



Working Paper
No. 552

**Male, Migrant, Muslim: Identities and entitlements of
Afghans and Bengalis in a South Delhi neighbourhood**

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February 2013

* ISS MA Research Paper Award winner for the academic year 2011-2012

ISSN 0921-0210

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Table of Contents

Abstract	5
List of Figures	6
Acronyms	6
1 INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Background	7
1.1.i Belonging in a global city: the case of the migrant Muslim informal worker	7
1.1.ii Gender as an important locus of identity: Muslim men and hegemonic masculinity in India	11
1.2 Research question and objective	12
1.3 Relevance	12
1.4 Structure of the research paper	12
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
2.1 Ethnicity and capital in the informal economy	13
2.2 Agency	15
2.3 Identity/identities	16
2.4 Masculinity and power	17
2.5 Entitlements and the Right to the City	18
3 METHODOLOGY	19
3.1 Data generation techniques	20
3.2 Selection of location and respondents	21
3.3 Techniques for data analysis	23
3.4 Reflexivity	23
4 IDENTITIES, AGENCY AND ENTITLEMENTS	25
4.1 Problematizing forced ethnic identities	25
4.1.i Questioning Bengaliness	26
4.1.ii 'Afghans' in Delhi	28
4.1.iii Forced identities and discrimination	30
4.2 Identities of affinity related to livelihoods	31
4.2.i Occupational Identities	32

4.2.ii	Operation of capitals through identities of locational affinities	34
4.3	Performances of masculinity: authority and meekness	36
4.4	Migrants' entitlements in the city	40
5	CONCLUSION	41
	REFERENCES	43
	APPENDIX: DELHI MASTER PLAN 2021	49

Abstract

In recent time Delhi has revealed its ambitions as a global city. The consequent need for cheap, casual, migrant labour for maintaining its world-scale ambitions has been highlighted in a lot of literature, particularly in the post Commonwealth Games (CWG) period. The migrant labourers in the informal economy of Delhi are seen as oppressed, particularly if they belong to a subordinated social group, like the Muslim male migrants. However, there is need to examine the homogenization implied by 'Muslim male migrants'. This research aims to challenge the one-dimensional depiction of Muslim male migrants as 'victims'. Analysing the narratives of two groups of Muslim migrant men in a South Delhi neighbourhood, this research tries to critically look at stable markers of identity such as ethnicity, gender and class. The research reveals identities as fluid, multiple and relational. The men emerge as complex subjects—not just passive 'victims' but capable of asserting agency, often through the strategic mobilisation of their multiple identities.

Keywords

Informal economy, men, Muslim men, migrants, Afghan migrants, Bengali migrants, rickshaw-pullers, ethnicity, masculinities, multiple identities, feminist methodology, urban citizenship, Right to the City, Delhi Master Plan 2021, Delhi.

List of Figures

Figure 1 Workers and enterprises in the informal economy.	15
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List of Maps

Map 1 Map of Delhi showing squatter settlements, resettlement colonies, the old city and the new city	10
Map 2 Map of Malda, Kathihar and Godda districts showing the border with Bangladesh	26

Acronyms

ARC	Report on conditions of work and promotion of livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector, 2007 or the Arjun Sengupta Commission Report
CWG	Commonwealth Games
DDA	Delhi Development Authority
LNB	Lajpat Nagar-Bhogal area
n.d	no date
MCD	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
MPD-2021	Delhi Master Plan 2021
RSD	Residential Status Determination by the UNHCR
RTTC	Right to the City
SCR	Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India, 2006 or the Sachar Committee Report
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UP	Uttar Pradesh

Male, Migrant, Muslim¹

Identities and entitlements of Afghans and Bengalis in a South Delhi neighbourhood

1 Introduction

Since its ‘discovery’ in the 1970s, the concept of informal economy has come a long way from being just a residual ‘sector’ in the economies of the countries in the global South. (Chen, 2007:235). In its current expanded definition, informal economy ‘is comprised of all forms of “informal employment”—that is, employment without labour or social protection—both inside and outside informal enterprises, including...self-employment [and] wage employment’ (Ibid. 235-6). According to the 2007 Report on Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector (ARC) in India, workers in the informal economy comprise over 93% of the country’s workforce. In spite of pioneering a law for the protection of unorganized workers (Unorganised Workers Social Security Act 2008²) on the basis of the ARC, the everyday practices as well as the laws in India are far from sufficiently supportive of those engaged in making a living from informal employment (Harris-White and Prakash, no date). This research examines, broadly speaking, the links between the many identities—spanning categories like ethnicity, gender and class—of those engaged in earning their livelihoods from the informal economy, and their entitlements on the basis of those identities. Specifically, I am looking at two groups of Muslim male migrants engaged in the informal economy in Delhi, India.

1.1 Background

1.1.i Belonging in a global city: the case of the migrant Muslim informal worker

The 2006 *Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India* (SCR) presents a comprehensive image of the overall negative social status of Muslims in India related to issues of identity, security and equity (Ibid.11). A division of the population of India according to poverty status reveals that ‘79% of the informal or unorganised workers [in India]...and 84% of the Muslims belong to the poor and vulnerable group’ (ARC, 2007:8). Commenting on the image of the (economically) ‘shining India’, the ARC points out that this has only been limited to the middle classes whereas the ‘poor and vulnerable’ section of the population, accounting for about 77% of the total population of India (Sengupta, et al. 2008: 52), ‘have remained poor at a bare subsistence level without any job or social security, working in the most

¹ I want to thank my supervisors Amrita and Karin; my respondents in Delhi; and Linus: without whom this research would not have been possible or as enjoyable.

² Many researchers have held up the Act as ineffective. E.g. Goswami, (2009)

miserable, unhygienic and unliveable conditions, throughout this period of high economic growth since the early nineties' (ARC, 2007: 8).

A disproportionately large number of Muslims in India work in the informal economy as self-employed and 'their participation in formal sector employment is significantly less than the national average' (SCR, 2006: 95). Harris-White and Aseem Prakash (n.d) delineate a 'regime of social discrimination in India [whereby the country's] norms of social order support the capacity of the "dominant" social groups to act against and police [economic and other] interests of social groups constituting the D[alits,]A[divasis and]M[uslims]'. Such exclusionary practices, both in the formal and informal economies, have been well documented (e.g. Thorat and Attewell, 2007; Prasad-Aleyamma, 2011). Social exclusion as normalised, everyday practices of citizens belonging to the dominant (Hindu, upper caste) groups is fairly visible. An example would be the widespread practice of Hindu landlords refusing to rent or sell their properties to Muslim tenants (Hashmi, 2009; Bawa, 2009; Menon, 2012; Ashok and Ali, 2012).

Rural to urban migration attracts a large number of migrants (circular and permanent) to Delhi (ARC, 2007). However, there are also transnational migrants—illegal/undocumented³, as well as refugees and asylum seekers⁴ in Delhi. The issue of Muslim immigrants/refugees has been a difficult topic in India. Ashish Bose (2004:4698) points out that '[e]ven the term "refugee" is not without controversies. In some circles, Hindu migrants from Bangladesh are called refugees, while Muslim migrants are called "infiltrators" and illegal migrants'. Bose also points out that determining who is an 'economic migrant' is often marked by existing structures of power.

Are Americans seeking jobs in the IT sector in Bangalore and Hyderabad economic refugees? Are they not driven from home primarily by the high unemployment rate and bleak economic prospects in US? (Ibid.)

Following Bose, I would like to argue that asylum seekers/refugees/economic migrants cannot be seen as rigidly differentiated categories, particularly in the context of Delhi—economic imperatives are as important for Muslim migrants from eastern states of India as they are for immigrants and refugees in Delhi. Moving to locations where imperatives of the globalised market economy result in a concentration of economic opportunities (Sassen, 2001; 2002) is the underlying logic for both internal migration as well as international immigration, even if there are other reasons for migrating which are not purely economic (see section 4.1.ii).

³ The Bangladeshi/Bengali Muslims are the most prominently labelled as such, particularly in the context of Delhi. E.g. Ramachandran, 1999; 2003

⁴ Among these the Afghans are the most numerous (UNHCR Global Appeal -India 2011) but this is the second wave of Afghans seeking refuge in Delhi the first wave being around the 1980s during and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. There are also asylum seekers from other West Asian countries like Iran and Iraq, African countries like Somalia and Asian countries like Myanmar (personal interviews, UNHCR).

Sassen (2002:185), writing about international labour migration to the global cities of the North writes:

[G]lobal cities have become places where large numbers of low-paid women and immigrants get incorporated into strategic economic sectors. Some are incorporated directly as low wage clerical and service workers such as janitors and repairmen. For others, the process is less direct, operating instead through the consumption practices of high income professionals who employ maids and nannies and who patronize expensive restaurants and shops staffed by low-wage workers

However, global cities are not only a feature of the economies of the global North as critics have pointed out: cities of the South are embedded in the global economy and often also aspire to the tag of 'global-city' (Gugler, 2004; Dupont, 2011). Dupont (2011) writes about the 'ambition to develop Delhi as a global city' as 'rooted in the liberalization reforms of the 1990s' (Ibid: 550). The world-city tag adopted by Delhi is stridently proclaimed through documents such as the Delhi Master Plan 2021 (MPD-2021, Appendix II). Delhi has socio-spatial fragmentations marked on its geography by the fact of its being 'continuously settled for about 2500 years' (Kudva, 2006:169). The particularities of these fractures in the modern Delhi can be traced back, partly to the colonial efforts of segregation—separating the white, modern, New Delhi from the old, Mughal city of Shahajanabad /Old Delhi—and continued under the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) mandate in the independent capital (Dupont, 2004, map 1). Today, Delhi is 'India's capital and showcase city' (Kudva, 2006: 170). However, '[t]his drive for global competitiveness involving image building has had negative consequences, especially for the poor, through "cleansing" the city of slums and other alleged undesirable elements' (Dupont, 2011: 533).

Empirical studies in Delhi on migrant labourers in the informal economy reveal quite a grim picture (Bhan, 2009; Kudva, 2006; Baviskar, 2003; 2006). The anxieties about belonging in Delhi became more and more apparent with its explicit claims to a world-class city status around the Commonwealth Games (Dupont 2011). Around the CWG in 2010, the issues of the right to the 'millennial city' (Bhan, 2009), came to more focussed attention when the drive to spruce up the city's image resulted in a mass eviction and invisibilisation drive which included slum demolitions and arresting 'beggars', among other things (Zee News, 2010; Indian Express, 2009; Indian Express, 2010; The Hindu, 2010). These drives, conversely highlighted the plight of those 'labouring at the margins of citizenship' (Dalmia, 2009), in mainstream media within India (Tehelka, 2010) as well as outside (BBC, 2010).

Researchers have further pointed out that the harassment of migrants in Delhi are coloured by ethnic and religious overtones. Baviskar (2006) points out that the focus of the state's exclusionary practices is directed at particular ethno-regional groups such as the Muslim migrants from the poorer eastern states of Bihar and Bengal. Corroborating Ramachandran's (1999, 2003) research, Baviskar writes that 'the spectre of Muslim terrorist infiltrators from Bangladesh has become a potent weapon to harass Bengali-speaking Muslim migrants in the city' (Baviskar, 2006: 4).

MAP 1



Sources: Census of India 1991, *District Census Handbook*, Delhi, Directorate of Census Operation, Delhi.
 Blum & Juggi Jhempi Department, *Municipal Corporation of Delhi, 1990*.
 Sabir Ali, *Slums within Slums: a study of resettlement colonies in Delhi*.
 New Delhi: Council for Social Development, 1990.

Digitized by eGangotri

¹ V. Dupont - LCA, Bondy - IFRI

Source: Dupont, 2004.

Being a Muslim, and a migrant engaged in the informal economy thus, seems to create multiple intersections of oppression. Looking at the empirical works cited above, the Muslim migrant in informal economy, emerges as oppressed through enmeshed social, political, legal and economic structures. The migrant

Muslim informal worker seems marginalised and invisibilised and left without any entitlements in the context of the global city.

However, this notion of utter disempowerment and victimization has been challenged in theories as well as ethnographies. Ramachandran, (1999) uses Scott's (1985) work—which problematizes 'intention' in 'resistance'—in her ethnography of 'illegal Bangladeshi migrants' in Delhi. Her ethnography reveals how Bengali/Bangladeshi Muslim migrants lay strategic claims to complex identities in which subordination and resistance play equal parts in challenging 'depictions of Muslims...as passive, helpless victims of Hindutva's exclusionary processes, lacking initiative and agency' (Ramachandran, 1999: 240). Thus, Muslim migrants emerge as more than just 'victims' of structural oppression. I explore the theories that critically look at empowerment/authority/agency in Chapter 2. In the next section, I look at gender as an important location of identity.

1.1.ii Gender as an important locus of identity: Muslim men and hegemonic masculinity in India

Joan Scott (1988) defines gender as a social relation which is the primary way of signifying relationships of power. As an analytic concept, it allows 'an exploration of gendered inequalities but also provides the possibility of using gender to theorize the concept of inequality' (Roy, 2003:19). Women have long been regarded as the ultimate underclass, marginalized doubly by their gender as well as by the socio-economic structures, particularly in academic literature pertaining to informal economy (e.g. Harriss-White 2002, 2009; Mezzadri, 2008). However, I would like to critically examine the easy equation of patriarchy and capital accumulation (Ibid.; Sassen, 2002), thereby problematizing the 'functionalism of capitalism and patriarchy endlessly aiding and abetting each other' (Roy, 2003:19).

In my research I have chosen to focus on migrant Muslim men in the informal economy and I look at how the intersections of class and ethnicity with their gendered subjectivity impact their self-constructions as working men. Further, in exploring 'gendered inequalities' I am looking at the hierarchies of masculinities and how these inequalities are constructed among the seemingly homogenous gender category of 'men'. Masculinities structure not only the relationships among men and women but also those between men (Sinha, 1999:446).

In the dominant social script of the Hindu right in India, the Muslim man is constructed as the aggressor, outsider, invader, 'dangerously virile' (Anand, 2007: 260)—a construction in which the history of past Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent figures prominently. The Hindu right wing masculinity is constructed as the hegemonic formulation of masculinity (Bharucha, 1995) by othering a stereotypical Muslim masculinity. The stereotyped image of the Muslim aggressor, then, becomes the foil for the 'anxious' Hindu masculinity (Anand, 2007). The construction of a right-wing, hegemonic, Hindu masculinity aims to vindicate the past effeteness of Hindu men who were defeated by Muslim ruler-invaders by defending the nation (defined as the

mother goddess). Violent communal massacres—such as those perpetrated by the Hindu right in 2002 in Gujarat—particularly on the bodies of Muslim women, read through this lens of hierarchized masculinities, become a way to emasculate the Muslim men (Ibid. 264). Thus, the pernicious power of images such as that of the insidious Bangladeshi infiltrator-terrorist (Ramachandran, 1999; 2003) stems from the construction of a subordinate Muslim masculinity which is also dangerous. The associations which go hand-in-hand with being identified as a Muslim man, therefore, necessarily affect their entitlements as citizens.

1.2 Research question and objective

How do multiple identities affect the entitlements (as citizens) of Muslim male migrants working in the informal economy in Delhi?

Through the primary data collected in course of interviews conducted in Delhi, this research proposes to look at how homogenized categories of identity, as implied by ‘Muslim male migrant’, are fractured by multiple allegiances. The research aims to reclaim the one dimensional ‘victim’ Muslim migrant as a complex subject with agentic capacities. It further aims to establish that identity—through its inherent fluidity and multiplicity—itself becomes a site through which agency is asserted.

1.3 Relevance

While systemic marginalisation of Muslims, migrants and informal labourers is very much a reality, it is also important not to homogenise this vast group of workers and entrepreneurs. Moreover, labelling the socially marginalised as ‘victims’ further devalues their capacity for action. Therefore, this research tries to reclaim a complex subjectivity for the Muslim migrants in informal economy. By studying the hierarchy of masculinities as power relations that structure inequalities between men in informal economy, this study addresses a gap in the literature.

In the context of Delhi, it is necessary to reformulate the concept ‘citizen’ and the entitlements stemming from citizenship, in view of the skewed developmental vision. However, in doing so it is important to look at Muslim male migrants as complex subjects with capacity to act, to resist and to articulate their aspirations. This research tries to challenge the developmental policies in the city from the multiple positions that Muslim migrants in the city actually articulate rather than reducing them to a voiceless mass of victims

1.4 Structure of the research paper

Chapter 2 of this paper goes on to examine some of the main theoretical underpinnings of the research. By exploring the conceptualisations of ‘agency’, ‘citizenship’, ‘identity’ and so on, the chapter undergirds the analysis (Chapter 4). Chapter 3 looks at the methodology of the research from the selection of techniques, to the actual implications of applying these methods in the field.

The chapter, particularly Section 3.4, reflects on the power imbalances that necessarily figures in any researcher-respondent interaction and tries to situate the knowledge claims within this matrix of power relations. Chapter 4 critically looks at identities by analysing the narratives of respondents through the concepts elaborated in Chapter 2. It ends with (Section 4.4) an attempt to locate how entitlements figure in these narratives leading to the more detailed analysis of the entitlements in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 summarises the paper and then goes on to look at entitlements of citizens and its policy implications in Delhi. The Chapter concludes with a critical look at the Right to the City (RTTC) discourse and how it can be interpreted in more dynamic ways to create a more inclusive vision of development in the context of Indian metropolises.

2 Theoretical framework

The following subsections critically explore the concepts already mentioned in Chapter 1. These form the basis of the analysis of the primary data in Chapter 4. The analytical framework in this chapter tries to address the ways in which ‘identity’ can be conceptualised. The conceptualisation of ‘agency’ and ‘citizenship’ help in examining the complex and multiple identities through which entitlements are claimed⁷⁸.

2.1 Ethnicity and capital in the informal economy

Following Nagel (2000:112), we can define ethnicity ‘as a series of crisscrossing boundaries dividing populations into multiple groups differentiated by religion, colour, language, culture, and...these boundaries are changeable and permeable’ which helps us move beyond ‘primordialist, essentialist understandings of ethnicity...as biological...or as historically or culturally determined’ (Ibid.). Use of the term ‘ethnicity’ in India refers to the regional, religious, linguistic and caste differences, rather than racial ones.

In the Indian context, Harriss-White (2002) writes, informal economy cannot be successfully disentangled from social institutions such as ethnicity and gender. The hierarchies of social institutions are reflected in the hierarchies of class so that those at the top—upper caste Hindu males—exploit those at the bottom—Muslim/Dalit/Adivasi females. Informality then becomes characterised by this hierarchy with those at the top accumulating capital at the expense of those at the bottom (Ibid.; Harris-White and Prakash, n.d).

To broaden this narrowly economic approach to informality it is important to look at the forms of capital Bourdieu (1986) outlined. Linking the ‘material and the symbolic’ (Siegmann, 2010: 348) Bourdieu’s conception looks at how “in a particular social field structured by relations of domination, subordination or homology...the capitals an individual is endowed with represent sources of power and hence influence individuals’ opportunities and well-being” (Ibid.). Bourdieu identifies economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital encompassing both the material and the symbolic.

Economic capital can be 'institutionalised in the forms of property rights' (Ibid.: 348) whereas social capital is the 'aggregate of resources linked' (Ibid.) to being part of a social network. Cultural capital in the embodied state consists of 'long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body' (Bourdieu, 1986: 47), the objectified state as 'cultural goods' (Ibid.) and in the institutional state as educational qualifications. Finally symbolic capital 'in the form of honour and prestige is the recognition and legitimisation of other kinds of capital' (Siegmann, 2010: 349). All other forms of capital can be converted into economic capital although for Bourdieu the most important is the 'accumulation of symbolic capital' (Ibid.). Thus, class becomes dependent not just on material possessions, but also symbolic accumulations.

The phenomenon of 'ethnic economy' has become increasingly talked about, particularly in context of the immigrants in first world countries. 'Ethnic economy' or, sometimes 'ethnic enclave economy' is often defined as the 'immigrant owned business sector in which immigrant work as employees of co-ethnics or as entrepreneurs' (Light, et al 1994: 65) although whether this benefits or exploits the participants is a matter of debate (Model, 1992: 63). However, other researchers have questioned the whole concept. The application of the term 'ethnic' in the context of countries of the North with large immigrant populations, Pieterse (2000:4) points out expresses a relationship of power:

Ethnicity is a marker of cultural distance but not every culture qualifies. A country's or a people's location in the hierarchy of power also matters.

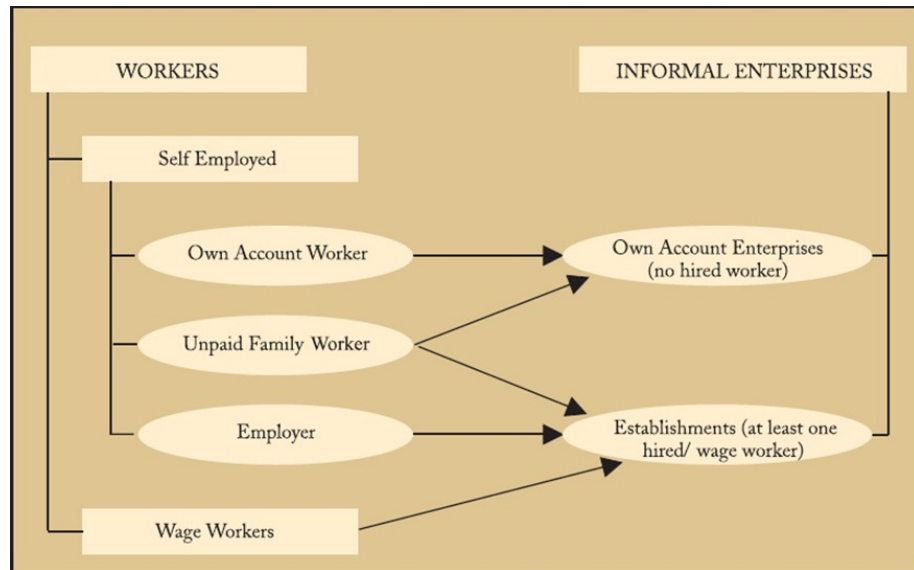
Therefore, a native American handicrafts shop or an Ethiopian restaurant is characterised as ethnic whereas a pizzeria might be considered more mainstream American. Pieterse (Ibid.) recommends replacing 'ethnic economy' with immigrant or migrant economy.

While there is some truth, in claims that subordinates in the ethnic (and gender) hierarchy occupy lower rungs of class position (Harris-White, 2002), it is important to note that ethnicity in and of itself cannot be reified as class. The informal economy is segmented into various labour status positions. Migrants from the same ethnicity do not necessarily occupy the same labour status as for instance in the case that one migrant might work (waged informal worker/unpaid family worker) in an enterprise owned by a fellow migrant of the same ethnicity (employer).

This research looks at those migrants who are working within the self-employed segment of the informal economy. 'Self-employed' is a broad and 'fuzzy' (ARC, 2007) category and including wide differences in class (Ibid.). There are further subdivisions within this category distinguishing the employers (hiring at least one worker, paid or family based) and own account workers (ARC, and Fig.1).

In Chapter 4, I will be using these concepts to look at how self-employed male migrants in the urban informal economy access and mobilise the different forms of capital through the use of multiple identities, including their ethnic identity.

FIGURE 1
Workers and enterprises in the informal economy



Source: ARC

2.2 Agency

Agency has been conceptualised within liberal academic traditions as individualistic and emancipatory. Marxist theories of agency gives us the concepts of ‘hegemony’ and ‘false consciousness’ used to explain how individuals can legitimise their own oppression through their belief systems. Feminist theorists have been particularly engaged with theories of agency and subordination. Mahmood (2001: 205) points out that feminist scholarship abandoned the overly simplistic ‘false consciousness’ argument and moved towards an understanding of the ‘operation of human agency within structures of subordination’ (Ibid.). A proponent of such an enmeshed view of agency comes from Schneider (1993). She writes about the problems of looking at agency as ‘based on notions of individual choice and responsibility, individual will and action: perceptions of a world composed of atomized individuals, acting alone, unconstrained by social forces, unmediated by social structures and systemic hardship’ (Ibid. 395-396) and the false dichotomy between victimization and agency emerging from such notions.

Ethnographies of subordinated social groups in the informal economy, particularly that of James Scott (1985) and Jan Breman (1996), similarly problematise victimization by showing that even the most marginalised are capable of resisting subordination. Breman writes that circulation itself is an act of protest fuelled by a ‘desire to keep one’s dignity intact’ (Ibid. 255). However, Breman reads the migrants’ docility and reservedness as only one side of the

coin which is complimented by violent behaviour on those who are ‘even more vulnerable, particularly women and children’ (Ibid. 256).

While acknowledging the truth of what Breman writes, I would here extend Mahmood’s (2001) critique of such conceptions which envision conscious or unconscious resistance as the only way to exert agency. Mahmood (2001) envisions a ‘docile subject’ whose agentic capacities are premised upon submission, particularly embodied submission. Mahmood, thus, broadens the scope of agency to ‘capacity for action’ and not just resistance to or desire to resist dominance (Chakraborty, 2012).

I do not think that the ideas of resistance to dominant structures and submission to the same are necessarily opposed. Instead in my analysis I use both to show how resistance and submission both form parts of the migrants’ multiple identities.

2.3 Identity/identities

I find that I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self ~ Audre Lorde (Lorde 1984: 108)

Lorde’s words bring up a problem that has plagued feminists and feminism. Identities of solidarity—as in the unified construct of ‘woman’— have often erased differences and internal complexities (such as white versus black women). Post-structuralism has broadened the conception of identity by helping us envision the multiplicity, fluidity and fragmentary nature of identities (Chhachhi and Pittin, 1995). Encapsulating this in their definition, Chhachhi and Pittin (Ibid. 6) write:

Identities refer to subject positions which are made available and mobilized in specific historical contexts. Identities are selectively mobilized in response to economic, social, political and cultural processes [and] therefore, may be constantly shifting, not only historically, but also at a given point of time. Identities involve the interplay of [factors such as] class, gender, caste, race, ethnicity, and age...

Thus, a person may inhabit multiple identities and the adoption of different identities, mobilised in response to different contexts, reflects the agentic capacity of the subject.

Elaborating, further on the concept of identity, Chhachhi (1991) writes on ‘forced identity’ distinguishing it from identities of affinity. Forced identities are identities that are imposed on an individual—an external imposition loaded with signifiers such as the stereotypical image of the Muslim man as the aggressor (see: Section 1.1.ii). However, Chhachhi (1991) shows by analysing cases from India, forced identities can also be strategically embraced to harness its perceived benefits in a context.

Identities of affinity are, on the hand, are those that an individual deploys at various moments, consciously or otherwise, foregrounding one or the other of her multiple allegiances. Writing in context of the multiple allegiances of

immigrant Muslim individuals in Britain, Hussain and Bagguley (2005:408) point out that identities are necessarily fluid in a world where individuals have multiple allegiances. I will attempt to show in my analysis that fluid identities can be used to legitimise access to certain entitlements.

2.4 Masculinity and power

Masculinity ‘traverses multiples axes of race, caste, class, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity [and] cannot be confined solely within its supposedly “proper” domain of male-female relations’ (Sinha, 1999:446). Sinha (1995, 1999) examines Indian masculinity in its historical colonial contexts to reveal how masculinities are ‘more fundamentally about relations of power’ (1999:449) and cannot be seen only as relational to femininity.

To understand how hierarchies of masculinities work within India it is important to take a look at colonial legacies. Sinha(1999:448) writes that the British colonial ‘cult of manliness and masculinity’ (Ibid: 446) reshaped the gendered relation between men of different ethnicities in India. The ‘colonialist ethnography’ which classified different ethnicities/regional groups into martial and non-martial races was to have profound impact upon the hierarchies of masculinity upto the present time (Ibid.:447). The stereotypes of the ‘manly’ Punjabi and the ‘effeminate’ Bengali, still holds today. And stereotypes based on religion like virile Muslim and effete Hindus have wider repercussions today, particularly in view of the rise of right wing Hindu nationalism.

In the Indian context today, the hypermasculinist Hindutva ideology is constructed in relation to the ‘Other’—the Muslim men (Chopra et al. 2004: 4) and reflects the hierarchical relations of power between men as has been elaborated already in Section 1.1.ii.

Connell’s (2005) classification of masculinities in their hierarchical relations to each other, namely: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalized forms of masculinities tries to overcome the challenge of essentialising ‘a working class masculinity’ or ‘a black masculinity’ (Ibid:76) when acknowledging multiple masculinities.

However, the messy realities are not necessarily bound by such neat classifications and power is not just a top-down structure. In my primary research I found various categories of masculinist subject positions that occupy different power structures at different moments and do not remain confined to any category as such. My analyses will attempt to demonstrate the usefulness of these categories as well as where messy reality overtakes and reshapes the theory.

Connell’s theory, moreover, is developed in the west (Chopra, et al, 2004: 1). For instance, Connel looks at the subordinate masculinity within the western framework of homosexuality and heteronormativity and marginalised masculinity within relations of race and class. In the Indian context, however religion and ethnic structures blend the subordinate and marginalised masculinities in many cases, as I will attempt to demonstrate in my analysis (Section 4.3).

In my research I'm looking at men working in the informal economy who are, indeed, more visible than women and yet their gendered identities cannot be captured simply by 'the analytically crude cardboard cutouts of pampered sons and patriarchs' (Roy, 2003: 20). As Jackson (2001:7) posits, '[c]onventional class analysis has a lot to say about relations between men but often as universal ungended subjects'. The understanding of how men with marginalised identity (because of ethnic, migratory and livelihood-related locations) negotiate hegemonic masculinity and power hierarchies in their relations with other men is important, particularly in the field of South Asian masculinities (Chopra et al, 2004:5). In my analysis I will try to nuance the image of the one-dimensional patriarchs through the performances of masculinities that I encountered in the field.

2.5 Entitlements and the Right to the City

A person's entitlements in a city can be defined under the category of urban citizenship which must be distinguished from the concept of a citizen in the legal sense of an individual defined by rights and duties in relation to the nation (Dupont et al, 2011:4). Urban citizenship is about 'legitimacy' (Ibid.) or 'belonging' (Bhan, 2009) and can be defined as 'a very fluid, but not porous boundary between those people whose presence is legitimate in the city and others' (Dupont et al. 2011: 4).

In context of Delhi, legitimacy as a citizen is severely curtailed (see: Section 1.1.i) for many residents of the city as Gautam Bhan (2009:141) writes:

[A] particular set of values – hygiene, environment, progress and growth-centric government, market participation, planning and order, aesthetics, notions of a 'world class city' and leisure...It is these 'sensibilities' that increasingly define the right to the city and urban citizenship in contemporary Indian cities, and they are, I suggest, representative of a new ideal citizen-subject in the making: an aspirational middle-class consumer citizen, ideally primed to live in a 'world class city'.

Looking back at Sassen's (2002:185) writing about migrants in global-cities, we can see that the rights of these delegitimised labourers in the arena of work/occupation is also eroded:

. Traditionally, employment in growth sectors has been a source of workers' empowerment; this new pattern undermines that linkage, producing a class of workers who are isolated, dispersed and effectively invisible

To understand this phenomena, caused by the imperatives globalised market economy, Standing (2009, 2011, 2012) has coined the term 'precariat'—a new class which lacks an occupational community like the traditional proletariat and is, therefore, much more fragmented (Ibid. 2012:1). Internally heterogeneous, the precariat, 'a class in the making', consists of 'millions with insecure jobs, housing and social entitlements' (Ibid.). 'Migrants make up a large share of the world's precariat. They are...in danger of becoming...demonised and made the scapegoat of problems not of their making' (Standing, 2011:90).

In order to define the kinds of rights and entitlements that the precariat can and cannot claim, Standing (2011:94) uses the term *denizen*—someone who has less rights—and therefore, less legitimacy—than a citizen.

Combining the concept of urban citizenship and envisioning the delegitimised in the urban spaces as ‘denizens’ gives a frame through which to look at the Muslim migrant men in Delhi and their experiences of discriminations (Section 1.1.i). In this context, to challenge the marginalisations and claim entitlement, the concept of the right to the city (RTTC) seems suitable.

In the Lefebvrian origins of the concept, RTTC is a common right as opposed to an individual right to property (Roy, 2005:155). In both Lefebvre’s vision and Harvey’s (2008) expansion of that, RTTC emerges as a critique of the imperatives of global capitalism in its manifestations through the processes of urbanization today. Harvey (2008: 39) writes:

[T]he metropolis is now the point of massive collision...over the accumulation by dispossession....and the developmental drive that seeks to colonize space for the affluent

Dupont et. al (2011:2) points out a second use of the concept in the way in which it is used by social movements as ‘a bundle of rights that can be obtained only by engaging with the institutions of the developmental state’. In its current formulations the UNESCO/UN-HABITAT, however, relegates RTTC beyond the realm of positive, juridical rights and into that of the moral (Baxi, 2011:17).

In Chapter 5 I will use RTTC to critically look at the vision of development as adopted in the MPD-2021 and examine implications it has on the entitlements of the Muslim migrant men in Delhi.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have tried to outline a broad framework looking at the theories of agency and identity—particularly from a post-structuralist understanding—as well as urban citizenship and entitlements, keeping in mind that within the informal economy categories such as class, ethnicity and capital take on different contextual meanings.

3 Methodology

This chapter deals with the experiences in conducting fieldwork as well as the choices and strategies and dilemmas. The sample size was bigger but I chose to focus on two groups of Muslim migrants in south Delhi—the restaurant owners of Afghan origin and Bengali speaking rickshaw-pullers—for the analysis.

3.1 Data generation techniques

[Q]uestions of politics and epistemologies of location have become increasingly central to...social science research...[C]lose connections between personal and representational process has framed feminist research ~Bolak (1996: 107-108)

The topic of enquiry in my research, namely, multiple narratives of identity, is something that has been a recurrent theme in feminist research. The conception of identity as a multi-locational site which is always in flux (Chapter 2) necessitates the acknowledgement of the researcher's presence into the narratives she creates. The 'epistemologies of location' as Bolak (1996), puts it are important in understanding the narratives of identity. Feminist researchers like Bolak (Ibid.) and Henry (2007) reflect on their methodology through a mode of constructive self-critique which has come to be defined as an important part of feminist research methods (Ackerly and True, 2010: 53). I felt that qualitative methodology, with feminist accentuation of situated, subjective knowledge, is suited for my purposes. My situatedness in the context (Section 3.2) was an important part of my decision to undertake this research.

I migrated to Delhi, for work, from my home city of Kolkata in 2009. I was living away from family, friends and a familiar city for the first time in my life. The experience of dislocation from the familiar helped me empathise with the other migrants. The migrants that I met in my daily interactions, living (and working) in a colony in South Delhi⁵ mostly comprised rickshaw-pullers, auto drivers and shopkeepers (including restaurant owners). This was further nuanced by my work in an NGO which was doing research on migrants in the informal economy. In a Delhi famous for its righteous middle class indignation about rude 'autowallahs'⁶(Bhan, 2012) and the menace of other poor migrants (Baviskar, 2006) I found myself chatting with migrants, some of whom even spoke in a familiar tongue⁷. The interactions were not always smooth—there was awkwardness, even hostility sometimes. I was often very aware of the differences in class positions. The conversations either happened over an economic transaction in which I was on the paying side, or in my capacity as a researcher employed by an NGO, visiting squatter settlements. In a city in which the 'middle-class consumer citizen' (Bhan, 2009) is increasingly the only legitimate mode of belonging, these interactions, in and by themselves, were my ways of challenging the dominant script. This research paper is part of the same processes—my attempt at locating myself in a melange of cross cutting identities and allegiances that is Delhi.

⁵ Researchers (Dupont, 2004; Datta, 2011) have long commented on the variegated socio-spatial organisation of Delhi describing it variously as a 'mongrel city' (Dutta, 2011:752), 'a city without spatial continuity' (Dupont, 2004: 158) and so on. The south has been primarily envisioned as a middle class area with government colonies and resettlement colonies constructed since the early fifties through and in the Master Plans of the Delhi Development Authority (Ibid.).

⁶ Auto drivers

⁷ Dialects of Bengali, my mother tongue, vary regionally but are also marked by one's class. See also section 4.1.i, particularly footnote 24.

The methodological approach I selected needed to incorporate and help me to reflect on my positionality. My familiarity with feminist methodologies which emphasize the personal and the reflexive was instrumental in helping me choose qualitative methodologies over quantitative ones. The recognition that “how we represent and account for others’ experiences is intimately related to who we are” (Bolak, 1996:108) in feminist epistemologies makes it necessary to underscore the process of knowledge creation.

In course of conducting the research, I knew that my subject positions and perceived identities would intersect with those of the respondents’ creating narratives that were riddled with intersections of the different identities. Crenshaw (1991) uses intersectionality to map the complex interconnections between gender and other structures of identity. However, I feel that my methodological approach benefits from Fereee’s (2011) understanding of ‘interactive intersectionality’ as an ‘on-going historical process’ as it looks at identities as processes made and remade through intersections in which structure and agency, institutions and individuals are all enmeshed. (Ibid: 56)

I used semi-structured interviews as a method of data generation that was both flexible but at the same time, allowed ‘guided focus’ (Ackerly and True, 2010: 168). In pointing to the merits of semi-structured interviews, Ackerly and True (Ibid.) point out that being more like conversation, semi-structured interviews allow the respondent ‘to give answers that do not conform to the researcher’s (known or unknown) expectations’. It therefore becomes a more equal way of co-producing data (Ibid. 169) with the respondents thereby further problematizing positivist claims. Further, I also decided to use the ethnographic tool of participant observation. As a person already embedded in the context, this seemed a way to deepen my understanding outside interviews. Section 3.2 demonstrates how issues of accessibility made pre constructed ideas about conducting interviews problematic through the exigencies of the field. The flexibility and processional nature of feminist methodology helped me in my strategic and ad hoc application of methodological tools.

3.2 Selection of location and respondents

I decided to focus primarily on the Lajpat Nagar-Bhogal (LNB) area with the ubiquitous rickshaw-pullers and the fast multiplying Afghan eateries. However, my analysis is also informed by some interviews conducted in Khirki and everyday lived experiences in Shahpur Jat where I stayed in course of my three months long field visit. The choice of the locations mentioned above were certainly influenced by concerns of feasibility, accessibility and above all familiarity. In LNB, Afghan businesses and Bengali rickshaw-pullers are prominently visible and part of the daily lives of non-Afghan and non-Bengali residents of and commuters to⁸ the area. I did not have a mediating gatekeeper in the form of an NGO or a person for an introduction into the field. Therefore, it was very important to be able to have access to my respondents

⁸ Lajpat Nagar is home to one of the most popular markets in South Delhi—a mix of street vendors and established shops.

as a matter of course. The visibility of the rickshaw-pullers and restaurant owners in an informal setting that was not hidden or underground was the perfect field setting in which to direct my enquiries.

Both LNB and Khirki are also locations where I have lived in my two years in Delhi and so I already had a degree of familiarity with them which made it easier for me to conduct interviews. For instance, knowing where the rickshaw stands or the restaurants were located, helped me in conducting interviews as well as making observations.

TABLE 1
Groups of respondents and sample size

Ethnicity; Location of work; Numbers	Occupation	Numbers used in analysis	Mode of interview	Mode of recording	Number of interviews per person	Location of interview	Legal citizenship status
Afghans from Khirki: 6	Unemployed, unpaid careworker, employed at UNHCR livelihood centre	2 (Anwar and his wife)	Semi structured in group and individually.	Manually during interviews, digitally (with Anwar)	Thrice with Anwar, once with the others	Home of Anwar, neutral public space (shopping mall)	Refugee card holders
Afghans from LNB; 6	Restaurant owner/co-owner, Bakery owner, Students working at bakery	4 (Afzal, Asif, Tariq and Abid)	Semi structured, Semi structured by prior appointment (Afzal)+ Participant observation	Digitally (Afzal) and manually during interviewing	Twice (with Abid) once with the rest	Restaurants and bakery, in most cases after eating there	Refugee card holder (3), Under RSD (1), Indian citizen (1), Afghan national with IndianBuisness Visa(1)
Bengalis from LNB : 10+	Rickshaw drivers (see section 4.2)	2 (Jhagru, Mazar and respondents in group interview) and minor findings from a large number of participants	Semi structured individual, semi-structured group, informal+participant observations	Manually during interviewing, digitally (group interview) and writing from memory (informal interviews)	Multiple with those living in Lajpat Nagar, Single with those living in Nizamuddin/Kale Khan	During rickshaw rides (informal interviews) at rickshaw stands, at a tea stall (group interview)	Legal citizen with Aadhar cards (issued by Delhi government), Voters id cards (issued at village of origin) and no documents
Others : 3	Hindu neighbor, (Hindu) Activist-Lawyer: Samira, (Hindu) Grocery Store Owner	3	Informal conversation, Semi structured interview (Samira)	Writing from memory(informal interviews) and manually during interviewing	Single and Multiple (Samira)	Residential neighbourhoods of LNB and Samira's office	(presumed) Legal citizens

The selection of respondents was primarily based on accessibility. Lacking a gate-keeper—and failing to acquire one even when access became nearly impossible—my only mode of eliciting responses became approaching the respondents at their locations of work directly and hoping that it would lead to

snowballing. In case of the Bengali speaking respondents, as I had anticipated, I was able to use my ‘authentic’ (Henry, 2007) identity as a fellow-native and migrant to Delhi with varying degrees of success, although issues of trust (see section 3.4) complicated the actual mode of interviewing and recording data. But snowball sampling (Ackerly and True, 2010: 157) became more or less successful with respondents voluntarily introducing me to others who were from the same village.

With Afghans on the other hand, being othered on every possible location of identity—as female, local (as opposed to being migrant), young/untrustworthy—the tactic of approaching did not work. In course of trying to access respondents, I ended up interviewing an activist-lawyer from a refugee rights NGO as well as some (more) willing Afghan refugees in Khirki, a second location where Afghan immigrants in south Delhi live in moderate numbers. However, I failed to interview any Afghans from Lajpat Nagar till I started making strategic use of a male co-researcher. With him I was able to access to restaurant owners in course of their daily work in an ad-hoc fashion. The table below shows the number of respondents, the methods of interviewing them and the use of narratives thus collected in the analysis.

3.3 Techniques for data analysis

In looking for narratives of identity in fragmentary conversations (created through the ad hoc and messy interview process) I created tables and mind-maps to identify the main issues at stake, in my case—the different kinds of identities in each group, the interplay among these competing/complementary identities within the group, and the hierarchy of identities between the groups. This process was one of the most difficult as the ‘groups’ so defined and as they stand in Table 1, column one, were part of my findings, rather than being predefined at the beginning of analysis. This process of trying to map out the identities was aided by an intersectional approach to the data. Analysing the interplay of power in the researcher-respondent relationship (see section 3.4) I was able to identify some key themes which would then emerge as locations of identity. Masculinity(ies) was one of the earliest themes that emerged from the detailed narrative analysis of the interviews. I started from an initial position of looking at ‘ethnicity’ as a stable category to base my analysis on. However, as my analysis deepened, it revealed the myriad manifestations of ‘interactive intersectionality’ (Feree, 2011) which problematized such uniform structures.

3.4 Reflexivity

Henry’s (2007) essay with its detailed account of her own experience in the field shows how the researcher’s mantle is often ‘unsettling’ in the field. The difficulties she experienced as a young, female researcher pertained to the ways in which power-relations expressed themselves at the intersection of the researcher-respondent intersections. She coins the term ‘authority’ and ‘authenticity’ to look at how the researcher’s role can be legitimised or discredited through operations of intersectional power relations.

Henry's (2007) work has helped me reflect on and make sense of my field experiences. The feeling of being 'in-authenticated' and subordinated was very unsettling for me in a few interactions. During a group interview with rickshawpullers at a roadside tea-stall, one of the by-standers, snatched the notebook out of my hands and started reading the questions I had written in Bengali. He stood out as better-dressed and when I tried to ascertain how he was related to the group of rickshaw-pullers, he dismissed me with easy authority. I felt humiliated and anxious at the same time. The note book had a lot of personal reflections on the rickshaw-pullers I had encountered so far. His insistence of reading out my writing in a low voice made me feel exposed to others who I felt had trusted me enough to speak to me. He clearly commanded some respect among the rickshaw-pullers because many—themselves illiterate—were looking at him expectantly. I had to wait till he finished reading my notes, taking his time, in spite of my insistence that I had to go somewhere else.

During the course of the same group-interaction, a rickshaw-puller asked me what they could expect from talking to me. I had anticipated such questions and in introducing myself usually emphasized my need to talk to them in order to complete an assignment. I had hoped that my emphasis on being a *student* and framing the interview within *my* educational requirements would decrease expectations. However, the question made me uncomfortable. My halting answers, in which I said that I did not think they would gain anything material from it, seemed to embarrass my respondents as much it made me uncomfortable. They all made expressions of dissent telling me that surely this will help. One of the younger rickshaw-pullers even went so far as to say tried that surely if they supported me I could become a 'neta' (leader) who would then espouse their cause. Researchers like Abbott (2007), in trying to address the dilemma caused by such questions, accentuate their positionality (Ibid. 226) in relation to the respondents. I have tried to do them same in my research.

When I failed to access the restaurant-owners in the LNB, I took the help of my friend. As a man from Sweden he was more easily accepted in the role of the researcher with me in a subordinate position as his translator. His race, gender and location all were a better fit for the role of the authentic and authoritative researcher. This created issues of exploitation of trust. Similarly, the instances where I gathered data from informal conversations/interviews from rickshaw-pullers were also ethically problematic. As I reflected on these two instances of not having explicit consent, I realised that the idea of written consent itself was problematic. The hierarchy of written consent seemed to embody a positivist separation between researcher and respondents. The realities of the context were that many of my respondents were illiterate and/or deeply suspicious of any form of documentation (digital or manual) produced through hierarchical relations of power by researchers (the knowledge-producing NGO worker/academic researcher or the scrutinising government official) with opaque and suspicious motives. And in adopting the role of the less authoritative translator or a chatty passenger, I was after all embodying, if consciously, the fluidity and fragmentary nature of identities.

While I was less comfortable in these roles than as a feminist, for instance, even in asserting that identity of affinity I have encountered difficulties.

Lastly, in order to protect the identities of my respondents, all names have been changed and particularisation of certain facts that could potentially be used to identify them has been avoided.

To summarise, the act of knowledge-production itself is ethically problematic as feminists, as well as post-structuralist and post-colonial theorists have demonstrated. Therefore adopting a methodology which disables objective claims and objectification of the respondents was seen as a necessary pre-requisite for this research. As a feminist, 'situated knowledge-production' seemed the only answer to myriad ethical and political dilemmas. This chapter on methodology, following Fereé's (2011:63) exhortation to feminist researchers, is 'a modest claim to limited, fallible but strategically useful framing [that opens the door for dialogues] allowing a reflexive approach...with which feminists can more broadly challenge the framework of inequality that enmesh us all'

4 Identities, agency and entitlements

This chapter analyses fixed and fluid identities through primary research data by looking at multiple sites of identity formation such as ethnicity and location, occupational class, and gender. It also looks at questions of power and agency through the lens of identities and concludes with reflections on entitlements, mobilised through the interplay of identities.

4.1 Problematizing forced ethnic identities

This chapter looks to question the concept of internally cohesive and externally bounded ethnic identities. Pieterse (2000) writes that the ability to name a group as an ethnic group points to relationships of power most often reserved by the state and other dominant groups. Chhachhi(1991) elaborates on her concept of 'forced identities' in the context of communal riots. A forced identity thrust upon an individual implies the burden of signifiers attached with that act of naming/labelling. For instance, Muslims in India carry the double burden of being 'victims' (such as in SCR's recommendation for positive bias from the state in order to empower Muslims) as well as 'aggressors' (as in the depiction of Muslims by the Hindu right) .

The following sections elaborate upon 'forced' ethnic identity in the construction of a unitary or cohesive Afghan/Bengali identity. These ethno-regional categories are reified and essentialised with the burden of imposed significations which are constantly contested in practice. The fieldwork was undertaken with the purpose of looking at two ethno-regionally distinct sections of Muslim migrant population in Delhi in order to problematize the homogenous category of uniform 'Muslim' identity.

4.1.i Questioning Bengaliness

One of the first respondents, Mazar, who with his hour-long interview provided rich insights into the lives of rickshaw pulling migrants like him, was from Katihar—a district in the state of Bihar bordering the Malda district in West Bengal. He spoke in Hindi-laced Bengali. Halfway through the interview a fellow rickshaw-puller from Uttar Pradesh (UP) accosted him quite aggressively and said that obviously, being a Bihari, he could not have knowledge of Bengali. Mazar explained, in perfect, unaccented Hindi how he also knew Bengali, although he is a Bihari. His emphasis on the Bihari identity—the knowledge of Bengali not diluting that—was striking and definitely helped to diffuse the situation. Mobilising his linguistic skill as an embodied form of cultural capital, he was able to position himself as a ‘Bihari’ (to the aggressive UP man) and a Bengali (to me). The initial dilemmas about whether or not to use this interview—and others following it where the respondents were from Jharkhand or Bihar and not West Bengal—were soon resolved as it became clear that such categorical purities were problematic.

MAP 2
Map of Malda, Kathiwar and Godda districts showing the border with Bangladesh



Source: Maps of India.

None of the respondents self-identified as Bengali although they would display assent when I claimed affinity on the basis of that. Most often the respondents identified on the basis of their location, usually district: Malda (West Bengal), Farakka (Jharkhand/West Bengal), Katihar(Bihar)⁹ (see Map 2). However,

⁹ Although one respondent did say that people who come to work here are from, among other places, Bangladesh ('odik' which would translate as 'other side'), no one admitted to being from Bangladesh and this was not explored any further because it did not elaborate on the research question. Ethnographic research on Bengali migrants in Delhi reveals discrimination based on the alleged 'illegal Bangladeshi' label (Ramachandran, 1999, 2003). Thus, directing queries about identity along those lines

within closer bonds of affinity, for instance among fellow rickshaw-pullers, the primary way of identifying collectively was through village-based kinship. Mitra et al. (2011) corroborate this finding by pointing out that fictive kinship based on villages of origin forms basis of social networks among migrants. A very common occurrence was introducing other rickshaw-pullers to me as, 'He's also from my village, didi'¹⁰.

So the category of 'Bengali' became broadened into 'Bengali speakers'. In course of a group interview, the respondents unanimously agreed that discrimination was directed at the 'Biharis'. When asked to elaborate, one respondent answered:

People here do not know that there are rickshaw-pullers who are Bengalis. They only know that rickshaw-pullers are from Bihar. So they abuse us by calling us Bihari.

Contrasting the response of Mazar to the rickshaw-puller from UP, with that of the respondent quoted above, it becomes clear how strategic the deployment of ethno-regional identities can be. In a country dominated by regional politics, the hierarchy of regional power is figured into identity. In the interaction between Mazar and the UP rickshaw-puller, being Bihari initially was synonymous with deception (deceiving the interviewer about Bengali identity). In the second case, being Bihari actually becomes a 'forced' identity that is synonymous with poverty and being powerless¹¹, irrespective of actual geographical origins.

Linguistic particularities, in the form of dialect, vocabulary and pronunciation—as markers of difference, particularly of class,—was present in every interaction I had¹². From Mazar giving me examples of his kind of Bengali (underscoring the difference with mine); to me misinterpreting words such as wife: 'istiree' in the dialect of one of my respondents from Malda and 'stree' in my tongue—the language used by my respondents and me were often

would be reinforcing an unimportant distinction used to extort from and harass Bengali speakers engaged in the informal economy in Delhi.

¹⁰ 'Didi' in Bengali denotes elder sister. The term when used by (adult) strangers denotes the double bind of closeness and respect. Even though I was probably younger than most of the men I interviewed they would use the term didi (as opposed to 'bon' meaning younger sister): probably as an acknowledgement of my position of authority over them as someone belonging to a higher class and often, also, a paying customer of their service.

¹¹ In a judgement reversing the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's (MCD) upper ceiling to the number of rickshaws, the Supreme Court of India characterized the rickshaw-pullers as 'weak and meek' advising the MCD to 'take on someone its own size' (Times Of India, 2012).

¹² Anindita Ghosh (2006) writes that Bengali became an arena for contestations of power from the eighteenth century onwards. The standardized Bengali written and spoken language emerged along with the new class of Hindu, western educated, middleclass which attempted to rid the language of its colloquial forms which came to be seen as a mark of the lower classes. Even today Bengali is fragmented by regional dialects as well as class, and my respondents did not speak the *same* language as me.

different. Thus, even the category of 'Bengali-speaking' emerged as heterogenous.

The Bengali national consciousness evolved, primarily as a response to colonial discriminations, exclusively involving Hindu (upper castes) and ('educated') middle class (Sinha, 1999) and often actively alienating the marginalised groups like Muslim peasantry (Chowdhury, 1998: 161). And while it seemed very natural for me to deploy my 'Bengaliness' and through it, find Bengalis who were pulling rickshaws, such broad ethno-linguistic/regional categories had little meaning for the respondents.

Following Rapport and Dawson (1998), it can be claimed, then, that these circular/seasonal migrants do identify themselves in relation to a place of fixity, an idea of 'home'. However, this home is not some abstract, 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) of Bengalis which cuts across other differences such as class, religion or region; but is the much more tangible physical places of origin. These places (villages) moreover, play an active role in their migration and livelihoods and continue to dictate social relations in the destination of migration, as the following sections demonstrate.

4.1.ii 'Afghans' in Delhi

As Table 1 demonstrates, the Afghans in Delhi are a myriad group of people. While the most obvious categories of internal difference might be the refugee/migrant status and specific ethno-religious categories, the reality is messier. In reports and articles Afghans have been polarised into dispossessed victims (Bose, 2004; The Hindu, 2007) or, more recently as successful entrepreneurs (Saini, 2012; Stillwagon, 2011a). In the field of entrepreneurial activities, Afghans have historically been associated in India with activities such as money-lending (Bose, 2004) and dry-fruits business (Stillwagon, 2011a). Moreover, a number of occupations such as translators, tourist guides (particularly related to the large-scale phenomenon of Afghan medical tourism in Delhi), restaurant-owners, real-estate agents, among others, have mushroomed around the increasing number of Afghans visiting and settling in Delhi (personal interviews with Anwar, Afzal and Asif).

Yet as Stillwagon's (2011b) primary research in Bhogal shows, the categorical separation of refugees with economic migrants is not tenable:

[T]he restaurant manager: a tall, lean Afghan man wearing a fitted black dress shirt [says that h]e and his family migrated to India five years ago as refugees, because of high unemployment and child kidnapping at home.

Security (arising from conflict) and economic security emerge as contiguous issues through my primary research as well. Abid, the owner of a bakery in LNB, insists that he came to Delhi only for economic reasons. Yet, he is on a refugee card and not a visa. Asif, the co-owner of a restaurant in the LNB area is on a RSD waiting list. He left Afghanistan because of issues of security and came to Delhi on the invitation of a previous colleague who wanted a partner in his restaurant business. He has been in India for a few months and feels

frustrated at the lack of opportunities to continue his study as a person without any stable legal status¹³.

On the other hand Tariq, the owner of a successful restaurant in Lajpat Nagar as well as with other business interests, is on a business visa and regularly goes back to Kabul where his family stays, 'particularly during the hot months'. Anwar (from Khirki), currently unemployed and previously in a high profile job, insists, however, that there are only refugees who left Afghanistan fearing for their lives as most had well-paying jobs. This is clearly not the whole picture and one respondent, who shall remain unnamed, goes as far as to say that Afghans on medical and tourist visas are also setting up businesses in India, taking advantage of the legal loopholes. Thus, even internally the community has different perceptions about the reasons for leaving Afghanistan.

As far as internally recognised stable markers of identity goes, most respondents were reluctant to reveal their ethnic origins (like Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, etc¹⁴) but less reluctant to identify by language (most seemed to be native Dari speakers with knowledge of Pashto and Hindi-Urdu, though they were equivocal about identifying as either Dari or Pashto speakers). Again, all readily identified as Muslim but were often reluctant to identify as Shia/Sunni.

I chose to focus on restaurant owners from LNB because they represented a melange of these different positions and also because of their visibility (section 3.2). Visibility of the 'Afghans' is, however, problematic. As Anwar pointed out, Hindu and Sikh Afghans were mostly indistinguishable to the Indians because of language, physical appearance and cultural practices. I discovered this to be true on many occasions when I would be surprised to learn that a particular business was being run by Afghan Sikhs or when I would hear Sikh gentlemen speaking with each other in Dari. Thus, those who are visibly identifiable as 'Afghans' are usually, almost always, Muslims. Samira used the term 'ethnic' Afghan to refer to the Muslims which seems to imply that only Muslim Afghans have a real claim upon the term 'Afghan' and that Hindus and Sikhs are not authentic Afghans. This was elaborated by Afzal in his interview:

¹³ Refugee card holding individuals can study in both schools and universities. However, private institutions often refuse to recognize these cards, issued by the UNHCR. Furthermore, as refugees they have limited mobility, often being confined within Delhi. Hotel owners and government officials, particularly outside Delhi, often do not accept the refugee status card as a proof of identity (personal interviews with Anwar and Asif).

¹⁴ Much has been written about the ethnic divisions fuelling conflict in Afghanistan, especially in the context of US invasion of Afghanistan. However, Brasher's (2011) analysis reveals how the fixity of such ethnic categories in Afghanistan, is fairly recent and the result of historical events. 'The localized, ambiguous and fluid state of identity formation was significantly altered by the communist revolution, Soviet invasion, and resultant widespread mujahideen resistance' (Ibid. 112). Whereas the 'Soviet-backed Communist regime officially recognized eight nationalities' a more recent survey has identified fifty five (Ibid).

Afzal: Afghan Sikhs are basically Indian origin [if you] trace back and that's why Indian government provide[s] them with visa easily. So they're staying legally.

Me: So they are coming on business visas?

Afzal: No...as of now they have residential permit, RP. So they have no problem, they can work. Government can't object [to] them, you know. Because they are Indian origin so till the time they can get their naturalisation they are treated as an Indian, half-Indian...

Thus, these interviews reveal that the 'Afghan' as a stable identifier is not a tenable category. While the respondents strategically lay claim to an Afghan identity for different reasons, it is internally differentiated.

4.1.iii Forced identities and discrimination

It interestingly emerged that while the forced identification as 'Muslim' created negative stigma associated with Bengali speakers (as 'Bangladeshi infiltrators'¹⁵), it did not seem to correspond with the experiences of Afghans living in Delhi. Most of my respondents of Afghan origin confirmed that while they had to pay higher rents as compared to 'locals', they were not routinely harassed by the authorities as for instance is commonplace in Iran, for Afghan refugees (personal interview). Yet, many also agreed that the general perception about people from Afghanistan equated them with Talibans (personal interviews). Abid, one of my respondents from Mazhar-e-Sharif and the most cautious and tight-lipped of the respondents, tried to distance himself from the 'disturbances' in Afghanistan repeatedly during the two interviews. He said he did not know about the situation since nothing 'like that' happened in the cities but only in remote places. He even pointed to my collaborator saying:

Actually I don't know much about the situation...These people [white foreigners] will know much more than me about those things.

In explaining why the 'housing apartheid' (Ashok and Ali, 2012) did not affect Muslims of Afghan origin in a non-Muslim residential neighbourhood like Lajpat Nagar, Afzal offered an explanation. According to him the neighbourhood, originally a refugee colony set up for refugees (Hindus and Sikhs) leaving Pakistan during the partition of 1947, was more sympathetic to the plight of refugees having to leave their country of origin. This seems not entirely probable—in Bhogal with its higher concentration of Muslim Afghans, the Delhi Police's public service announcements in the busy market area consists of messages cautioning residents about the necessity of verifying the identities of people seeking employment or seeking to rent property so as to

¹⁵ My respondents were mostly silent and reluctant to respond directly my questions about discrimination on the basis of being Muslim and whether that led to stereotypes about Bangladeshi immigrants. However, in course of my interaction with Bengali Muslim waste pickers through my work in an NGO, I was repeatedly told about police harassment based on such stereotypes (see also: Dalmia, 2009).

avoid terrorists¹⁶. All the respondents of Afghan origins mentioned the fact that they had to pay higher rents, which might also act as a mitigating factor for the landlords who benefit more. Overall, it does seem that the ‘Taliban-Afghan’ stereotype has not become hardened into official practise and mainstream discourse (through the efforts of the Hindu right) as in the case of the ‘Bangladeshi-infiltrators’. And thus the ‘official script’ (Ramachandran, 1999) seems to considerably affect and influence everyday social practices of discrimination. While people may conflate Afghans with Taliban and terrorists¹⁷, the official leniency towards Afghans has influenced actual practice.

Interestingly enough, the rickshaw-pullers, although very forthcoming on most subjects were very reluctant to discuss religious discrimination. When pressed, the respondents in the group interview identified the police as harassers. But, particularly, when I tried to ascertain harassment pertaining to being identified as Bengali-speaking Muslims, there was uncomfortable, but resolute silence in several interview situations¹⁸. As Poland and Pederson (1998:294) point out, silences in qualitative research can be ‘profoundly meaningful’. However, rather than trying to analyse the meaning of the silences, I would like to suggest that the silences on part of the respondents was one of the most important way of resisting the efforts of an outsider-researcher to probe the realms of the personal. While the silence might indicate the fear of being identified as Muslim to an obviously Hindu (-named) researcher, it was also an indication that resistance to someone from a superior class position cannot always take the form of a direct, verbal refusal to answer. And silence, therefore, is a strategy to assert certain boundaries that I was stepping over through my questions. Silencing, is usually seen in a negative light, and silences often taken to affirm subordination, fear and oppression. But whether or not it indicates fear, it clearly demonstrates agentic capacity in the respondents’ refusal to reveal.

4.2 Identities of affinity related to livelihoods

This section will examine how occupational status is reflected in the self-identifications of the rickshaw-pullers and restaurant owners. These claims will be examined in light of Standing’s (2011) elaboration of occupational insecurity

¹⁶ The message (in Hindi) also exhorts the residents to report ‘suspicious persons’ and ends with the salutary ‘Jai Hind!’ or ‘hail to India’ in a scary association with the Hindutva rhetoric. These messages are particularly noticeable because of their complete absence from the nearby, busier Lajpat Nagar market where the cautionary messages pertain to warnings about pickpocketing and other similar messages for the consumers.

¹⁷ A casual chat with one of my Hindu neighbours revealed this to be true. In course of a conversation I mentioned Afghan restaurants and he commented on the rising number of ‘these people’ and expressed his fears for security.

¹⁸ Exception to this silence came during an informal conversation during a rickshaw ride, where the rickshaw-puller, on being asked if it was difficult to drive rickshaws during the fasts of the Ramzan, vehemently exclaimed that he was Hindu.

in a changing global economic regime. Bourdieu's (1986) elaboration on the forms of capital will be used to elaborate on the occupational hierarchies.

4.2.i Occupational Identities

Connell (2005:55-56) points out centrality of the (male) body in the labour market and that the division of class is reflected in the embodied possession of 'skill' (middle class men) versus the possession of 'force' (working class men). In the following analysis, occupational identity is related to class by examining the respondents' labour status as well as their identification with the 'force'- 'skill' binary.

The rickshaw-pullers are seasonal, male migrants who come to Delhi without families. The ARC (2007) has identified this group as the most vulnerable among the self-employed section within the informal economy. While, they are classified as own account workers, in reality their means of production is not completely controlled by them: they rent the rickshaws at forty to fifty rupees per day¹⁹. This, then, destabilises neat labour status categories. While circular migration in itself points to multiple occupations--all respondents owned and often worked on agricultural land--the migration itself was multi-locational and spanning multiple jobs. Respondents indicated that they worked as construction labourers and embroidery workers besides pulling rickshaws. Standing's (2009) argument about the erosion of occupational communities and the consequent erosion of the strength of bargaining seems eminently applicable in the case of the migrant rickshaw-pullers. Jhagru, one of the most voluble respondents said:

We don't have unity here...Among people from the same village, yes but not among people from the different villages. If in a Bengali village in Farakka someone slaps a van driver²⁰, there will be hartals²¹ ...Here someone can come and slap me around...because I have nobody, I'm powerless here...If we [from the same village] try to set up a union, then the others [residents of other villages] will come and create a lot of hullabaloo

Thus, village based communities take precedence over occupational associations in the city, although this picture seems different in the villages of origin. The more stable occupational identities in villages become much more blurry with migration to the cities. At the same time, occupations undertaken

¹⁹ The Article 3(1) of the Section 481 of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act (1958) stipulates that a rickshaw puller must be the rickshaw owner and a person can own only one rickshaw (with exceptions in case of physically challenged persons and widows, in which case they are allowed to own upto five rickshaws) (See: Kishwar, 2001). However, from the primary research it emerged that most owners, from whom the respondents rented, possessed dozens of rickshaws.

²⁰ Cycle vans are a rural form of transportation, absent from cities

²¹ Hartal literally translates as 'strike' in English. However, hartal in contemporary politics of India (and West Bengal) can connote more than just peaceful civil disobedience and assume the form of forceful shutdowns and violence in a show of power.

in the villages often become part of more stable occupational identity. Working on agricultural land was the most common occupation. Mazar, for example, said that the remittances from his work in Delhi (and other cities like Surat and Pune) went into buying seeds, fertilizers and pesticide. Even if some of them spent four months or less, per year, in the villages, most talked about taking part in farming. Jhagru, for instance, went into detailed descriptions of the crop cycle and how that reflects the rhythms of migration:

After this [monsoon] I will go home for the reaping of paddy...then [it will be time for] sowing wheat [and lentils] and after that I will be coming back here

Some migrants viewed this work as a hiatus from their actual occupations. Ali, from Malda, viewed his work in the cities as a temporary strategy to avoid impoverishment. His land has been made uncultivable by riverine floods a few years ago. Working as a rickshaw-puller paid more than the wage of a day labourer in his village and he will continue to come to the city until his land becomes cultivable again. Only one respondent said that he came to Delhi to earn capital to invest back into his business of selling clothes in Malda.

The label ‘rickshaw-pullers’ used in this research as well as other reports like the ARC, is clearly not how these migrants identify themselves but more a way of identifying them in the official script. Though it emerges as problematic, I am continuing to use the term in this paper for the sake of convenience.

In terms of the force-skill binary, Jhagru’s testimony on agriculture was definitely given with the fact in mind that his audience, me, was unskilled in the ways of crop seasons. However, rickshaw-pulling was not defined as a ‘skill’, probably because it was not identified within the realm of ‘occupation’. The idea of force (or lack thereof) is discussed in detail in Section 4.3.

‘Skill’ emerged as an important locus of identity in the responses of the restaurant owners. When asked how he set up his shop, Abid said:

Here no one has the know-how. I made this oven myself. I wouldn’t trust anyone else to do it properly.

An erstwhile owner of a similar bakery in Mazar-e-Sharif, Abid has come to Delhi because business was not so good back home. He has refugee status under the mandate of the UNHCR. His employees followed him from Mazar-e-Sharif, once he set up his business. In spite, of his self-proclaimed skills as a baker, the actual baking was done by the three workers (also card holding refugees). In case of Abid’s enterprise, the difference in labour status between the employer and the employees was not very stark--all four shared a room in the neighbourhood. This is probably due to the common place of origin, and may even be actual kinship bonds. Abid was not very forthcoming in his responses.

Afzal, definitely occupying a higher class position than Abid with his diversified business enterprises, also occupied the same labour status category of an employer. The labour status differences between him and his employees, however, were far greater. He was much more invested in the idea of skill as

opposed to kinship. He was at pains to establish that he did not offer jobs on the basis of a common ethnic identity:

I know a guy some days back he...came to my place [to ask for a job in the restaurant. He said] 'I've been here for the past one month and I don't have money.... I can do any [work]. But I can only work for two months...I'll work I'll earn and then I can go back [to Afghanistan]'. I said no, I don't want...Most people [Afghans] are unemployed. Only those with skills of cooking and working in restaurant [are employed]

Kinship—whether through affirmation or denial of it—frequently emerged as an important condition in defining identities of affinity within occupational communities. The next section looks at how kinship identities are mobilized in occupations.

4.2.ii Operation of capitals through identities of locational affinities

Prasad-Aleyamma (2011:180) points out that migration 'needs to be viewed as a social as well as economic process'. Bremen (1996:260), in context of labour circulation, writes how the informal migrants' 'collective identities are asserted and reproduced' and 'investment' in loyalties of 'caste, religion, regional origin, etc' (Ibid. 257) is valued. The role of social capital through networks of solidarity among migrants in the Indian context has been examined by, among others, Mitra et al.(2011). This section will look at the operations of social capital based on identities of location.

Identities based on the locational origin is often the bond that holds the migrant community together as mentioned briefly in sections 4.1 and 4.1.1. In a world of constant circulation, the locational fixity of 'home' becomes a powerful identity of affinity (Rapport and Dawson, 1998). However, reifying the idea of home as fixed can also become problematic as I will try to demonstrate.

All the respondents who worked as rickshaw-pullers in Delhi, mentioned that they came to Delhi because others in their villages had done so before them. People from the same village shared accommodation and costs of living and rented rickshaws from the same person. All this was possible because of a shared identity--often literally, in the form of shared documents of identity that a new migrant had to show to the rickshaw owner. Many rickshaw-pullers, particularly younger ones, did not have a voters' identity card or similar documents and had to depend on another co-villager with an acceptable document to vouch for him. Social capital also functions as a principle of exclusion in that locational identities are narrowly defined in terms of a village. So that anyone not from that village becomes an outsider.

However, there are intra-group differences in status, as with a rickshaw-puller who had a Master's degree. In this case, the inter-village differences are temporarily resolved in order to present someone whose accomplishments are

equal²² to that of the outsider. By extension, the symbolic status accrued by his educational qualifications is also reflected upon his peers. However, this rather diffident man was not the most vocal or prominent among the group. Thus, institutionalised cultural capital (in the form of his degree), through its failure to convert itself into economic capital (in the form of a respectable job), also failed to accrue lasting symbolic gains in the form of tangible honour as a spokesperson for the group.

Livelihood and location become interlinked within networks of social affiliations through hierarchies of status. In the process of circulating for livelihoods, the bonds forged from a common locational identity become the only dependable source of security, although differences in status continue to persist within these groups. Circulation, for Bremen (1996:255) is a livelihood strategy related to resistance. Through their refusal to settle down, the 'footloose' workers in the informal economy are registering their protest to the harsh and oppressive conditions of work (Ibid.).

At the same time, essentialising locational identities that refer back to a fixed 'home' (Rapport and Dawson, 1998), emerges as problematic through the responses obtained from the restaurant owners originating from Afghanistan. For Afzal his familial occupation of business is the basis for a complex of identities that span both Afghanistan and India. When asked about how he came to set up a restaurant he said:

We're into export import business...You know, we actually have long term business between India and Afghanistan--more than fifty years...My grandfather used to have this...dry fruits [business]. So that's the thing. I have long relation with India

He migrated with his family to India more than two decades ago. Growing up in an Afghan community in India has created complex allegiances. On the one hand, he takes pride his origins in Mazar-e-Sharif which has 'the best food in Afghanistan' and is 'safer than Delhi'. On the other hand, he's bothered about the 'state of law and order' India. Afzal constantly contrasts himself with other Afghan business owners to demonstrate he does not depend on his of Afghan origins to gain economic benefit from the social network:

Many of these hospitals have approached me. That you have restaurant: you send us customers--patients [and] we'll give you this much, we'll give you this much. I said no. I'm not interested...Other restaurants take commission I know.

Yet, by his own admission 'too many Afghans coming to Delhi' and it is because of these Afghans, forming 'ninety percent of [his] clientele', that he was able to diversify the family business into restaurants. As Saini's (2012) report shows, a whole plethora of informal livelihoods have sprung up around the Afghan (medical) tourists and diaspora. The multiplying numbers of restaurants are part of this scenario. Thus, in spite of his articulated rejection of it, he does benefit from the network of connections among people coming

²² As a masters student myself, I felt awkward at this wide gap in our economic status in spite of the same educational qualifications.

from Afghanistan. Pictures on the walls of the restaurant also display certain specific locations in Afghanistan underscoring the fact that he is deploying his locational identity as part of his economic strategy. The context of his interview, with the presence of an Indian, might certainly have influenced his emphasis on his Indianness. But more importantly, it is probably also a function of his class. He did not depend on the place-based social networks like the rickshaw-pullers did.

Abid, on the other hand, clearly occupying a lower class position as the owner of a single small bakery, depended much more on his social network. His employees came from Mazar-e-Sharif like him and they pooled in resources like accommodation. The hierarchy of class and occupational status is thus reflected in the need for mobilising social capital based on a common identity of location. Social capital may persist nonetheless in aiding the accumulation of economic capital.

Impoverishment is often seen as a failure of social capital mobilised through such networks of affiliative identities of location. Pieterse (2000:15) quotes Portes and Landolt who point out that in spite of the availability of ample social capital residents of a ghetto are often unable to pull themselves out of poverty due to 'lack of economic resources—beginning with decent jobs'. While this appears to be true on the basis of the primary research in this paper, what is perhaps missing is an assessment of the nature of social capital. In its fragmentary and informal forms that are available to the rickshaw-pullers, social capital is crucial for those in dire need and does not necessarily lead to accumulation of economic or other forms of capital. However, in case of the restaurant owners it often exists in more formalised structures. For instance, there exists an informal association comprising of people of (diverse) Afghan origin(s) (personal interviews with Anwar) which represents social capital in a more organised form. Finally, social networks are not a 'natural given' (Bourdieu, 1986) and by constantly mobilising identities of location they are maintained and strengthened.

The next section examines the gendered identities of the respondents.

4.3 Performances of masculinity: authority and meekness

Performances of masculinity by the respondents were related to their behaviour towards me, the female researcher, and their attitudes towards other women as well as how they placed themselves in relation to other men.

Mazar—in course of an interview in which he had changed from the deferential 'apni' to the more informal 'tumi'²³—asked me to assess his appearance. I hesitated because I did not know whether he wanted me to

²³ 'Apni' and 'tumi' both translate as 'you' but differ in degrees of respect indicated, much like the French 'vous' and 'tu'

compliment him or express sympathy at his impoverished form and if his question indicated unwelcome (sexual) advances. As I was hesitating, he answered it himself: the poorly remunerated hard physical work with poor nutritional value of the meals he could afford has reduced his 'figure to this'. This is clearly meant to invoke sympathy.

At the end of the interview I asked him to give me a ride, wanting to compensate him for his time. He drove very fast while talking to me, and insisted that he could actually earn quite a lot from plying rickshaws. Both the verbal assertions and the supportive action of driving (fast) skilfully, seemed to be directed at inverting his previous statements about his weakness. In course of the interview, where as an interviewer I had an authoritative position, his self-depiction reflected this hierarchy of power. However, gaining control by conveying me in his rickshaw he had reversed that relationship. The expression of his agentic control became, his rash speed/skill. His self-assurance in this position of power, even overcame the constraints of a lower class position, so that he offered to look for (gender appropriate) jobs²⁴ for me.

Mazar's interview also had a number of metaphors. He came to Punjab as a teenager, working for his brother-in-law who was a labour contractor. Trying to explain his insubordination to his brother-in-law who made him do housework he said:

I am not some kind of girl that I will keep cooking for you [the brother-in-law].

This insubordination to a male authorial figure, probably at least partly fictive, is in direct contrast to his accounts of his performances of subordination/meekness in his role as a migrant in Delhi. He asserted that it was dangerous to drive rickshaws after nine at night because drunks demand rides and then don't pay. When asked why he doesn't protest he evocatively replied:

Jaan ka dar hai na (I fear for my life).

This is in keeping with the hierarchy of hegemonic and subordinate regional masculinities where North Indian local men can threaten migrants from the eastern states with impunity. The Supreme Court's characterisation of rickshaw-pullers as meek and the actions of MCD as not befitting their 'size' (Times of India, 2012, footnote: 11) evokes, the image of the 'wimpy' (Connell, 2005: 79²⁵) Bengalis and the more masculine North Indians from colonial times (Sinha, 1999; Chowdhury, 1998).

Occupational hierarchy is also figured through these hierarchies of manliness. A report (Aman Trust, n.d) on the informal transport sector in Delhi makes the interesting observation that migration and demographic patterns in occupations have co-relation:

²⁴ He asked me whether I would be able to teach at primary level schools when I rejected his proposition to work in a factory

²⁵ This, in practical terms, problematizes Connell's separation of 'subordinate' and 'marginalised' masculinities within the Indian context. (Section 2.4)

[M]ost bus drivers and conductors are from Western U.P. This occupation almost demands a high level of aggressive behaviour. The general social perception indicates that men from U.P. are more belligerent than others. Rickshaw-pullers on the other hand are mainly from Bengal and are considered meek and timid.

This hierarchy of manly aggression is reflected in Afzal's responses where he contrasts the extreme aggression of Afghans with the legitimate aggression of (some) Indians:

Too much aggressive people are in Afghanistan...here if you shout to rickshawwalla [to] go from here, he go[es] without, you know, replying or something. There if you shout [h]e will either come and abuse you ...or hit you... [So] if you fight with poor people you can't say that no he's poor he can't beat me. Or...reply back. That's the thing. Everyone thinks that [they're] powerful. Whether [they're] rich or poor

When asked about harassment by the police, rickshaw-pullers reported both extortion and physical intimidation. On the one hand the police collect a monthly fee to let the rickshaw-pullers park and take breaks in certain areas. On the other they regularly force the rickshaw-pullers to do menial jobs like cleaning their shoes. One Afghan restaurant owner also confirmed that the police come for a monthly 'fee' but insisted that there was no harassment.

Both these accounts were corroborated by observations in course of the research. During a lunch with my co-researcher at an Afghan restaurant, we observed two police constables at the restaurant. They were treated courteously and offered beverages. After some muted exchange with the staff at the cash desk, they went away with clearly some transaction having taken place. At a rickshaw stand in the Lajpat Nagar market I observed the police hitting a younger rickshaw-puller. Both the recipient of the blows as well as the fellow rickshaw-pullers were laughing in stark contrast to the frowning police constable. After a few slaps, the rickshaw-puller was commanded to shift a heavy bench, used by the constables, to a more shady location. While the humiliation that the rickshaw-pullers were subjected to was painfully obvious, their reaction was in keeping with performances of a subordinate masculinity. Anger and aggression, the prerogative of those exercising manly control, was not available to them (Bremen, 1996). Jocularly can then be read as not simply a performance of meekness, which might erupt into violence in another context (Ibid.; section 2.4) but also as a strategy to deal with the daily realities of living in a hostile city. Following Mahmood (2001) I would argue that through such performances of 'embodied submission' the rickshaw-pullers continue to negotiate lives and livelihoods in Delhi.

The sphere of masculinity (as defined through work) was also emphasised in contrast to ideas of women's work. As stated above, resisting authority, in case of Mazar, was expressed by asserting his manliness in refusing to do women's work. Rahim, another rickshaw-puller defended his (and others') decision to migrate singly by contrasting the hardships in the male sphere of work with female sphere of domesticity:

If you bring your family²⁶ here it will get destroyed...This is no place...There [in the village] we have everyone, we have to go back...

Mazar corroborates this in his interview saying that he goes home with his earnings so he can rest for a while. Once he gets 'bored' (he used the English word) he comes back to Delhi to feel lighter: *dimag halka karne ki liye*²⁷. Thus, the restful domestic sphere is not only contrasted with the action packed male world in the city, but the binary is also hierarchized. Of course, this representation might not be the whole picture: Mazar's forays into the village and return to the cities might correspond with how long the remittances last in a rural household. The contact of these two spheres—village/domestic/private and city/occupational/public is deeply unsettling as Rahim and others in the group interview assert:

Our women will never leave their *bhite*²⁸--they might die from hunger, but the Malda women will never come here

Irrespective of what 'Malda women' might actually want, accruing honour from locational identity ultimately rests on the behaviour of women at home. This corroborates Siegmann's (2010) work in rural Northwest Pakistan about the honour of women left behind by migrating men.

Similarly both Anwar and Afzal talk about the dishonour heaped upon the women of Afghan origin who work in Delhi. Some women earn a lot as translators and Anwar asserts that their success is a reason why men insinuate that they 'have bad character'. Anwar's wife adds that her husband is exceptional (within the 'Afghan' community) in that she is allowed to go out as she pleases:

Many women here complain that their husbands are very controlling. They can't even go out of the houses alone²⁹.

Male control over women's action in general, and their work outside the domestic sphere in particular, seems necessary in maintaining male honour, which is 'vested in women but [remains] the property of men' (Rose, 2009). Afzal says:

Actually many girls [come to my] restaurant here...asking me [for work]. I refuse them. Because once you keep a girl or a woman in your restaurant, especially in Afghani restaurant...people will think yeah, he's earning from this lady or from this woman. Maybe beside this restaurant he's doing something else, you know? [Their] minds work differently you know. So that's why I never kept a lady in my restaurant. Never.

Women's work that is 'labour'³⁰ as opposed to unpaid care work, therefore, continues to pose challenges to constructions of hegemonic masculinities in

²⁶ He used the Bengali word 'poribar' which might indicate 'wife' as well as 'family'

²⁷ To make the mind lighter.

²⁸ Literally: 'ancestral piece of land'

²⁹ However, there are other dimensions to this picture. Stillwagon's (2011c) research shows there are Afghan girls 'studying to be doctors' while also earning for their families, for instance

relation to subordinated femininities whether in case of the wimpy 'Bengalis' or the more manly 'Afghans'. The lack of narratives/performances of masculinity in the interviews with Afghan men in this section is, at least in part, due to the fact that they were addressing themselves to a male researcher unlike the rickshaw-pullers.

4.4 Migrants' entitlements in the city

This section critically examines the migrants' entitlements in the city in light of the previous sections of this chapter. From the sections above, it emerges clearly that the entitlements of the migrants are related to their class, locations as well as their occupational status (and the two are not necessarily the one and the same).

In trying to establish a stake to the city, embodied cultural capital was often mobilised by the respondents. . Bourdieu (1986:49) recognises 'pronunciation characteristics of a class or a region' as an embodied form of cultural capital. On the basis of my primary research, I will extend the application to acquiring/possessing linguistic skills. Through the interviews it emerged that the knowledge of Hindi—which is perceived as a 'local' language—was an important marker of difference. The rickshaw-pullers, particularly those who were relative newcomers to the city, had strongly (Bengali) accented Hindi which marked them as outsiders. On the other hand many respondents from Afghanistan displayed their knowledge of Hindi as an insider status. Abid said:

My father used to bring Bollywood films all the time. We have grown up watching those films. I knew Hindi since my childhood.

Similarly Anwar asserted:

I had five Hindu classmates [in my school in Kandahar]. I learnt Hindi from them. I still remember their names.

The knowledge of a local language, thus strengthens claims to the city.

The two groups of respondents also have markedly different physical attributes. Anwar testified to how physical appearance and legitimacy as an 'insider' are related:

In Iran they recognise you as Afghan by looking at your face. There's more harassment—showing identity cards...Here when people look at me they think I am from Assam or something. My wife, she wears kurtas...like you, and she grew up in Pakistan. So the autowallas can never tell that she's not local. When my Iranian neighbours look for an auto, they [always get an inflated price].

Thus, physical appearance—comprised of bodily and sartorial attributes—becomes a marker of legitimacy.

³⁰ Feminist researchers such as Diane Elson (1999) have long demonstrated how women's reproductive and care work in the domestic sphere have been relegated to the realm of unproductive and not considered labour.

Bhan (2009) asserts that the ideal citizen type for millennial Delhi is the ‘aspirational middle-class consumer citizen’ and the rickshaw-pullers are situated much further away from this category than the restaurant owners and other Afghan-origin respondents like Anwar. Class being a marker of entitlements and reflected in attributes like clothes, the respondents originating from Afghanistan, for instance, in being better dressed than the rickshaw-pullers, are therefore, closer to the ideal citizen type.

The rickshaw-pullers with the lack of a stable occupational identity fit very well within Standing’s (2011) conception of the precariat which supersedes the traditional conception of the proletariat. Their weak entitlements in the city can be characterised as denizenship (Ibid.)

The analysis has thus, enabled a separation of the rickshaw-pulling denizens (mostly with legal citizenship rights) from the refugees and migrants from Afghanistan (often with legal denizen status). The latter, irrespective of their legally circumscribed rights as less-than-citizens, are often able to mobilise rights to the city, through identities that are considered more legitimate within the urban citizenship discourse of Delhi.

Concluding remarks

Through the analysis, I have tried to demonstrate the dangers of homogenizing subjects. The homogenized subject—Muslim migrant man—has thus been effectively deconstructed. Chapter 5 looks at the implications this has for mobilising RTTC as a rights framework to reframe urban citizenship in a more inclusive manner.

5 Conclusion

This paper argues that homogenizing the Muslim male migrants as victims is problematic (Chapter 1). By looking at theories of identity, ethnicity, class and hierarchized masculinities I have tried to set up a broad framework through which to analyse the narratives of the respondents (Chapter 2). The methodological framework, following in footsteps of prior feminist research, enabled me to situate myself in the research context (Chapter 3). Through the narratives of the migrants, collected in interviews, I have tried to problematize markers of identity such as ethnicity as inherently unstable. The narratives of the migrants reveal identities as sites of constant struggle between the multiple allegiances through which they express their agency and structure their entitlements (Chapter 4). Following the framework of urban citizenship and RTTC (Chapter 2), in this chapter I will examine some of the policy implications of my findings in the context of Delhi.

The MPD-2021(Appendix II) can be taken as representative of the current model of developmental imagination, in context of the Indian metropolises. Baviskar (2003:92) shows how the previous Master Plans of Delhi have violated their own objectives and created squatter settlements through the indirect employment of casual migrant labourers in the process of infrastructural development. In trying to ‘orchestrate a transformation that will

make Delhi an ideal urban space'(Ibid), the Master Plans keep neglecting informality as an integral part of the urban landscape. Roy (2005:155-6) points to this tendency in urban planning as treating informal spaces 'as the exception to planning, lying outside its realm of control'. Urban planning that is unable 'to think about the complex social systems through which plans must be implemented' (Ibid.) therefore, continues to contradict itself like the Master Plans of the DDA.

The solution, says Roy (Ibid.) is to reformulate urban planning by 'moving from land use to distributive justice, [and] rethinking the object of development'. What, then, one can ask, would this reformulated object of development look like? The proponents of the RTTC model under the auspices of UNESCO/UN-HABITAT (Dupont, et al, 2011:11) propose it as 'an agenda for change'. The more radical proponents of RTTC like Harvey (2008:23) see it as the 'right to change ourselves by changing the city'.

Both these formulations fall short. The first, in its generalisations of 'the urban poor and the migrant workers' (Dupont et al, 2011:11) fails to take into account the diversity in this vast group. The second in its aim to reject easy functionalism, fashions itself into an articulation of transformative politics that is very easily relegated to the realm of the moral (Baxi, 2011: 17) and dismissed as having little bearing on actual policies.

However, the need to substantively challenge and transform the development vision as articulated by policy documents such as MPD-2021 and others, is undeniable. Going back, now, to my analysis, I would suggest, that a first step in envisioning better policy, should be to look at the actual diversity of realities and the different needs stemming from those realities. To ignore the very real investments of the migrants' in their diverse aspirations, by abstract articulations of 'taking back the city' or 'empowering the disempowered' is to continue to delegitimise them. Visualising the migrants and informal workers as voiceless and disempowered, then, is certainly a form of, to borrow Spivak's (1988) term, 'epistemic violence'.

Although, surely a migrant rickshaw-puller in Delhi does not want to be humiliated by the police, does he really envision himself as a stake holder in the transformative politics of the urban space? My findings as elaborated in this paper, underlines how important the 'primordial ties' (Breman, 1996:255-6) of kinship and locational origin are among the 'footloose' (Ibid.) migrants. While it seems obvious to address their substantive needs—such as access to housing—it is inevitable that, this will lead to deepening their involvement in the city. In my findings, the tenuous bonds with the urban space for the rickshaw-pullers have been, for the most part, created by the very real discriminatory practices in Delhi and hence, their need to re-affirm the ties of kinship, neighbourliness, etc. However, and this is a gap in my research which needs to be explored further, there is no indication of what these migrants would, when given real opportunities to belong in the city, choose. Will these 'wage hunters and gatherers' (Ibid) in whose evasive circulation Breman sees a way of holding onto dignity, settle down (to continue the metaphor) if they are able to fully exercise their rights to the city? This will have to be answered by

the migrants themselves and assessed through the parameters of their (changing) needs and points to the scope for further research in this direction.

The Afghan refugees and migrants are an even more internally diverse group in terms of their actual legal rights. The RTTC therefore, will need to adapt itself to multiple dimensions of these needs. On the one hand as primary research with the Afghan diaspora shows (Stillwagon, 2011a & 2011b; Bose, 2004) there are very urgent issues to address. The need to formulate a uniform policy for all asylum seekers and refugees³¹, the need to hasten the process of RSD and ensuring financial support for those in need of it, seem foremost among many others. My findings do however suggest that the Indian government is taking steps to address some issues in case of the Afghan refugees (personal interviews with Anwar and Samira) particularly regarding the issuing of work permits to refugees. While most refugees in Delhi still look for resettlements to countries of the North (personal interviews with Asif and Anwar), they do lack opportunities to work or continue their studies which causes a lot of frustration. On the other hand, most refugee-card holders, particularly the wage earners, who are taking part in the informal economy of Delhi, clearly do so because of economic needs. While the government's overall leniency at present allows such enterprises to flourish and provides employment for a substantial section of the Afghan diaspora, there is no actual guarantee that this will not change. Overall, any change in this policy will affect only those with the least opportunities—not the owners of bigger enterprises with access to substantial economic capital. Therefore, the RTTC framework, in the context of Delhi must also take into account, the rights of these urban citizens.

To sum up, by pointing out that multiple identities can be the sites of agency for the delegitimised citizens of Delhi, this research problematizes the uniformity of the policy/rights framework that the RTTC discourse, in its two dominant conceptions, suggests. Although some broad parameters for modifying current policies have been recommended, there is need for further situated explorations in this area.

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³¹ India is not a signatory to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951).

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Appendix: Delhi Master Plan 2021

INTRODUCTION

1. Delhi, the focus of the socio-economic and political life of India, a symbol of ancient values and aspirations and capital of the largest democracy, is assuming increasing eminence among the great cities of the world.

Growing at an unprecedented pace, the city needs to be able to integrate its elegant past as well as the modern developments into an organic whole, which demands a purposeful transformation of the socio economic, natural and built environment. A prime mover and nerve centre of ideas and actions, the seat of national governance and a centre of business, culture, education and sports, Delhi, however, stands at the crossroads today. The choice is between either taking a road to indiscriminate uncontrolled development and slide towards chaos or a movement towards making Delhi a world- class city, if handled with vision and care.

2. Apart from critical issues such as land, physical infrastructure, transport, the ecology and environment, housing and other socio cultural and other institutional facilities, the cornerstone for making Delhi a world- class city is the planning process itself and related aspects of governance and management.

VISION

3. The Vision-2021 is to make Delhi a global metropolis and a world-class city, where all the people are engaged in productive work with a decent standard of living and quality of life in a sustainable environment. This will inter alia, necessitate planning and action to meet the challenge of population growth and in migration into Delhi and even measures to restrict it to the extent possible; provision of adequate housing, particularly for the weaker sections of the society; addressing the problems of small enterprises, particularly in the unorganized informal sector; dealing with the issue of slums, both as an issue pertaining to the cityscape and of shelter; up-gradation of old and dilapidated areas of the city; provision of adequate infrastructure services; conservation of the environment; preservation of Delhi's heritage and blending it with the new and complex modern patterns of development; and doing all this within a framework of sustainable development, public-private and community participation and a spirit of ownership and belonging among its citizens.

REVIEW OF PAST EXPERIENCE

4. The process of planned development of the National Capital began with enactment of the Delhi Development Act 1957, followed by the promulgation of the Master Plan in 1962 (MPD-62).
5. The MPD-62 set out the broad vision for the development of Delhi and, with a view to realizing the development plan underlying this vision, a scheme of Large Scale Acquisition and Development of Land was also formulated. The aim of the latter was to ensure that the spatial pattern of development, and use of land, could conform to the development plan, and infrastructure and services could be laid out to match the same. At that early stage, the process of planned development was envisaged as a public sector led process with very little private participation in terms of development of both shelter and infrastructure services. The philosophy of public sector/government led growth and development process continued in general till the process of economic reforms was initiated in the early Nineties. Therefore, the Master Plan 2001 (MPD-2001) also substantially reiterated the planning process, which had been outlined in MPD-62. These plans could be seen mainly as Land Use Plans with a three level hierarchy of the Master Plan, Zonal Plans and Layout Plans for specific development schemes within each zone
6. The Master Plan 2021 would be the first plan of the 21st Century and, considering the limited land area of Delhi, there would be limited scope thereafter for pure new urbanization and the related spatial development and land use planning. It is necessary, therefore, to briefly review and analyze some of the achievements, shortfalls and difficulties during the implementation of the MPD-62 and MPD-2001 at this juncture. Such an exercise should be seen as introspection, which could lead to the development of sound basic policies and strategies, which should inform both the Master Plan and the methodology of its implementation.
7. Some of the broad parameters in the light of which a review could be usefully done would relate to the extent and validity of population projections, quantum of land needed for development as per the Plans and the extent to which this actually became available, quantitative and qualitative targets for the development of shelter and the required infrastructure services and the actual achievements in this regard, and other important developments which were not anticipated, but impinge heavily on the entire process of the planned development of Delhi.
8. The population of Delhi in 2001 was 137.8 lakhs as against the MPD-2001 projection of 128 lakhs. This has had its inevitable implications and impact in terms of shelter, including squatter settlements, and other infrastructure facilities, etc.

9. As regards the actual acquisition and development of land, studies made for the preparation of MPD-2021 show that there have been large gaps between the area targeted for, and/or actually acquired, as also between the area acquired and that, which could be developed. This has had implications, at one level, in terms of shortfalls in the planned development of shelter and allied facilities and, at another, in terms of the growth of unauthorized colonies, particularly on lands which may have been notified for acquisition but could not actually be acquired. In turn, this position is indicative of limitations of resources- financial, physical and human, on the one hand, and of the procedural and other difficulties, bottlenecks and delays in the process of land assembly for the purposes of Planned Development, on the other.
- 9.1 Another vital aspect stemming from the whole scheme of declaration of large areas as Development Areas, under the Delhi Development Act, coupled with the scheme of large scale acquisition and development, is that no construction can be done by any person or organization without the approval of the DDA which, in turn, has not been possible largely because of non-submission of proper layout and development plans etc. This has also been substantially responsible for the growth of unplanned and unauthorized colonies. Some issues that arise for consideration in this backdrop are:-
 - i) A review of the scheme of large scale development and acquisition and its relevance in the present context;
 - ii) Development of alternatives options for development of areas identified for urbanization in MPD-2021 without having to depend upon acquisition and development of land by the DDA or any other public sector authority;
 - iii) Evolving a system under which planning for, and provision of basic infrastructure could take place simultaneously with reference to (i) and (ii) above; and
 - iv) Generally involving the private sector in the assembly and development of land and provision of infrastructure services.
10. One of the most important aspects of planned development pertains to the provision of adequate, and well provisioned, shelter and housing for the different categories of inhabitants of the city. The studies carried out for the formulation of MPD-2021 have revealed quantitative and qualitative shortages and deficiencies in this regard. The provision of shelter has been predominantly in realm of the public sector. The limited participation of the private sector in the development of housing has been through the medium of co- operative group housing societies, who are being allotted land, mainly in the urban extension areas by the DDA. There are obvious limitations to the extent to which housing can actually be provided by public sector agencies alone, and there is an urgent need to

see how the involvement of the private sector in this sphere can be significantly stepped up. In turn, this should also be seen in concert with the involvement of the private sector in land assembly and development.

11. Two major challenges which have emerged in the wake of the developments outlined above relate to the phenomenon of unauthorized colonies and squatter / jhuggi jhompari settlements. Both these will require planned measures, not only to deal with these phenomena in their present manifestation, but also in terms of future growth and proliferation.
12. The exercises done for the MPD-2021 also show that there is a need for redevelopment, and even densification of the existing urban areas, both in terms of improvement of the housing stock and increasing the capacity to host additional population, as also with reference to overall urban design and city improvement. This aspect would need to be a major component of the new Master Plan, and a comprehensive redevelopment strategy for accommodating a larger population, strengthening of infrastructure facilities, creation of more open spaces, and generally with reference to urban design, would need to be developed and implemented. An important aspect which needs consideration in this context is the need for re-densification / intensification and redevelopment along the MRTS corridors, so that the synergy between work and residences and, generally, between transportation and urban development could be achieved.
13. Another important development observed during the period of the last Master Plan is the unanticipated phenomenal growth of automobiles in Delhi. This has resulted in a variety of serious problems pertaining to congestion, pollution, safety of travel, etc., which will need to be squarely addressed.
14. It also needs to be understood that the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has a total area of only 1483 sq. kms. and is surrounded by the States of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Keeping in view the fact that the NCT of Delhi would always act as a magnet for the people from all over the country, apart from the fact that there is a sizable requirement of land on account of its being the seat of the National Government, the need for a concept of the National Capital Region (NCR) was recognized even before MPD-2001 was promulgated and the National Capital Region Planning Board Act was enacted in 1985. The logic underlying this would be self evident i.e. to see that the development of Delhi should be seen in a spatial context going beyond its geographical boundaries in a seamless manner, inter alia, to ensure that the core of the NCT could be developed as a sustainable world-class city and, at the same time ensuring proper planning and development in the adjoining regional areas. Apart from assessing the physical aspects of what may have been achieved in the light

of these goals, it would also be important to see whether the existing statutory provisions are adequate to realize the basic objectives underlying the concept of the National Capital Region.

15. The NCT of Delhi had been divided into 15 Zones from A to P, of which 8 Zones are in the urban area, one in River bed and remaining 6 in the rural area. So far, Zonal Plans in respect of 7 zones have been notified by the Government of India, whereas in the case of number of others, which also include Urban Extension areas like Dwarka, Rohini and Narela, the complete Zonal Plans remain to be notified and the process of planning and development has been carried out through change of land use etc., in terms of specific development plans that may be prepared for specific areas within these zones. There are reasons for this, but there is, nevertheless, a need for a methodology by which the Zonal Plans can be expeditiously prepared in the context of MPD-2021 in a manner which would be conducive to their actual and timely realization.
16. Another important development of which cognizance would need to be taken at this stage, pertains to the need for the involvement of the citizenry, through their representatives, in the process of planning. Therefore, at a procedural level, which would also necessarily have substantive implications, steps would have to be taken to involve the local representatives and institutions at the appropriate level in terms of the hierarchies of planning mentioned earlier.
17. The experience of the past two Master Plans also shows that while projections regarding various basic infrastructure services have been made with reference to the population growth projections and the related increased urbanization requirements, there has been very little practical convergence between the Master Plan and the actual development of infrastructure services. An important element would, therefore, have to be brought in to bring greater convergence between these two aspects, particularly in the areas, which would be taken up for fresh urbanization.
18. Finally, there are two important aspects pertaining to the actual implementation of the Master Plan, note of which would need to be taken. Enforcement of the Master Plan provisions is an area which will require much more focussed attention at all levels. One aspect of this pertains to the legal framework and actual implementation and enforcement of the legal provisions. The other aspect relates to the practicality and current relevance of some of the provisions in the Building Byelaws, etc., and the need for flexibility so that the provisions of the Master Plan do not themselves become a stumbling block or otherwise leave scope for their violation.

PRE-PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

19. Democratic procedure and statutory obligations require that the Master Plan be prepared after obtaining the views, suggestions and objections of the public. Keeping this in view, extensive consultations were done at the pre-planning stage with the people, local bodies, government and public sector agencies, professional groups, resident welfare associations and elected representatives, etc. over a period of nearly five years, through a number of seminars, conferences, etc.
20. The Ministry of Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation also issued the Guidelines in July 2003, for the Master Plan for Delhi 2021. The Guidelines were widely disseminated through the Media, Resident Welfare Associations, Traders Associations, Experts, Professional Bodies and individuals with a view to get suggestions from public. Nearly 2000 responses were received, which have duly been considered.

The indicative Perspective plans of infrastructure services prepared by the concerned agencies are annexed with MPD- 2021, which are subject to finalisation and approval of competent authority.

21. 21. The Master Plan can be seen as an elaborate set of do's and don'ts, and its success depends on conversion of the policies and strategies outlined in it into time bound development and action plans, periodic reviews and close monitoring, and on the people's will and willingness to adhere to discipline in the use of land, roads, public space and infrastructure.