pratt (1995) describe the act of navigating the constraint of distance as a kind of "geographic manoeuvring". I argue that women domestic workers' choices to move in with employers represent certain forms of spatial manoeuvring, which are much more nuanced than what

[15]Control over space has been identified as key to any kind of social control (Henri Lefbvre paraphrased in Qayum and Ray, 2003). In domestic work relations, "live-in" arrangement has been seen as one which enhances employers' control over the workers (Ray and Qayum, 2010). This is something which comes out in the autographical account of Halder and Butalia (2006), who herself is a domestic worker in Delhi.

Hanson and Pratt's analysis captures, as some narratives in the following section will show.

Mala, a mother of four adolescent daughters, attributes her decision to live in a gated colony to the perceived safety such colonies have in opposition to all other kinds of residential areas. She earlier used to live in Mehrauli, an urban village, but she left that area because she did not find it safe for herself and her daughters. Mala finds the current work arrangement exploitative and she is susceptible to eviction without any notice. She finds the arrangement exploitative because workers are on call at all points of time, simply because they live next door. Also, the locality in which she lives, employers' referrals play an important role in finding work. She shared that if a worker left work from a particular household at her own will, finding a new household in the same locality would be difficult, as the new employer would need a referral and workers leaving work on their own were usually not appreciated by employers, she explained. It is in this context that workers explained the nature of the power employers had over them. However, Mala justifies the choice in the light of the fact that it is very expensive to find a place to live in general and a safe place to live with young daughters in particular.

Though affordability remains a key reason why workers want to live in "free" accommodation provided by an employer, the choice is significantly shaped by the women workers' notions of safety in different types of neighbourhoods. However, it is important to remember that "safety" for a woman is not just about protection from sexual violence but also about honour (Phadke et al., 2011), which is seen to be harmed via local rumours and gossip about her "character" (Donner, 2006). Shyamonisha, a resident of Mukundpur, a working class and unauthorized colony, shared that she did not like living in the colony because its environment was not good—"*mahaul kharab hai"*. According to her, people in the area gossip about her character because she dressed up well like "*kothiwale*"[16] (rich people). She attributed her lifestyle (which does not go well with the socio-cultural norms of the area) to the time spent working as a maid in the middle-class neighbourhoods. She found the environment of middle-class colonies "liberating" where people did not judge her for the way she dressed up. On the other hand, she regarded the atmosphere of Mukundpur as "unsafe". By unsafe, she referred to situations in which people, both men and women, passed remarks on her way of dressing and gossiping about her working outside home. "People are not good here. If you go out they keep staring at you", she said. While she portrayed a rosy picture of her experiences of working and living in middle-class neighbourhoods as a maid, she also shared, in a passing comment, that these residential campuses had strict norms regarding working class people who lived there. Expressing her sense of loss of a good housing in a "good" neighbourhood she said:

> I feel like going back … but I cannot live there with grown up kids—nobody will hire me. Women [domestic workers] whose kids grow up in such neighbourhoods are removed from the job. Women with young kids are retained and preferred … perhaps, since [grown up]

[16]A colloquial Hindi term used by workers to refer to the class of employers. The term literally means people with big houses.

> girls and boys start having affair…. At one point, the restrictions had become so stringent that people [from servant quarters] could not even gather outside and have a casual chat.

Workers who decided to move in with their employer shared mixed feelings, acutely aware of the trade-off between the "freedom" of living independently and the "safety" and "good environment" of middle-class neighbourhoods. Living with an employer gave him or her excessive control, as Waldrop's (2000) ethnography of Golf Link area shows, wherein some house owners of the neighbourhood felt entitled to command working class people in the area, whether they were employed by them or not, to work for them. As one worker contrasting live-out arrangement with live-in explained to me, "It is better to work as a live-out worker, because in this arrangement we come back home. If tomorrow I feel like bunking the work, I can do that. Those who work as live-in servants, have no option but to work". While moving in with an employer is certainly an act of "manoeuvring" the city—overcoming the distance of commute and the corresponding constraints—such manoeuvring has its price: workers are more dependent on and vulnerable to employers.

11.5 Spatial Stickiness of Networks: A Case of Eviction and Resettlement

Delhi's vision to become a world-class city has been insidious for the survival of various groups that do not fit into this narrow aesthetic. In the name of environmental and aesthetic concerns, middle-class activists have moved to claim more space in the city over the past two decades (Baviskar, 2011). Eviction and relocation of the inhabitants of informal settlements from the banks of the Yamuna river (Menon-Sen and Bhan, 2008), relocation of industries from the city to the peripheries of the city (Ahmed, 2013; Baviskar, 2011), and the ban on cycle rickshaws, though temporary, in Chandni Chowk area have all redefined the urban poor's relation with the city and their livelihoods.

For part-time domestic workers, displacement and resettlement in Delhi have not only increased the time and money spent on travel between home and work,[17] it also made their own, unpaid household work much more challenging (Baviskar, 2009; see Chap. 6 in this volume). After being relocated, Bano had to leave all of her former employers in Lajpat Nagar and East of Kailash as the earnings from the domestic work were not enough to offset the increased travel expenditure from Madanpur Khadar, a resettlement colony. Bano asked the employers to raise her wages in light of the change, but they refused.

[17] Menon-Sen and Bhan (2008) in their study of Bawana resettlement notice that in case of part-time domestic workers the only option was to go back to their old middle-class neighbourhoods as there was no middle-class colony near the resettlement colony at least within 10 km.

Madanpur Khadar (Khadar hereafter) came up as a resettlement colony in the background of beautifying/recreating the city for the Commonwealth Games held in 2010. The first group of people were resettled in Khadar in 2004. The settlement is located in the bed of river Yamuna[18] in south-east end of the city limits. Most of the households that were relocated here were from the informal settlements, i.e. *jhuggi jhompri* clusters, from different parts of south Delhi. In interviews, workers reported that they were relocated from their place of residence, some of which were as much as 20 km away.

To simply look at the change in commuting distance that results from relocation, however, as the only outcome is to miss some crucial elements of the urban space. Until very recently, the only way to get to the resettlement colony was by an informal private transport network of vehicles called RTV[19] (road travel vehicle), which were usually over-crowded round the clock with a capacity of 15–20 passengers. It was not unusual to see RTVs carrying 35–40 people. Early morning, the first few trips of RTVs are especially used by domestic workers. During my own experience of travelling by these vehicles, I learnt that the driver did not start the trip before the bus was fairly crowded and moreover could stop the bus for long durations at any point to pick up more passengers and thus the journey could be unduly long. Workers often arrived late at their workplace because of this, which resulted in conflicts with employers, sometimes even leading to them losing their jobs. Meenu shares how the locally run RTV service impacts her everyday work experience:

> It has become a routine; I do not get *gaadi* (RTV) from here and [then] I do not reach there [workplace] on time, and [as a result,] there is a quarrel every day. I also told [the employer] to hire someone else. Public transport is a serious problem in our Khadar. At present, there are six *gaadi*s running and in those six too, they close the door [after certain number of passengers have got into the *gaadi*] and do not open it. Then, how will I go? [My facilitator tells me that they have started closing the door after an accident recently in which a woman died by falling off the vehicle]. Even today, one woman fell off the vehicle and lost some of her teeth. People run after the *gaadi*.

The poorly run informal RTV service remains the key mode of transport for the residents of Khadar (see Fig. 11.1). And, examining the domestic workers' experience of travelling by these RTVs highlights the fact that the relocation has increased the physical distance to work, but the poor quality of informally provided transport and near absence of state-run public transport enhances this physical distance further. This has constraining effects particularly when it comes to women workers, as they juggle with the pressures to be back home early and reach their workplaces on time.

[18]Yamuna is a drying river. During the monsoons (raining months) the water level in the river increases and causes flood in the areas around its banks. Khadar is one such area that is impacted by the flood in Yamuna.

[19]Originally, these vehicles were introduced for transport in rural areas and that is why initially RTV stood for "rural" travel vehicle. But with the expanding usage of the vehicle in urban areas, the name was changed to "road" travel vehicle.

Fig. 11.1 An RTV leaving from Madanpur Khadar for Nehru place. *Source* Photo by Shahana Sheikh

In this case, the resettlement has also intensified some of the challenges that often constrain women's mobility-related decisions across city spaces. For example, access to a toilet—which is always negotiated—has been an experience that has changed tremendously ever since the people have been relocated. Employers' refusal to allow workers the use of their private toilet is fairly routine[20] and is part of a broader strategy to segregate household resources like utensils, food, dining area among others (See, for example, Dickey, 2000a). In my sample, workers had diverse experiences as far as the access to toilet was concerned: some used the same toilets as their employers, while others either used separate toilets or had no access to toilets at all. Workers from Khadar explained that before relocation, their workplaces were close to homes, usually within 1 or 2 km, and thus they could always come back home for using toilets.

In cases where toilets are inaccessible at worksites, the distance enforced by resettlement requires workers to strategize differently. Not drinking "too much" water was one of these strategies, according to some workers. Rajeshwari, who works in Sarojini Nagar, uses the toilet before leaving for work and then after returning home. Over time, some employers have built separate toilets for workers on their terraces in acknowledgement of the longer distances that have to be travelled for work post-relocation. The struggles around access to toilets can become a marker of the working class women's "unwantedness in the city"[21] and the lack of public toilets, in the light of employers' inaccessible private toilet, becomes an everyday reminder of that. Delhi's poor civic culture for public toilet exacerbates the vulnerabilities of women domestic workers. A High Court Committee during an inspection in 2007 found that out of 3192 public urinals in the city, only 132 were for women (Sheikh, 2009) and it is in the light of facts like this that the perspective on women domestic workers' spatial-mobility and the challenges associated with it can be further nuanced. The question then is: Why cannot workers find work close to their

[20]See, for example (Vasanthi, 2011), in which the author mentions the issue of inaccessibility of toilets as one of the findings of a study conducted in Hyderabad.

[21]See the section on 'peeing' in (Phadke et al., 2011) where the author narrates women's experience of navigating the city in the absence of adequate provision of urinals.

homes? Why do they travel if it is so strenuous? In the case of Madanpur Khadar, there are a few middle-class neighbourhoods within a range of 3 or 4 km where these workers can find work and some workers have started working there. However, for a large number this is still not a possibility because of lack of new networks.

In Delhi, when domestic workers get relocated to far-off areas, they often continue working in their old neighbourhoods simply because they have networks in a particular locality (see, for example, Ramakrishnan in Chap. 4 this volume). Having networks in a particular place allows domestic workers to signal that they can be trusted for two reasons: (1) if one has a past record of crimes like theft, then one cannot last long in a particular neighbourhood, and (2) in case, a potential employer wants to verify one's past record, he/she can do so by contacting other workers and employers in that locality. Usually, for part-time domestic workers, references from an employing household play a major role in finding work in new households. While such references are important to signal workers' quality of services, they are also indispensable in signalling their trustworthiness in the light of the widespread image of domestic workers as potential criminals and a source of threat for their employers (Waldrop, 2000).

Jummi, who was relocated to Khadar (almost 19 km away from her original place of work/residence), explained the significance of networks due to which she continued working in her old neighbourhood:

> I leave for work at 4.30 am. Only [if] I leave early then will I get a seat [in RTV]. If I start late then I will not get a place to sit [and] I will have to travel standing [throughout the way]. [There,] we have responsibility. I have *sanaagat* there. Now, If I go to a new colony, I will not have *sanaagat* there…

She further explained the meaning of '*sanaagat*' in the following words:

> …By *sanaagat* I mean …you will not let any stranger enter your home. There are all kinds of valuable objects lying there [in the employer's home] … there are people [employers] who have jobs [working couples … they leave the key to their apartment with the neighbours. I take the key and perform the tasks, and give the key back to neighbours. Like sometimes, *maalik* [employers] are sitting outside in the sun [in winter] and we are working inside the home—this is called trust. If the employers' valuable objects start going missing, then who will let me enter their home?

In domestic work, networks are also a kind of investment in goodwill, as Jummi's narrative demonstrates. Goodwill, which allows workers to access perks like small loans, gifts, jobs for male family members and money for children's education, is primarily based on trust that one earns by working in a locality over several years. This narrative makes more sense in the light of the larger politics of fear of and hostility towards the urban poor. The representation of domestic workers as a threat to employers in the light of the crimes committed by some workers, accentuates the need for networks and goodwill (Matilla, 2011). The ease of entry can be confined to certain households in a locality and cannot be infinite in the sense one cannot work in any neighbourhood one wishes to. Moving so far away puts these women at the risk of losing the neighbourhoods wherein they have networks. And loss of the network entails loss of a goodwill earned over many years

by working in particular neighbourhoods. Thus, workers have to constantly weigh the cost and benefits of losing old neighbourhood and finding new ones.

11.6 Conclusion

Ray and Qayum (2010) through their provocative writing on domestic work relations in Kolkata, called the "culture of servitude", draw our attention to place-specific nature in which domestic work relations are organized and embedded. According to them, every place has its own ideologies, norms, spatial and historical features that characterize domestic work relations. The narratives presented in this study provide us insights into a set of issues highlighting the place-specific characteristics of domestic work relations in Delhi from one set of women domestic workers' point of view. The abundant scholarship (e.g. Froystad, 2003; Ray, 2000 and Dickey, 2000b) on domestic work in India shows the vulnerable position of domestic work in relation to their employers. The narratives here allow us to go beyond the generic vulnerability of domestic workers in relation to their employers and expose us to larger interconnections that enhance and feed into these vulnerabilities. Examination of why domestic work is chosen as a possible livelihood option tells us that there is a complex set of reasons, which shapes these choices. However, the complexity is overshadowed by one common thread across all the narratives, which show how social and spatial boundaries actively produce this work as a "choice". The workers' desire to live in middle-class neighbourhoods in servant quarters shows how such arrangements allow for breaching the spatial segregation and accessing "safety", though with an escalated level of "unfreedom" and dependency on the employers. Another context which shows heightened dependency of workers on employers is the case of eviction and resettlement, wherein due to past networks workers continue being dependent on old neighbourhoods, which are now far off, simply because new networks cannot be built overnight and without them they cannot find work in a new locality even if it is in the proximity.

Finally, an examination of the city of Delhi through the perspective of women domestic workers exposes us to the dialectics between an informal and unregulated activity that takes place in the private spaces of households and the larger, often informal, spatial dynamics of the city. Thus, the desire to live in a servant quarter in a middle-class neighbourhood for its perceived safety and the notion of it being "free accommodation" in spite of constant feelings of being exploited and having little or no bargaining power, tell us about the lived aspect of the deficit of housing in Delhi, in both quality and quantity. Similarly, the sticky nature of networks in domestic work makes women domestic workers go back repeatedly to their old neighbourhoods in spite of their relocation to far-off areas, and this produces particular types of gendered mobilities with new sets of relations to urban transport and new patterns of vulnerabilities.

Thus, this chapter triggers a larger set of questions about the "urban" and paid domestic work, and the spatial intertwining of the two. It tries to take the

vulnerabilities and power inequalities beyond individual experiences and examines them in the light of various structural issues in the context of extreme inequalities that are not just economic but also socio-cultural and civic. The intent is not to "fetishize" space, but rather to look at its role in shaping the urban life—as a resource, a constraint, a site of contestation and negotiation—from the gaze of the marginalized. It enables us to see the wider set of relations stretched over the city space that produces domestic work relations. By looking at individual experiences of domestic work together with wider entitlement issues, this chapter dislocates the power that produces vulnerability for domestic workers from the immediate place of work and locates it at multiple sites in the city.

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Chapter 12
Bus/Bas/बस: The 2012 Delhi Gang Rape Case, City Space and Public Transportation

Tara Atluri

Michel Foucault defined the anxiety of "our time" as a spatial anxiety.

Foucault suggests that,

> …the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time. Time probably appears to us only as one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space….(Foucault, 1986, 23)

I discuss the anxiety of time and space in regards to "the bus". The buses of the world carry haunting histories.

The word Bus/bas loosely translates into "enough" in Hindi. On December 16, 2012 in Delhi, the capital city of an Indian subcontinent of increased urbanization, a woman was gang raped, tortured and inflicted with such bodily harm that she died two weeks later. On the night of the Delhi gang rape case of 2012, Jyoti and her friend Awindra saw a film, after which they attempted to travel home utilizing public transportation in the city. They caught an auto rickshaw outside of the theatre where they had seen the film. The auto rickshaw then took them to a place where urban commuters catch buses. An off-duty bus that had been hijacked by a group of men stopped and the couple boarded, unaware of the gruesome events that would follow. The group of men on the bus proceeded to gang rape Jyoti, utilizing a metal rod to commit crimes of extreme bodily violence. The use of the rod and the nature of the crimes can only be called torture. Awindra was also severely beaten by the attackers. Roychowdhury discusses how the assault of Awindra, which involved a violent beating and his body being stripped naked and left by the side of the road, was downplayed in the global media with the case focusing on the imagined victimization of brown women by brown men. She discusses this narrative

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of the case in relation to Spivak's gendered reading of colonial discourse as a narrative of "…white men saving brown women from brown men" (Roychowdhury, 2013, 282). The author suggests that Awindra disappeared from narratives regarding the case, "…because brown men are not typically viewed as allies of brown women…." (Roychowdhury, 2013, 284). Jyoti's injuries were so severe that her internal organs were damaged during the assault. She was taken to a Delhi hospital and then flown to Singapore to receive medical treatment in a final attempt to save her life. She died less than 2 weeks after this incident. Awindra survived the unspeakable violence of this night and was undoubtedly left with a psychic trauma that is perhaps beyond words (Lodia, 2015). Jyoti's parents have publically spoken about this case to local and global media, demanding harsher penalties for those who were charged. Her family released her name to the press, suggesting that they wanted the world to know her name and for her to be remembered as a hero, whose spirit would give strength to survivors of gendered violence. Awindra later released his own name to the press (Losh, 2013). Roychowdhury discusses the making of the case into an international media spectacle that constructed Jyoti as a symbol of the "modern Indian woman" and her assailants as rural migrant men whose sexual violence was used to mark rural India as misogynistic in comparison to imagined "progress" of the city. Roychowdury further discusses how this construction positioned the impoverished rural migrant displaced in the city as an adversary of the urban Indian woman, in need of salvation from brown male barbarism. The author states, however, that while Jyoti was represented by the global media as "…highly individuated and 'westernized…,'" (Roychowdhury, 2013, 283) as with many of her assailants, her family were in fact migrants from a rural village. Roychowdhury states that "Pandey's family was part of the Kurmi community, a lower caste group with agricultural origins; her attackers, it turns out, also belong to lower caste groups…" (Roychowdhury, 2013, 284). The author further states that despite narratives that attempted to construct Jyoti as a symbol of urban wealth and her assailants as impoverished men lacking in class-based "civility", Jyoti's father worked at the Delhi airport as a luggage handler, earning the same level of income as some of the attackers (Roychowdhury, 282–284). The narratives of this case which positioned the urban middle class woman as a victim of rural migrant men, Jyoti's father's actual class status as a labourer at the airport throwing the baggage of business travellers onto planes in an increasingly globalized economy, and the violence that took place on the bus and street all gesture to the spatial implications of this case.

Six men were arrested for committing the crimes which took place on December 16, 2012. Four of the six men were convicted and the prosecutors in the case requested death penalty for the convicted assailants. One of the accused was tried as a minor and received a lesser sentence. The final person accused of this wretched act of misogynistic and inhumane brutality committed suicide in prison. Following the case, the Verma Committee, a judiciary review board was assembled to review national laws pertaining to gender-based violence. The committee proposed a series of promising recommendations, not all of which were upheld by the Indian state. There were, however, notable changes made to sexual assault and harassment law, which involved increased penalties for those convicted of crimes of gender-based

violence, and stricter forms of enforcement (Bhattacharyya, 2013). The Delhi gang rape case raised questions regarding the use of death penalty in the Indian subcontinent, the sentencing of those deemed to be "young offenders" and the (im) possibilities of legal grievance to resolve cases of such tremendous grief. The case received attention from political figures in Delhi, national politicians, and transnational media coverage. It garnered outcry from multiple factions of feminist, queer and leftist activists in Delhi and transnationally.

This paper is caught behind the roaring exhaust of many city buses, drawing on philosophy and research regarding public transport, transnationally (see also Chap. 11). I discuss the spatial politics of the 2012 Delhi gang rape case with reference to the contemporary era of neoliberal governance in India. I further comment on gendered embodiment in urban spaces, and the role of public transport in contemporary political struggle. There is an old adage that women often hear which states that "Men are like buses". On December 16, 2012 in Delhi, capital city of a postcolonial nation haunted by ghosts of colonial powers and histories of political resilience, two people caught a bus that led to an incident of unspeakable violence. In the spirit of justice, we can mark this moment by moving in a new direction. As Slavoj Žižek suggests, "The task of the leftist thinker today is, to quote Walter Benjamin, not to ride the train of history, but to pull the brake"(Žižek cited in O'Hagen, 2010).

12.1 Public Transport Protests: The Miracle of the Event

12.1.1 From "Commonwealth" Games to Mass Arrests in the Traffic of the "Brand" City

In her writings regarding haunting, Avery Gordan discusses the quality of being haunted as expressive of futurity. Gordan writes,

> ….haunting is an emergent state: the ghost arises, carrying the signs and portents of a repression in the past or the present that's no longer working. The ghost demands your attention. The present wavers. Something will happen. What will happen of course, is not given in advance, but something must be done. (Gordan, 2011, 3)

The 2012 Delhi gang rape protests speak to the collective haunting of postcolonial nations and cities. One of the recommendations made by Verma Committee following this case suggested that marital rape should be criminalized. The recommendation was struck down on the basis that criminalising marital rape would "…threaten the Indian family" (Menon, 2013). A recent 2014 court ruling only further confirmed the legal sanction of rape. The judiciary ruled that a man who allegedly drugged a woman, forced her to marry, and raped her was not legally culpable. The preceding judge stated that owing to their wedded union, "…the sexual intercourse between the two, even if forcible, is not rape and no culpability can be fastened upon the accused" (Zimmerman, 2014).

There is a parallel between owning women's bodies as the property of husbands and owning land by nationalists that turns rape into a legally sanctioned act. The construction of women as property can also be found in pre-colonial religious ideologies and colonial law (Chatterjee, 1989; Spivak, 1995). Tambe discusses how The East India Company enshrined the rights of men to buy women as wives and parents to sell their children. British colonial officials criminalized sex work as infringing on the property rights of male patriarchs to own the sexual labour of their wives. Tambe discusses colonial property laws and Victorian ideologies of implicit sexual violence through which women's bodies were valued as the property of elite men (Tambe, 28). The colonial construction of women as property is no less patriarchal than religious justifications of patriarchy, but expresses the role nationalist discourse plays in claims of entitlement that legally sanction rape.

The "loose" woman in India not owned as property by elite men is left to traverse spaces that are rife for forms of violence, which are legally and ideologically justified due to the imagined place of the woman in the home. Simultaneously, the woman held in place within the idealized Hindu middle class home as the property of male elites can be legally raped in a subcontinent, haunted by colonial history. However, the massive demonstrations involving people of all genders in Delhi and the occupation of public space offer evidence of the use of spaces outside the home as ones of dissent.

The 2012 Delhi gang rape protests are political events with implications for urban postcolonial spaces and transportation. As Badiou discusses in *Being and Event,* political events represent a radical break from the social order, akin to theological miracles (Badiou, 2005). Just as temporality is charted through the birth of a religious prophet, political events ways of marking time and space. The use of Jantar Mantar in Delhi as a space of protest against sexual violence in 2012 marks this event and the space of the city as one of resistance. Jantar Mantar has also been the site of other political events such as anti-corruption protests and protests regarding Kashmiri independence. As Arvind remarks, "Once known for its historical and architectural importance, Jantar Mantar has now become the unofficial designated protest site in the Capital" (Arvind, 2014). While the Delhi gang rape case has been written of in gender-centric terms, the occupation of Jantar Mantar perhaps gestures to what Badiou suggests is the subjectivising effect of struggle, through which the mass is not predetermined but defined through the act of protest. The 2012 Delhi gang rape protests hailed the collective into being through demands of the political event as a miracle.

12.2 Contemporary Delhi and the Haunting of City Buses

12.2.1 Neoliberal Governance and the "Idealized Citizen"

The overarching narrative of the 2012 Delhi gang rape case should be placed within a wider framework of neoliberal governance. As Ahmed points out, despite a rhetoric of overall betterment owing to ideologies of neoliberalism which

privilege elite global business industries, economic structuralist reforms beginning in the 1990s have not benefitted the poor. Ahmed makes reference to buses as a symbol of the spatialization of class. Ahmed writes,

> Buses tend to be the most economically and environmentally efficient means of transport for more people. Even though bicycles are environmentally friendlier, it is difficult for labourers to travel long distance in this manually powered vehicle. At times, the poor cannot even accumulate enough savings to be able to purchase a bicycle. (Ahmed, 2011, 178)

Ahmed and Ghertner both discuss bourgeois environmentalism among upper classes in Delhi, which involve pathologizing impoverished people who are seen as polluting the city through caste/class-based associations between poverty and uncleanliness (Ahmed, 2011, 163–188). One can consider that following the Delhi gang rape case, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh blamed sexual violence on what he termed "footloose migrants", from rural India and from poorer states (HT Times Correspondant, 2012). Similar comments were made by leader Raj Thackery who blamed sexual violence on Bihari migrants in Delhi, utilizing impoverished migrant men as scapegoats for wider failings within police and state structure and a broader patriarchal ideology that crosses borders. The criminalization of impoverished migrants from rural areas and poorer states became an alibi for conservative political leaders who pitted the protection of women against the rights of Delhi's migrant labourers. "Loose" women like "footloose migrants", traverse the city bus without governmentally supported social or physical mobility (Atluri, 2013). Elite structures of governance overinvest in private capital at the expense of public interests that would enable labouring bodies of women and workers to ride city buses, free from violence.

One can consider the governmental decision to close Metro stations during the Delhi gang rape protests of 2012, trapping many protestors at Jantar Mattar. There was also a decision made on the part of ruling powers to use water cannons against protestors. These politically motivated decisions to attempt to stop protestors from exercising freedoms of movement and assembly speak to an overall failure of governance. This overall failure of political governance to represent and uphold the rights of "citizens" can be considered in relation to the protection of neoliberal business interests and the branding of the city for the Delhi Commonwealth Games in 2010, which involved coveting foreign business interests to make the city conducive for international tourism (Chowdhury, 2011).

12.3 The Social Ladder Is Missing Rungs

12.3.1 Mobility, Social Mobility and the Rickety City Bus

Anand and Tiwari discuss the relocation of slums that has occurred since 2000 in Delhi and throughout India. The displacement of the poor to the outskirts of Delhi has had a differential impact in the lives of working people. Drawing on interviews

done in the Sanjay Camp, the author's state that, "Women are the targets of sexual harassment while travelling to work and practically every woman interviewed had anecdotal evidence of suffering from the same" (Anand and Tiwari, 2006, 78). They write that,

> Harassment while walking down the street or travelling on a bus is a common occurrence for working women and is exacerbated by the absence of adequate lighting on streets and subways and by the small lonely paths connecting the slum with the bus stops. (Anand and Tiwari, 2006, 78)

The image of the isolated and harassed woman riding a rickety commuter bus is part of a larger marking of the public sphere and the metropolis as male space, while interior regions are marked as feminine. Partha Chatterjee argues that Indian nationalists triumphed essentialist ideas of "Indian culture" with the middle class Hindu Indian woman playing a crucial role as idealized homemaker and wife, one whose duty within the nationalist imaginary lay in upholding the domestic realm through the reproduction of essentialist and caste-based ideals of Hindu "culture" (Chatterjee, 1989). This Orientalist marking of the interior as feminine and quintessentially "Indian" may strip women of entitlements to be counted as full "citizens" within the urban public sphere. Anand and Tiwari further argue that the Delhi transport system not only creates discomfort in the lives of women, but is also inaccessible to the poor and further exacerbates class divisions in the city (Anand and Tiwari, 2006, 78). The authors discuss "time-poverty" in relation to slum dwelling women whose ability to work is threatened by their inability to labour owing to travel time. Women are engaged in twice as much reproductive labour, which makes multiple trips between their residences and workplaces a necessity. Expensive and therefore impossible and unsafe transportation hinders the ability of female slum residents to live without the daily threat of violence.

One can consider reports following the 2012 Delhi gang rape case that Jyoti and Awindra lay bloodied in the streets of Delhi for hours. Jason Burke writes,

> For 40 min, X and her friend lay beside a slip road of the highway. Vehicles slowed, almost stopped and then accelerated away. Finally, an off-duty worker on the nearby toll highway saw the bystanders and notified the police who arrived and took the couple to hospital (Burke, 2013).

We live in an increasingly global culture of neoliberalism in which one can protect private property and business interests above any civic, political, and ethical responsibility (Žižek, 2008, 77–105). The bloodied bodies of Awindra and Jyoti lying in the streets of Delhi as cars of urban commuters drove past are perhaps symbols of the construction of neoliberal city spaces as those that encourage capitalist individualism.

12.4 Rosa Parks and Public Parks

12.4.1 Space, Oppression and Protest

The relationship between transport, politics, gender and class is perhaps a transnational truth that resonates across time/space. For example, in the first decade of its inception in the 1900s, the New York subway system was littered with overcrowding and sexual harassment. Much like the single sex strategies employed by the Delhi transport system and throughout India, the early New York transport system also utilized female only subway cars to prevent sexual harassment (Schulz and Gilbert, 1996, 551). What is interesting about the New York City subway lies in how tensions of gender and class arose regarding which women should be protected in public space and how. As one writer notes,

> The experiment was not a success; it lasted only from April 1 to July 1, 1909, and immediately became enmeshed in the class-based politics of the times. The ladies' car was favoured by upper-middle class women returning from shopping expeditions to New York City's popular Ladies Mile. They particularly appreciated the red-capped attendants who carried their packages to the evening rush hour trains (Schulz and Gilbert, 1996, 552).

Many efforts to protect women in the public transport system leading into the Great Depression were in fact centred around protecting white bourgeois women at the expense of working class and Black women who were not viewed as damsels in distress. Similarly, activists and feminists suggest that the case of Jyoti would not have garnered such outrage had the victim been a Dalit or sex worker (Atluri, 2014). As discussed, Jyoti was also represented in many mainstream global media narratives as a "middle class" figure to construct the political demands of women as being oppositional to those of the poor.

One can see a haunting trace of revolutionary buses that travel across time and space. In 1955 in Montgomery Alabama, a woman named Rosa Parks boarded a public bus. Rosa Parks was not casually thrown into what would lead to a remarkable spark of political agitation and major changes to national law. Rather, Parks was an impassioned figure in the civil rights movement whose case was used as a springboard for a political movement. Parks boarded and sat in the first three rows of the bus. After refusing to give her seat to a white person, she was arrested. The case was used to launch the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a benchmark in American politics and the civic lives of African Americans. As one author surmises,

> The boycott lasted for 381 days. Although many blacks walked to and from work during the boycott the MIA (Montgomery Improvement Association) also organized an elaborate "private taxi" plan with more than two hundred cars as a parallel transportation system, an enormous undertaking. Drivers (including a handful of sympathetic whites) picked up and dropped off blacks who needed rides of designated points (Dreir, 2014).

There is perhaps a connection between this movement and the 2012 Delhi gang rape case, in the use of transportation as a symbol of political solidarity. Cornel West discusses how at an ideological level, the civil rights organizing of this period challenged a depoliticized class of petite bourgeois African Americans. He

discusses the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), suggesting that this movement, while often financially privileged, "…epitomized this revolt against the political reticence of the 'old' black middle class…" (West, 1993, 245). He highlights issues regarding the segregation of public space as sparking the radicalization of Black middle class students. West writes that these students,

> …would give first priority to social activism and justify their newly acquired privileges by personal risk and sacrifice. So the young black student movement was not simply a rejection of segregation in restaurants. It was a revolt against the perceived complacency of the 'old' black petite bourgeoisie (West, 1993: 244).

Drawing on histories of segregation, one can ask how feminist and activist movements tied to the 2012 Delhi gang rape protests which often involve young people, challenge older structures of colonial governance and state power. One can also consider Occupy struggles globally which involve taking over public space, and involve politicized students (Chomsky, 2012). The ruse of formalized democracy is revealed in the streets, and subsequently challenged through protest, in the streets. Cornel West writes,

> The arrest of Rosa Parks on December 1, 1955 in Montgomery's bus line that year—led to the creation of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), adoption of a citywide black boycott and the placement of King at the head of the movement. After nearly a year of the boycott, the US Supreme Court declared Alabama's state and local bus segregation laws unconstitutional (West, 1993: 242).

Rosa Parks is also an interesting feminist figure, due to her politicization of gender-based violence. David Zirin writes of Parks' campaigns against sexual violence, such as her vocal opposition to the 1944 gang rape of 23 year old mother and sharecropper Recy Taylor. Zirin suggests that her activism presents the civil rights movement as being imbricated with African American feminist resistance to sexual violence (Zirin, 2013). The 2012 Delhi gang rape protests can be examined in relation to other historical instances of violence, to pose broad questions regarding the place/displacement of the gendered postcolonial "citizen" in the urban polis.

The protests following the 2012 Delhi gang rape case can be read as expressions of an instability that defines contemporary India. This uneasiness lies in thwarted hopes of social mobility in a society caught between Western capitalist values promising wealth through labour, and older systems of caste-based stasis. The political mobilization in the aftermath of the case speaks to how protest opens up liminal spaces of reckoning between the wretched truth of violence, the wretched of the earth who bear history's colonial markings, and protestors reclaiming public space (Fanon, 1965). One can see comparable frustrations in these protests and those of African American civil rights organizers who protested against their full countenance as citizens and workers. Civil rights demonstrations also expressed a revolt against the marking of skin as determining one's fate and future. Peter Dreir writes of the Montgomery Bus Boycott stating that one of "…the key lessons of that era is that history is full of surprises. Many ideas that were once considered outrageous, utopian, and impractical are today taken for granted"

(Dreir, 2006, 92). The rights of workers and women as people, beyond the countenance of human life through colonial and capitalist calculations are with us in city buses and all the ghostly haunting they carry.

12.5 No Somas No Sardinas

12.5.1 Spatial Justice Beyond Borders

The basic right to access transport still defines contemporary anti racist and feminist struggles, beyond borders. Mann discusses the Labour/Community Strategy Centre in Los Angeles and efforts to organize workers, particularly Black, Latino and Migrant workers despite assaults from right wing politicians and the neoliberalization of cultures of work that often disproportionately affect racialized workers (Mann, 2009, 259). The Los Angeles Labour/Community Strategy Centre is exemplary in demonstrating that the Clinton/Blair programmes of divestment from a social welfare state model cannot curtail the passionate organizing of the Left. At the core of the work of the Latino/Community Strategy Centre is The Bus Riders Union/Sindicato de Pasejeros (BRU)-a multiracial organization of transit dependant workers, many of whom are racialized migrant women. The BRU has staged protests that involved workers in yellow shirts who are engaged in "freedom rides" against racism and the corporatization of the public transit system. Eric Mann discusses the, "'No Somos Sardinas/No Seat No Fare' campaign in which tens of thousands of bus riders refused to pay their fare as a protest against bus overcrowding" (Mann, 2009, 259). Mann further discusses how the politics of social mobility and immobility is expressed spatially. The author states that,

> While suburban auto commuters complain about gridlock, they can turn on the air conditioning and CD-player, contact clients on their cell phone and suffer in style. For the working class, with increasingly dispersed employment and education centres, the 1- and 2- h commutes each way on filthy, overcrowded buses, the long waits, the missed transfers, the constant fear of being fired for being late for work, the intrusion into any leisure time generates a rage that can be directed at a clear enemy—the powerful Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) with a U.S.$ 3 billion a year budget that if captured and redirected towards a first-class bus system, could dramatically improve life for the working class (Mann, 2009: 260).

The Strategy Centre was formed through the organizing of transport workers at a General Motors plant, demonstrating how transport unites oppressed peoples transnationally. As discussed, the suburban commuter class is also increasingly visible in the city of Delhi, with drivers speeding past dilapidated city buses that "footloose migrants" and "loose" women often traverse. While suburban commuters perhaps suffered the Delhi traffic "… in style" on the night of December 16 2012, Jyoti and Awindra lay bloodied in the streets for hours, their brutalized bodies an unremarked spectacle in another "world class" city of foreign made cars and unspeakable violence on city buses.

12.6 Bus/Bas/बस

12.6.1 Answering the Political Call in Non-Eventful Times

While the examples discussed in this chapter move across time/space, they gesture to an overall failure of governance within times of corporatized city space. The refrains heard during the 2012 Delhi gang rape protests expressed outrage at the decision by the Delhi police to close several central metro stations in the city, preventing protests from growing in size. Slogans such as "Did your Dad pay for the metro?" were used on placards at protests, demonstrating an outrage against state power (Atluri, 2013). As Dube writes,

> The country witnessed thousands of young men and women holding placards deriding the role of the Police and the ineffectiveness of the entire machinery of the State to protect women and safeguard their safety and security. The cries resonated in the chambers of the highest political authorities and thus new Commissions were born to inquire into the matters and recommend appropriate steps to deal with the situation (Dube, 2014: 90).

Dube suggests that the 2012 Delhi gang rape protests speak to a chronic feeling of disease regarding the inadequacy of the state to respond to cases of gender violence and the lack of free mobility within the city (Dube, 2014: 89). Shilpa Phadke's research regarding pleasure in urban India, speaks to a politics of space not fenced in by gendered and sexual colonial ideology. In an interview conducted with Phadke in 2014 at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, she discussed the *Back Off* Ā*z*ā*d*ī campaign stating,

> Often, in India, the understanding of public space is very much structured around safety. And I think now, because it is out there in the public and there is a discussion happening, there is a space for back off Āzādī. There is an idea for fun and loitering which my colleagues and I have tried to advance. I think what the last year has done is to create little spaces for *Back Off* Ā*z*ā*d*ī and to talk about what we have been doing, which is to speak about fun and loitering. The idea of a right to public space (Atluri, 2014).

The *Back Off* Ā*z*ā*d*ī of the 2012 Delhi gang rape protests was lead by Kavita Krishnan and supported by many feminists, activists, and protestors. In a statement recently released by several organizations in Delhi, the inspirational words of Krishnan were cited as a galvanizing force for protests and new social movements. When Krishnan's speech went viral it was widely circulated with over 57, 615 having viewed it through YouTube. Against a protectionist and conservative rhetoric regarding the mobility of women in public spaces, Krishnan emphasized women's "…right to be adventurous" and demanded that the Government protect the "fearless freedom" of women (FeministsIndia, 2014). Krishnan's inspiring words were translated in several Indian languages and activists suggest that they became emblematic of the use of the 2012 Delhi gang rape case as an event of the political involving a spirit of resistance that marks Delhi as not only bearing the haunting traces of gendered violence, but also of resilient political struggle (FeministsIndia, 2014) *FeministsIndia* further documents the struggles of feminists and activists against the criminalizing gaze of the state,

> Women, students and youth activists of various organizations have demanded that the charge-sheet filed by Delhi police against them for protesting the December 16, 2012 Delhi gang rape…be withdrawn. Those charge-sheeted include Kavita Krishnan, Secretary, All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA), Anmol Rattan from Delhi University, and Om Prasad from JNU, both activists from All India Students' Association (AISA) and Aslam Khan of Revolutionary Youth Association (RYA) (FeministsIndia, 2014).

The actions taken against Delhi activists speak to the wager that one must make to remain faithful to the political event (Badiou, 2005, p. 173). Badiou utilizes the terms truth, event and subject to discuss the making of politics. Drawing on Badiou's philosophical critique, Bensaid states, "… a truth is sparked by an event… an event that spreads like a flame fanned by the breath of a subjective effort that remains forever incomplete" (Bensaïd, 2004, p. 94). The lasting flame of subjective effort, much like the burning candles that were used to mark the space of Jantar Mantar as those of commemoration and outrage at protests following the 2012 Delhi gang rape case, gestures to what is born out of a miraculous moment of reckoning, as the event of politics. Those who participated in demonstrations following the 2012 Delhi gang rape protests further declare,

> We and thousands of others will continue to protest and demand the right of women, as well as of everyone, including men and women from Dalit, Muslim and other marginalized identities, to be free and adventurous, as we did on December 19th. If this Government and the Delhi Police holds that this is a crime deserving our arrest, so be it (FeministsIndia, 2014).

B.R. Ambedkar, leader of the Dalit liberation movement wrote of the inherent dignity of the individual (Ambedkar, B.R. ed. Bhagwan Das, 2010). When one considers that many Hindu temples are often structured around caste-based entry and the subsequent caste-based barring of "Untouchables" from accessing public spaces, Ambedkar's vision of dignity is central to creating spaces of social justice (Rege, 2013). Much like American colonial history, the reduction of African Americans to corporeal racialized flesh constructed Black slaves as lacking in intellectual capacity. Associations between Blackness and filth have also been built into bourgeois colonial sensibilities and the lived spaces of cities. Urban spectacles of pristine malls and expensive automobiles are shadowed by lives of material violence and resistance in the streets.

To politicize sensual pleasure in the city is crucial to reimagining spaces of desire and postcolonial urban futures. The fight to create spaces of pleasure in Indian cities continues to be fought by NGO's such as Jagori, who are part of the Safer Cities free from Violence against Women and Girls Initiative, which involves documenting sexual harassment and working with urban planners, activists, and researchers to create strategies for feminist urban renewal (Jagori, 2015). *The Blank Noise* project is also an interesting example of the dynamism of young Indian feminists. The project has several aims, one of which is to,

> Build a relationship between women and cities: to imagine and enable us to see the city as a place to which we belong as citizens with rights rather than the often touted constructs of us as someone's mother/sister/daughter/ on the street (Editorial, 2010. *Indiasocial*).

The space of the Internet is also a useful means through which gender-based violence can be protested against when the material spaces of urban life worlds remain inhospitable to workers and women, who act as the productive and reproductive backbone of the city. Van Deven discusses Blank Noises's transnational feminist activism citing their Facebook campaign I NEVER ASKED FOR IT:

> "I Never Asked For It"… includes women taking photos of the clothing they were wearing while eve teased[1] to put to rest the idea that only certain types of "promiscuously dressed" women are harassed. Alongside the photographs are the words "I Never Asked For It" in several Indian languages…. Blank Noise also asked for contributions of common sayings that excuse men's lecherous behaviours and imply that women *do* ask for it. The sayings are then coupled with visual descriptions (Van Deven, 2015; Blank Noise, 2015).

The Pink Chaddi (panties) Campaign is another creative example of protest and important to consider given the recent election of Bharatiya Janata Party leader Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister of India. The campaign occurred after the violent beating of women in Bangalore pubs by Hindu nationalists, another example of how urban spaces are often inhospitable to women's free mobility. Following the attacks, women sent pink panties to the Hindu Nationalist group, the Sri Ram Sene, accused of committing these misogynistic crime. The underwear was engraved with messages of defiance and mockery (Hamilton et al., 2011). These political strategies are often enacted by those who are violently hailed into being by the political event, and also blessed with an indescribable courage.

The political event can be thought of in relation to the artistic event, a moment of original and creative emergence that creates resistance outside of state bureaucracies. In a painting created by artist Md. Tahir Siddiqui, the 2012 Delhi gang rape case and the relationship between mobility, gender and public space are elucidated in the subtle and affective labour of artistic praxis (Fig. 12.1). The painting depicts Jyoti, her ghostly image part of the city map. The line of red conjures up memories of this tragic case, one in which a journey through city space ended with the life of a person being charted in a red line on a hospital screen, flat lining in a tragic death beyond all words. The shoes that the artist uses convey the ways in which the performative constructions of gender in regards to dress and aesthetics determine one's ability to occupy public space. The archetypal feminine pink shoe is not the glass slipper of a princess who exists in fairy tale mythologies. The illusory "progress" of a neoliberal India in which people have access to mall chic fashion and symbols of sexual freedom as commodity, meets the violence of the street. The remnants of abhorrent acts of brutality and torture haunt an "India shining" in ways that are emotively commented upon through the artist's gaze.

Bell hooks once remarked that "The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is-it's to imagine what is possible" (Hooks, 1994: 281). In depicting a feminine image that is forever immortalized as a citizen of the street, this artistic

[1]"Eve teasing" is a term sometimes used in urban India to refer to sexual harassment of women.

Fig. 12.1 Tahir Siddiqui's metonymic inscription of Jyoti's fate on Delhi's map Source: Painting by Tahir Siddiqui, reproduced with permission

work not only remembers Jyoti but remaps urban space as political space. The city streets are aesthetically imagined as those that might one day be hospitable to all those who traverse the metropolis.

While the 2012 Delhi gang rape case is haunted by shadows of death, there are good ghosts such as B.R Ambedkar and Phoolan Devi, (Fernandes, 1999) who also haunt the political moment. As we continue to reimagine the city and ourselves in the city, we can recall the words of a revolutionary person named Rosa Parks who once stated, "I'd like to be remembered as a person who wanted to be free and wanted other people to also be free". (*PBS NewsHour*, 2005; Atluri, forthcoming).

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