

**SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION OF METROPOLITAN CITIES:
A CASE STUDY OF KOLKATA**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

DEBAPRIYA KARMAKAR



Centre for the Study of Regional Development
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi
India
2022



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
Centre for the Study of Regional Development
School of Social Sciences
New Delhi-110067

DECLARATION


I do hereby declare that the dissertation titled **Spatial Transformation of Metropolitan Cities: A Case Study of Kolkata**, submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is a bona fide work and has not been submitted previously to any university/institution for the award of any other degree.

Debapriya Karmakar
Debapriya Karmakar


CERTIFICATE

We recommend this dissertation be placed before the examiner(s) for its evaluation.

Dr. Bikramaditya Kumar Choudhary
Dr. Bikramaditya Kumar Choudhary
Supervisor

 Centre for the Study of Reg. Dev.
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

Prof. Milap Punia
Prof. Milap Punia
Chairperson

 Chairperson
Centre for the Study of Reg. Dev.
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

Dedication

To Baba

Acknowledgments

Writing this dissertation has been challenging in some inexplicable ways. The process of orienting my thoughts into words while struggling to come to terms with the unprecedented materialisation of a humanitarian crisis amid the global pandemic has been arduous. However, this hindrance has never been overbearing enough to intrude into my purpose because of some experiences and people who have helped me stay calm and grounded during these uncertain times.

First and foremost, my work on this topic would not have been possible without the assistance of some crucial people whose support and cooperation have been unflinching in conducting my field survey. Thanks to Suresh Dixit, Animesh Nath, Sujit Chandra Naskar, Narayan Das, Rana Mitra, Ramona Adhikari, Sati Chatterjee, Kaushik Maitra, Sapna Sarkar, Bapi Ghosh, Kartik Balabanta, Pulok Das, Gopal Chandra Das, Ujjwal Chatterjee, Soumitra Chatterjee, Kuntal Dutta, Johor Sen, Rinku Naskar, Indrani Palit, Debashis Roy, Bata Krishna Roy and Dr. Mohit Roy for being immensely patient in hearing me out, answering my tedious questions repeatedly and putting me in further contact with other key sources. My appreciation for Professor Tathagata Chatterji (Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar), and Professor Souvanic Roy (IEST, Shibpur), cannot express enough how blessed I felt upon receiving their reply to my impromptu mail. Their generosity in sharing academic knowledge without any prior acquaintances is genuinely something I wish to imbibe. Special mention to Anasua for helping me with the nuances of the software while away on another continent.

During my initial days at M.Phil, the classes with Dr. Bikramaditya Kumar Choudhary enormously influenced my ideas on the criticality of urban space. Little did I know back then that I would have the good fortune to be under his direct supervision. I would not have even ventured into such a topic had it not been for his unswerving motivation to engage critically with the subject. It would not be an exaggeration to say that my academic life did change crucially after I had the blessed opportunity to be under his invaluable guidance. This work would not have attained its final shape without the vital insights from my Research Advisory Committee members, Dr. Ghazala Jamil (CSLG, JNU) and Professor Shrawan Kumar Acharya (CSR, JNU). Their comments have empowered my writing and have been paramount in completing the dissertation.

When I first came to JNU, as much as I was excited to be a part of this acclaimed institution, leaving home had always been a troublesome thought. But this place has bestowed me with some irreplaceable relationships. Sonali Di, you have been the witness and a forbearing company to all the pourings of my heart. As for you, Minakshi Di, words truly fall short to describe my love and gratitude. You have been my home away from home. This token of appreciation would be incomplete without mentioning the warmth and inspiration I receive from you, Prem Bhaiya, and for you, Mehreena, your geniality has never left a dull moment. Thank you, Manti Di, for always being a call away.

Back in Kolkata, my days at Presidency University were enriched under the mentorship of Dr. Koel Roychowdhury. Her frequent stirrings of "*tui parbi*" over the phone have been a constant source of motivation and strength for me. Equally reassuring have been Dr. Aritra Chakraborty's words.

To two of my closest friends, Shramana and Baisali, who have allowed me to be insane and accepted me at my worst. Thank you both for holding on to me.

Some more, Ankita, your cheers have worked like magic every time. To Riha, Sanjana, and Ishani, what can I say, you people have been the firsts to all my happy experiences. Life does surprise one in some of the most unexpected ways, Aradhana and Pranesh, you people have been such surprises. The end of this dissertation would not have been possible without your constant encouragement.

I believe my life has taken a wonderful course since I have stepped beyond the protective embrace of my school years. I have had many learning experiences, met a few amazing people, and been to some great places, which I could not have imagined during my early years. This has been only and only possible due to the prayers and well wishes of Mamoni *Mashi*, Robi *Jethu*, Samir *Kaku*, and Rita *Kakima*. I draw immense strength from the fact that you all exist in my life, and I hope to continue on this beautiful journey with your best wishes.

Finally, *Maa*, *Baba*, and *Dadu*, you three collectively form the sun in my life. I owe you my everything. And then there is this little piece of respite from all my pent-up anxieties, my beloved *Goglai!*

Debapriya Karmakar
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi
23.09.2022

Contents

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| Chapter 1 | Introduction | 1 – 16 |
| Chapter 2 | Contextualising Urban Spatial Transformation | 17 – 56 |
| Chapter 3 | Changing Landscape of Kolkata during Colonial Period | 57 – 86 |
| Chapter 4 | Changing Landscape: Kolkata in the Post-Colonial Period | 87 – 124 |
| Chapter 5 | Spatial Transformation in South Kolkata | 125 – 166 |
| Chapter 6 | Institutional Interventions in Transforming the Landscape | 167 – 196 |
| Chapter 7 | Conclusion | 197 – 204 |
| | Works Cited | 205 – 230 |
| | Annexures | 231 – 241 |

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the dissertation. It opens with a brief note describing the context, followed by the significance of the study. The chapter then goes on to illustrate some related works in the area, gap, and objectives of the present study. Finally, it concludes with the documentation of the undertaken methodology and a framework for the subsequent organisation of the dissertation.

Background

The origin of Kolkata¹ in the Indian urban map dates back to the trade requirements of the British East India Company. The primitive sedimentary beds of the Hooghly River in Bengal bear testimony to the accomplishment of numerous trade deals structured around the Britishers in the city. Over time, as the role of the traders mutated into colonial rulers, Kolkata surfaced as the seat of the British capital in India. Besides boosting commerce and housing administration, the significant amount of time spent by the colonisers here was intended to find comfort and familiarity. As a consequence, parts of the port city were laid out in Europe's then popular baroque tradition to replicate the intimacy of home in an alien land. With gradual progress over time, the administrative dominance of the colonial rulers got manifested in spatial forms and architecture to represent the celebrated hegemony of subjugation. However, post-independence, Kolkata's evocative eminence underwent a sea change amid an exceeding population pressure, dwindling verve of the industrial rolls, toiling capacity of the urban services, and hankering cries of the aggrieved public. The technocratic vision guiding the making of Indian modernity during this time not only conflicted with the city's socio-political realities, but also undermined its industrial potential. Thus, imperiled by decades-long incidences of industrial disputes, when the neoliberal reconfiguration of the Indian economy was instituted, its ushering in the rule of private capital

¹ The names 'Kolkata' and 'Calcutta' have been used interchangeably in the study. Although both the names are equally popular in the present time, the colonial city 'Calcutta' was remained 'Kolkata' on 1st of January, 2001 through the West Bengal Capital City (Change of Name) Act, 2001.

pitched Kolkata a fitting ground to re-theorise its lost prominence. However, the overarching impact of such an economy in instigating the 'bourgeoisisation' of space, reinforcing the grip of poverty, has led the city to become embroiled in a constant state of contestation.

The particularity of urban in this context of transformation of space emerges from its continued capacity to accommodate a great deal of diversity. The congregation of multiple activities driving its purpose not only results in numerous modes of interaction, but also creates the possibility of creative destruction to make room for the varying manifestations of desires and terms of engagement. And it is this 'perpetually in the making' capacity of urban, which scholars like David Harvey and Saskia Sassen have amply justified through their works, that makes it so central in the overall process of the neoliberal economy. The elaborate reworking of such an economy on the functionalities of the state has led to the infiltration of ambiguities in the relationship between governance and democracy. The crisis is more acute in countries like India, where, amid the vast discrepancies in legal rights, the proliferation of class-based authority has significantly manipulated the state instruments to exercise hegemonic regulation of space and its ownership.

In Kolkata, the tenets of neoliberal transformation were effectively called into force by the Left Front Government to institutionalise the demands surrounding the emergence of the service economy-the booming IT culture in particular. The monumental metamorphosis of the government's socialist principles in light of such economic imperatives caused a multiplier effect on the socio-spatial structure of the city, whose building block is essentially constituted by the rising middle-class. Having access to IT-sourced income, this class, in alliance with the state, is profoundly involved in creating a west-informed version of urban landscape, primarily at the cost of increased peripheralisation of the poor. Through numerous bouts of construction and reconstruction, the present-day making of Kolkata rests on the valorisation of real estate capital to bring back the colonial practices of replication, wooing the consumption behaviour of the aspiring middle-class, and in the process, the city stands not only polarised but also subject to new forms of politics that seek to leverage it ceaselessly.

Significance of the Study

The significance of neoliberal transformation in Kolkata chiefly emanates from the city's decades-

long foothold on socialist principles. The longest-serving Communist Government here welcomed the same private investments it had been so resistant to in the past. The incorporation of neoliberal principles within a framework of pro-labour set-up yielded some very striking results. The study thus emphasises how the transformation in the duties and the role of the state under a neoliberal regime brings about a transformation in the socio-spatial set-up. Such that even a government rooted in socialist welfare beliefs accommodates its demands allowing the sudden proliferation of profiteering capital at the cost of encroached labour rights. At the same time the study attempts to quash the widely popular notion of "labour militancy" in Bengal. Addressing the labour issues within industrial disputes, the study shows how the capitalist class commonly adopts the prevalence of inherent biases against the labour force, as a means to make them perpetually responsible for every crisis capital falls into. Finally, the study calls into attention the influences of all these amalgamated changes on the city's spatial context, whereby the hegemony of class-based practices is found to rupture the innate morphology of the city, altering the original transformability of the city's space and producing new types of politics surrounding its usage.

Existing Literature

The study of urban has witnessed the exploration of various themes over the years, and each of these themes has its individual spatial articulation. The three broad themes that could be identified are demographic, dealing with aspects like migration, and urban sprawl; economic, largely concerned with the modes of economic exchange, relations of production, industrial activity, or new service economy; and cultural, focussing on the patterns of urban life, its diverse influences or the uniqueness of its identity. Of these, the undertaken study is primarily based on the economic aspect of urban space, featuring some overlapping connections with the remaining themes.

Neoliberal Urbanisation

An overwhelming volume of literature focuses on the facets of neoliberal urbanisation. Scholars like Harvey, Brenner, Theodore, and Peck have extensively researched the aspects of a neoliberal

economy, its effect on the state's role, and the resultant impression on urban space.² Their studies have laid down the intrinsic link between capitalist principles and the dissemination of neoliberal ideology, whereby the diversity of every society imparts the practice of neoliberalism and its eventual neoliberalisation a "variegated" character. Understanding such a character requires a context-specific approach. Urban being one such context gives rise to assorted spaces and multiple uses of the same space. Harvey related how the consumption-pro persona of these spaces has made cities serve as the economic stabiliser to every financial crisis that capitalism has historically fallen into. Similarly, works by Beauregard, Christophers, and Zou examine Harvey's arguments to conclude the increased speculative nature of private investments in the urban property market.³ The hegemony of such investments lies in manipulating the inherent disposition of cities as per the relational dynamics of the capital, making the entirety of urbanism contingent upon the dictates of capitalistic forces through the efficacious mobilisation of the state institutions. Studies by Jaffee, Mayer, and Roy reverberate such exercises in the persistent entrepreneurial stance of the state with matters related to contemporary urban making, whereby the logic of market fetishism has been the guiding principle behind the making of all urban policy objectives.⁴ They foreground that the "urgency of infrastructure funding" amid competitive interests has expedited the acts of privatisation to a scale that has brought about a momentous shift in the character of the state, altering their role from service providers to commodity purchasers.

Globalisation and Change in Labour Force

Critiquing such role of the state, whereby its characteristic alteration has allowed the authority of

² Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, "After Neoliberalization?," *Globalizations* 7, no. 3 (2010): 327–45; Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism,'" *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 349–79; David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (OUP Oxford, 2007); Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 380–404.

³ R A Beauregard, "Capital Switching and the Built Environment: United States, 1970–89," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 26, no. 5 (1994): 715–32; Brett Christophers, "Revisiting the Urbanization of Capital," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 6 (2011): 1347–64; Yonghua Zou, "Capital Switching, Spatial Fix, and the Paradigm Shifts of China's Urbanization," *Urban Geography* (2021): 1–21.

⁴ David Jaffee, "Neoliberal Urbanism as 'Strategic Coupling' to Global Chains: Port Infrastructure and the Role of Economic Impact Studies," *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 37, no. 1 (2019): 119–36; Margit Mayer, "Neoliberal Urbanism and Uprisings Across Europe," in *Urban Uprisings: Challenging Neoliberal Urbanism in Europe*, ed. Margit Mayer, Catharina Thörn, and Håkan Thörn, Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 57–92; Ananya Roy, "The Blockade of the World-Class City: Dialectical Images of Indian Urbanism," in *Worlding Cities* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2011), 259–78.

the market to supersede the history of its relationship with the people, Chopra considers the ideology of neoliberalism to be ingrained within the multinational networks of globalisation.⁵ Sassen's work on global cities demonstrates how increased deregulation of the state operations amid the rule of the market entails growing transnational dynamics between the cities and obscure the relative significance of a nation as a spatial unit.⁶ But this notion of obscuring boundaries between nations is called into question by Massey.⁷ She opines the existence of a paradoxical idea behind globalisation, in which a nation is permitted to practice nationalism, like on grounds related to international migration, while riding high on the claims of free trade and unobstructed mobility. Concerning such a paradox, Yeoh and Chang's work on Hong Kong confirms the government's strategically determined, manipulative policies to ensure that the call to attract migrant workers amid the globalising influences on the job market does not open the "floodgates" of mass migration.⁸ Scholars like Beaverstock and Elliot have illustrated the impacts of the changing job market post the advent of the era of globalisation. Emphasising the role of globalisation in finance capital, Beaverstock and Smith have laid down that the market demands of the new deregulated functions of the international financial system have influenced the disproportionate clustering of the highly skilled immigrant labour force in the corporate houses of the global cities.⁹ Elliot argued that the concentration of the corporate powerhouses in the global cities emanates from their classic infrastructural facilities, which aid the accumulation of various kinds of professional services assisting the former. He further noted the prevalence of such mutually reinforcing tendencies, created through agglomeration within the global cities, produces a widely polarised labour force, further intensifying the social stratifications.¹⁰ Doreen Massey too elucidated how the socio-spatial relations are intricately related to the practice of reorganisation of labour.¹¹

⁵ Rohit Chopra, "Neoliberalism as Doxa: Bourdieu's Theory of the State and the Contemporary Indian Discourse on Globalization and Liberalization," *Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3-4 (May 1, 2003): 419-44.

⁶ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁷ Doreen Massey, "Globalisation: What Does It Mean for Geography?," *Geography* 87, no. 4 (2002): 293-96.

⁸ Brenda S. A. Yeoh and T. C. Chang, "Globalising Singapore: Debating Transnational Flows in the City," in *The Urban Sociology Reader*, ed. Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, Second (Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2013).

⁹ Jonathan V. Beaverstock and Joanne Smith, "Lending Jobs to Global Cities: Skilled International Labour Migration, Investment Banking and the City of London," *Urban Studies* 33, no. 8 (1996): 1377-94.

¹⁰ James R. Elliott, "The Work of Cities: Underemployment and Urban Change in Late-20th-Century America," *Cityscape* 7, no. 1 (2004): 107-33.

¹¹ Doreen Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labor: Social Structures and the Geography of Production* (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1995).

Consumption Pattern and Role of Cities

Studies have indicated that such reorganisation of labour force has had a direct impact on the urban areas through the rise of the middle-class and a concomitant change in the urban environment supporting their emerging lifestyles.¹² Works by Scott, Fowlow, and Mitchell have related this change in the economic structure to the appearance of a commodified culture. They propounded that cities being at the centre of such appearances have catered to this culture through physical enhancements or transformation.¹³ Similarly, Goss's *Magic of the Mall* reinstates the strategisation and production of spaces through symbolic content to encourage the culture of consumption.¹⁴ David Ley has ascribed changes in consumption patterns to be the driving force of the regeneration of the inner city areas. He contended that the efforts to regenerate the inner cities have led to gentrification, targeting the attention of the white-collar workforce through improved housing filled with amenities and recreational features.¹⁵

However, alternate theories of gentrification have emerged over the years. For instance, Neil Smith countered gentrification to be an outcome of the economic imperatives rising from the previous land-use patterns.¹⁶ In contrast, experiences in the Global South have revealed gentrification to be "embedded" within the entrepreneurial aspirations of the developmental state policies.¹⁷ Hyun Bang Shin puts forward that regardless of the neoliberal commitments, from the very beginning, the state-endorsed speculative nature of urban development in Seoul has proceeded through the

¹² Leela Fernandes, "The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India," *Urban Studies* 41, no. 12 (2004): 2415–30; Asher Ghertner, "Gentrifying the State, Gentrifying Participation: Elite Governance Programs in Delhi," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 504–32; Sandhya Krishnan and Neeraj Hatekar, "Rise of the New Middle Class in India and Its Changing Structure," *Economic and Political Weekly* 52 (2017): 40–48; John Rennie Short and Lina Martínez, "The Urban Effects of the Emerging Middle Class in the Global South," *Geography Compass* 14, no. 4 (2020); Myungji Yang, "The Rise of 'Gangnam Style': Manufacturing the Urban Middle Class in Seoul, 1976–1996," *Urban Studies* 55, no. 15 (2018): 3404–20.

¹³ Loraine Dearstyne Fowlow, "City as Theme Park: The Mickeyization of the Urban Landscape," 1996; Allen J. Scott, "Capitalism, Cities, and the Production of Symbolic Forms," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, no. 1 (2001): 11–23; Donald Mitchell, "Metaphors to Live By: Landscapes as Systems of Social Reproduction," in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 121–44.

¹⁴ Jon Goss, "The 'Magic of the Mall': An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, no. 1 (1993): 18–47.

¹⁵ David Ley, "Alternative Explanations for Inner-City Gentrification: A Canadian Assessment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 76, no. 4 (1986): 521–35; David Ley, "Inner-City Revitalization in Canada: A Vancouver Case Study," *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe Canadien* 25, no. 2 (1981): 124–48.

¹⁶ Neil Smith, "Gentrification and Uneven Development," *Economic Geography* 58, no. 2 (1982): 139–55.

¹⁷ Hyun Bang Shin and Soo-Hyun Kim, "The Developmental State, Speculative Urbanisation and the Politics of Displacement in Gentrifying Seoul," *Urban Studies* 53, no. 3 (February 1, 2016): 540–59.

mass displacement of the working-class neighbourhoods. While Chatterjee and Parthasarathy's study on the gentrification of Mumbai's mill land lays down how displacement is not necessarily attached to the inner-city redevelopment strategies.¹⁸ On the other hand, Rao has critiqued the over-emphasis on the privileged class in the process of gentrification.¹⁹ By proposing the concept of "small-scale gentrification" based on a resettled colony in Delhi, she urges to capture due attention to the way the marginalised are compelled to navigate their daily struggles through various strategies for survival.

Indian Cities

Scholarly works based on India have unanimously underlined that the impact of neoliberal policies on the process of Indian urbanisation is palpable in the country's incessant quest to go global, the outcomes of which have not only been exclusionary, but also violent on the lives of the poor.²⁰ At the same time, Gururani, Roy, and Sircar's arguments highlight how agrarian land relations and practices are crucial in making India's urban.²¹ Gururani pointed out the critiques against the city-centric approach of urban studies and maintained that such an approach, stemming from the experiences of the Global North, destabilises the focus on the process of urbanisation in the Global South, where the post-colonial trajectories of urban experiences can be rightfully captured through the lens of agrarian transformation in urban making.²² Roy has also drawn attention to how informality has become a state-regulated mode in the realisation of India's neoliberalised urban

¹⁸ Dwiparna Chatterjee and D. Parthasarathy, "Gentrification and Rising Urban Aspirations in the Inner City: Redefining Urbanism in Mumbai," in *Sustainable Urbanization in India: Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. Jenia Mukherjee, Exploring Urban Change in South Asia (Singapore: Springer, 2018), 239–55.

¹⁹ Ursula Rao, "Urban Negotiations and Small-Scale Gentrification in a Delhi Resettlement Colony," in *Space, Planning and Everyday Contestations in Delhi*, ed. Surajit Chakravarty and Rohit Negi, Exploring Urban Change in South Asia (New Delhi: Springer India, 2016), 77–89.

²⁰ Swapna Banerjee-Guha, "Neoliberalising the 'Urban': New Geographies of Power and Injustice in Indian Cities," *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 22 (2009): 95–107; Dhiraj Barman, "'Global'-izing Indian Cities: A Spatial Epistemological Critique," in *City, Space, and Politics in the Global South*, ed. Bikramaditya K. Choudhary, Arun K. Singh, and Diganta Das (Oxford; New York: Routledge, 2020); Himanshu Burte and Lalitha Kamath, "The Violence of Worlding Producing Space in Neo-Liberal Durban, Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro" 52 (2017): 66–74.

²¹ Shubhra Gururani, "Cities in a World of Villages: Agrarian Urbanism and the Making of India's Urbanizing Frontiers," *Urban Geography* 41, no. 7 (August 8, 2020): 971–89; Ananya Roy, "What Is Urban about Critical Urban Theory?," *Urban Geography* 37, no. 6 (August 17, 2016): 810–23; Srilata Sircar, "Placing the Urban in Its Rural Context: A Mixed Methods Case Study of a 'Census Town' in India," *Urbanisation* 2, no. 2 (2017): 98–115.

²² S. Gururani and Rajarshi Dasgupta, "Frontier Urbanism: Urbanisation beyond Cities in South Asia," *Economic and Political Weekly* 53 (March 24, 2018): 41–45.

dreams.²³ Likewise, Asher Ghertner's work on Delhi underscores the cruciality of aesthetical appearances in determining the legitimacy of the projects aimed to transform the capital city into a "world-class city." He explores how such supremacy of aesthetics comes to justify violence against the slum dwellers and encroachment of the legitimate discourse of their rights and justice in the city.²⁴

Studies on Kolkata

The neoliberalisation of Kolkata's urban experiences was subjected to acute criticism, particularly because it was the centre of a state which had been under one of the longest communist regimes in the world. Works by Ananya Roy, Pablo Bose, Tathagata Chatterjee, and Souvonic Roy have questioned the transformed role of the erstwhile Left Front Government in enabling the discriminatory practices of urban restructuring in the city.²⁵ Condemning the highly exclusionary nature of the state-facilitated projects of economic zones and public-private townships combined with the spatial cleansing exercises like Operation Sunshine, Roy holds that the post-liberal remaking of Kolkata proceeds through the state-guaranteed informalised rationale of land acquisition and displacement. On the other hand, Anurupa Roy considers the very exercise of reconstructing city space to be reflective of the inherent class struggle. She states that the reform-related actions of pervasive displacements and evictions are means enacted by the state in partnership with the private enterprises to stimulate the accumulative tendencies of a class-based capitalist society. Likewise, Kundu's focus on the planned satellite township of the city, New Town, reveals how the realisation of the state's entrepreneurial aspirations of global integration

²³ Ananya Roy, "Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities: Informality, Insurgence and the Idiom of Urbanization," *Planning Theory* 8, no. 1 (2009): 76–87.

²⁴ Asher Ghertner, "Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi," in *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, ed. Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong, First (Chichester, West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011), 279–306.

²⁵ Pablo S. Bose, "Bourgeois Environmentalism, Leftist Development and Neoliberal Urbanism in the City of Joy," in *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*, ed. Tony Roshan Samara, Shenjing He, and Guo Chen (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 127–51; Tathagata Chatterji and Souvanic Roy, "Gentrification and Post-Industrial Spatial Restructuring in Calcutta, India," in *Gentrification around the World, Volume II*, trans. Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena, Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 269–88; Ananya Roy, "Re-Forming the Megacity: Calcutta and the Rural–Urban Interface," in *Megacities: Urban Form, Governance, and Sustainability*, ed. Andre Sorensen and Junichiro Okata (Tokyo; Dordrecht; Heidelberg; London; New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2011), 93–109.

through land acquisition remains contested.²⁶ Chakravorty and Gupta have demonstrated that Kolkata's planning objectives in the post-liberal period underwent a sharp transformation from slum improvement to developing middle-class and elite housing.²⁷ Urmi Sengupta's research too emphasised the restricted access to Kolkata's housing market due to the enhanced production of upper-income housing.²⁸ Donner associated these factors with the emerging dominance of the middle-class in the city.²⁹ Similarly, Shaw's findings on the declining population in the city's core areas align with this middle-class aspirational trend,³⁰ which, as Bose has established, is increasingly drawn toward the gated apartments and enclave developments on the city's fringe areas.³¹

Research Gap

Studies on Kolkata's neoliberal transformation have mainly focussed on the developments to its east. The vast stretch of wetlands along the arterial connection of the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, or the satellite township of New Town, has provided an unhindered space for remaking the city. But the transformations occurring within the core city have received relatively less attention. Such difference may emanate from the saturated character of the core city, which habitually obscures the dimensions of the characteristically fragmented and erratic transformations. The city's once prosperous industrial base has experienced a gradual decline. Today, the vast premises of these industrial units have become lucrative sites for residential high-rises. Evidences of such transformations from the core city have altered the landscape of these locations, impacting the condition of the people who were once depended upon these sites for their livelihood. Such practice

²⁶ Ratoola Kundu, “‘Their Houses on Our Land’: Perforations and Blockades in the Planning of New Town Rajarhat, Kolkata,” in *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South*, ed. Ayona Datta and Abdul Shaban, Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 123–47.

²⁷ Sanjoy Chakravorty and Gautam Gupta, “Let a Hundred Projects Bloom: Structural Reform and Urban Development in Calcutta,” *Third World Planning Review (TWPR)* 18, no. 4 (1996): 415–31.

²⁸ Urmi Sengupta, “Housing Reform in Kolkata: Changes and Challenges,” *Housing Studies* 22, no. 6 (2007): 965–79.

²⁹ Henrike Donner, “Whose City Is It Anyway? Middle Class Imagination and Urban Restructuring in Twenty-First Century Kolkata,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 46 (2012): 129–55.

³⁰ Annapurna Shaw, “Inner-City and Outer-City Neighbourhoods in Kolkata: Their Changing Dynamics Post Liberalization,” *Environment and Urbanization ASIA* 6, no. 2 (2015): 139–53.

³¹ Pablo Shiladitya Bose, “Home and Away: Diasporas, Developments and Displacements in a Globalising World,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008): 111–31; Pablo Shiladitya Bose, *Urban Development in India: Global Indians in the Remaking of Kolkata* (Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2015).

has not only devoured the previous mode of land capitalisation, but also the previous sociality attached to that place, producing a wholly reshaped area, whose value has now come to be measured in terms of the enormity and aesthetics of the newly transformed space.

In this light, the undertaken study is an attempt to contribute to this aspect of spatial transformation in the city by exploring the dynamics of labour, capital, and the reconfigured role of the state under the neoliberal regime.

Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to understand the spatial change that the city of Kolkata has witnessed over the years, especially in the context of deindustrialisation, and in this context the following four specific objectives have been identified.

1. To contextualise urban spatial transformation in the wake of changing economic structure.
2. To examine the changing landscape of the city of Kolkata during the colonial and post-colonial periods.
3. To map the process of spatial transformation in South Kolkata
4. To ascertain the role of institutions, including the state, in shaping the contemporary landscape.

Methodology

The study has largely adopted a qualitative approach in research methodology, whereby the objectives have been addressed following a descriptive-analytic framework. However, some quantitative techniques, including descriptive statistics, have been used to complement the theoretical insights.

The first objective has been studied primarily through the literature focused on the origin of cities, their relational role within the dynamics of the property market, and the socio-spatial impacts of such dynamics on urban life across the world. For the second objective, which attempts to understand Kolkata's present landscape by tracing its inception history, the study used archival

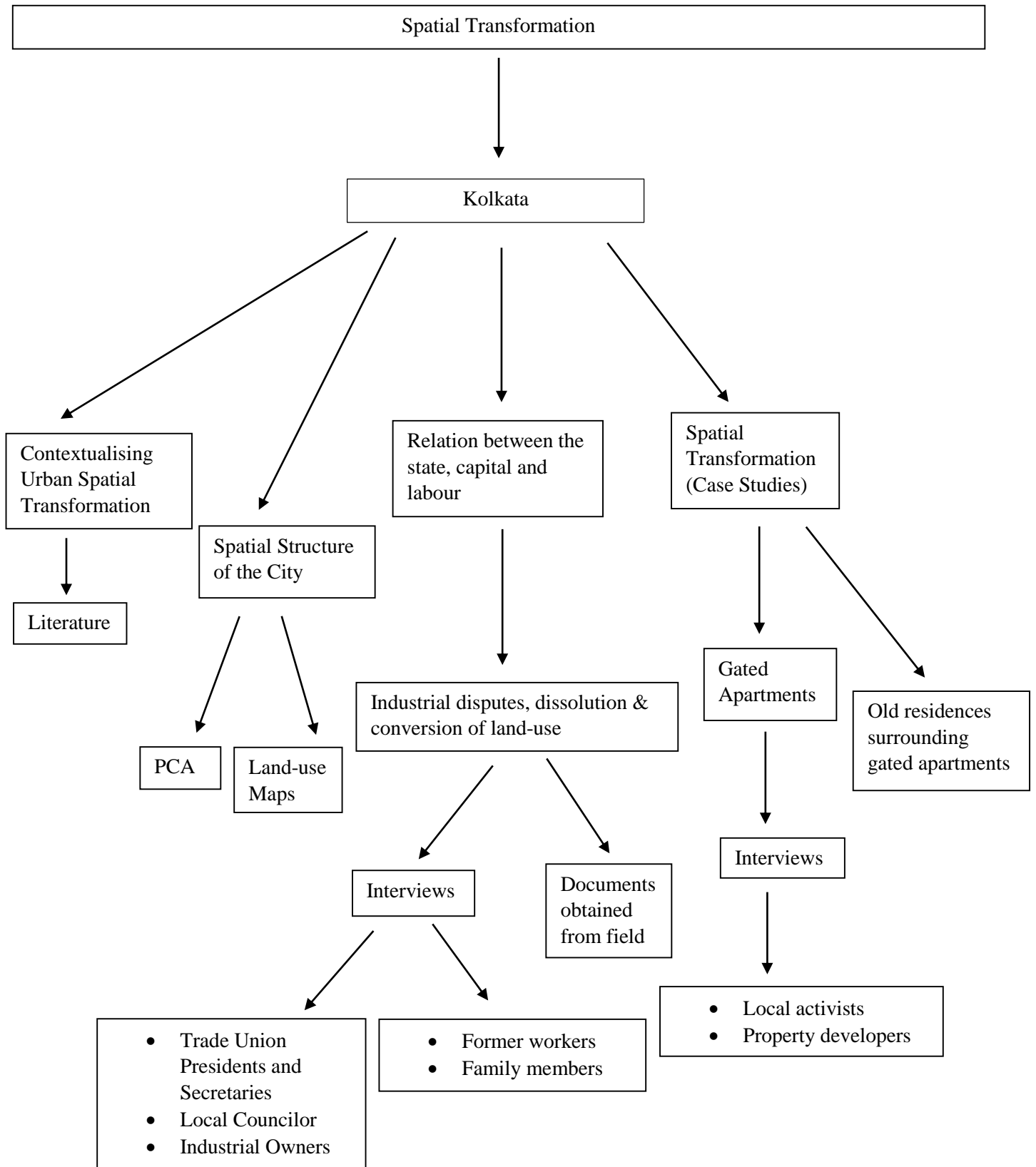


Figure 1.1. Methodological Framework

documents. The brief visit to the Centre for Studies in Social Science Calcutta (CSSSC) helped identify some key sources related to the history of the city. Whereas to understand the present spatial structure of Kolkata, Principal Component Analysis was performed. The PCA model has been adapted from the parameters of urban form by Bardhan et al. (2011).³² The data for the parameters, namely, population density, household density, household not owning cars, slum growth, population growth, sex ratio, ward-wise compactness, and ward-wise crowding, were obtained from the Census of India 2011. For the average residential property price per sq. ft., the data was acquired from the property website of MagicBricks for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020. Lastly, ward-wise proximity to the CBD was measured by mapping the distance between the centroid of the CBD ward numbered 45 and the individual centroid for each ward of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) in ArcGIS software. This was supplemented with the land-use maps of the city, prepared for the years 1980, 2000, and 2020. Extracting the settlement area from the land-use maps enabled comparing the extension pattern of the urban settlements over the years.

The third and fourth objectives study the spatial transformation of the city through six undertaken cases located in the Jadavpur neighbourhood of South Kolkata. Their description is provided below.

1. Jay Engineering Works Ltd. (JEWL)-South City Project: JEWL housed the Usha Sewing Machine Division in Kolkata on Prince Anwar Shah Road. After incurring financial losses for over a decade, JEWL was declared sick in the early half of the 1990s, following which the industrial land was sold for the development of "eastern India's largest mixed-use real estate development," the South City Project, in 2008 at the cost of retrenchment of over 900 factory employees.
2. Bengal Lamps Ltd. (BLL): BLL was one of the largest bulb manufacturers in the country; however, huge financial losses during the 1980s led to its sudden shutdown in 1989. Since then, BLL has been caught up in a horde of legal disputes, which has repeatedly deferred the sale of its land. While in the meantime, three decades have passed and the BLL workers still are awaiting their compensation.

³² Ronita Bardhan, Kiyo Kurisu, and Keisuke Hanaki, "Linking Urban Form & Quality of Life in Kolkata, India," in *Liveable Cities, Urbanising World – Meeting the Challenge* (47th ISOCARP Congress, Wuhan, China, 2011), 12.

3. Sulekha Ink-Devaloke Residences: Post the closure of the Sulekha Ink factory in early 1989, the management declared the possibility of the company's revival to be contingent upon a number of conditions- the sale of a significant portion of the factory land in Jadavpur, excess worker retrenchment, and product diversification. After some initial opposition, finally, in 2005, the Sulekha land was sold to a local property developer, resulting in the development of Devaloke Residences. The year next, the factory was reopened on the remaining portion of the land through necessary product diversification.
4. Krishna Silicate and Glass Works Limited: When in 1969, Krishna owner Bibhuti Sarkar terminated the production owing to a mounting financial crunch, the industrial unit was taken over by the state government. Finally, in 1991, the state government officially announced its closure by clearing the labour dues. While its second unit at Baruipur (in South 24 Parganas) was sold over to a private company, the land of the Jadavpur unit has been lying vacant. Amid the state's lack of any certain plan, the vacancy of this land has become a nuisance to localites and a symbol of impending threat of eviction for the nearby Krishna quarter residents.
5. Annapurna Glass Works-Ekta Heights: Posed against the allegations of evading excise duties, Annapurna dropped its shutters during the early 1980s. When the demands for adequate compensation went unheard, many workers lost hope and left for their native places, while the ones who remained accepted whatever paltry amount the management offered at the end of years-long negotiation. Today the land boasts of accommodating one of the first gated apartments, Ekta Heights, in the area.
6. Dabur India Limited- Westwind Jadavpur and Iris Multispeciality Hospital: After Dabur decided to shift its Garia factory and warehouse to a nearby site in Narendrapur, the land was subsequently sold to multiple private entities, ultimately leading to the development of a gated apartment called Westwind and a private hospital, named Iris Multispeciality.

The data for these case studies draws primarily from 15-week fieldwork in Kolkata. Due to the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, the fieldwork had to be carried out in two phases. The first phase continued for close to two months, from the second week of February to the first week of April 2021, while the second phase commenced in August and lasted till September 2021. The fieldwork comprised two parts- interviews and questionnaire surveys. Interviews were conducted with two sets of individuals. The first set consisted of semi-structured personal interviews with the trade

union presidents and secretaries, local councilors, industrial owners of the concerned cases, local activists, and property developers. Whereas the second set included unstructured personal and group interviews with the former workers of the industrial units and their family members. The interviews helped to apprehend the context of the concerned industrial disputes, the resulting course leading to their present status, and the socio-spatial impacts of the same. The narratives by the industrial owners, trade union members, and former workers aided the understanding of the relations between the state, labour, and capital. These informants further provided a host of documents related to the industrial disputes of the cases, the processes of their dissolution, and the subsequent conversion of the industrial land-use.

The second part was based on questionnaire surveys. The first phase of the survey was conducted in two of the redeveloped gated apartments from the case studies, namely Devaloke Heights and Ekta Heights, while the second phase was carried out among the old residences surrounding the third redeveloped gated apartment called Westwind. This phase also included brief discussions with some of the old inhabitants of the area housing the other redeveloped gated apartments in and around Jadavpur. The discussions built on and improved the theoretical insights of the study regarding the dynamics of spatial transformation of the city.

Other secondary data sources included internet archives such as leaflets and reports from the politico-economic website of Sanhati, plan documents, government and government-sponsored reports (published), real estate magazines, National Housing Bank reports, the KMC website, and newspaper reports (published online).

Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. Besides the introduction in the first chapter, the second chapter discusses the impacts of the varying urban processes on the socio-spatial set-up of a city. The third chapter provides an account of the inception of Kolkata during the colonial period and the subsequent emergence of its spatial structure in relation to its pattern of urban growth. The fourth chapter traces the socio-spatial landscape of the city in the post-independence period. By documenting the transformation of the Indian economic regime in the post-independence period, the chapter attempts to illustrate the socio-spatial repercussions on the city. The fifth chapter

focuses on the city's spatial impacts due to the reformed economy with respect to the changes in urban land-use for the selected case studies. The sixth chapter offers an analysis of the case studies by exploring the role of labour, capital, and the state in influencing the present socio-spatial terrain of the city. Finally, the seventh chapter presents a summarised findings of the undertaken study.

Chapter 2

Contextualising Urban Spatial Transformation

This chapter discusses the broad theories of the urban process across different times and its relevance to a city's spatial structure. The chapter begins by presenting the ideas on the origin of a city and its subsequent progression through the Industrial Revolution to reveal its conflicting class character, configured around the land and property market. The discussion then focuses on the shift in a city's socio-spatial landscape and functioning subtleties due to the transformed global economy. The following section is compiled to examine the significance of such landscape as per the traditional urban theories in the context of the cities in the Global South. Finally, it draws upon the summarised learnings to trace the contemporary economic, social and political developments at home in Kolkata, India.

Density and Diversity

The making and unmaking of cities have been a constant process. The start of this process was heralded with the generation of surplus, i.e., food surplus. When surplus in agricultural production was achieved over the needs of subsistence, people, especially those possessing political, military, economic, or religious power, could afford to divert from the agricultural means and specialise in different fields of art, culture, and politics. When these people assembled in geographical space, the rendezvous of their differences in expertise led to the creation of cities. But the critical factor towards sustaining such appreciative differences essentially lies in mutual interdependences among the various activities. Congregation of varied activities, each attached to different habits of life, resulted in complexity, which in turn caused the emergence of unity. This is because mutual interdependencies often functioned through transactional relationships, the synergic benefits of which could only be accrued by agglomerating together in geographical space. Hence, a simple increase in population did not define a city; the heterogeneity that went into the making of such a population laid the foundation for city formation and the subsequent sequence of urbanisation.¹ However, the

¹ V. Gordon Childe, "The Urban Revolution," *The Town Planning Review* 21, no. 1 (1950): 3–17; Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961).

successive furtherance of urban growth was hardly undeviating without impediments, most of which ensued because the cities got entrapped within the Malthusian crisis of declining agricultural surplus. Even though some of these impediments could be tamed over the European Age of Exploration during the 16th and 17th centuries, the real turnabout occurred with the commencement of the Industrial Revolution, which introduced a systematic reformation to the limitations of agricultural production primarily through mechanisation. Moreover, Industrial Revolution marked a resurgence in the arena of public and manufactured goods, thereby triggering the culmination of cities as economic centres, and the consequent advent of industrial cities, as was evident in much of North America and Western Europe, followed by Asia and Latin America.² The industrial cities witnessed vast streams of immigrants from their rural counterparts to work the plants established here. By the time the Industrial Revolution had run its course, more than 80 percent of the population in advanced capitalist countries had belonged to urban.³ These immigrants hailing from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds when interacted, the heterogeneity of their perspectives turned the city into a breeding ground of innovation, which helped create better solutions to problems. Propagation of innovative solutions and the creation of economically significant goods and services accelerated knowledge spillovers to the adjacent areas, thereby augmenting the economic growth of the entire region.⁴

Thus, since the time city existence came into validation, it has been characterised by the width of diversity before the strength of density. Such reliance upon diversity for the survival prosperity of cities not only emanates from the agglomeration economies as the traditional industrial cities, but with the progress of time and increase in wealth, also from the desirability of a city to be lived in.⁵ This denotes a stage of maturation of the industrial era, where vigorous growth based on economies of scale has ceased to make way for cities with distinguished amenities like proximity to recreational areas, access to cultural incentives, and the presence of physical endowments. Of all the industrial city dwellers in the United States, only 17 percent were found to reside in municipalities that continued to grow by the end of the 1960s.⁶ But, desirable urban amenities like competent public services, prolific consumer goods, mesmeric

² Allen J. Scott and Michael Storper, "The Nature of Cities: The Scope and Limits of Urban Theory," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 1 (2015): 1–15.

³ Anthony Pascal, "The Vanishing City," *Urban Studies* 24 (1987): 597–603.

⁴ Thomas Kemeny, "Cultural Diversity, Institutions, and Urban Economic Performance," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 44, no. 9 (2012): 2134–2152.

⁵ Edward L. Glaeser, Jed Kolko, and Albert Saiz, "Consumer City," *Journal of Economic Geography* 1, no. 1 (2001): 27–50.

⁶ Pascal, "The Vanishing City."

architectural aesthetics, and expeditious transportation links require diverse landscapes to burgeon. Such that in the tricyclic pattern of density, diversity, and desirability, diversity essentially commands the central force, primarily because of its vitality-enhancing characteristic. The promotion and restoration of vital urban life, necessary for its futuristic evolution, need to be characterised by multiscaler diversity, i.e., at the district, neighbourhood, and street levels. Diverse or mixed land uses across a city generate a host of varied activities involving residents, visitors, employers, and employees, who all keep the city streets occupied and bustling with life and purposes. This wide range of people engaged in various tasks arising out of mixed land uses besides augmenting density offers access to daily social contacts and interactions. The manacle of such interaction often resulting from "sidewalk terms" facilitates keeping the city streets safe and well equipped against wrongdoings. Hence, the successes and failures of cities have always been reliant upon the people and their diffusive interaction more than the designs of the city planners, who have unswervingly manifested the tendency of implementing modern orthodox plans conceptualised around uniformly utopian conditions.⁷ A critical statistical parameter of great cities has traditionally been associated with density. Although the anatomy of these cities across the world has been evaluated in terms of centralised urban planning, the fixated mechanical terms of such planning have seldom been the sole contributor to their 'greatness.' Rather, their 'greatness' is the outcome of the successful fostering of certain urban conditions that itself lead to the desired density, a "clustering force"⁸ that helps in the illustrious growth of the city. No amount of intricate planning can rightfully predict the ideal configuration of that cluster, as to how or when it is to be generated, for the best configuration often results from the spontaneous amalgamation of conditional forces. This is because people are most productive when clustered, but the content of the cluster ought to be effective in developing contacts and networks for them. Spatial arrangements that enable the formation of such a cluster ultimately lead to the proliferation of great cities.⁹

The probability of potential differentiation is to range more widely when a larger number of individuals share the urban interface, so the only way an area constant in proportion can underpin the effect of such ever-increasing numbers is by diversifying the individual activities. On the downside, the arrangement alike certainly risks intense specialisation of functions. The

⁷ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

⁸ Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), cited in Stefano Moroni, "Urban Density after Jane Jacobs: The Crucial Role of Diversity and Emergence," *City, Territory and Architecture* 3, no. 1 (2016): 13.

⁹ Peter Gordon, "Spontaneous Cities," *Advances in Austrian Economics* 16 (2012): 181–209.

consequent differentiation of areas within the city, effecting tough competition to make each area economically productive, segregating places of work from residences, can relegate the overall city structure to a mosaic of variegated, social worlds devoid of neighbourly bonds. But on the flip side, the highly diverse population enforces a "levelling influence," where the common usage of public utilities- educational, recreational, cultural, or health- ought to introduce an element of adjustment to meet the mass requirements.¹⁰ When an individual engages in all aspects of city life- political, social, and economic, which he does by associating in a greater number of organised groups, he suppresses a part of his individuality in the interest of the popular outlook. This may mean that concentration of diverse attitudes tends to function most successfully through the production of generalised perspectives, amid a sense of tolerance, towards the final attainment of "seculari[s]ation of life."¹¹ Thus, despite a notion about the loss of community values and spirit in the context of the growth of great cities,¹² an understanding of such growth and its associated uproar is principally rooted in the existence of local communities or "natural areas," whereby numerous, diverse local communities merge together to form the larger urban community. The typical layout of almost every large city comprising of Central Business District (CBD), industrial districts, residential areas, satellite cities, slums, and immigration colonies, characterised by their unique way of life, are instances of such natural areas. These are natural because they are not the outcomes of the cogent planning process; rather, these emanate from the impacts of specificities of spatial interaction and their survival logic on the people and functions within the city. In this sense, both the social and spatial morphology of a city is highly an unpredictable culmination of the collective effort on the part of the people to live together.¹³ The distinct feature of any modern city life originates from the social dynamics of the local, which constitutes not only the beating heart of the larger urban ecosystem, but also the smallest unit of political organisation of a city. The local, in combination with its molecular components of place and indigenous conditions, acclimatise their inhabitants as per their customs, traditions and values. The co-habitational process of many such locals is what weaves the heterogeneous yarns of the city fabric, such that the woven fabric of the city flourishes the difference in local yarn fibres. Suppose one is to dwell in the idealism of city life, in that case, the freedom that ensues the life alike is to form affinity groups. The formation of these groups based on like-mindedness may take the form of spatial and social

¹⁰ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (1938): 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹² William H. Jordy, "Review of *The Intellectual Verus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright, Morton*," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49, no. 4 (1963): 683–685.

¹³ Robert Ezra Park, *Human Communities: The City and Human Ecology* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1952).

singularity. Still, this singularity must not involve any exclusionary practices. In other words, domination of particular neighbourhoods by single groups can function as long as the boundaries among the neighbourhoods remain obscured. The diversity of the activities supported by the city gives rise to a multitude of uses of the same urban space, which not only brings people in public to achieve their individual goals but also causes the inevitable mingling among the different groups using that space, thereby creating a hospitable environment of mutual habitation.¹⁴

Capitalisation of the City

The intrinsic tendency of capitalism towards the appropriation of surplus value has always found its materialistic articulation within cities. The capability of cities to sustain various forms of engagement has resulted in the production of various kinds of spaces, allowing the capitalist class to manifest their disposition within its terrain through incessant capitalisation and recapitalisation of its constituent elements

Emergence of Capitalism

The diverse character of the city renders it capable of fulfilling most desires, performing all functions possible within the ambit of human imagination, thereby making way for more desires and innovations of the inhabiting population. Its allure is driven by the fundamental and primitive connotations acting on the part of the people, which ultimately convince them to leave the familiarity of their secure homes in small towns to participate afresh in the uncertain practices of the giant city life.¹⁵ It is the celestial belief of betterment amidst the presence of city air that has incessantly centralised city in most of the utopian proposals.¹⁶ The all-encompassing oddity of cities has not only raised the general level of expectations from it, but also ploughed the furrow of conflicts. In the context of such oddity when every individual aspires to materialise their goals, the resultant mesh of their conflicting aspirations creates

¹⁴ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), cited in Susan S. Fainstein, "Cities and Diversity: Should We Want It? Can We Plan For It?" *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 1 (2005): 3–19.

¹⁵ Robert E. Park, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment," *American Journal of Sociology* 20, no. 5 (1915): 577–612.

¹⁶ G. Brown, "Utopian Cities," in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, ed. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), 125–130.

chaos as to who would wield enough power to disentangle their aspiration from the mesh, necessary for its realisation. Those who succeed in such a battle of power move ahead to engage in similar tasks at a higher-level order. Such a source of power emanates from disproportionate access to better information, higher knowledge, resourceful connectivity, and vast ownership of money. Thus, every time an individual drives the wheel of power to extricate one's aspiration from the conflicting mesh for its accomplishment, one does so at the expense of others, which always leaves open the question of applying force and coercion during the process. Over time, as the strength of this accomplished group increases, the city gets divided into those who can and those who cannot (have their way). So if we are to question the outcome of the relational analysis of power alike as to who benefits? who governs? or who wins?, we are likely to land ourselves with an answer related to the distributionary process. In civilised world, access to food, clothing and shelter are the basic tenets of human life. The more the access, the better, because more of such access leads to certain experiences that are highly valued, namely, great education, better and safe income jobs, and higher purchasing capacity. These privileged experiences provide quality of life and shape it a full circle. The distribution of such experiences serves as the power indicator, for those who are in possession of these experiences are often the ones occupying important institutional positions, taking part in the decision-making process. Therefore when a cohort is over-represented in institutional or decision-making processes relative to the proportion of its population, the cohort can be designated as powerful. Their domination indicates to set the terms exceedingly favourable for their successful unhindered operation in the world through complete control over the rest.¹⁷ This powerful cohort- frequently termed as the "power elite," in control of a disproportionate amount of privileges like information, knowledge, connectivity, and wealth, share homogenised viewpoints to achieve their common objectives. In the United States, historically, power elites have been found to dominate the economy, government, and military, thereby strengthening their hold of power as they shift from one to the other sector. A part of it has been possible because in the US, there has been no rival opposition to challenge their hegemony as the historical religious actor of Catholic Church in Europe or their powerful feudal lords, which resulted in their smooth progression across the sectors. Moreover, organizational power tends to transform as they begin to consolidate, such that economic power can turn into potential

¹⁷ G. William Domhoff, "The Class-Domination Theory of Power," in *Who Rules America? Challenges to Corporate and Class Dominance*. (New York: McGraw-Hill., 2009).

political power.¹⁸ Mills, in his famous work, *The Power Elite*, has anticipated that those residing at the highest rank of the order do not face any real opposition, which enables them to function in close-knit overlapping circles concerning political, military, and economic arenas to influence at least national-level policy-making.¹⁹ These consequential decisions play active roles in shaping society's key institutions- financial, educational, social, civic, and cultural, thereby having a wide impact. For instance, the domestic elites of Chile, fearful of its socialistic drive, helped mount Pinochet's Coup against the democratic government head, Salvadore Allende, in 1973, with support from the US Corporations, the CIA and the US Secretary of State. Similarly, in Sweden, the Swedish Employers' Federation, when threatened with the growing effect of the workers' union, sought to join the European Union in 1993-94 so as to furnish the most awaited indoctrination of elite-favoured agenda at home. In both instances (though to a much great extent in Chile than in Sweden), the masses suffered due to violent repressions of social solidarity measures and political democratic organisation.²⁰ The Power Elite theory, therefore, believes in the complete authority of a single elite group over the future of an entire nation, exercising influence via the middle group and ultimately leaving the impacts of its outcomes to the commons.²¹

The rise of this elite group has always led to the hegemonic appropriation of circumstantial opportunities, and the most blatant expression of such an exercise is found in the cities. Because cities have always provided the ideal opportunities to be mobilised into productive forces governing the socio-spatial patterns of life. A city's tendency to get divided during the process of being mobilised into productive forces has ushered the greatest benefits upon the capitalist mode of production. The primary consideration of capitalism as a mode of production is mostly derived from its overarching effect on the whole of society, which started during the early 16th century, paving the way for the contemporary capitalist era.²² The capitalists largely comprise a group of producers in control of the means of production, producing commodities for the exchange market. In doing so, they aim to realize as much profit as possible to stay competitive. The only way to increase profits is by keeping the cost of production low. Since a part of the

¹⁸ G. William Domhoff, "The Four Networks Theory of Power: A Theoretical Home for Power Structure Research," *Who Rules America?*, April 2005, accessed September 20, 2021, https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/theory/four_networks.html.

¹⁹ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

²⁰ David Harvey, "Chapter 4: Uneven Geographical Development," in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005), 87–119.

²¹ Mills, *The Power Elite*.

²² Gerard Delanty, "The Future of Capitalism: Trends, Scenarios and Prospects for the Future," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 19, no. 1 (2019): 10–26.

production cost involving raw materials and machinery remain fixed, the capitalists seek to meet their profit-making goal by cutting short on the cost of labour and extracting as much labour from the workers as possible at the given cost. However, with increasing fixed production cost of machinery and raw materials and decreasing cost of labour, the capitalist encounters hindrances in making any further profit by cost-cutting labour. So in order to relieve himself of the problem, the capitalist is forced to reinvest a part of his profits into machinery, to substitute labour with capital, such that the labour cost is reduced to a bare minimum, i.e., subsistence wage. In this way, greater employment of capital in the production process accompanies further misery for the workers. According to Marx, it is in the class interest of the capitalists (bourgeois) to resort to capital by substituting labour so as to earn higher profits, for the failure in doing so will cost them their position in the bourgeois circle.²³ Thus, the conflict of interest in the capitalist mode of production emanates from the relentless pursuits of a capitalist to retain his position as a bourgeois, which not only goes against the "objective" interests of the working-class (proletariat) but effectively causes greater misery to them.²⁴ In this sense, capitalism goes beyond the economic tenets of a functioning society to assert its force in terms of wide socio-cultural and civilizational significance.²⁵ The advent of capitalism predates the industrial economy. It is hard to arrive at a confirmed result regarding the relationship between industrialisation and capitalism. Just as the examples from third-world countries like Africa indicate, the emergence of capitalism can be convolutedly connected to the agrarian background and is not always preconditioned upon industrialisation. Similarly, instances from the Soviet Union under Stalin or China under Mao Zedong direct the growth of industrialisation in non-capitalist countries.²⁶ Capitalism is believed to be historically etched amid the coexisting universes of preindustrial society. The coexisting universes of mutually distinct characteristics have strengthened the gestation ground of capitalism per se. As the first universe houses the everyday structures of routine human life encompassing the unconscious expressions of human habits, and behaviours, the second universe deals with the conscious decisions of human existence. Its surroundings, based on the conscious exchange relations of the market economy and the accompanying activities necessary for growth and development, essentially signal the turn towards capitalistic development. Since the everyday structures of

²³ *Marx Engels: Selected Works* (London: Lawrance and Wishart Ltd., 1950).

²⁴ W. Schmaus, "Determinism: Social and Economic," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Oxford: Pergamon, 2001), 3538–3541.

²⁵ Delanty, "The Future of Capitalism"; Johann P Arnason, "Theorizing Capitalism: Classical Foundations and Contemporary Innovations," *European Journal of Social Theory* 18, no. 4 (2015): 351–367.

²⁶ D. Simandan, "Industrialization," in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, ed. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), 419–425.

human life is largely a reflection of the power relations and prerogative positions in a society, the materialisation of capitalism in the preindustrial civilization and its subsequent dominance in the contemporary world is made possible through exchange functions of the pre-existing market economy by leveraging such power relations amid the commercial supremacy of the cities.²⁷ Evidences from Rome during the time of Augustus, have well established the fact that cities have traditionally served as the nodes in organised trade system.²⁸ Gradually over time, by virtue of its interaction with the surrounding region, the urban centres have grown to become the market places for the exchange of goods, resulting in the accumulation of great amounts of money. It is this power of money that not only enabled the cities to straighten the terms of trade linkages with the surrounding region, but also helped them assert their territorial influence. Stemming from such power of money, cities have thereafter led to the prominence of capitalism in the economic policy discourse. The west pioneered in this aspect, mustering public credit system structured around tax regimen, long-distance trade, and different formats of trade finance. To acquire a comprehensive understanding of the inception and dissemination of the capitalistic operations, it is, therefore, crucial to take account of the spatial transformations, central to which has been the emanation of the economic significance of cities. Their increased capacity to absorb greater risks owing to the control of a massive proportion of wealth has simultaneously resulted in growth and misery, characterising cities as the locus of intense class struggle, for "without cities, there are no classes and no state."²⁹ The functioning conditionality of cities, laying open the austere indifferences of capital, are instrumental in implanting the realisation that the proletariat is "a politically and economically organised class in opposition to the bourgeois."³⁰

Impact on the Urban

The advance of capitalism has not only caused the momentum of the consequential class struggle to gather apace, but also introduced varying contexts for the emergence of new ones.

²⁷ Gary Fields, "Urbanization and the Transition from Agrarian to Industrial Society," *Berkeley Planning Journal* 13, no. 1 (2012), 102-128.

²⁸ Jeanne Rutenburg and Arthur M. Eckstein, "The Return of the Fall of Rome," *The International History Review* 29, no. 1 (2007): 109-122.

²⁹ Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, cited in C Paris, "Social Theory and the Urban Question: Reviews, Critiques, and Reply: Whatever Happened to Urban Sociology? Critical Reflections on Social Theory and the Urban Question," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 1, no. 2 (1983): 221.

³⁰ Peter Saunders, "Social Theory, Capitalism and the Urban Question," in *Social Theory and the Urban Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 2.

Its age-old association with the exploitation of workers in the industrial sphere over the years has given way to their deprivation in terms of urban living space. By commodifying the survival elements of a city, capitalism has been effective enough to reduce the contemporary city to plutocratic terms. Its incessant pursuit of accumulation has always regarded the city with all its diversity as a "spatial fix" to the crisis that emanates from such tendencies of accumulation. The capacity of a city to provide solutions to the intrinsic problem of systematic crisis in the capital accumulation process is expressed through spatial expansion and restructuring.³¹ The ecological niche of capitalism hinges upon the ability to reproduce surplus value, whereby the urban configuration of a city is an ideal manifestation of its survival habitat. Marx has propounded that in the history of human existence, conflicts are inherent to every mode of production that, in due course, result in its departure and replacement by another more advanced stage of economic and social life.³² By the same logic, the central conflict of the capitalist system, which has consistently culminated in its existential crisis, is its tendency in overproduction to satiate its profit-motivated avarice. However, according to Weberian analysis, capitalism will inevitably find ways to avert its structural crisis through calculative planning.³³ The weberian analysis finds logic in the practice of urbanisation that has always come to the rescue of the capitalistic crisis of surplus production by thriving on the mobilisation of the surplus. In this process, the urban built environment has undergone repeated bouts of construction and destruction only to meet the contextual requirements of capitalism from time to time,³⁴ thereby habitually absorbing the economic shocks that periodically affect capitalist societies and perpetually putting the urban spatial and social fabric through the test of survival. When the invariable problems of over-accumulation began to threaten the continuity of capital circulation during the 18th century Britain the "complex composite" of the urban built environment largely absorbed the surplus capital, which was offered no other suitable place to secure a steady rate of return. Such magnanimous in-take capacity of the urban built-up has, therefore, facilitated the subsequent phenomenon of "capital switching" every time in the wake of over accumulation crisis of capitalism.³⁵

³¹ David Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix,'" *Geographische Revue* 2 (2001): 23–30.

³² "Historical Materialism by Karl Marx," *Social Theory Re-Wired*, 2016, accessed June 25, 2022, <https://routledgesoc.com/category/profile-tags/historical-materialism>.

³³ Delanty, "The Future of Capitalism."

³⁴ David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards Critical Geography*. In Kevin Fox Gotham, "Creating Liquidity out of Spatial Fixity: The Secondary Circuit of Capital and the Subprime Mortgage Crisis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 2 (2009): 355–371.

³⁵ David Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2, no. 1–3 (1978): 115.

Following the significant employment shift from manufacturing to services during the 1980s, the United States witnessed a vast movement of capital into the construction and real estate sector, centred on the simultaneous shift of preferences, and development of new consumption behaviour, especially among the "yuppies" (the class of young urban professionals).³⁶ This was also when the mortgage market became securitized and globally consolidated. Towards the late 1990s, as the impending accumulation crisis of money capital began to lurk in the United Kingdom, investments in equipment and machinery dropped substantially, followed by its subsequent shift to the urban built environment.³⁷ In this sense, a city's class divisional consumption dynamics have played a critical role in averting the crisis of capital circulation and expansion. However, according to Harvey, such a "spatial fix" is only temporary, for the nature of investment involved in the switching of capital is characteristically speculative, which may merely serve to delay the over-accumulation crisis for a time but cannot prevent it entirely, as it will ultimately fawn upon to diminish the exchange value of the built environment. The relentless process of asset value speculation through a vast investment of surplus in the urban built-up will ultimately lead up to what may be called a "property-market boom," thereby "switching" the crisis from production-centered over-accumulation to speculative surplus asset accretion or the "crisis of asset valuation."³⁸ Such a crisis will further the existing financial predicament by ultimately transforming into a "financial crisis of urbanisation."³⁹ The global financial crisis of 2008-09 was a clear manifestation of the systematic accumulation crisis of capitalism. The regime of capitalism fundamentally operates due to the flow of capital, whereby the money is made to circulate so as to fetch more amount of it. Hence, as mentioned earlier, until and unless a part of the profit is reinvested in the circulation process, the pursuit of higher levels of profit remains a bleak probability. In view of this compulsion, the capital is required to maintain a standard compound growth rate of a minimum of three percent for it to have "healthy" sustenance, as anything lower than that is troublesome. The average global growth rate from 2000 to 2008 was exactly three percent, but there were plenty of local variations, which were indicative of the capital's problem in systematic circulation and resultant maintenance of the standard compound rate of growth. Thus when the profit-motivated outlet of easy credit exploded in 2008, leading to the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States,

³⁶ R A Beaugard, "Capital Switching and the Built Environment: United States, 1970–89," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 26, no. 5 (1994): 715–732.

³⁷ Brett Christophers, "Revisiting the Urbanization of Capital," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 6 (2011): 1347–1364.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review*, no. 53 (2008): 23–40.

³⁹ David Harvey, "Their Crisis, Our Challenge," March 15, 2009, accessed September 10, 2021, <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/Their-crisis-our-challenge/>.

the foundation of the world capitalist system suffered an attack. It resulted in the fall of a number of investment banks on Wall Street. Major mortgage and insurance companies had to be nationalised. The entire financial damage reached an insurmountable scale to be rescued through a massive government bail-out. A significant reason for the crisis was the debt-financed structure of the property market and the globalisation of such a market. As a result, countries like Spain, Britain, Ireland, and Iceland were on the verge of bankruptcy; unemployment levels soared up across the globe. In China alone, the huge decline in the export sector had cost around 20 million jobs.⁴⁰

Therefore, the progress of capitalist development through capital switching takes account of the coherent requirements to exploit the lucrative opportunities of the built environment as part of the capitalist class ambitions, and the state is often found to be an effective ally in this process.⁴¹ Lefebvre observed that capitalistic growth during the 20th century was majorly concerned with springing a new life in the secondary circuit through property speculation, which led to a greater realisation of surplus value, such that it eventually replaced the primary circuit. While the share of global surplus put into the circulatory process of the secondary circuit increased, it decreased in the primary circuit, suggesting that "industrial revolution" gave way to "urban revolution."⁴² The materialisation of Lefebvre's suggestion can be perceived when urbanisation is viewed as a process arising out of the unique amalgamation of mutually reinforcing conditions (like agglomeration economies, infrastructural framework, transportation, and communicational links). These conditions depend profoundly upon man-conditioned resources of nature, which lead to the 'exclusivity' of resources (such as land) and their consequent transfer payments in the form of rent.⁴³ Such urban orchestrated production of rent replaces the neo-classical definition of rent as a form of transfer payment to a 'scarce' factor of production with an 'exclusive' factor of production, such that the factor of production, often in the form of land, is exclusive to the urban environment. And it is broadly this redefinition of rent that not only "blur[s] the distinction between natural and artificially created scarcity" but also enhances the prospect of capitalisation of land. Since the foundational logic of capitalist development lies in the production of surplus value i.e., profit, a capitalist is habitually drawn towards sources capable of yielding greater returns. The high return-yielding

⁴⁰ David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and The Crisis of Capitalism* (London: Profile Books, 2010).

⁴¹ Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism."

⁴² Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

⁴³ David Harvey, "Class-Monopoly Rent, Finance Capital and the Urban Revolution," *Regional Studies* 8, no. 3-4 (1974): 240.

ability of investments in the urban built environment compared to industrial investments, thus, often follows the logic of shift from primary to the secondary circuit of capital.⁴⁴ The urban real estate market, along with the practice of rent appropriation from the urban land, constitutes an integral part of such a secondary circuit of capital, entailing crude exploitation of urban space and common urban life through repeated restructurings, determining not only the spatial configuration of the cities but also their social configuration.

Within the ambit of the secondary circuit, the capital which flows to the urban real estate market is partly engaged in rent-related transactions of landed properties, propelling spatial reorganisation in the process.⁴⁵ Supported by the fundamental principle of private property under capitalism, the group which succeeds in the battle of power is often found to be the owners of the land and its associated components. These owners, by virtue of their ownership status and the supremacy that emanates from such status, exert their influence as a class on the rest of the masses, by extracting rent from them in return for the usage of and on the land. Their 'class' connotation is meant to express social cohesion, a sense of "we-ness," heightened by their contractual relationship with the tenants. The commonness in their exploitative treatment of the tenants binds them as a cohesive group, feeding their class-conscious attitude. As per the elite theory, the dominant class is able to govern the political outcomes owing to their shared economic interests, which stem from their commonness of ideology. Since the character of the dominant ideology is in contrast to the working-class, it functions to unify the dominant class, i.e., the capitalist class, of which the elites form an inner circle.⁴⁶ The diversity involved in the process of urbanisation in terms of residential structures, housing sub-markets, tenancy forms, consumption patterns, social wants, and survival objectives engenders a "multiplier effect" in the course of rent appropriation, generating opportunities to yield even greater returns.⁴⁷ This explains the capitalistic inclination towards diverting investments from industrial production to the built environment. At the same time, the shift of capitalism away from the Fordist forms of mass production is largely supported by the new financial system, which no longer depends

⁴⁴Harvey developed his "capital switching" argument in the context of "circuit" of capital accumulation, whereby the "primary circuit" involves industrial production and creation of surplus value, "the secondary circuit" is the built environment; and the "tertiary circuit" includes investment in science and technology.

⁴⁵ Allen John Scott, *The Urban Land Nexus and the State* (London: Routledge, 2007); Stefan Krätke, "Cities in Contemporary Capitalism," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 5 (2014): 1660–1677.

⁴⁶ Kate Williard, "Understanding Political Power: Pluralism, Class Theory and Elite Theory Perspectives," Academic, *Academic Blog*, January 3, 2016, accessed September 22, 2021, <http://www.katewilliard.com/1/post/2016/01/understanding-political-power-pluralism-class-theory-and-elite-theory-perspectives.html>.

⁴⁷ David Harvey, "Class-Monopoly Rent, Finance Capital and the Urban Revolution."

on the circuit of primary production. This autonomy of the finance capital, unlike industrial capital is derived from the various facets of production and consumption. The diversity of urban culture offers the finance capital a quintessential opportunity for exploiting the urban consumption gateways. Its capacity to continually define the evolving phenomenon of urbanisation in terms of new means of consumption is essentially achieved through "fetishism of the consumer," where the pattern of commodity flow supported by global advertising strategies increasingly projects the consumer as the protagonist of the consumption field. In reality, it is just a fetish, "a sense of mask" that disguises the real actor, i.e., the producer and its associated forces operating from behind the scene of global production.⁴⁸ These forces master the art of advertisement to conjure such a powerful image that the consumer is unquestionably led into believing they are the decision-maker. Whereas, in the truest sense of the term, they are merely a "chooser" in the inevitable field of consumption. Such a system, therefore, makes the finance capital more adept at accumulation without necessarily being dependent on industrial production. Over time, as had happened in the latter half of 1960s, the decline in industrial investments is accompanied by the accommodation of that capital in different types of consumption, mainly centred around the land, housing, and property market, which ultimately replaces the industrial profit with "class monopoly rent."⁴⁹ But capital circulation in the property market has a bit of a gambling effect, where the result may either be extremely successful, an enormously profitable possibility for commercial investment, and a source of mass consumption in the form of home ownership, causing further accumulation.⁵⁰ Or it may prove to be a major hindrance to future accumulation, providing renewed significance to Marx's prognosis about capitalism's future, "the real barrier to capitalist production is capital itself."⁵¹ This is because debt-financed investments in the built environment involve high risk, where the rate of return stretches far into the future. By the time over-investment is ultimately exposed, the producer is already engulfed by the financial loss. The net result of the 2008-09 subprime mortgage crisis in the United States was very much alike. The post-crisis event resulted in an abundant supply of empty houses, office spaces, and shopping malls. Property market crisis, just as it takes years to surface, continues to haunt for a prolonged period, plundering financial institutions in the meantime.⁵² Nonetheless, the growing relevance of

⁴⁸ Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, Culture & Society* 7, no. 2-3 (1990): 307.

⁴⁹ Harvey, "Class-Monopoly Rent, Finance Capital and the Urban Revolution."

⁵⁰ Gotham, "Creating Liquidity out of Spatial Fixity."

⁵¹ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume III. The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole* (Chicago: Charles H Kerr & Company, 1909), 293.

⁵² Harvey, "The" *Enigma of Capital*.

finance capitalism is categorically tied to the deeper role of the state, which serves as an effective ally to the finance capital by feeding into the system of consumer fetishism in the interest of economic growth and stability. Thus, when the property bubble collapsed in United States, the US Government rushed in to save the confidence of the finance capital, the principal detonator of the financial meltdown, by sanctioning a national bail-out of the financial institutions with public funds. Backed by the support of fiscal policies, the state has not only actively managed the production and consumption on behalf of the capitalist class, but also manipulated the administrative policies of the urban local governments to the advantage of its members.

The Rise of the Neoliberal State

When the crisis of accumulation in the 1970s threatened the interests of the capitalists, it also hit large-scale unemployment and soaring inflation. Social discontent and widespread labour movements demonstrated a strong inclination towards a socialist alternative, further strengthened by the growing popularity of the socialist and communist parties across much of Europe. As a result, the economic elites and the ruling classes of the developed and developing countries were politically cornered. However, the neoliberal answer, concerned with the restoration of class power, surfaced through the New York fiscal crisis operation in 1975, and in no different manner than in the past, the urban process rose to significance.⁵³ The ascent and subsequent hegemony of neoliberalism as an alternative economic doctrine stemmed from its appeal to the political ideals of human dignity and individual freedom of speech, expression, and choice. Drawing from the dissatisfying outcomes of embedded liberalism in the 1970s, the neoliberal discourse effected such efficient promotion of the detrimental impacts of state intervention and its imminent threat towards the core ingredients of human freedom that the path towards neoliberalism consciously appeared as the only alternative towards the realisation of unhindered experiences of daily lives.⁵⁴ The resting principle of attaining the neoliberal discourse of individual freedom and greater dignity comprised freedom of market and trade, and the conditions for achieving these endowments were to be guaranteed by the neoliberal state. The sole function of the neoliberal state, much like the arrangement of post-war US

⁵³ David Harvey, "Chapter 2: The Construction of Consent," in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39–63.

⁵⁴ David Harvey, "Chapter 1: Freedom's Just Another Word," in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5–38.

imperialism, is to facilitate private capital accumulation and protect the interests of private and multinational entities, hereby identified as individuals. The state must use its sovereignty to protect the freedom of trade and the validity of market contracts. State-guaranteed safeguard of such freedom is supposed to eventually make way for the freedoms of corporate enterprise and private property. Privatisation of public assets, unregulated exploitation of indigenous natural resources, facilitation of foreign direct investments, freedom of the labour market from all sorts of institutional and regulatory restraints (trade union power, for example), superseded favour of export-led growth over import substitution, right of profit repatriation by the foreign companies and massive roll back of social security measures- have characteristically defined a neoliberal state.⁵⁵ In summary, to put in Margaret Thatcher's words, neoliberalism represents the germination of a system where there is "no such thing as society, only individual men and women."⁵⁶ The role of the state is to principally focus on creating and protecting an institutional framework conducive to the exercise of individual entrepreneurial freedoms, private property rights, free market, and free trade. The experiences of Chile, Mexico, Iraq, and Iran bear testament to such a type of sovereignty.

The state's role under the precept of neoliberalism is crucial to understand that contrary to the widely proclaimed idea of 'no state intervention', the operational success of neoliberal policies would hit a road block in its absence. This is because, for the fundamental neoliberal tenet, i.e., market to work on, active mediation of the state is required, but only in terms complementary to the neoliberal actors. The admission of the market within the administrative forum is not a natural phenomenon; it has to be brought within the public domain, regulated according to the existing conditions, and monitored subsequently for it to function prosperously, all of which is impossible without the authority of the state. Hence, what is essentially asserted as the erosion of the state, only indicates a qualitative transformation of its form from being the guardian of the people to the guardian of the market instrumentalities. The reorientation of the state capacities often imparts the impression of departure of the state in general, whereas, in reality, it refers to the departure of specific affiliated states of socialism and developmental welfare. Amid these conventionally disparate state forms, the application of the neoliberal formula though produces a generalised version of 'neoliberal state', contextual differences in terms of its implementation, operation and consequences exist prominently enough to account for the "institutional hybridity" in each case. The distinctive experiences undergone by each and every

⁵⁵ David Harvey, "Chapter 3: The Neoliberal State," in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005), 64–86.

⁵⁶ Harvey, "Chapter 1: Freedom's Just Another Word," 23.

country during their move towards neoliberalism have not only caused uneven outcomes but also made the neoliberal discourse increasingly path-dependent.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the idiosyncratic practices of neoliberal transition commonly align in their outcome towards exposing the weakest section of society to further economic hardships. Be it the violent attack on the organised labour power in Britain in the wake of Thatcher's privatisation drive of British native industries or the loss of rural livelihood due to the dissolution of agricultural communes in favour of Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs) in China.⁵⁸ The qualitative transformation of the government under the neoliberal regime has occurred through the extension of market logic to mainstream governmental areas like administration and social security, such as the penetration of market forces across the UK policing sector in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis or the privatisation of pension funds in Sweden after its long-awaited strategic integration with EU in 1994. The emergence of this reorganised form of government is driven towards increased "autonomisation" of governmental tasks, whereby both the gains of success and the risks of failures are necessarily transferred upon the enterprise, i.e., the individuals.⁵⁹ Every individual is held responsible for their fortune, whereby individual success and failures are considered as part of entrepreneurial outcomes. Such proposition is extended to mean that if due to systematic changes in the social provisions such as privatisation of education and consequent fee hike, a section of the society is unable to invest enough in human capital, then the blame for such failure is to be borne by them and not the state or its institutions. All solutions to problems are to be sought via legal procedures, where matters are frequently decided based on the power of the parties involved rather than the integrity of the facts. By upholding the rule of law, the neoliberal dogma strives to uphold the supremacy of money power and private property over the issues of equal rights and social justice.⁶⁰

The primary intention of restoring class power by re-establishing the conditions of private profit-making is what guides neoliberalism. In the United States, the housing market has served as a crucial stabilising component of the economy since the 1990s. The dominance of private property owing to the renewed proliferation of class power has played a remarkable role in absorbing the surplus capital through new construction and regeneration, initiating rapid inflation of housing prices. Neoliberalisation stands for "financialisation of everything"- all

⁵⁷ Jamie Peck, "Geography and Public Policy: Constructions of Neoliberalism," *Progress in Human Geography* 28, no. 3 (2004): 395.

⁵⁸ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (OUP Oxford, 2007).

⁵⁹ James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality," *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4 (2002): 989.

⁶⁰ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

areas of the state, economy, and human life.⁶¹ The consequent eminence of finance and financial services largely entails speculative urban property markets through the establishment of spectacular islands of wealth and privilege in the name of 'global cities'. Following the mounting prevalence of speculative gains, these global seats of finance exercise vast commanding functions, particularly with respect to the 'ideal' role of cities to align with the neoliberal agenda. Sassen notes that global cities necessitate the sedimentation of many resources essential for global economic activities. The industries involved in handling these resources are characterised by hypermobility of the output (instead of the resources) and professional expertise. Alongside, the prosperity of these industries is dependent upon many subsidiary, "non-expert jobs," which are put into effect through the establishment of networked city-to-city cross-border transactions, emphasising the prospects of place-based infrastructure and institutional frameworks in the process. Since much of these place-based prospects are related to the outcomes of national policy-making, the materialisation of 'global' according to Sassen, is at least partially contingent upon national territories.⁶² Evidently, the path-dependent character of neoliberalism has accompanied large-scale institutional creative destruction in cities surrounding local tax abetments, public-private partnerships, property-redevelopment schemes, and innovative forms of local boosterism, such that the entire notion of 'urban' is transformed through the production of a fresh nexus of urban functions at the global and the national level.⁶³ This process has not only invoked major municipal budgetary cuts and imposition of fiscal austerity measures, but also burdened the local government to adjust its own economic upheavals by necessarily engaging in the privatisation of social reproduction functions, interplace competition, and place marketing to attract jobs and investments.

Changes to the Urban Government

The post-Fordist regime, mustering force since the late 1970s, succeeded the agents of Fordist forms of mass production primarily in terms of demonstrable economic reforms. Its resultant reflections have not only been stark on the cultural manifestations, but also on the forms of the

⁶¹ David Harvey, "Chapter 1: Freedom's Just Another Word," 33.

⁶² Saskia Sassen, "The Global City: Introducing a Concept," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2005): 27–43.

⁶³ Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism,'" *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 349–379.

urban area where the propagation of this culture takes place.⁶⁴ Thus, two broad phases of urbanisation could be traced out ensuing the shifts in the political economy from a Fordist to a post-Fordist industrial organisation in response to the characteristic dynamism of capitalism; which consistently brings about a change in the conceptualisation of urban to interpret the changing relations between form and process, activity and thing, and subjects and objects. In this sense, when retrenchment of the welfare state came to be implemented with the turn towards the post-Fordist period, the shift from 'government to governance' brought about its associated changes in urban institutions and spatial forms to replicate the character of such a shift.⁶⁵ The prime focus of this transition in administrative configuration is addressed towards public-private partnerships to discover the innovative and entrepreneurial side of urban government in alleviating the distress that dawned upon people in the aftermath of the dismantled welfare state. Such an appeal to urban governance in the face of intense global competition has struck a uniform chord with all the local governments irrespective of their spatio-cultural or ideological differences. Their synonymy in forming a class alliance to mark the structural shift from "managerialism to entrepreneurialism" have therefore yielded synonymous outcomes - be it the lopsided relation of public-private partnerships (where the public sector bears the risks while the benefits accrue to the private) or duplication of projects and its resultant ephemerality.⁶⁶ Amid the growing significance of urban governments to deploy their institutional strengths in favour of market instruments, their implicit reliance on the state's power concerning its resolving capacity of market-related complications provides a clear glimpse of the nexus of state-local entrepreneurialism. Their complementary relation in enforcing a "business model" within the local to leverage the urban spatial fix has been well evident in China, where the fall in export sector post the 2008 global crisis triggered a renewed pattern of urbanisation, distinguishable from its speculative land deals in the form of new towns.⁶⁷ The new towns, chiefly comprising of land parcels, provide the ideal examples of spatial fix to capital accumulation, facilitating debt-financed infrastructural development by the local government and the subsequent profit-making contractual transactions between the local government and the real estate developers.

⁶⁴ Allen J. Scott, "Capitalism, Cities, and the Production of Symbolic Forms," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, no. 1 (2001): 11–23.

⁶⁵ David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Yonghua Zou, "Capital Switching, Spatial Fix, and the Paradigm Shifts of China's Urbanization," *Urban Geography* (2021): 1–21.

The post-Fordist regime of market-based flexible accumulation lists a basic outline of functions to be followed by the cities so as to maintain a concatenation among them in the urban hierarchy; the only way to scale up the hierarchy is to grab a larger share of the highly mobile capital and make the local apparatus more adaptable to the global economy. Such a system of adaptability, therefore, turns the mobile capital highly susceptible to place-based conditions, allowing it to be regulative of geographically fixed labour markets, communities, and even nation-states. It makes the capital sensitive to slight changes in production and consumption opportunities (e.g. high cost of labour or relatively high rates of taxations) without any long-term commitment to place-based socio-economies.⁶⁸ The damaging impact of such fragile capital-place relations on inter-place competition has entailed contemporary urbanism largely to be an emulation project of the established higher-order urban centres like New York, London, or Los Angeles. Increased entrepreneurialism has been a vital result of this process. The emphasis on producing a "good business climate" to build a suitable interface for the mobile capital to work on essentially hinges upon speculative construction, encompassing a great deal of uncertainties about the future of the undertaken projects.⁶⁹ The "speculative real estate fever" experienced in China's new towns has resulted in such skewed composition of demand-supply figures, that many new towns have been rendered the title of "ghost cities."⁷⁰ These speculative constructions, often induced by public-private partnerships, are essentially tied to the image-building responsibility of the entrepreneurial government, structured around conspicuous consumption to consolidate the city's saleability to foreign investors. Urban reimagining resulting from such comprehensive initiatives of corporatised place-making reinforce both social and cultural exclusion, whereby the deployment of "cosmopolitanism" within such entrepreneurial forms of urban governance largely disregards social concerns.⁷¹ While the consumption-motivated, urban promotional strategies have managed to alter the face value of certain cities, resulting in a massive influx of foreign businesses, the reconstruction practices that such strategies entail have largely led to the loss of local meaning.⁷²

⁶⁸ Michael Dear and Steven Flusty, "Postmodern Urbanism," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 1 (1998): 50–72.

⁶⁹ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism."

⁷⁰ Guanwen Yin, Yungang Liu, and Fenglong Wang, "Emerging Chinese New Towns: Local Government-Directed Capital Switching in Inland China," *Cities* 79 (2018): 102–112.

⁷¹ Craig Young, Martina Diep, and Stephanie Drabble, "Living with Difference? The 'Cosmopolitan City' and Urban Reimagining in Manchester, UK," *Urban Studies* 43, no. 10 (2006): 1687–1714.

⁷² Paolo Rizzi and Ilaria Dioli, "From Strategic Planning to City Branding: Some Empirical Evidence in Italy," *PASOS Revista de turismo y patrimonio cultural* 8, no. 3 (2010): 39–49; Andrea Schöllmann, Harvey C Perkins, and Kevin Moore, "Intersecting Global and Local Influences in Urban Place Promotion: The Case of Christchurch, New Zealand," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 32, no. 1 (2000): 55–76.

In the developing world, where the public resource base is more limited and dependent upon the neoliberal conditionalities of global financial institutions like IMF or World Bank, the dynamics of local governance are expressive of the external entities who have a greater degree of control over the internal matters of management. Based on such an anomalous equation between the local government and the transnational NGOs, Bangladesh has exhibited that the global external bodies are rarely accountable to the local obligations. On the contrary, the government is put under perpetual pressure of deregulation from the foreign donors to local NGOs in the partnership. They actively aid the local NGOs in dissociating themselves from governmental control financially and strategically, thereby ruining the modicum accountability of the NGOs to the people in general.⁷³ Even if the shift towards local governance, following the neoliberal discourse, has been adopted as a 'to do task' across much of the globe, the pattern and the pace of such shift undoubtedly varies countrywide, as per the degree of a country's allegiance towards neoliberalism. While some third-world countries are still tied up in the process of establishing a coherent local body, others like post-apartheid South Africa, lost no time in progressively modifying their local structure as per the neoliberal position (although there exist enough ambiguities as to the exact ideological configuration of post-apartheid South African urban policy, which makes it difficult to label its transition purely in neoliberal terms⁷⁴). On the other side, the market-oriented transition of the Philippine's local apparatus had been more gradual and uneven.⁷⁵

But, no matter where and when the transition towards governance takes place, the net result of its pursuit commonly yields the entrepreneurial ventures of the local government to eliminate all forms of social solidarity measures, contributing to declining community opposition and increased disparities in wealth and income. This is because neoliberalism necessitates class orientation of the status quo by means of flexible capital. Its constant yearning for image/appearances to attract the "creative classes"⁷⁶ over real substances like area development, social inclusivity, or economic security has unquestionably made post-modern urban design a priority over comprehensive urban planning, resulting in severe urban instability. In Bangladesh, the class-based collusion between the top government officials and

⁷³ M. S. Haque, "Governance Based on Partnership with NGOs: Implications for Development and Empowerment in Rural Bangladesh," *Scopus* (2004): 271-290.

⁷⁴ Susan Parnell and Jennifer Robinson, "(Re)Theorizing Cities from the Global South: Looking Beyond Neoliberalism," *Urban Geography* 33, no. 4 (2012): 593-617.

⁷⁵ Mike Geddes, "Neoliberalism and Local Governance – Cross-National Perspectives and Speculations," *Policy Studies* 26, no. 3-4 (2005): 359-377.

⁷⁶ Rizzi and Dioli, "From Strategic Planning to City Branding," 44.

the leaders of the NGOs has resulted in the development of a unique patron-client system, which enabled many of the NGOs (backed by foreign funds) to engage in profit-making commercial ventures and micro-credit finance.⁷⁷ In many advanced capitalist cities, like Baltimore or Los Angeles, the worldwide influences of such capital flexibility have taken a toll on urban stability, more prominently than ever, manifesting a geographical shape in the form of a dual city- an inner-city of affluence and a surrounding sea of growing impoverishment.⁷⁸ The ones inhabiting the inner-city of affluence characteristically have immense corporate and commanding powers at their disposal, typically comprising of the "cybergeois," living in glided ghettos. While those heavily dependent upon the commanding decisions of the cybergeois, the "protosurps" are increasingly criminalised and marginalised along the periphery.⁷⁹ Thus, the new urban forms are characterised by intense social polarisation due to the dramatic realignment of class relations. The more city spaces are structured and restructured to accommodate the incubation of neoliberal policies through alteration of the local economy, the greater has been the consequent scale of conflicts and social problems, followed by stricter social control and surveillance. The adoption of Giuliani's "zero tolerance tactics" in New York and its consequent transformation into "the revanchist city"⁸⁰ bears testimony to the emergence of an authoritarian neoliberal state working against the proliferation of protosurpian movements in the interest of averting all conflicts towards advanced capitalist status quo.

The advent of Gentrification- A strategy toward Urban Remaking

The post-Fordist configuration of capital accumulation prospered primarily based on the capital's capacity to produce and meet new demands, which helped maintain the consumerist culture of neoliberal urbanism, even if it meant affordability of discretionary expenditure only by a selected few. Consequently, expenditure patterns have progressively evolved to encompass the consumption of goods both in qualitative and quantitative terms, resulting in the production of variegated options of consumerism to cater to the highly differentiated lifestyle choices within a society and the intensification of the symbolic forms of the consumer outputs. One of the significant streams of force behind the growth and expansion of the

⁷⁷ Haque, "Governance Based on Partnership with NGOs."

⁷⁸ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism"; Dear and Flusty, "Postmodern Urbanism."

⁷⁹ Dear and Flusty, "Postmodern Urbanism."

⁸⁰ Neil Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 427–450.

consumerist behaviour of possession has been the rapid escalation of the cultural industry in the wake of the post-Fordist regime. The massive dimension of this industry, comprising media, fashion, advertisement, tourism, entertainment, and crafts, has helped disseminate the consumerist culture by exposing people to a vast range of ideas and their executionary processes. The growing popularity of this industry has also been vital enough to introduce varied hobbies and likings to people's lives, such that their expressions have induced the materialisation of new spaces. The rising numbers of art galleries, museums, libraries, theatres, and themed cafes within the urban domain include some demonstration of these materialised spaces.⁸¹ The nascent period of entrepreneurial New York witnessed marked initiation of consumption drive through mobilisations of its elite institutions to promote artistic freedom, cultural spirit, touristy aspirations, diverse behavioural patterns, and cosmopolitan outlook, which in due course resulted in the projection of New York as the epitome of a post-modern city before the global forum.⁸² The pioneering success of New York City in this context has in a way, mandated the rest of the urban local government across the globe to consort with the private capital in creating a "theme park" of a city with such variegated spaces of consumption.⁸³ The overriding focus on the quality of life through the mechanisms of privatopian administration, gentrification, physical upgrade of the urban forms, ambitious architectural pursuits, and cultural innovation are all social, economic, and spatial expressions of such conspicuously consumed spaces. And this burgeoning consumerist culture of neoliberal urbanism under the post-Fordist regime is concretised by the emerging white-collar service jobs which replaced the blue-collar manufacturing ones. Although the replacements have occurred at a massive scale, the consolidation of service activities into urban regions tends to be either low-paying jobs or very high-paying managerial positions. This is because the new service-oriented employment structure largely depends on a minimum of a college degree to roll out middle-class incomes.⁸⁴ Hence the more service-centred a city grows, the greater social bifurcation it instigates in the income distribution, and what was originally claimed to boost individual entrepreneurial freedoms and human dignity by the neoliberal rhetoric turned out to be nothing more than a boost to informal labour works. The service sector of the economy is internally divided even in terms of more crucial professional services engaged in maintaining

⁸¹ Scott, "Capitalism, Cities, and the Production of Symbolic Forms."

⁸² Harvey, "Chapter 2: The Construction of Consent."

⁸³ Teresa Caldeira, "Review of Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space," *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984) 48, no. 1 (1994): 65–67.

⁸⁴ James R. Elliott, "The Work of Cities: Underemployment and Urban Change in Late-20th-Century America," *Cityscape* 7, no. 1 (2004): 107–133.

continuity of global production function and the more conventional consumer services. It is the rise of this professional service activity that refurbished the service economy and produced a profoundly "holstenized"⁸⁵ class.

The growth of this holstenised class has stimulated high-income gentrification⁸⁶ in the inner city with numerous retail and consumer services at their disposal.⁸⁷ The mounting significance of the neoliberal league methodically replaced the liberal urban policy provisions and their constraints on gentrification with subsidised private-market transformation of the urban built environment. Resultantly, by the end of the 20th century, gentrification fuelled by the systematic coordination of public and private entities evolved as a crucial urban strategy to "pioneer a comprehensive class-inflected urban remake."⁸⁸ The post-industrial job growth in the service sector has disproportionately concentrated in the downtown area of the large urban centres, which in turn has led to the rapid growth of office spaces in the CBDs, particularly in service-oriented cities. A significant high income in such white-collar occupations not only had its impact on increased purchasing power but that the growth in this type of labour force restructured the lifestyle preferences of the middle-class at large. These restructured preferences are reflected in the increased female workforce, postponed marriages, childless or households with fewer children, often with two working adults, greater divorce tendencies, and a younger lot of homebuyers and renters with penchants for amenity-filled houses, showing a complete contrast to suburban familism.⁸⁹ A decrease in child-rearing costs combined with two wage earners in a tertiary household leaves considerable proportion of discretionary income to exercise greater housing choices in terms of architectural designs, cultural facilities, and recreational activities.⁹⁰ In other words, the environmental and cultural amenities of the revitalised inner-city locations of a big city tend to feed more on the consumerist attitude of these affluent home buyers, thereby promoting more and more inclination towards reinvestments in the inner-city locations and generating a cumulative effect towards

⁸⁵ The term "holstenised" class is used here to refer to a class of consumers belonging to the upper echelons of the society, characterised by lavish and extravagant spending on lifestyle components. Dear and Flusty, "Postmodern Urbanism."

⁸⁶ Gentrification is the process of revitalising and redeveloping the inner city working class neighbourhoods resulting in the entry of a new "gentry" to these neighbourhoods replacing the working class population. Ruth Glass, *London: Aspects of Change* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964).

⁸⁷ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁸⁸ Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism," 443.

⁸⁹ David Ley, "Alternative Explanations for Inner-City Gentrification: A Canadian Assessment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 76, no. 4 (1986): 521–535.

⁹⁰ David Ley, "Inner-City Revitalization in Canada: A Vancouver Case Study," *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 25, no. 2 (1981): 124–148.

gentrification. Such creation of a high amenity central city landscape was vigorously endorsed by many city administrators in the US throughout the 1970s and 1980s by committing major public funds to the cultural and environmental aesthetics of inner cities.⁹¹

Besides this consumption-side theory explaining the proliferation of the class-inflected urban restructuring, there is a production-side theory that views gentrification as an economic process. It holds that the sole consideration of gentrification by consumer preferences renders an incomplete analysis of the process involving the crucial role of the builders, investors, real estate companies, landlords, funding agencies, and public institutions.⁹² The acknowledged debate between these two sides of the explanation of the process of gentrification surfaced during the late 1970s and early 1980s with the emergence of the "rent-gap" theory.⁹³ Recalling the switch of capital to the urban built environment in the wake of economic crisis, this theory by Neil Smith attempts to explain the movement of capital not only sectorally but also locationally through the structure of capitalism. In a capitalist economy, profit is the essential measure of success. All capital enterprises survive to attain increasing levels of profit to reach their ultimate goal of capital accumulation. A sustained period of increased profit leads to economic growth; when such growth is stalled in the industrial sector, the capital in its perpetual search for profitable outlets moves to the built environment. But the location of this capital investment in the built environment depends upon the geographical patterns created by the previous economic restructuring processes. This is because capital invested in the built environment is generally fixed as land, and improvements on it are fixed in space. Resultantly, investments in such an environment have a very long turnover period and are immobilised in a definite form. The returns are obtained over the period of its use, gradually and partially. So in order to seek profitable returns, the built-up structure has to remain in use throughout the period of such fixity, while it undergoes a devalorisation cycle (i.e., decay in physical form), and cannot be demolished without sustaining an economic loss. By this logic, Smith views suburbanisation as less of a decentralisation process and more of an effort towards ensuring the continuity of capital accumulation in the urban, which may possibly be restricted due to the tied-up land use of the previously developed inner city undergoing a process of devalorisation.⁹⁴ Hence, during the economic depression of the 1890s and 1930s, capital

⁹¹ Ley, "Alternative Explanations for Inner-City Gentrification."

⁹² Neil Smith, "Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45, no. 4 (1979): 538–548.

⁹³ Sujayita Bhattacharjee, "Comprehending the Gentrification of a Suburb: The Case of Mulund, Mumbai," *GeoJournal* 86, no. 1 (2021): 133–143.

⁹⁴ Neil Smith, "Gentrification and Uneven Development," *Economic Geography* 58, no. 2 (1982): 139–155.

movement to the suburbs appeared as the only economic alternative (in urban locations) to inner city devalorisation, achieved through the "dual process of suburban development and inner city underdevelopment."⁹⁵ Continued underdevelopment of the inner city due to the deliberate absence of capital investment not only yield returns over a long period, but also brings about the necessary rent gap.⁹⁶ When such a difference grows large enough to counteract the profit rate achieved elsewhere, the capital moves back to the inner city, resulting in the subsequent movement of people, primarily known as "the back to the city movement."⁹⁷ In this sense, gentrification is the manifestation of a continuous locational shift of capital in the built environment, primarily emanating from the barriers to further development in an already developed area. Appealing to the consumer fetishism dogma, the production-side theory calls for a colligative explanation of gentrification, taking account of both the consumers and producers, but with a heavy reliance upon the profit-motivated behaviour of the producer, which helps create the consumer demands by marketing the ideals of 'liveability'. And in this process of revitalising the profit rates, consumer preferences are generated around the bourgeois makeover of the old inner city neighbourhoods by means of condominium conversions, office constructions, and redevelopments of hotels, restaurants, and retail stores, thereby facilitating the middle-class to win over the city space replacing the working-class, and fulfill their "heart's desires"⁹⁸ by exclusively disentangling them from the mesh of conflicting aspirations.

The advanced capitalist cities of the UK and the US witnessed the debut of gentrification as a process of inner city revitalisation in three broad waves.⁹⁹ The first wave dating back to the 1950s was sporadic, highly localised, and in most cases, accomplished through public funding. For inner city reinvestment without assurance from the state was still dubious. Thus, during this time, the rhetoric of gentrification derived its power from the purpose of reversing the urban decline. The second wave, following the revival of the market after the global recession of 1973 and 1977 and continuing throughout the 1980s, marked not only the active involvement of the private entities, but also its dissemination in smaller cities across the globe. By this time, gentrification had already begun to be adopted as a national-level urban strategy of socio-

⁹⁵ Ibid., 150.

⁹⁶ "Rent-gap" is difference between the ground rent gained under present land use and the expected ground rent under a higher or better use. Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.; Smith, "Toward a Theory of Gentrification.

⁹⁸ Harvey, "The Right to the City," 13.

⁹⁹ Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith, "The Changing State of Gentrification," *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 92, no. 4 (2001): 464–477.

economic restructuring. With the advent of the third wave during the 1990s, the process gained a strong foothold at the global level, experiencing spatial extension beyond the city centre to the suburbs. Involving large-scale global capital, gentrification during the third wave was turned into a formal code for activating neoliberal urbanism, leading to a severe decline in the strength of anti-gentrification movements.¹⁰⁰ Irrespective of the difference in pace and style between the developed and developing countries, the emergence of the neoliberal economy by the end of the 20th century essentially brought about a convergence in the contours of urban planning under the joint partnership of the public and private entities. The palpable involvement of the state in orchestrating class conquest of the urban space by allying with the private capital flourished during the third wave through a massive resurgence of urban landscape development. It was characterised by a whole gamut of transformations, which outspread past residential up-gradation to include the development of shopping complexes, eateries, retail shops, employment centres, cultural and recreational venues. Today, this all-inclusive character of gentrification has grown to be a principal criterion of inter-place competition, eliciting the contemporary urbanisation process in favour of the supreme classes.¹⁰¹ It deconstructs the previous urban forms to indulge in renewed construction of altered urban order, exclusively for the upper and middle-classes, through transformed social, economic, and political relations. The universalisation of urban takeover by the privileged gentry synchronises with the neoliberal chord of class realignment. Since neoliberal urbanism thrives on the flexibility of capital and survives via those, who are in control of this capital, at the expense of depleting social resources of the working masses, any effort that facilitates maintaining the supremacy of the capital owners to smoothen the class dynamics of social function is dear to neoliberal urbanism. Gentrification, one such urban process of class relocation, entails a massive influx and subsequent dominance of capital owners and is considered to be an essential expression of neoliberal urbanism in the context of "global urban development strategy."¹⁰²

Dynamics of the Southern Cities

The rise of capitalism in the cities of Global North has mainstreamed the process of urbanisation across the world, thereby underpinning the presumption that the theories

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism."

¹⁰² Ibid.

emanating from such a process are applicable throughout the world, irrespective of the existing individual conditionalities. A coherent body of literatures has, therefore, focused on the necessity to decontextualise cities in general from the hegemonic urban norm of the Global North and consider them based on their individual capacities.¹⁰³ The overriding emphasis on the cities of the Global South to fit into the grooves of the Euro-American urban rhetoric is being challenged through alternative approaches capable of informing the theories of the Global North.¹⁰⁴ An analysis of the cities in the Global South by merely relying on the adaptation of the established urban theories primarily based on western experiences not only limits the scope of urban studies but also risks methodological inadequacies.¹⁰⁵ The simplified application of gentrification within many scholarly frameworks indicates the broad nature of urban displacements in the Indian cities is one such instance of methodological inadequacy.¹⁰⁶ The overtly focussed accounts of crowding, over population, slum dwellings, and poverty, in these cities have relegated them to such an extent of "othering" that their capacities to contribute to the existing knowledge of urban treatise is frequently ignored. The distinction between the developed and the developing has influenced the testament of third-world urbanisation in ways contrary to the urbanisation of first-world cities. While the former glorifies the success of finance capital and its affiliated urbanism, the expression of the latter recurrently relies upon the chronicles of economic backwardness and infrastructural inadequacies, undermining the importance of diverse economic activities, innovative arrangements of local governments, and amalgamation of assorted cultures, in creating their urban distinctiveness.¹⁰⁷ The cities which currently inhabit more than half of the global population cannot be simply regarded as peripheral to the prominence of the few west concentrated seats of global finance, if not the potential cradle nursing the embryonic processes of future urban theory. A comprehensive understanding of 21st-century urbanism requires investigation beyond the pervasive accounts of "third world-ism"¹⁰⁸ to incorporate all urban experiences by means of "worlding" regardless of cities' hierarchical positions in the global

¹⁰³ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America Is Evolving Toward Africa," *Anthropological Forum* 22, no. 2 (2012): 113–131; Ananya Roy, "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 2 (2011): 223–238; Parnell and Robinson, "(Re)Theorizing Cities from the Global South."

¹⁰⁴ Comaroff and Comaroff, "Theory from the South."

¹⁰⁵ Ananya Roy, "Urbanisms, Worlding Practices and the Theory of Planning," *Planning Theory* 10, no. 1 (2011): 6–15.

¹⁰⁶ Asher Ghertner, "India's Urban Revolution: Geographies of Displacement beyond Gentrification," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46, no. 7 (2014): 1554–1571.

¹⁰⁷ Jennifer Robinson, "Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26, no. 3 (2002): 531–554.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

order.¹⁰⁹ Roy holds that such incorporation must not essentially be limited to the documentation of their happenings but their analytical linkage to the world economy at large, which is habitually overshadowed by the blinding beam of economic command of the global cities. Her concept of "worlding" does not urge to provide special attention to the circumstances of the cities in the Global South, but to offer due attention to the circumstances of all cities, to adopt a "world view" of urbanisation. Just as the theoretical knowledge of the circuit of capital production, urban entrepreneurialism, or gentrification, growing out of the Euro-American context has become relevant at the global urban level, so too the circumstantial experiences of the Southern cities can be of potential significance to the world stage. The discourse on informality explains a similar area of global urban relevance arising from the domain of the Southern cities. The Southern experience of the informal sector, such that its connection to the state forces in mediating spatial value, has resulted in uneven geography and its consequent capitalisation. This association of informality with the contemporary privatised urban processes is not limited to the cities of the South, but has now become integral in understanding the ongoing dynamics of urbanism across the globe.¹¹⁰

It is important to focus on the growing weightage of the Southern cities in restructuring the urban functions and relations. Amid the partial applicability of the Keynesian welfare regime in the Southern world of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, a clear departure from the Keynesian welfare system post the approach of a neoliberal state has never been conspicuously registered among them.¹¹¹ Thus the post-Fordist crisis, which affected most parts of the advanced world, is not necessarily comparable to the crisis in these cities of the South. For instance, in South Africa, more than the 1970s post-Fordist crisis of declining industrial strength, the post-apartheid economic crisis wreaked havoc largely due to years-long selective citizenry exclusion from the nation's formal economy.¹¹² By the same proposition, the economic resilience of the South's mega cities, unlike the advanced world cities of the North, is worthy of notice in the aftermath of declining provisions of social reproduction consequent to the rising influence of neoliberalism. Such resilience is reflected in the hours-long daily commutes to work and back home in places like Sao Paulo or Harare. It is reflected in the will of the workers to turn up for work every day to contribute to the economic production, even after suffering from long

¹⁰⁹ Roy, "Urbanisms, Worlding Practices and the Theory of Planning"; Ananya Roy, "The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory," *Regional Studies* 43, no. 6 (2009): 819–830.

¹¹⁰ Roy, "The 21st-Century Metropolis."

¹¹¹ Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism."

¹¹² Parnell and Robinson, "(Re)Theorizing Cities from the Global South."

traveling hours, increased private traveling costs, high housing costs in the city proper, and relatively low wages. This is because, in the absence of coherent welfare provisions, the workers of these metropolises have rarely had the opportunity to consider the crucial links between the economic production of a city and the necessities of social reproduction. Such absence and its associated inexperience have, in fact, caused the urban economies of the third-world metropolises to emerge as the breeding grounds of a renewed system of production, accelerated by the "expansion of social production rather than reproduction," and this is what constitutes their precise linkage to the world economy at large.¹¹³

Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie once noted,

[P]eople never revolt just because they have to carry a heavy load, or because of exploitation. They don't know life without exploitation, they don't even know that such a life exists. How can they desire what they cannot imagine? The people will revolt only when, in a single movement, someone tries to throw a second burden, a second heavy bag, onto their backs.¹¹⁴

Quite similarly, the workers of the metropolises, amid the strengthening inducements of informality to the renewed system of urban production, may not be adequately aware of the social reproduction liabilities of a welfare city, but they are surely aware of their right to revolt when the tactics of informality begin to meddle with their very means of existence. The accounts of the megacities in the contemporary Global South encompass such narratives of revolt, the revolt of the informals armed with the inculcated sense of exploitation. The accounts are packed with the influential anecdotes of their struggle towards the commoning of urban space and its relations, the undercurrents of the contestations between the powerful and the powerless.¹¹⁵ The extensive network of informal systems prevalent in the Southern cities, towards procuring access to the urban properties and their services, serves as an assembling factor for the marginalised. The outcomes of which are collectively borne and contested- be it pressurising the local officials to secure a regular supply of crucial amenities like water and

¹¹³ Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism," 436.

¹¹⁴ Ryszard Kapuscinski, *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*, trans. William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczlwwslw-Brand (San Diego; London; New York: A Helen and Kurt Wolff Booh Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1983), 97, cited in Seth Schindler, "Towards a Paradigm of Southern Urbanism," *City* 21, no. 1 (2017): 58.

¹¹⁵ Roy, "The 21st-Century Metropolis."

electricity or making mutual arrangements of such supply on their own and defending these arrangements in the face of adversity.¹¹⁶

The aspect of 'diversity' is not merely confined within a city's definitional precincts, but that the characteristic features of diversity are to be perceived between the separate entities of every city. In other words, it is crucial to visualise every city as a disparate occurrence, where the only commonality amid the system of separate cities is their adherence to heterogeneity. Each city, in this sense, is different from the other. While some "family resemblances"¹¹⁷ may exist, especially in terms of economic production, population density, forms of governance, and global or national significance, the consolidation of these resemblances does not necessarily produce the same outcome. The interaction of the overall city process with each of these forms differs from their counterparts in the other cities. Hence, the most beneficial method of enquiry begs principal focus on the city-wise individual manner of interaction between the forms and the processes, subjects and objects, and parts and whole, to outline the future course of a city's functioning. Scholarly understandings synthesised from a similar focus on interactive dynamics have pointed out that much like other structures, the conceptualisation of capitalist management too needs to be disassociated from their reference to prior western experiences to explain the relationship between the politico-economic imperatives and their manifestations in defining the urban process of the Southern cities.¹¹⁸ For instance, as the volume and material composition of wastes in the metropolises have changed in recent times with increased means of consumption, the mechanical procedures of transforming these wastes through recycling and incineration have become profitable sources of investments for private units. As continued patterns of consumption lead to the generation of more waste, one of the many motivations to allow the consumption avenues to keep floating is derived from the profit-making opportunities of waste management enterprises.¹¹⁹ These indigenous production and exchange circuits thus reverberate with the notion that modernity is present everywhere. Transcending beyond the narrative of "regressive modernity" of the third world, the holistic approach of modernity stretches past the Eurocentric categories of modernity to include its varied types, many of which potentially originate from the native distinctiveness and functional individuality.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Schindler, "Towards a Paradigm of Southern Urbanism."

¹¹⁷ Peck, "Geography and Public Policy," 395.

¹¹⁸ Schindler, "Towards a Paradigm of Southern Urbanism."

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Roy, "The 21st-Century Metropolis."

The 21st-Century Urbanism in India

The standing of the global cities in the present finance-controlled order of the economy is undoubtedly dependent upon the coordination of functions by the 'other cities' vis-à-vis their positions in the global hierarchy. The world turned global by effecting simultaneous integration and disintegration. By disintegrating and dispersing the various sub-parts of production and services across the world, the national economies of the world are getting increasingly integrated within the nexus of global capital.¹²¹ And here, the notability of the Asian, African, and Latin American metropolises are to be marked. Although the progress of the Global South does not communicate uniformity, countries in the South, particularly in Asia, are currently housing cities that are size-wise individually comparable on the world scale. Their potentiality to become the powerhouses of the future economy has propelled the 21st century to be essentially labeled as the "Asian Urban Century," for more than half of the world's urban population are currently inhabiting these cities. While the crisis of "neoliberal redistribution" fell upon most parts of the advanced world during 2007-2009, countries like India and China gradually materialised "[new] models of capital accumulation" by calibrating their policies along the neoliberal lines.¹²² Almost all the large Indian cities are now equipped with diverse economies, ranging from global real-estate markets to informal slum enterprises.¹²³ India's policy orientation witnessed a major shift with the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991. Its motivated global inclination towards liberalisation and privatisation was premiered via its 'urban remaking' ambition. The strategic way forward was elucidated in the seventh five-year plan (1985-1990), which archetypically advocated the favourable authorisation of the private sector involvement in India's urban development. The subsequent years, especially post the installation of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in 2005, commonly branded as the official harbinger of neoliberalism in India, saw a massive restructuring of urban space through the vigorous pursuit of market rules.¹²⁴ The state-sponsored practices of officiating and strengthening private investments in the urban remake of the Indian cities into "world class cities" followed most of the classic processes of

¹²¹ Partha Chatterjee, "Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois At Last?" in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 131–148. ; Swapna Banerjee-Guha, "Neoliberalising the 'Urban': New Geographies of Power and Injustice in Indian Cities," *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 22 (2009): 95–107.

¹²² Ananya Roy, "Worlding the South: Towards a Post-Colonial Urban Theory," in *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 9–20.

¹²³ Ananya Roy, "City Life: Dichotomies in an Urbanizing India," June 18, 2012, accessed October 2, 2021, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/city-life-dichotomies-in-an-urbanizing-india/>.

¹²⁴ Banerjee-Guha, "Neoliberalising the 'Urban.'"

neoliberal transition, the crux of which was profoundly embedded in the entrepreneurial transfiguration of the government. The entrepreneurial stance of the state government called upon the celebratory coalition of non-state actors in public institutions, creating new regimes of supervision via the appointment of Chief Executive Officers (CEO) or administrative bureaucrats through the launch of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), which is a quasi-autonomous organisation and parastatal agency, under the pretext of enhanced governmental efficiency. These establishments have been found to critically undermine the authority of the democratically elected urban bodies in vital areas related to land-use planning, land zoning, and overall city development strategies. For instance, in Karnataka, the state government initiated the formation of the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (KUIDFC), headed by private entities, to assist the municipalities in raising funds from the market and international institutions. The projects sanctioned under their leadership hardly involved the decisions of the municipalities. The assignments of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) in 1999 and Agenda for Bangalore Infrastructure and Development Taskforce (ABIDe) in 2008 by the respective Congress and BJP-led state governments of Karnataka were similarly driven towards constituting a "business model" in institutionalising Bangalore infrastructural development via the assistances of various corporate entities. None of the task forces were officially required to involve the local representatives. Their mediation with the state bureaucrats made them directly accountable to the state government.¹²⁵ The urban local governments, in most cases, lack effective powers to make city development decisions and are frequently conferred upon the implementation task of state-approved urban plans. More than often, the local bodies act as the dummy of the elected state government in power, and the pledge to foster democratic local governance via the amendment of the 74th Constitutional Act remains documented only in paper. The central government, inebriated under the influence of global economic integration, purposely stimulates inter-state competition to attract foreign investments, following which the individual states assume the chief mission of developing high-end urban infrastructure, manifesting a clear bias towards the large cities of the country.¹²⁶ This coincides with Smith's logic that economic changes related to increased mobility of capital post deindustrialisation, have engendered the regional significance of industrial production to be denigrated and replaced by the metropolitan significance of "global production," entailing

¹²⁵ Soumyadip Chattopadhyay, "Neoliberal Urban Transformations in Indian Cities: Paradoxes and Predicaments," *Progress in Development Studies* 17, no. 4 (2017): 307–321.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*; Banerjee-Guha, "Neoliberalising the 'Urban.'"

rescaling of the functions and activities in the cities.¹²⁷ However, over the years, excessive central aided mega city focus has led to a large-scale inter-urban disparity in services and infrastructure between the large cities and the small/medium towns. The introduction of JNNURM, the largest urban modernisation scheme of the central government since independence, conditioned the state governments to establish non-elected, parastatal agencies to oversee the progress of the undertaken projects of the scheme and manage the sanctioned funds through vigilant allocation to the urban local bodies.¹²⁸ Among others, the scheme a) commissioned public-private partnerships (PPP) in urban infrastructural development and service provision, b) mandated all state governments to (i) repeal the Urban Land Ceiling Regulation Act (ULCRA) 1976, which until now prohibited the holding of excess land under private ownership, thereby enabling uncensored access to land by the private owners, (ii) effect flexible land-use conversion means to facilitate commercial establishments, (iii) permit indiscriminate entry of foreign investments in housing and real estate sector. The scheme made the state government prioritise private projects, which accordingly directed the transformation path of the urban character of the Indian cities, whereby the urban local governments merely served to smoothen the process. In this way, the state government largely entailed recentralisation of urban functions instead of decentralisation through the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 (CAA).¹²⁹ The usual skewed relationship of public-private partnership has been no different in the Indian scenario, whereby the 'public' in the partnership has been frequently found to not only share forty percent of capital costs of the projects in the name of "validity gap funding" but also grant massive land concessions, tax exemptions and monopoly functioning power to the corporate sectors. The construction of the Hyderabad Metro Rail Project by the association of Navbharat-Maytas-ItalThai-Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services is one of the many examples of the state-authorized "geobribes" to the corporates in bringing about the necessary urban transformation.¹³⁰

One of the most crucial points of relevance of the JNNURM scheme with the broad neoliberal policy has been its inordinate emphasis on mega-scale infrastructural projects. These projects, driven by the market impulses of PPP and structured around the image building exercise of the

¹²⁷ Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism."

¹²⁸ Banerjee-Guha, "Neoliberalising the 'Urban.'"

¹²⁹ Chattopadhyay, "Neoliberal Urban Transformations in Indian Cities."

¹³⁰ Banerjee-Guha, "Neoliberalising the 'Urban.'"

"entrepreneurial city,"¹³¹ have involved the construction of high-end residential condominiums, west-inspired aesthetic sports stadia, multi-facilitated shopping malls, and internationally flavoured cultural and recreational facilities, necessitating hostile slum eviction to reclaim land, fragmented patches of gentrification, dispossession of the marginalised, increased socio-economic inequality and colossal disassociation of majority of the urban population from the place economy. The projection of Mumbai as the country's finance capital has initiated similar developments at the cost of displacing nearly ninety thousand marginalised, poor families. The dismantled industrial base of the city gave way to the new service industry. The shift in the focus of the built environment reflected the consequent shift in the economic base of the city—be it the growth of the IT hub of Andheri, gentrification of the mill lands at Parel and Matunga, or the development of the Bandra-Kurla Complex.¹³² Most of the plans to transform Mumbai into a new age post-modern world-class city have been institutionalised by significantly altering the land-use rules, reclaiming huge sections of land in the dock area, and large stretches of closed textile mill lands.¹³³ Over the years, the mill lands have been converted into state-of-the-art developments encompassing art galleries, fashion houses, clubs cum restaurants, and media companies, exuding enormous consumption imperatives and generating inflated property prices.¹³⁴ Many high-rise luxurious apartments have come up within the mill complex in recent years. These developments have transformed the mill area into what Sharma calls "proto-rich enclaves," characterised by gated communities, fortified islands of the privileged, exclusive rights to access, strict surveillance, and class reservation of urban space.¹³⁵ Such reservation of space is essentially driven by and towards the urban upper and middle-classes. Organised under the civic groups, these classes demand a squalor-free, clean city, and exercise their demand through the process of eliminating all those who don't fit the rubric of their class alliance.

Such dynamics of urban space claim have rendered the Indian cities largely to be in a state of perpetual contestation. For, most of the Indian city population are poor, living in dilapidated conditions, often without housing rights and basic services or with access to the services

¹³¹ Pablo S. Bose, "Bourgeois Environmentalism, Leftist Development and Neoliberal Urbanism in the City of Joy," in *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*, ed. Tony Roshan Samara, Shenjing He, and Guo Chen (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 131.

¹³² Banerjee-Guha, "Neoliberalising the 'Urban.'"

¹³³ R.N. Sharma, "Mega Transformation of Mumbai: Deepening Enclave Urbanism," *Sociological Bulletin* 59, no. 1 (2010): 69–91.

¹³⁴ Dwiparna Chatterjee and D Parthasarathy, "Kamala Mills Fire and the Perilous Gentrification of Mumbai," *Economic and Political Weekly* (2015): 7–8.

¹³⁵ Sharma, "Mega Transformation of Mumbai."

through informal means, negotiating every day of their lives with the local leaders, politicians, or the land mafias. In the post-independence era of the 1970s and 1980s, the government and this group of population, who Partha Chatterjee holds as the "political society" shared certain mutual liabilities towards each other, chiefly in the form of 'electoral bargains'.¹³⁶ Even though the political society was 'rightfully' separated from the real citizens of the city, i.e., the "civil society," Chatterjee notes that the welfare government of the time owned a sense of moral to realise the labour provided by the political society in making the city and address their concerns by means of substantive concessions. Consequently, the respective public and private agencies came together to provide their services in the form of subsidised electricity, concessions on transportation, supply of water, sanitation, schools, and health care to the slums. The situation might not have produced overnight success, lifting a chunk of the said society out of poverty. Still, a spirit of solidarity was maintained, whereby the Judiciary earnestly reflected the needs of the poor in terms of housing, resettlement, and their rights regarding the urban space. While the confer of these benefits upon the political society often involved political and social connotations, defined by a complex interplay of interests and marked by constant mediations between its members and the state representatives, the entire arrangement of extra-legal provisions of basic services and infrastructure to the political society was popularly considered to be the most incredible initiative of the post-independent urban India. However, such an initiative, Chatterjee considers, witnessed a sea change with the turn of the globalised era in the 1990s. The impact of this era on the extensive circulation of the post-modern global city image led the country to discover an effective approach to pursue urban reconfiguration via the economic shift from manufacturing to services and the associated rise of the civil society in having the affordability to lead a life in sync with such a shift.¹³⁷ It is this reawakening of the civil society, which until now mostly took a back seat in the negotiations between the government and the political society, that has started to demand a change in the government policy, a change in the structure of 'urban' so that the city streets and its spaces are free of unwanted 'filth'-a demand to create a city after their "heart's desire."¹³⁸ Scholars have referred to this change through various terms, namely, "enclave urbanism," "bourgeois urbanism," or "bypass urbanism."¹³⁹ The proliferation of the urban middle-class through such reformed order

¹³⁶ Chatterjee, "Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois At Last?"

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Harvey, "The Right to the City," 13.

¹³⁹ Sharma, "Mega Transformation of Mumbai.," Roger Keil, "'Common-Sense' Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada," *Antipode* 34 (2002): 578-601; Lindsay Sawyer et al., "Bypass

of urbanism seems inevitable. Delhi's Bhagidari Scheme is a perspicuous exhibition of this inevitability. In the name of "good governance" to enable [the] "citizen-government partnership- Bhagidari," the state government of Delhi has reconceptualised the governance mechanism through the private property owners by allowing the middle and the upper classes to be the stakeholders in the city-related decision-making process.¹⁴⁰ Ghertner comments that the Bhagidari operation has implied gentrification of political spaces, such that the private property owners, through the Residents Welfare Association (RWA) have been facilitated by the state to mobilise the political processes in their favour.¹⁴¹ Such a favour, according to Ghertner, has not only created a mode of governance detached from the democratic process, but also blocked the means of negotiations by the "unpropertied poor" towards retaining their tenancy claim and procuring access to urban basic services.¹⁴²

However, much like the old saying by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, "[t]hat which does not kill us, makes us stronger," neoliberalism has had a similar impact on the urban poor. The booming practices of neoliberal urbanism in the country have generated the necessary conditions for their increased awareness and vigorous exercise of democratic rights. The glimpses of which have indeed evinced some hope towards their mode of resistance against the bourgeois makeover of the urban. Sassen regards these resistances across the world to be making a history. To her, as more and more protests surface against the neoliberal state, their demonstrations across the city metamorphose it into a space capable of reinforcing the sociality of the "powerless," making them and their demands visible before the world by strengthening their collectivity.¹⁴³ Instance from Mumbai's Dharavi had successfully exhibited the mettle of these resistances when the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, under the leadership of a private developer, was forced to be suspended in 2010 following intense protests by the slum dwellers and local civic organisations.¹⁴⁴ Similar occurrences were found to transpire in Kolkata when the dwellers of the informal settlements along the banks of the North Canal not only defensively survived the eviction drives following the commencement of the North Canal Reclamation

Urbanism: Re-Ordering Center-Periphery Relations in Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 53, no. 4 (2021): 675–703.

¹⁴⁰ Asher Ghertner, "Gentrifying the State, Gentrifying Participation: Elite Governance Programs in Delhi," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 506.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Saskia Sassen, "The Middle Classes: An Historic Actor in Today's Global World," *Juncture* 20 (2013): 125-128.

¹⁴⁴ Chattopadhyay, "Neoliberal Urban Transformations in Indian Cities."

Project in early 2000, but also strategically forestalled the project altogether.¹⁴⁵ These small, fragmented stories of success instill a sense of optimism about the validity of Harvey's call for mobilised street power, which is supposed to be capable enough to exploit the disguised contradictions of neoliberalism and global capitalism at large.¹⁴⁶ In relation to such mobilisation through political organisation and mass revolution, there has been an increasing emphasis on the social justice discourse invoking the "right to the city." Originally conceived by Lefebvre, "right to the city" calls for the coalition of rights required to lay claim upon the city's physical and social space.¹⁴⁷ Operating under the primacy of private property, the expropriation of urban spaces has led to the aggressive compartmentalisation of land from the surrounding community, thereby alienating the land and the interactive processes shaping on it from the social mesh and overriding the resultant precarious social concerns in the larger urban context. In this setting, the idea of the "right to the city" propagates the struggle to "de-alienate" the urban space so that it can be merged back into its inherent framework of the social system. It is an urgent plea to initiate actions for an alternate urban beyond capitalism, a different urban, "reimagined and remade" to uphold the rightful claim and ownership over the reoriented spaces of those who truly inhabit it. Between equal rights over city space, "right to the city" is an appeal to that force that surfaces through working-class revolutionary movements to exploit the contradictions of the monopoly of class power and alter the conceptualisation of fundamental and derivative rights commonly existing under the reign of capitalism.¹⁴⁸ The forces of neoliberalism have had both direct and indirect impacts on cities across the world. In Global South, the neoliberal tenet of structural adjustment programme (SAP) has transformed the foundational configuration of cities by bringing about a major shift towards privatisation, thereby weakening the limited redistributive capacities and increasing informality. By transforming the notion of the city as an active mediator between capitalist political strategies of global accumulation and hyper-modern urban symbolic forms, neoliberalism has directly impacted the national policies of the Southern countries. These policies have blatantly expressed the qualitative reconfiguration of the state's role through its employment of participatory governance, which is progressively considered as the bait for inviting foreign direct investments in the whole range of urban regeneration projects. These initiatives have therefore resulted in increased privatisation of public services and spaces- the

¹⁴⁵ Antarin Chakrabarty, "The Mischievous City: The Kolkata Poor and the Outsmarting of Neoliberal Urbanism," *Planum: The Journal of Urbanism* 1 (2013).

¹⁴⁶ Harvey, "The Right to the City."

¹⁴⁷ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*.

¹⁴⁸ Harvey, "The Right to the City."

combination which has made life more hard and unequal in the cities of the South. The slums are vivid examples of such precarious life. The current antagonistic treatment of the state towards the slum dwellers' 'informalised' civic integration has led to widespread protests at various levels of society, ensuring the deepening of democracy amid the growing recognition of extreme deprivation of the rights to the city.¹⁴⁹ It is this growing recognition that can potentially reconceptualise the meaning of rights and their interrelation, constituting "perhaps [the most crucial] geopolitical event of our times"¹⁵⁰ against the global reign of capitalism.

Experiences in Kolkata

In this background of altered urban landscape consequent upon the systematic transformation from industrial capitalism to finance capitalism and its promulgation under the neoliberal control of the world order, the present study correlates the spatial phenomena of this altered development to the relevant theories discussed above in the context of Kolkata. The city has had a fair share of controversy with regard to its pattern of urbanisation, especially post-independence. While some called it a "premature metropolis,"¹⁵¹ others considered it a classic example of "modernity gone astray."¹⁵² Despite these remarks, the city currently houses the seventh largest population in the country and exercises elevated levels of commercial importance in the eastern part of India. Like all other metro cities of the country, Kolkata welcomed the liberalised era with a host of privatised renewal and revitalised projects, manifesting all facets of neoliberal urbanism from slum eviction, expropriations of urban space, social unrest to ecological degradation. In 1996, the launch of Operation Sunshine by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), under the supervision of the CPI(M) led state government, was initiated in a bid to implement urban cleanup by uprooting and relocating the city's hawkers and pavement dwellers. However, after massive protests from various hawker committees, KMC allowed the hawkers to reclaim their pavement spaces. Similar eviction drives accompanied the introduction of "beautification of Calcutta" campaign displacing

¹⁴⁹ Wouter Bervoets and Maarten Loopmans, "The Divisive Nature of Neoliberal Urban Renewal in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso," in *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*, trans. Tony Roshan Samara, Shenjing He, and Guo Chen (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 60–80.

¹⁵⁰ Slavoj Žižek, "Knee-Deep," *London Review of Books*, September 2, 2004.

¹⁵¹ Nirmal Kumar Bose, "Calcutta: A Premature Metropolis," *Cities* (1966): 59–74.

¹⁵² Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

350,000 illegal pavement and slum dwellers.¹⁵³ The city's urban redevelopment program was commissioned with Saltlake city creation in the 1960s to accommodate Kolkata's growing population. It was subsequently followed by the emergence of a series of townships, namely, Baishnabghata Patuli and East Calcutta Township in the 1970s and the New Town Kolkata Township in the 1990s. The construction of these townships, along with the Eastern Metropolitan (EM) Bypass, has been accomplished by acquiring vast stretches of the East Kolkata Wetlands, at the cost of considerable environmental repercussions. The townships, connected via the 29 km long thoroughfare of EM Bypass, have become a major hunting site for the real estate developers. EM Bypass now stands to be the most modernised part of this delta city, featuring sky-reaching, internationalised building complexes, lavish hotels, and posh restaurants, prioritising the lifestyle aspirations of the selected upper-middle class over the existential concerns of the rest.¹⁵⁴ The spatial reorganisation of Kolkata's urban landscape has mostly been centred on its gradual economic progress towards the tertiary sector, involving repeated bouts of land conflict due to the juxtaposition of the new economic practices within the socio-spatial structure of the old industrial economy. Outlining these developments of the city in recent times, the study attempts to investigate the particularities of spatial transformation at the micro level to draw a connection with the broader theories of urban capitalism.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Pablo S. Bose, "Bourgeois Environmentalism, Leftist Development and Neoliberal Urbanism in the City of Joy," in *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*, ed. Tony Roshan Samara, Shenjing He, and Guo Chen (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 132.

¹⁵⁴ Jenia Mukherjee, "Transformed Infrastructures," in *Blue Infrastructures: Natural History, Political Ecology and Urban Development in Kolkata*, Exploring Urban Change in South Asia (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore Pvt. Ltd, 2020), 151–177.

¹⁵⁵ Tathagata Chatterji and Souvanic Roy, "Gentrification and Post-Industrial Spatial Restructuring in Calcutta, India," in *Gentrification around the World, Volume II*, trans. Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena, Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 269–288.

Chapter 3

Changing Landscape of Kolkata during Colonial Period

The present chapter concerns a background on the city of Kolkata, with particular reference to the emergence of the city and later its development as a colonial centre. It tries to find the answers to the contemporary urban pattern and spatial structure of the city by tracing its origin and journey under the colonial rule.

Introduction

Located on the eastern bank of River Hooghly, Kolkata has a legacy of around 300 years. Once a seat of British administration, today, the city is an emerging hub of the prevailing service and finance economy. Be it the glory of its past, the sense of secured reliance upon a city that had once catered to one of the largest influx of migrants in history¹ or the promise of a better future harboured in the popular notion of city life, Kolkata remains a vital destination of migration to date, especially from the other districts of West Bengal and its hinterland states of Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.² This is because the urbanisation pattern in West Bengal has been primarily Kolkata-centric, extending to the neighbouring districts within Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA).³ Constituting one of the oldest and largest urban agglomerations in the country, KMA presently covers 1831.58 km² area encompassing five districts besides Kolkata, namely, North and South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, and Nadia. It consists of around 4 municipal corporations, of which Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) is the oldest and the largest, and 37 municipalities, which is the highest within the Kolkata Metropolitan Region (KMR). The concentration of more than half of the census towns in West Bengal is found within

¹ For details, see Joya Chatterji, “‘Dispersal’ and the Failure of Rehabilitation: Refugee Camp-Dwellers and Squatters in West Bengal,” *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 5 (2007): 995–1032.

² Nirmal Kumar Bose, “Calcutta : A Premature Metropolis,” *Cities* (1966): 59–74; Urmi Sengupta, “The Hindered Self-Help: Housing Policies, Politics and Poverty in Kolkata, India,” *Habitat International* 34 (2010): 323–331; Myron Weiner, “Urbanization and Political Protest,” *Civilisations* 17, no. 1/2 (1967): 44–52.

³ Ranjan Basu and Sarbendu Bikash Dhar, “In-Migration, Commutation and Urban Sprawl: A Case Study of Kolkata Metropolitan Area,” *Spaces and Flows: An International Journal of Urban and ExtraUrban Studies* 3, no. 3 (2013).

this metropolitan region centring on the metropolis. Kolkata Metropolitan Region has a total of 23677 km² area, including the whole of districts Kolkata, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Howrah, and Hooghly, and parts of districts of Nadia, Bardhaman, Purba and Paschim Midnapore (Figure 3.1).⁴ Extreme population pressure in the city proper has resulted in the burgeoning growth of the towns peripheral to it within the metropolitan region.

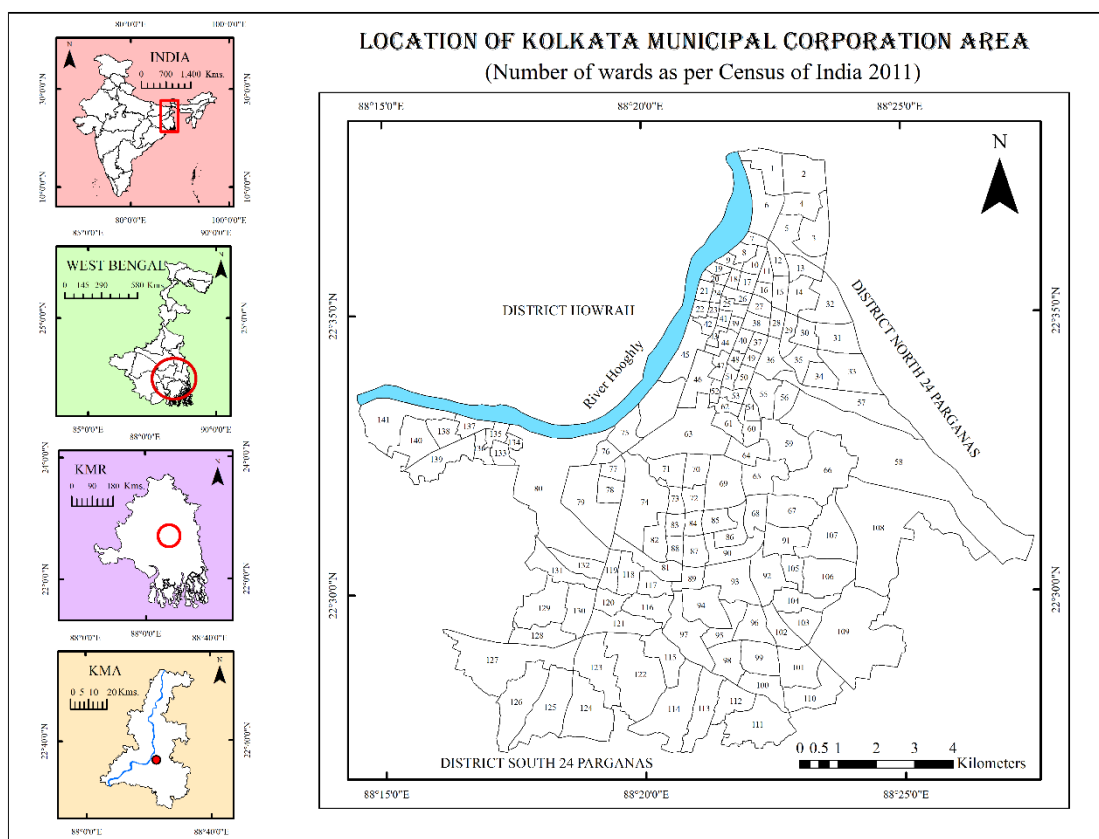


Figure 3.1. Map showing the 141 wards of Kolkata Municipal Corporation as per the Census of India 2011. In 2012, Kolkata Municipal Corporation added three new wards under its jurisdiction covering the areas of Joka I and II. However, the present study has taken account of the previous 141 wards as per the availability of the census 2011 data.

Consequent to India's partition in 1947, the refugee influx to the city initiated an enormous realignment of its urban character. During the mid-1940s and 1950s, Calcutta lent shelter to

⁴ Susmita Bhowmick and Lakshmi Sivaramakrishnan, "Growth Behaviour of Census Towns in Kolkata Metropolitan Region, West Bengal, India," *Transactions of the Institute of Indian Geographers* 43, no. 1 (2021): 12.

around 3,000,000 refugees.⁵ As per the census, between 1941 and 51, Calcutta registered an approximate growth rate of 28 percent, with the influx of 433,000 Bengali Hindu refugees from East Pakistan.⁶ Such a massive increase in the city's population was way more than its geographical and infrastructural capacity. The refugee movements that surfaced in the early 1950s and were reinforced by the city-wide support from its upper and middle-classes did not limit their demands for space and voting rights in the city but led the way to demand larger urban rights such as the protests against the rise in second class tram fare in 1953, the movement for an increase in teachers' salaries and allowance in 1954 or the greater food movement in 1959 and 1965-66.⁷ These developments, which heightened during the Naxalite period of the 1960s and 70s, causing social decay that ensued the city's disconcerted urban life during such revolutionary movements, attached Calcutta to the archetypical image of "political violence and extremism"⁸ among the cities in the developing world. The decade of the 70s breathed political turmoil into the city air owing to several reasons- decline in industrial growth and employment, brutal state resistance to urban revolution and student protests, conflictual state elections between the Congress and the Left Parties, socio-political involvement in the Bangladesh War of Independence by the city's Bengali middle-class residents,⁹ and finally the imposition of the state emergency rule¹⁰- all of which eventually laid the foundation of the uninterrupted Left regime in Bengal thereafter with the historic state mandate of 1977.

Calcutta's tumultuous landscape during this time synchronises with the dilemma of the urban crisis in many cities of the developed North. Around the mid-20th century, the mechanisation of agriculture in South America and the rapid decline of hired labour in the southern plantations led to the large-scale migration of the Black population from the rural south to the cities of the United

⁵ Jean Racine, ed., *Calcutta 1981 : The City, Its Crisis, and the Debate on Urban Planning and Development*, (Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2020).

⁶ Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), cited in Anwesha Dasgupta, "Calcutta in the 1950s and 1970s: What Made It the Hotbed of Rebellions?," *Political History of: 1947-1977*, August 8, 2019, accessed October 23, 2021, https://www.sahapedia.org/calcutta-1950s-and-1970s-what-made-it-hotbed-rebellions#_edn12.

⁷ Anwesha Dasgupta, "Calcutta in the 1950s and 1970s: What Made It the Hotbed of Rebellions?"

⁸ Weiner, "Urbanization and Political Protest," 45.

⁹ Bangladesh War of Independence or War of Liberation led to the partition of East and West Pakistan in 1971, which subsequently resulted in the creation of a new independent nation called Bangladesh out of East Pakistan, also called East Bengal.

¹⁰ Dasgupta, "Calcutta in the 1950s and 1970s: What Made It the Hotbed of Rebellions?"

States.¹¹ The suburban wave that touched the US cities until the late 19th and early 20th century engulfed those cities in the post-war period of accelerated industrial decentralisation. The advent of the blacks in the cities furthered the suburban move of the American whites, while the blacks concentrated in its inner areas. Sustained practices of disinvestment and redlining in the Blacks inhabited inner cities resulted in the inhospitable conditions of urban ghettos. Systematic exclusion of the Black population from the federal housing policies, job market, and socio-political participation created the ground for an urban social uprising in the US cities like New York, Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles. Failing infrastructure, shrinking manufacturing, continued trends of suburbanisation, waning sources of revenue, and mounting racial tensions flared in the US cities during the 1960s and the 70s.¹² These socio-economic conditions provided the objective imperatives leading to the rise of urban movements in the US. Similarly, in Amsterdam, immigrant activism during the 1970s in the face of hostile immigrant regulations by the Netherland Government thrived amid the vibrant, contentious urban environment of diverse movements related to resistance against urban renewal, women's rights, democratisation of the University system, Apartheid practices, and Vietnam War.¹³ All these movements not only extended mutual solidarities and bolstered the plurality of aggrieved causes, but also established the networks of dissent across various sectors for collective mobilisations to work. The people of Amsterdam who fiercely resisted the government's urban renewal programmes in the central city or those who fought for university democracy and women's rights found resonance in the deprived conditions of the immigrants.¹⁴ Their shared struggles aimed at greater mobilisation by building support across diverse classes, associations and professions around the issues of discrimination, housing, labour and human rights, thereby imparting unrelenting momentum to the radical urban environment in Amsterdam. In recent years, through the physical occupation of public spaces, refugees in Berlin developed alliances with various sections of the city and beyond to create

¹¹ Jack Temple Kirby, "The Transformation of Southern Plantations c. 1920-1960," *Agricultural History* 57, no. 3 (1983): 257–276.

¹² Susan S. Fainstein and Norman I. Fainstein, "Economic Restructuring and the Rise of Urban Social Movements," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1985): 187–206; Douglas S. Massey and Jonathan Tannen, "Suburbanization and Segregation in the United States: 1970-2010," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 9 (2018): 1594–1611; Wendell E. Pritchett, "Which Urban Crisis?: Regionalism, Race, and Urban Policy, 1960—1974," *Journal of Urban History* 34, no. 2 (2008): 266–286.

¹³ Walter J. Nicholls and Justus Uitermark, "The Cooptative State: The Pacification of Contentious Immigrant Politics in Amsterdam," in *Cities and Social Movements: Immigrant Rights Activism in the US, France, and the Netherlands, 1970-2015* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 138–156.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

multiple channels of social and physical visibility.¹⁵ Such visibility, which culminated in political movements, worked towards establishing refugee rights in the city and lent active support to the anti-gentrification and anti-authoritarian protests in Berlin.¹⁶

According to Louis Wirth, the assimilation of different groups in cities creates the necessary density of urban life.¹⁷ Such density forges inter-group interaction and communication, making cities the prime centres required for heralding a social change.¹⁸ The uniqueness of cities not only lies in the compilation of diverse lives but in exposing those lives to similar circumstances, which carve a new community out of its population.¹⁹ Due to their shared goals, this new community strengthens the "territorial base for joint action."²⁰ The dynamics of these resistances and radicalism enabled by the socio-cultural urban milieu of cities constantly seeks to question and challenge the order officialised by the dominant group and make way for the subaltern voices to be heard. They make cities, in Saskia Sassen's words, an "incomplete system," empowering them to contest the practices destructive to their roots.²¹ These episodes get entwined in their history of making, accommodating their complexity in their distinctive experiences and symbolising their characteristic resilience whenever their contemporary processes are open to question.

Urban Growth

The pooled impacts of the events between the decades of the 1950s and 70s left a dent in Kolkata's demographic profile. The city registered a severe decline in population growth following 1950, while its suburbs demonstrated an increase.²² This difference in growth between the city proper (KMC) and the suburbs continued until 2011, when the suburbs grew at the expense of the city

¹⁵ Fazila Bhimji, "Visibilities and the Politics of Space: Refugee Activism in Berlin," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 14, no. 4 (2016): 432–450.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Zane L. Miller, "Pluralism, Chicago School Style: Louis Wirth, the Ghetto, the City, and 'Integration,'" *Journal of Urban History* 18, no. 3 (May 1, 1992): 251–279.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Fainstein and Fainstein, "Economic Restructuring and the Rise of Urban Social Movements"; Miller, "Pluralism, Chicago School Style."

²¹ Saskia Sassen, "Does the City Have Speech?," *Public Culture* 25, no. 2 70 (2013): 209–221.

²² Racine, *Calcutta 1981*.

Table 3.1. Comparison of population growth between the city proper (Kolkata Municipal Corporation or KMC) and the suburbs within Kolkata Metropolitan Region (KMA)

| Year | Growth in KMC | Growth in Suburbs (within KMA) |
|------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 1931-1941 | 84.8% | 51.5% |
| 1941-1951 | 27.9% | 30.4% |
| 1951-1961 | 8.5% | 55% |
| 1961-1971 | 7.6% | 39.7% |
| 1971-1981 | 5% | 37.9% |
| 1981-1991 | 33.1% | 12.4% |
| 1991-2001 | 3.9% | 30.4% |
| 2001-2011 | -1.9% | 11.5% |

Source: Census of India, cited in Wendell Cox, "The Evolving Urban Form: Kolkata: 50 Mile City," *New Geography*, October 1, 2012.

(Table 3.1). The growth emerged firstly due to the incoming refugee population. Between 1946 and 1971, close to 71 percent of such population settled in the KMA districts of Kolkata, North and South 24 Parganas, Howrah, and Hooghly.²³ Responding to this huge increase in population, the West Bengal Government, under its scheme of Relief and Rehabilitation, initiated the establishment of new townships across the state to rehabilitate the refugees and disperse their concentration.²⁴ 11 of these 16 townships are, however, located within the metropolitan area,²⁵ thereby adding to the population growth in here. Secondly, around the mid-1950s, the promising industrial growth of small towns like Durgapur, Asansol, and Haldia began to attract immigrants.²⁶ At the same time, the core city showed a decline in attaining a state of saturation. As Table 3.1 indicates, the population growth of KMC has not only declined over the years but has also been negative in the last census decade of 2001-2011. This finding is consistent with Hall's proposition that, unlike the popular notion of unstoppable growth, a metropolitan area, after its period of relentless growth, slows down to eventually exhibit a reverse growth.²⁷ However, the decline in Kolkata's growth had been a sign of its weakening might. Its industrial growth dwindled in the years following India's independence. The city's infrastructural merits of the past—port, electricity, water supply, and transport, failed to keep up with its initial population growth and suffered long periods of negligence thereafter. Urban squalors and poverty-stricken outsized *bustees* grew common during the 1950s and the 70s. Consequently, the city, which was once the primary site for urban migration for decades up until the 1950s, fell behind Mumbai, and Delhi, as

²³ Basu and Dhar, "In-Migration, Commutation and Urban Sprawl: A Case Study of Kolkata Metropolitan Area."

²⁴ Himadri Chatterjee, "Partitioned Urbanity," *Economic and Political Weekly* 53, no. 12 (2015): 93–100.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Pabitra Giri, "Urbanisation in West Bengal, 1951-1991," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 3033–3038; Asok Mitra, "Three Elements of CMD's Growth," in *Calcutta on the Eve of Tercentenary* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990), 45–55.

²⁷ Peter Hall, "The Containment of Urban England," *The Geographical Journal* 140, no. 3 (1974): 386–408.

people began to out migrate.²⁸ The only exception is the decade of 1981-1991, where the growth in KMC exceeded KMA by more than two times. This was the decade during which the boundary of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (then Calcutta Municipal Corporation) was redefined after nearly twenty years to include the refugee colonies from the neighbouring district of the present-day South 24 Parganas through the amended Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC or CMC) Act of 1980. Expansion of the municipal area, therefore, had a predictable impact on its demographic figures, showing a considerable rise in population. But this growth, too, had been ephemeral in the next two decades. Many wards, especially in North Kolkata, which is essentially the older part of the city, have shown a decline in population over the years. Wards to the Central and South have also demonstrated similar patterns in their population figures, but less in relative extent. On the other hand, later added wards to the South of Kolkata (through the KMC or CMC Act of 1980) covering municipalities of South Suburban, Garden Reach, and Jadavpur (Wards 101-141) have registered a general increase in the population, depicting a pattern of urban growth away from the already saturated city core (Figure 3.2).

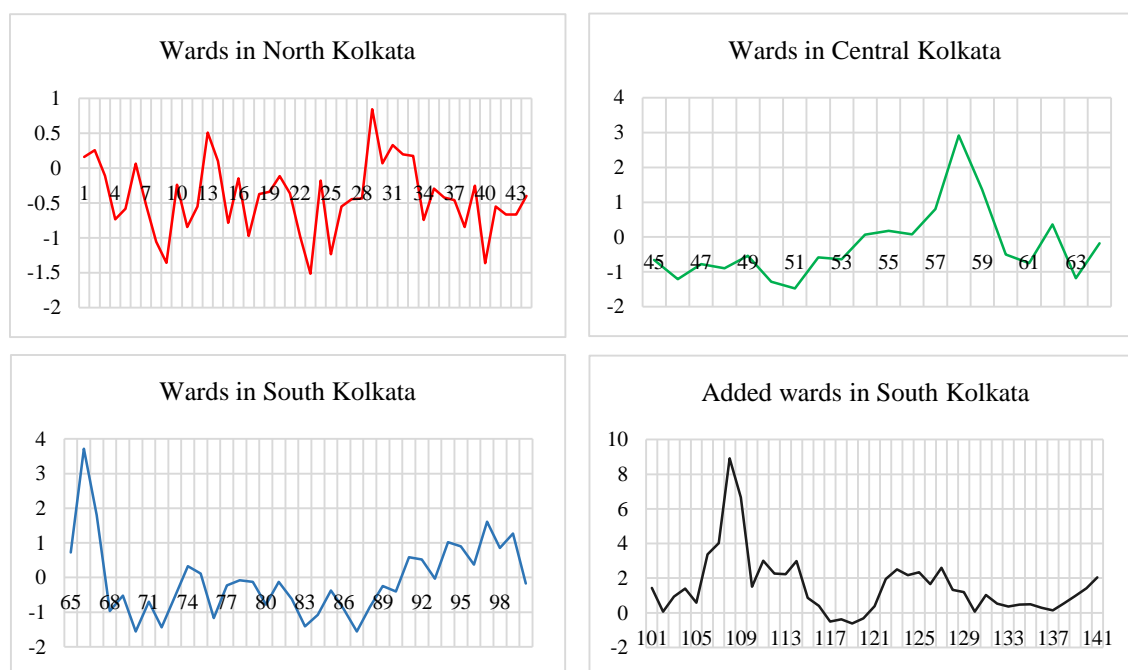


Figure 3.2. Graphs showing the population growth pattern for North, Central, South and extended South Kolkata over the years from 1981 to 2011. The horizontal axis indicates ward numbers, while the vertical axis measures population growth. Data from Census of India.

²⁸ Mitra, “Three Elements of CMD’s Growth.”

Suburban Development

Irrespective of the decline in growth over the years, Kolkata (KMC) continued to have one of the highest densities in the world, holding the highest proportion of the urban population within KMA.²⁹ The city, which once boasted of palaces in the colonial era and provided emotional refuge to the colonial officers with the replication of architecture from their homeland, transformed overnight into a city of squalors by the mid of the 20th century, drooping under the pressure of population. With the ailing infrastructural capacity of the city core in terms of land, water and housing, post-independence growth of the metropolis has been commonly related to acute imbalance, earning Kolkata the title of "urban disaster."³⁰ In this context, the development of the city suburbs was undertaken through the installation of new townships around the core area of KMC. The Saltlake Township and the Kalyani Township are essential examples of Kolkata's suburban development. However, unlike the dominant Western model of capitalistic class-based logic of suburbanisation, the suburban development of Kolkata has not been unilateral. Walker has noted that American suburbanisation is the spatial manifestation of the differential mode of consumption.³¹ According to him, the spatially distinct pattern of residentialism expressed through suburban development in America is not only exercised by the former bourgeois and the latter upper-middle class to effectuate a "buffer of social control and defence" towards the other inferior class but also because of ideological underpinnings, which aim for the reproduction of class-based division of labour and lifestyle.³² This process got expedited with the extensive class dissection of the workforce after the emergence of a new group of white-collar office-goers due to the post-war economic restructuring.³³ Although not as significant as that of the United States,³⁴ and regardless of its suburban diversity,³⁵ evidences across England support the class-based logic of suburbanism.

²⁹ Sushobhan Majumdar and Lakshmi Sivaramakrishnan, "Mapping of Urban Growth Dynamics in Kolkata Metropolitan Area: A Geospatial Approach," 2020, 9–24.

³⁰ Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

³¹ Richard A. Walker, "A Theory of Suburbanization: Capitalism and the Construction of Urban Space in the United States," in *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, ed. Michael Dear and Allen J Scott, vol. 7 (London, New York: Routledge, 2018), 383–429.

³² *Ibid.*, 391.

³³ Manuel Castells, "Beyond the Myths of the Urban Crisis: The US Model," in *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, 1977), 381–392; Walker, "A Theory of Suburbanization."

³⁴ Hall, "The Containment of Urban England"; Walker, "A Theory of Suburbanization."

³⁵ Mark Clapson, "The Suburban Aspiration in England since 1919," *Contemporary British History* 14, no. 1 (2000): 151–174.

The period post-1900 witnessed the flight of the upper-middle class families from the central cities of Manchester and Leeds in considerable proportion.³⁶ This peaked during the suburban boom of the 1930s, manifesting a significant rise in middle-class homeownership across England, which instrumentalised their separation from the rest of the working class.³⁷ Fishman has argued that the origination of suburban development in America during the mid-19th century had essentially been based on a derivative model of the 18th century English suburbia, which demonstrated the spirited conversion of the leisure villas of the elites in the outskirts of London to their permanent residences in pursuit of class-based spatial differentiation.³⁸

In Kolkata, the concept of suburban housing grew as early as the 18th century in the present-day neighbourhood of Chowringhee, when the well-off city dwellers used the suburbia primarily as their place of occasional retreat from the hullabaloo of the city.³⁹ However, by the late 19th century, as the city's prominence developed, with the proliferation of the commercial activities and growth of inner-city crowding, the suburban areas withdrew outwards and gradually turned into the places of permanent residence for those who preferred and could afford the countryside openness.⁴⁰ Neighbourhoods like Alipur, Ballygunje, Entally, Bhawanipore, and parts of Tollygunje served such open areas for settlement. Although these areas got accommodated within the municipal corporation by the late 19th century, their relative spaciousness was secured only for the economically privileged. Thus, similar to the class logic of the Anglo-American suburbia, the origination of the Kolkata's suburbs in the 18th century also followed the existing economic power structures, attuning its spatiality with economic sociality. But the subsequent periods of the city's suburban development did not necessarily emanate from the same principle. During the mid-19th century, the suburbs of Howrah and Hooghly largely quartered the city's industries. Unlike the pattern of industrial decentralisation observed in the United States between the 1930s and 1960s,⁴¹

³⁶ Simon Gunn, "Class, Identity and the Urban: The Middle Class in England, c.1790-1950," *Urban History* 31, no. 1 (2004): 29–47.

³⁷ Robert L. Fishman, "American Suburbs/English Suburbs: A Transatlantic Comparison," *Journal of Urban History* 13, no. 3 (1987): 237–251; Gunn, "Class, Identity and the Urban."

³⁸ Fishman, "American Suburbs/English Suburbs."

³⁹ Swati Chattopadhyay, "*Bourgeois Utopias*?" *The Rhetoric of Globality in the Contemporary Suburban Landscape of Calcutta*. (Sweden: Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies. Lund University, 2009).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Walker, "A Theory of Suburbanization."

the very foundation of industries in Kolkata has been in its suburbs.⁴² Most of the suburban development later during the early 20th century in present-day neighbourhoods of Southern Avenue and extended parts of Tollygunje in the south and Ultadanga and Beliaghata in the north-east were directed to cater to Kolkata's growing population, housing middle and low-income dwellers. These suburbs attained spatially contiguous character without any class distinctions. Subsequently, these areas were subsumed within the boundaries of the municipal corporation by the mid-20th century. Thus, the city's policy of outward growth chiefly emerged on account of supporting its growing population, which expanded the delineation of its territorial limits. In the aftermath of India's partition, Kolkata experienced an overwhelming increase in its population from a huge inflow of East Bengal refugees. The dire inability of the city to sustain such massive population pressure further initiated the development of suburban townships around the core city. This was when the plans to develop the Saltlake and Kalyani Township were conceived. In the following years, numerous plans were commissioned to charter the route of decongesting Kolkata through the creation of alternate suburban townships.⁴³ The Kalyani-Bansberia Township in the northern part of the KMA was imagined to be one such growth centre supporting the metropolitan centre of Kolkata. Besides, Howrah, Haldia, North Dum Dum, Sonarpur, and Saltlake, were earmarked for dispersing the burdening growth of the city.⁴⁴

Hence, the post-independence planned development of the city's suburbs was principally instrumentalised for decongesting the core city and did not inherit a social class character. This was because, since its colonial days, the central city of Kolkata has always exerted an overpowering influence on housing the elites. Numerous studies have pointed out that the core areas of most Indian cities typically comprised of the economically well-off.⁴⁵ Chattopadhyay has noted that despite all its glorious attributes, the countryside retained a status of perpetual backwardness for the elites.⁴⁶ The inability of Kalyani Township to culminate into one of the proposed growth centres despite adequate state planning proceeded from such logic of core city-

⁴² Sanjoy Chakravorty, "From Colonial City to Globalizing City? The Far-from-Complete Spatial Transformation of Calcutta," in *Globalizing Cities*, ed. Peter Marcuse and Ronald Van Kempen (USA; UK; Australia: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2000), 56–77.

⁴³ NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper* (New Delhi: National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1986).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Asher Ghertner, "India's Urban Revolution: Geographies of Displacement beyond Gentrification," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46, no. 7 (2014): 1554–1571.

⁴⁶ Chattopadhyay, "Bourgeois Utopias"?

centricity. The state's plan to transfer its administrative set-up to Kalyani could never materialise when public officials were found reluctant towards the relocation.⁴⁷ The background paper by NIUA on the outcomes of the Basic Development Plan acknowledges the gap between the achieved and targeted progress in the township.⁴⁸ However, the development of Saltlake in the vicinity of the city shifted such a course of suburban development. Considering its proximity to Kolkata, the buildout of Saltlake was aspirational in nature. It was aspirational because of all the inadequacies and congestion that Kolkata represented during the 1960s. Based on a modernist approach to a self-sufficient, planned urban landscape, the creation of Saltlake signified Kolkata's best prospect of exhibiting its potential. More than an independent township, Saltlake was promoted as an extended part of Kolkata, significantly dependent on the core city, and aimed at housing a population of mixed socio-economic backgrounds.⁴⁹ But the proliferation of its development at the time of India's economic restructuring between the 1980s and 1990s found logic in the profitable endowments of land speculation and real estate investments, which reconfigured Saltlake's initial plan of social inclusivity to impart a class differential character to its spatiality.⁵⁰ As a result, Saltlake evolved into an increasingly affluent neighbourhood of the upper-middle class who could afford the real estate turn in urban planning during this period, thereby transforming its planned multi-family apartments into detached single-family dwellings.⁵¹ The advantages of the congestion-free environment of the newly developed Saltlake (presently under Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation) attracted many upper-middle class families from the city core, which continued to attract migrants of rural origin.⁵² Residential behaviour in Saltlake, therefore, brought back the early years of Kolkata's suburban class logic. The present-day rich found the spacious and closely located Saltlake reasonable to be settled in to continue their appropriation of the city benefits while simultaneously avoiding its cost. Such renewed evolution of Saltlake consolidated the transformational process of the city's eastern periphery through the construction of the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass from the reclaimed East Kolkata Wetlands. Development of the Bypass has provided facilitative road connectivity within the Kolkata

⁴⁷ Chakravorty, "From Colonial City to Globalizing City?"

⁴⁸ NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper*.

⁴⁹ Chattopadhyay, "Bourgeois Utopias?"; Andrew Rumbach, "At the Roots of Urban Disasters: Planning and Uneven Geographies of Risk in Kolkata, India," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 39, no. 6 (2017): 783–799.

⁵⁰ Andrew Rumbach, "At the Roots of Urban Disasters: Planning and Uneven Geographies of Risk in Kolkata, India," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 39, no. 6 (2017): 783–799.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Racine, *Calcutta 1981*.

Metropolitan Area and enabled active eastward extension of the city, leading to the development of the contemporary class-characterised townships and speeding the pace of the blooming urban real estate projects. According to Murray, the creation of new cities can be traced back to the modernist approach to urban planning, which sought to entail creative destruction for improving urban living conditions and finding solutions to the urban problems of crime, overcrowding, and deteriorating infrastructure.⁵³ However, the city building exercise in the current times of transnational market rules, often on the periphery of the existing metropolitan boundary, involves the production of city-like privatised spaces.⁵⁴ Constructed solely for the purpose of profit-making, these city "doppelgangers" neither have any history nor the responsibility to mitigate the urban problems.⁵⁵ Instead, they "bypass" such problems to transform overnight into city-like structures to serve as the node within the network of global metropolitan centres by catering exclusively to the affluent class.⁵⁶ The recent turn in Kolkata's suburban development reverberates the same pattern. Conforming to the norm of expanding and constituting urban through rampant invasion of the rural hinterland, the development of Kolkata's satellite city of New Town, in the wake of economic restructuring, has been geared to represent the interests of the business class and real estate developers. Primarily built on the agricultural land of the adjacent districts of North 24 Parganas (Rajarhat block) and South 24 Parganas (Bhangar Block II), New Town Kolkata, an "unceremonious insertion on the edges of the existing metropolis" has been "built from scratch" to suit the "world-class" image of entrepreneurial urbanism.⁵⁷

Spatial Structure

The colonial city is often required to perform specific functions for contextualising the economy of the colonised country and facilitating the assimilation of varied cultures while personifying the hierarchical power relations. These functions are executed by establishing particular institutions.

⁵³ Martin J Murray, "Waterfall City (Johannesburg): Privatized Urbanism in Extremis," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 47, no. 3 (2015): 503–520; Martin J Murray, "Frictionless Utopias for the Contemporary Urban Age: Large-Scale, Master-Planned Redevelopment Projects in Urbanizing Africa," in *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South*, ed. Ayona Datta and Abdul Shaban (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 31–53.

⁵⁴ Murray, "Frictionless Utopias for the Contemporary Urban Age."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

The interconnectedness of these functions and institutions can be traced through the characteristic spatial form of such a city.⁵⁸ According to King, during the early phase of urban planning, political supremacy and military dominance guided such interconnectedness to determine the layout of the urban settlements in these cities.⁵⁹ The north-western part of the present corporation bounded area of Kolkata served similar advantages of military and commercial pursuits, which commenced the growth of Kolkata as a port city. By the 18th and 19th centuries, many landed Bengali elites started settling in this part of the city owning vast tracts of land. Some of these elites were allotted land plots by the British in the nearby neighbourhoods of Shobhabazar, Pathuriaghat, Jorasanko, Shimulia and Hatkhola in exchange for their land elsewhere during the construction of the new Fort William in 1758.⁶⁰ Thus the development of the city during this time centred on this present-day north-western part of KMC. Later, amid the periodic influx of refugees to Bengal in the aftermath of the partition, the spatial structure of Kolkata grew complex. The ones who arrived in the first wave immediately after the partition belonged to the privileged sections of the society with previously established contacts in the city.⁶¹ Many of these contacts had migrated to Kolkata long before the partition to work in the minor offices under the British administration.⁶² Thus, when the first refugees landed in the city, they banked upon their kin in these established locations for shelter and protection in the new country. In the subsequent years, Kolkata witnessed an intense shortage of space in the face of continued influx. As their strength amplified, the refugees dispersed to various locations in the city and beyond, searching for available space for settlements. Today, many of these refugee settlements have become parts of KMC with the gradual expansion of its administrative boundaries. Economic necessities and a rising middle-class population have increased Kolkata's spatial lucrativeness beyond limits, making it an executional ground of change in the conventional spatial logic. Consistent appropriation of the city space has therefore led to a

⁵⁸ Anthony D. King, "Colonial Cities: Global Pivots of Change," in *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, ed. Robert J. Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, Comparative Studies in Overseas History (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1985), 7–32.

⁵⁹ Anthony D King, "Colonialism and Urban Development," in *Cities of the Global South Reader*, ed. Faranak Miraftab and Neema Kudva (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2015), 29–39.

⁶⁰ P. Thankappan Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta," in *Calcutta, the Living City-The Past*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990), 10–23.

⁶¹ Chatterji, "'Dispersal' and the Failure of Rehabilitation."

⁶² Haraprasad Chattopadhyay, *Internal Migration in India: A Case Study of Bengal* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Co., 1987).

massive expansion of its limits over the years, particularly towards its south and east, involving repeated changes in the corporation boundaries.

In this background, an analysis has been undertaken to examine the contemporary spatial structure of Kolkata. The present structure, reflective of the built-up layout in the past, indicates the future growth pattern of the city. The following analysis has taken account of ten parameters ranging across built-up and population characteristics at the ward level, largely pertaining to the data obtained from the Census of India, 2011. In order to understand the interrelationship between the two sets of variables belonging to built-up and population characteristics, in the shaping of the modern-day urban structure of the city, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been performed using Varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalisation Technique to retain eigenvalues above 1.0. The interpretation of the analysis is based only on those groups of factor loadings, which individually exceeded a threshold value of 0.5 (Table 3.2). A total of three factors have been acquired with eigenvalues greater than 1, cumulatively explaining 74% of the combined variance (Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

Table 3.2. Rotated Component Matrix of Principal Component Analysis

| Variables | Components | | |
|--|------------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Ward-wise compactness | .936 | | |
| Household density | .932 | | |
| Population density | .890 | | |
| Ward-wise crowding | .874 | | |
| Households not owning cars | .658 | | |
| Declining slum population growth | | .743 | |
| Sex ratio | | .677 | |
| Population growth | | .610 | |
| Price of residential property per sq.ft. | | | .951 |
| Ward-wise proximity to the CBD ward no. 45 | .612 | | .689 |

The first component of the PCA depicts urban compactness. Here urban compactness is used to mean the degree of immediacy or concentration of the urban physicality, i.e., houses/built-up constructions and people. The positive relationship of the compactness indicators- ward-wise compactness, ward-wise crowding, household density, and population density, with the indicator of distance from the central business district (CBD) denote an overview of the urban layout of Kolkata. It reveals that the compactness of urban form increases with the decrease in distance from

the northerly located CBD. In other words, Kolkata continues to conform to the traditional urban pattern of a dense centre with high ward-wise compactness, crowding, and household and population density. This intense concentration of the urban physicality disperses away from the centre, thereby exhibiting that the southern part of the city, being developed later, is less physically contiguous than the north. Additionally, the given urban layout of the city indicates two crucial patterns, first, proximity to the CBD has a significant influence on the proportion of households not owning cars, as it is positively correlated with distance, and second, the outward growth of the city in its sequential stages of expansion could successfully materialise due to the immigration of the affluent sections of people over the years, having considerable affordability to own cars.

Table 3.3. Explanation of the total variance (in percentage)

| Component | Initial eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 4.642 | 46.424 | 46.424 | 4.642 | 46.424 | 46.424 | 4.318 | 43.184 | 43.184 |
| 2 | 1.460 | 14.599 | 61.023 | 1.460 | 14.599 | 61.023 | 1.619 | 16.191 | 59.375 |
| 3 | 1.304 | 13.044 | 74.067 | 1.304 | 13.044 | 74.067 | 1.469 | 14.693 | 74.067 |
| 4 | .842 | 8.419 | 82.486 | | | | | | |
| 5 | .588 | 5.876 | 88.362 | | | | | | |
| 6 | .565 | 5.647 | 94.009 | | | | | | |
| 7 | .357 | 3.569 | 97.578 | | | | | | |
| 8 | .207 | 2.071 | 99.649 | | | | | | |
| 9 | .032 | .323 | 99.972 | | | | | | |
| 10 | .003 | .028 | 100.000 | | | | | | |

Robert Ross and Gerard Telkamp, in the introduction to their book called *Colonial Cities*, have remarked that the study of the transformational process of a city having its roots in colonialism is contingent upon the understanding of the colonial city life, because "much of what was creative and destructive in the dialectical relationship between colonial rulers and their subjects originated in the towns."⁶³ In relation to such a proposition, any discussion related to Kolkata's present spatial structure and future growth pattern remains incoherent without mapping its past landscape. The

⁶³ Robert J. Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, "Introduction," in *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, ed. Robert J. Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1985), 2.

following section of the chapter, therefore, attempts to shed some light on the city's origin and its consequent development during the British era to understand the same.

Structural Genesis

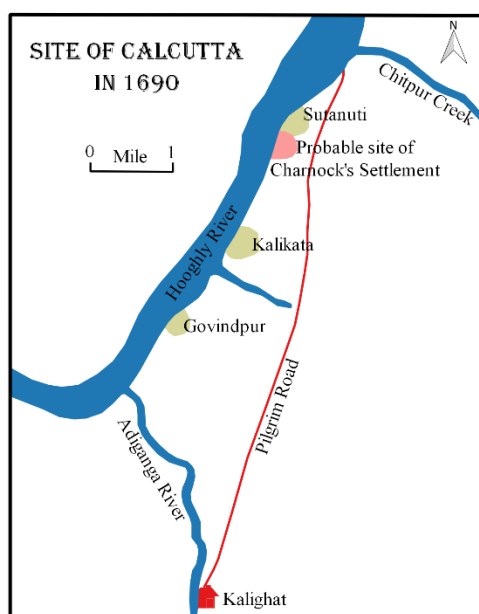


Figure 3.3. Initial locations of Gobindapur, Kalikata and Sutanuti. Adapted from Rhoads Murphey, "The City in the Swamp: Aspects of the Site and Early Growth of Calcutta," *The Geographical Journal* 130, no. 2 (1964): 244.

Kolkata was originally an unnoticeable village on the eastern bank of River Hooghly, a distributary of River Ganga. Although the city's inception is popularly credited to the English traders, as one of their agents visualised its potential as a focal trading centre in the East, the foundational stone of its materialisation was laid by a group of native Hindu families amid the influence of the Portuguese traders (who were then in possession of foreign trading operations in Bengal), during the 16th century. The Portuguese used to trade in Bengal primarily through two ports- Saptagram, a present-day village in the Chinsurah subdivision of Hooghly district in West Bengal, and Chattagram or Chittagong, now a port city in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh. However, heavy siltation of the Saraswati River led to the economic decline of Saptagram as a port centre by the late 16th century, compelling the domestic and foreign merchants to shift their base. The

majority of the merchants moved to Hooghly, except a handful of Hindu merchant families- four of Basaks and one of Seths, who moved southwards and established a village called Gobindapur on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River to seek the advantage of Betore, then a market town on the west bank of the river and used by the merchants as a break in bulk point to transport the cargo further upstream to Saptagram via small country boats. After settling in Gobindapur, the families went ahead to establish a marketplace northwards on the same side of the riverbank, known as the "Sutanuti Hat or Cotton Bale Market."⁶⁴ Over time, by the 17th century, the market town of Betore

⁶⁴ Evan Cotton, "The Founding of Calcutta," in *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City* (Calcutta: W. Newman, 1907), 3.

waned out, to be replaced by the growing significance of Sutanuti, where the Basaks and the Seths were strengthening their mercantile relations with the British, who by then had set their factory in Hooghly and were beginning to affirm their hold onto the province, by setting factories at several other sites like Dhaka in present-day Bangladesh, Patna in Bihar and Kashimbazar in Bengal.⁶⁵ In 1687, Hooghly became the principal centre of the British East India Company in India. During their time in Bengal, the Company's Chief Agent in here Job Charnock, caught sight of the locational advantages of Sutanuti for commercial operations, as they had now begun to use it as a site for anchorage. He insisted on making Sutanuti the factory headquarter for Bengal. However, his commercial aspirations with regard to Sutanuti soon suffered a blow following hostile relations with the Mughals. After a failed negotiation with them, Charnock had to abort the factory and trade operations in Bengal to transport it to Madras (present-day Chennai) in around 1688-1689.⁶⁶ Finally, in 1690, insisted upon the compensatory encouragement from the Nawab of Bengal, Ibrahim Khan, Charnock made a permanent return to Bengal and settled in Sutanuti by setting up a factory. He sought to amalgamate Sutanuti with the neighbouring villages of Gobindapur and Kalikata, thereby marking the inception of the city. In 1698, the British purchased the *zamindari* rights of these three villages which were then held by Sabarna Roychowdhuri from the Nawab of Bengal.⁶⁷ The three villages encompassed a total of 1861 acres, roughly extending from Chitpur Creek in the north to Tolly Nullah in the south.⁶⁸ This move of acquirement of the *zamindari* rights is viewed as a landmark event in the rise of the British power in Bengal and the country at large, for this was the first step towards their change of position from mere traders to administrators.⁶⁹ One of their first symbolic manifestations of power accession was the construction of the old Fort William in 1699 at Kalikata, situated between Sutanuti and Gobindopur. The military protection provided by the fort soon transformed it to be the heart of the British settlement in the city, which was typically concentrated between Babu Ghat, close to modern-day Eden Gardens and Clive Street.⁷⁰ Many English houses proliferated during this time; some of these houses were converted

⁶⁵ Monidip Chatterji, "Before Calcutta," in *Calcutta, the Living City-The Past*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁶⁶ Rhoads Murphey, "The City in the Swamp: Aspects of the Site and Early Growth of Calcutta," *The Geographical Journal* 130, no. 2 (1964): 241–256.

⁶⁷ Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta."

⁶⁸ Evan Cotton, *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City* (Calcutta: W. Newman, 1907).

⁶⁹ Kathleen Blechynden, *Calcutta, Past and Present* (London: W. Thacker & Co., 1905).

⁷⁰ Cotton, *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City*.

from their previous semi-permanent structures to elaborate compositions housing gardens.⁷¹ The street close to the north of the fort, i.e., Bowbazar Street, presently known as the Bepin Bihari Ganguly Street, used to be adorned with lavish English settlements. It ran perpendicular to the only north-south extension called the Pilgrim Road, later renamed Chowringhee Road or Jawaharlal Nehru-Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Road.⁷² In line with the fort was a tank or the Lal Dighi, amid a park (presently known as the Binoy Badal Dinesh Bagh); the English settlers expanded the tank to establish it as their source of drinking water,⁷³ thereby making their first intervention in the planning of the city.⁷⁴ Surrounding the English settlement or the Christian Calcutta was the Dihi Calcutta, inhabited by the natives, who had a bazaar to the north of the fort, connected to the Christian Calcutta through the Clive Street.⁷⁵ Further north was the market town of Sutanuti, and further south was Gobindapur, most of which was overgrown with jungle. According to Captain Alexander Hamilton, Calcutta, by the early 18th century, was home to around 12,000 people.⁷⁶ In 1746, the British rented the area between Park Street and present-day Lenin Sarani to be merged with Calcutta,⁷⁷ which had begun to demonstrate an inclination towards British architectural structure. But the real change in the city's spatial structure came only after 1957 with the conniving victory of the British against the Bengal Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula in the historic Battle of Plassey. The victory assured political control of Bengal to the British under the regime of the dummy Nawab, Mir Jafar, who granted them the possession of the whole of the land within the Maratha Ditch, along with the rights of the land beyond the Ditch down till Kulpi in South 24 Parganas.⁷⁸ Built in 1742, the Maratha Ditch was entrenched at the onset of the Maratha invasion in Bengal; it stretched from the Chitpur Creek in the north roughly till the Tolly Nullah to the south of Maidan. Although the proposed plan with respect to the ditch was never executed, after Nawab Ali Verdi Khan, the predecessor of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula, successfully checked the Maratha progression, the ditch nevertheless emerged momentous in the geographical landscape of Calcutta.⁷⁹ In 1799,

⁷¹ Siddhartha Sen, "Colonizing Kolkata," in *Colonizing, Decolonizing, and Globalizing Kolkata* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017).

⁷² This North-South extension today forms the basis of the principle metro line in the city of Calcutta.

⁷³ Blechynden, *Calcutta, Past and Present*.

⁷⁴ Sen, "Colonizing Kolkata."

⁷⁵ Cotton, *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City*; Sen, "Colonizing Kolkata."

⁷⁶ Cotton, *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City*.

⁷⁷ Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta."

⁷⁸ Binaya Krishna Deb, *The Early History and Growth of Calcutta* (Calcutta: Romesh Chandra Ghose, 1905); Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta."

⁷⁹ Cotton, *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City*.

the excavated ditch was refilled to create the later Circular Road,⁸⁰ which in the current times goes by the name of Acharya Prafulla Chandra (APC) Road (Upper Circular Road) and Acharya Jagadish Chandra (AJC) Bose Road (Lower Circular Road). Post the success of the Battle of Plassey, the British brandished their newly annexed political power by constructing the new Fort William in 1758, further south of the original fort, at the site of Gobindapur, where vast portions of the area were cleared off the jungle. Its inhabitants were relocated to the north to create an open space for the fort.⁸¹ Thus, by the mid-18th century, Calcutta had begun to expand outwards at the expense of Sutanuti, which the Englishmen had partially vacated. At the same time, their settlement in the city grew larger and extended almost towards Chowringhee.⁸²

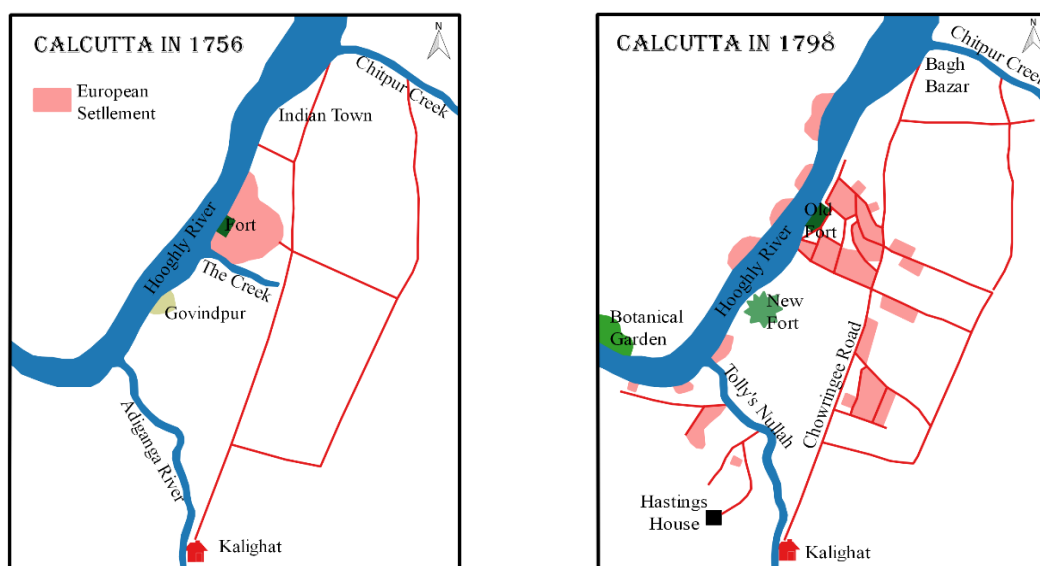


Figure 3.4. *Left*, English settlement in colonial Calcutta surrounding the old Fort William; *right*, Location of the new Fort William and expansion of the city outwards. Adapted from Murphey, “The City in the Swamp”, 244. *Note:* Adi Ganga River, also known as Gobindapur Creek, dried up by the late 17th century, dredging works of the channel got subsequently commenced from the early 18th century. Later, it was renamed as Tolly Nullah, after being successfully converted into a navigable channel by Major Tolly during the late 18th century.

The victory in favour of the British in 1757's Battle of Plassey was momentous in the discourse of Calcutta's spatial structure. The construction of the new fort marked the southward progression of

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Nair, “The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta.”

⁸² Cotton, *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City*.

the city. But the site of the original fort remains to date, the city centre, constituting the CBD, presently falling under ward number 45 (currently known as Binoy-Badal-Dinesh Bagh or BBD Bagh). The gradual growth of the city southwards has therefore left its CBD northerly located according to the current delineation of the city limits. Further, the transfer of Calcutta's administrative powers to the British was officialised through the Royal Charter of 1763, which led to certain initial infrastructural developments in the city in terms of roads, sewerage and water supply. The spatial structure was divided between the Europeans and the natives. The white town of the Englishmen was primarily concentrated around the old fort area close to Lal Dighi (Great Tank) along the BB Ganguly street, while the native town, known as the Black Town, was towards its north and north-east, in and around the present-day Rabindra Sarani (previously known as Chitpur Road). However, a portion of the Black Town also existed within the English town, comprising blurred zones of habitation, as many wealthy natives owned plots in the White Town, which they rented out to the British. Until 1794, the term 'Calcutta' was primarily used to indicate the sites of the two forts and the settlements in its vicinity; the rest of the area was popularly hailed either as the English Suburb or the Native Town.⁸³ One such suburban area was Chowringhee; a few wealthy Englishmen and natives who desired to live in suburban country houses settled there while enjoying its relative proximity to the fort, which was the seat of administration.⁸⁴ Finally, in 1794, Governor-General Lord Cornwallis demarcated the boundaries of Calcutta, guarded by Hooghly River to the west, the Chitpur creek, marking the northern limit of the Maratha Ditch to the north, the Circular Road to the east (comprising the filled linear extension of the ditch, in the north-south fashion), up to the riverside extension of the Lower Circular Road (present-day AJC Bose Road) close to the meeting point of Tolly Nullah with the river in the south.⁸⁵ Since the high cost of building materials kept the construction outlays high, rent was inevitably higher; only a handful could afford to dwell in the villa type spacious houses, while most had to settle wherever the rent was relatively lower, commonly in huts, built of mud and straw.⁸⁶ Such arrangement of habitation frequently befuddled the White Town-Black Town spatial demarcation in the city, as it

⁸³ Deb, *The Early History and Growth of Calcutta*; Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta."

⁸⁴ Swati Chattopadhyay, "The Limits of 'White' Town," in *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 76–135.

⁸⁵ Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta."

⁸⁶ Chattopadhyay, "The Limits of 'White' Town."

was common for the white town to be dotted with indigenous huts.⁸⁷ Anthony King has suggested a few possibilities of spatial typologies for European colonial cities, which started without any significant indigenous settlements. Among the two possibilities:

[T]he new foundation can be built...for the colonists but with a separate location and accommodation for the indigenous and intervening groups (Nairobi); [or] for the colonists and all (or some) of the intervening and indigenous groups in the same area (Kingston, Jamaica).⁸⁸

The spatial structure of colonial Calcutta had been a combination of the two typologies, which emerged from the indefiniteness of the spatial division between the White and the Black Town. King has attributed such indefiniteness to crucial deviations from the hegemonic generalisations of the "colonial city phenomenon."⁸⁹ This deviation was nonetheless partial because, although the spatial boundaries of the native and the British settlements were indefinite, their origination was rooted in the generic grounds of discrimination between the colonisers and the colonised. The socio-economic imperatives might have influenced their intended configuration; the divisions, however, never ceased to exist. The supremacy of the colonial rulers was typically maintained through their spatial expression of power, which relegated the Black Town to a stature of neglect, while most of the improvements related to parks, commercial enterprises, wide roads, drainage and sanitation were limited to the stretches of the White Town, making it synonymous to the 'city of palaces'. It represented the emulation of the English architecture to make the Britishers feel at home in the colonised land. According to King, such disposition towards designing largely followed the Eurocentric sense of superiority.⁹⁰ The Black Town, on the other hand, inhabited mainly by the slums, became the site of narrow streets and precariously built houses. The British frequently considered it the nest of diseases like malaria and cholera, frequent in those days.

⁸⁷ Partho Datta, *Planning the City: Urbanization and Reform in Calcutta, c. 1800 - c. 1940* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2012); Siddhartha Sen, "Colonizing Kolkata," in *Colonizing, Decolonizing, and Globalizing Kolkata* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 37–76, accessed November 2, 2021, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9789048530687-004/html>.

⁸⁸ King, "Colonialism and Urban Development", 31.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

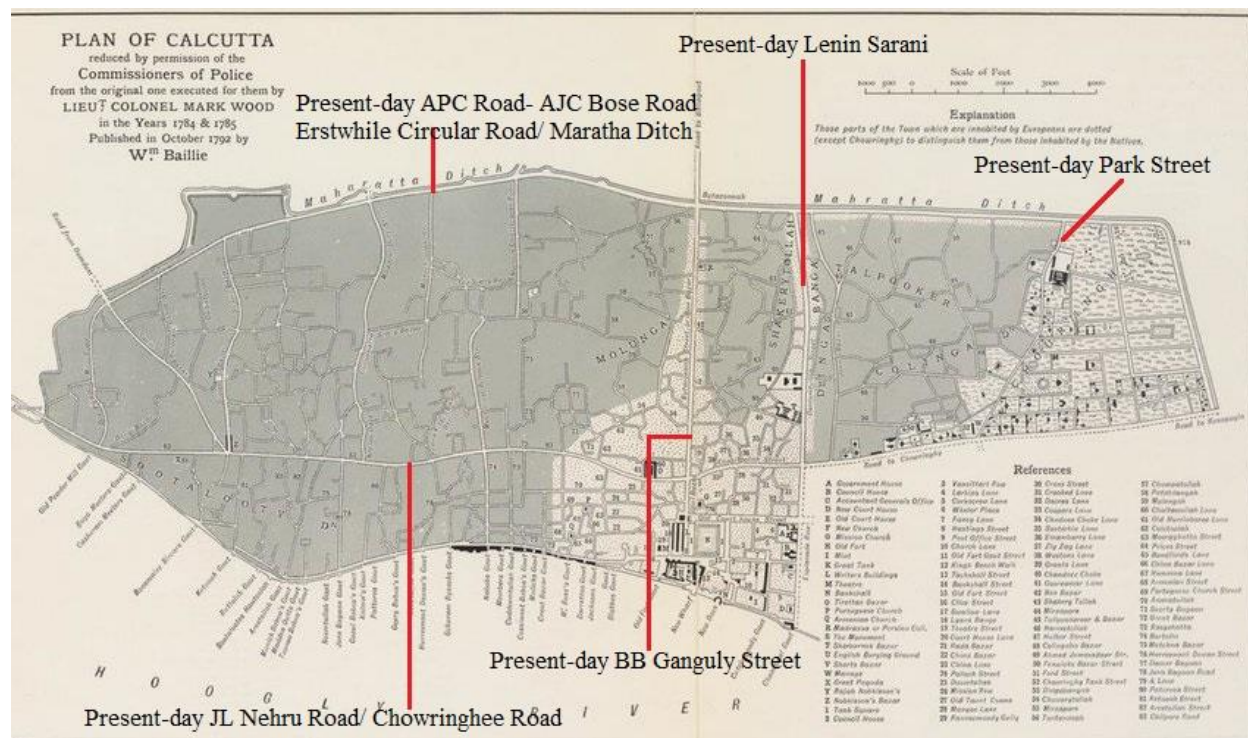


Figure 3.5. Lieut. Colonel Mark Wood's 'Plan of Calcutta', 1784-1785, showing the locations of White Town and Black Town. Published in October 1792 by William Baillie.

Meanwhile, the city's burgeoning administrative and urban significance by the late 18th century had already structured it as the capital of the British authority in the country. The latter half of the following 19th century was significant for Calcutta's infrastructural development. Industrial success, especially in terms of jute production during the mid-19th century, augmented the pace and the scale of such development, which included the provision of elaborate sewerage systems, railway and tram services, and communication networks. In 1857, the suburbs of the city were delineated, some of which included the present-day neighbourhoods of Beniapur, Entally, Garden Reach, Khidderpore, Mominpur, Ekbalpur, Bhawanipur, Alipur, Tollygunje, Ballygunje, Ultadanga, Beliaghata and Manicktala.⁹¹ The suburban areas like Entally, Alipur, Bhawanipur, Ballygunje and Tollygunje initially served as the country house addresses of the British and a few wealthy natives, but later transformed into the places of their permanent residences. Park Street, then known as the Burial Ground Road, was originally intended to be developed as an English

⁹¹ Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta."

enclave.⁹² However, the mounting commercial vitality of Park Street and the Chowringhee area during the 1850s made the wealthy British withdraw outwards from the core city, leading to the development of Alipur.⁹³ Alipur, along with a few others like Ekbalpur, Bhawanipur, Entally, Beniapukur, Ballygunje, and the northern portion of Tollygunje were integrated with the core city in 1889.⁹⁴ While the rest of the area under the suburbs was divided into four municipalities, namely, North Suburban, East Suburban, South Suburban and Suburban.⁹⁵ In 1863, municipal governance was established, which later transformed into a municipal corporation through the Calcutta Municipal Consolidation Act, 1876. The Town Improvement Committee of 1805, Lottery Committee of 1817, and the later the Calcutta Improvement Trust of 1911 were the city's key urban planning and development bodies. Many prominent roads, especially in the native section of the city were constructed under the supervision of the Lottery Committee, such as the Chitpur Road (presently known as Rabindra Sarani), College Street, Amherst Street, Harrison Street (present-day Mahatma Gandhi Road), and Strand Road. Others included Hare Street, Cornwallis Street, Loudon Street Wellington Street and Elliot Road. The subsequent body called the Calcutta Improvement Trust (later known as Kolkata Improvement Trust) became operational in 1912 and focused on the development of areas like Bhawanipur, Tollygunje, Ultadanga and Beliaghata, laying out important north-south and central-south connecting thoroughfares like Chittaranjan Avenue (CR Avenue), Russa Road, Syed Amir Ali Avenue and other south located roads, namely, Southern Avenue and Rash Behari Avenue. The planning body remained in effect up until 2017, when it was finally merged with the statutory urban development body of Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA).⁹⁶

In 1911 the Britishers transferred their capital to New Delhi. Calcutta, by then, struck by the piercing blow of the 1905 Bengal partition, had resorted to increased radicalism in its assertive form of political participation. After India's independence in 1947, the city, whose population had long crossed the million mark, underwent a massive change in its spatial structure, particularly in

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Chattopadhyay, "The Limits of 'White' Town."

⁹⁴ Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta."

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Kolkata Metropolitan Development Agency (KMDA), formed by the presidential ordinance in 1970, under the Urban Development Department of Government of west Bengal, is an urban development body, entrusted with the responsibility to plan, implement and monitor infrastructure related development projects within Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA).

the wake of the incoming refugees. The continued streams of refugee inflow in overwhelming volumes from erstwhile East Pakistan transformed Calcutta's political, demographic and spatial configuration. The fear of imminent animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims engendered the first wave of refugee influx to the city. The latter streams followed soon after intermittent bouts of religious conflicts in certain districts of East Pakistan. The first group of refugees, who came to the city between 1946 and 1949, comprising at least one out of every five refugees to the state,⁹⁷ had their cultural tastes, intellect, lifestyles and social standing almost at par with that of the native upper-middle class Bengalis.⁹⁸ Their similarity in class character made many of them averse to their rehabilitation in relief camps. On the contrary, they settled close to the native neighbourhoods in colony squatters, some through legal means but mostly through *jabar dakhla*⁹⁹ (collective takeover by force). The growth of areas, namely, Bijoygarh, Ramgarh, Azadgarh, Netaji Nagar, Jadavpur, Dhakuria, Santoshpur, Garia, Kasba, Behala and Chetla in the southern part of the present-day Kolkata have occurred primarily from refugee colonies (locally known as *udhbastu* colonies). The political awareness of the refugees jolted the presence of the native Bengali elites, many of whom had now replaced the colonial predecessors in the once affluent suburban localities of South Kolkata (like Bhawanipur, Alipur, and Ballygunje), leaving the dingy living conditions of the north.¹⁰⁰ It led to petty skirmishes between the native and migrated Hindu Bengalis (locally known as *Ghoti* and *Bangal*, respectively) and also between them and the native Muslims, who turned intimidated by their prodigious influx. Initially, the vacant land were squatted upon by a few refugees; however, as more numbers began to decant, the squatter settlements grew, forming a colony with schools, libraries, youth organisations, and markets.¹⁰¹ Soon by the early 1950s, Calcutta turned into a city of refugees accommodating relief camps and refugee colonies in almost every part of its limits and beyond. A large portion of these refugee colonies was located in the southern part of the Kolkata Metropolitan Area, which was the site of a US military base during the Second World War.¹⁰² The refugees, driven by their sheer numbers, were compelled to occupy

⁹⁷ Chatterji, "'Dispersal' and the Failure of Rehabilitation."

⁹⁸ Omkar Goswami, "Calcutta's Economy 1918-1970: The Fall from Grace," in *Calcutta, the Living City-The Present and Future*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁹⁹ Nilanjana Chatterjee, "The East Bengal Refugees: A Lesson in Survival," in *Calcutta, the Living City-The Present and Future*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁰ Goswami, "Calcutta's Economy 1918-1970: The Fall from Grace."

¹⁰¹ Romola Sanyal, "Contesting Refugeehood: Squatting as Survival in Post-Partition Calcutta," *Social Identities* 15, no. 1 (2009): 67-84.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

the last piece of land available, be it on the roadside pavements, on the railway platforms, or near the shabby wetlands.¹⁰³ Conflicts ensued when many settled on vacant land held under private ownership by the local landowners or on the Muslim *waqf* land, demanding government intervention, which the refugees repelled through violent encounters and protests.¹⁰⁴

Castells regarded social processes that allow humans to appropriate space by constructing social organisation as the ultimate expression of urbanisation.¹⁰⁵ The social value that emanates from the interaction between different individuals and classes of such an organisation imparts particular meanings to cities. The production of this social value is subjected to numerous constraints due to relentless conflict between different groups and their interests, each seeking to carve the city as per their vision of urban meanings. He argued the potentiality of social movements that emerge from "urban-oriented mobilisation" to create new urban meanings and transform the existing ones by influencing social change.¹⁰⁶ He substantiated his case by drawing on the examples of the Glasgow Rent Strike in 1915 and the Madrid Citizen's Movement in 1969. The social mobilisation that built these movements, involving inter-class associations, successfully challenged the exploitative order of urban service and infrastructural provision by placing the common welfare needs and demands of political democracy at the forefront. The movements not only facilitated the addressal of the concerned issues, but also created a space to assert the existence of their "social force" and consider such force while determining the functions of the city, thereby imparting new urban meanings.¹⁰⁷ The refugee movements in Kolkata and Bengal at large conveyed similar attitudes towards constructing new urban meaning. The extraordinary stance of the refugees in asserting their voices against state mismanagement and in demand for proper rehabilitation and rights gained momentum through their engagement in a variety of urban movements. The social value that emanated from these movements through large-scale mobilisations, structured around the common issues of employment, wages, transport, and inflation, facilitated the production of a new social space for the refugees to claim their demands as well. The inter-class alliance such

⁵⁸ Joya Chatterji, "Dispositions and Destinations: Refugee Agency and 'Mobility Capital' in the Bengal Diaspora, 1947–2007," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 2 (2013): 273–304.

¹⁰⁴ Sanyal, "Contesting Refugeehood."

¹⁰⁵ Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley; Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1983), cited in Stuart Lowe, *Urban Social Movements: The City after Castells*, 1st ed. (New York: Red Globe Press London, 1986).

¹⁰⁶ Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*, 305, cited in Stuart Lowe, "The City and the Grassroots," in *Urban Social Movements: The City after Castells*, 34.

¹⁰⁷ Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*, 230, cited in *Ibid.*, 40.

movements forged helped create a new urban meaning through not only the grant of the refugee rights but also assimilating their voices in the popular discourse of city making.

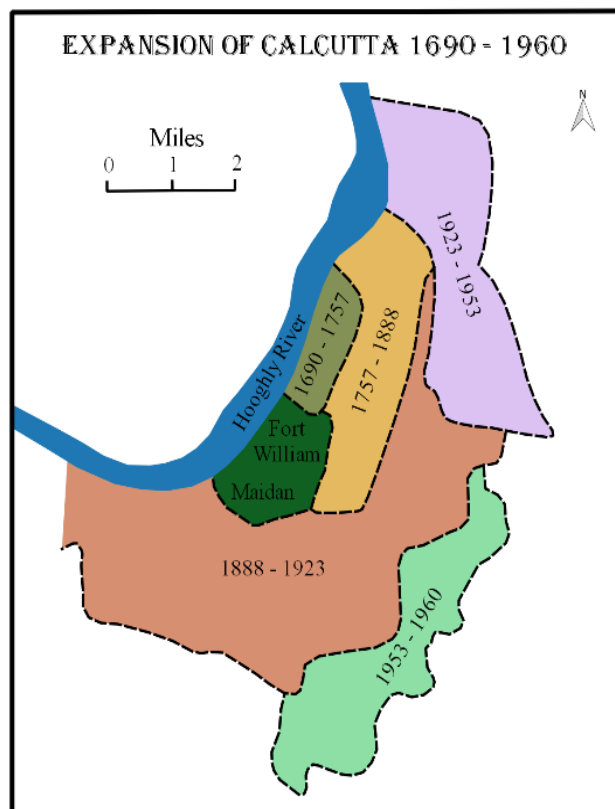


Figure 3.6. The periodic evolution of Calcutta from 1690-1960. Adapted from Murphey, “The City in the Swamp”, 244.

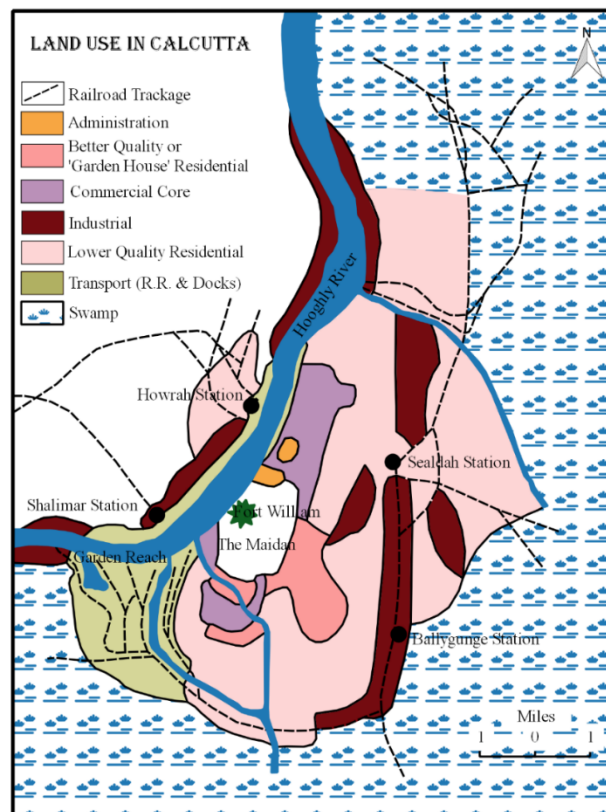


Figure 3.7. The land-use of Calcutta during 1964. Adapted from Murphey, “The City in the Swamp”, 244.

Post-partition Kolkata is therefore popularly characterised as intensely congested with an acute shortage of space. The colony sites largely encompassed swampland featuring open ditches to be cautiously routed for reaching the interspersed, mostly bamboo-built huts. The exhausting and sometimes futile outcomes of the daily quest to navigate life in the absence of basic amenities like streetlights, drinking water, or sanitation forged a community out of these colonies, determined to see the light.¹⁰⁸ Their struggle for rights to social and physical space, in terms of land, housing,

¹⁰⁸ Henrike Donner, “Locating Activist Spaces: The Neighbourhood as a Source and Site of Urban Activism in 1970s Calcutta,” *Cultural Dynamics* 23, no. 1 (2011): 21–40; Manas Ray, “Growing Up Refugee,” *History Workshop Journal* 53, no. 1 (2002): 149–179.

employment and recognition, against the aggrieved efficacy of the then Congress Government appealed to the Leftist sentiments of redistribution and radicalism, which ultimately ushered the Left era in Bengal thereafter. The rise of the CPI(M) led Left Government in Bengal witnessed the grant of the refugee demand for legal ownership of land. From 1981 onwards, the West Bengal Refugee Rehabilitation Department, in association with the Local Colony Committee, began issuing land deeds to the refugee families. With the commencement of the Calcutta (now Kolkata) Municipal Corporation Act, 1980, some of these refugee colonies in the south were incorporated within the area of the municipal corporation by extending its territorial limits to include the former municipalities of Jadavpur, Garden Reach and South Suburban, making a total of 141 KMC wards.

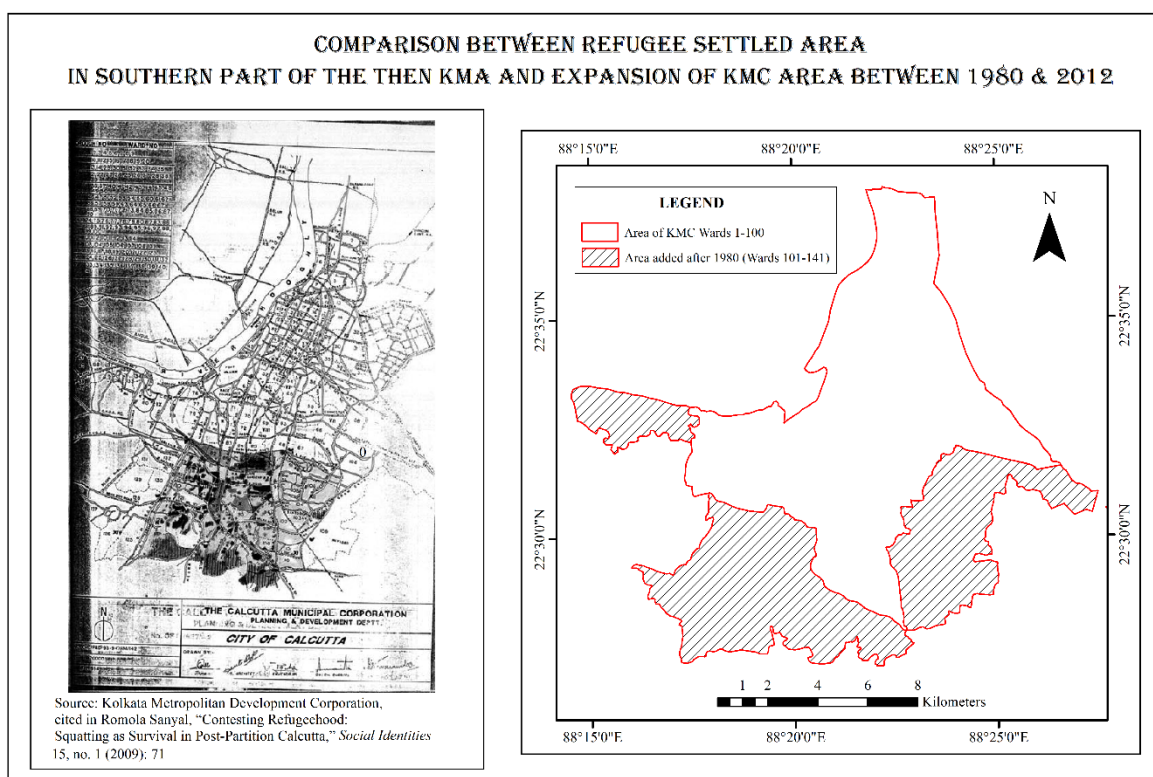


Figure 3.8. Map (right) showing the area of newly added wards within Kolkata Municipal Corporation after 1980, integrating the refugee settled region in the southern part of Kolkata Metropolitan Area (left), covering municipalities of Jadavpur, Garden Reach and South Suburban. The expansion increased the number of KMC wards to 141 from the previous 100, with a total of 185 sq. kms. area.

Conclusion

Kolkata, since its inception, has organically grown southwards. With the river to its west and the

pestilential swamp to the east, the city had been ill-equipped for sideward expansion. Its consequent linear growth has rendered the CBD northerly skewed and unequally distanced from different parts of the city. The emergence of the CBD originated from the site of the old fort, whose location was strategically determined to seek the defense advantage of the river. The area, which is presently known as the North Kolkata, possesses the original contours of the city; its dense form bears the evidence of urbanity for at least two hundred centuries. Being the home of the natives, North Kolkata, a large part of which was categorised under the colonial spatial subdivision of Black Town, has been housing a majority of the population throughout the city's existence. On the other hand, the south emerged much later and is relatively planned through various stages of the city's suburban development. The overall evolution of the present-day South Kolkata has been in a step-like manner with increased immigration. Accordingly, the compactness of the south's urban form is suggestive of such piecemeal growth. The PCA result of the first component, thus, demonstrates the customary pattern of a city's progression outwards from its CBD. The difference in the concentration of urban physicality, which is expressed through urban compactness, also follows the city's monocentric trend. Undoubtedly this trend has been offset relatively in the recent years by conceptualising Kolkata's eastward development, whereby the present offices, in response to the changes in the contemporary business demands, prefer to move out of the CBD, but Kolkata's monocentricity exists even today. Until 2011, the state's administrative functions continued to operate from the Writers' Building (renamed Manhakaran, in the post-independence period) in BBD Bagh, which also accommodated the police headquarters Lal Bazar, in its neighbourhood. Dharmatala remains the headquarters of important government offices, and areas like Esplanade, Bowbazar and Burrabazar are commercially significant to date. All these neighbourhoods are located in and around Kolkata's CBD. Moreover, the colonial significance of neighbourhoods like Park Street and Chowringhee is evident even today. These neighbourhoods have now been transformed into high-end, fancy shopping and dining destinations, fashioning high property values. The location of the city's famous schools and colleges too follow a similar pattern, with a high concentration in the central part. While the southward growth of the city is still in the process of making. The ongoing development of South Kolkata has enabled it to be the executional ground of targeted practices of spatial enhancements, entailing an increased pace of transformation. Certainly, many later developed south neighbourhoods today have become popular locations in the city, like Jadavpur, Dhakuria, or Kasba, especially in the context of the

proliferating shopping malls, high-rises, and gated communities and are increasingly attaining an affluent character, but in no way it has been able to replace Kolkata's monocentricity. The combined impact of all these features, thus, helps explain the third component of the PCA, which indicates a generalised pattern of decrease in residential property prices with the increase in distance from the CBD.

Chapter 4

Changing Landscape: Kolkata in the Post-Colonial Period

This chapter relates to the post-colonial developments in the city of Kolkata. By treading through the contours of differing economic regimes, the chapter attempts to connect the city's vulnerability in the aftermath of the country's independence to its post-liberal stance in documenting the variegated character of its ongoing spatial transformation.

Introduction

Post-independence, the vision of a modern state guided the principles of urban planning and state-directed development in the country. The metropolitan cities being the centres of industry, trade and commerce, began to be considered the dynamos for delivering such modernity. The potency of the spatial concentration of various industrial, finance, and government institutions in the cities, to ensure creative synergies was noted as significant in fulfilling the modernist vision of social and economic transformation of the post-colonial state. However, it was not until the 1960s that coherent plans centering on urbanisation and urban processes were conceptualised. Increased population and poor living conditions gripped most of the cities in the immediate years after the partition. Besides the arrival of the refugees, the industrial units established in the cities, particularly at the onset of the Second World War, attracted a huge number of immigrants with limited provisions of shelter. Thus, over-congested slums under unhealthy environments characterised post-independence urban India.¹ Engulfed with the similar problems of an overwhelming population, Kolkata experienced a severe urban crisis surrounding the concerns of employment, poverty, and infrastructure. Up until the Second World War, Kolkata's industrial capacity flourished to sustain its growing population. Its efficient port facility and infrastructural merits of adequate power and water supply reinforced its economy to make it one of the most

¹ Lalit Batra, *A Review of Urbanisation and Urban Policy in Post-Independent India*, Working Paper Series (New Delhi: Centre for the study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2009); Rajni Kothari, "State and Statelessness in Our Time," *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, no. 11/12 (1991): 553–558; Annapurna Shaw, "Urban Policy in Post-Independent India: An Appraisal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 4 (1996): 224–228.

thriving cities in the East. However, at the commencement of the War, the industrial scenario of the city took a turn. The setting up of major war supply plants in the city depended largely on the labour of the semi-skilled or unskilled workforce, derived primarily from the rural hinterland. The prospects of employment opportunities attracted many migrants to the city.² Further, the agrarian distress in Bengal, followed by the Bengal Famine in 1943, compelled vast sections of the rural population to land up in the city as their last resort.³ Such unprecedented growth of the population, particularly between 1941 and 1944, put tremendous pressure on the civic life of Kolkata.⁴ Consequently, the provision of the urban services and infrastructural capacity fell severely short of the requirement. Post-partition, Kolkata witnessed an exponential increase in the scale of its existing problems with the inflow of East Pakistan refugees. As Table 3.4 shows, the share of the migrants during 1951 composed more than 50 percent of the total population.⁵ Hence, by the late 1950s, the city's infrastructure was almost exhausted, industrial growth lagged on account of partitionary impacts, and unemployment soared.

Table 3.4. Composition of Kolkata's population from 1911-1951

| Year | Total Population | Natural Population | Migrant Population | Share of Migrant Population |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1911 | 9,98,012 | 6,34,738 | 39727 | 3.980613 |
| 1921 | 10,31,697 | 7,06,122 | 3,71,575 | 36.0159 |
| 1931 | 11,40,862 | 7,84,387 | 3,78,776 | 33.20086 |
| 1941 | 21,08,891 | 14,44,932 | 6,90,550 | 32.7447 |
| 1951 | 25,48,677 | 12,04,190 | 13,89,023 | 54.49977 |

Source: A Ghosh, *Census of India 1961: Calcutta the Primate City*, Monograph Series (New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 1950).

² Asok Mitra, "Where Do We Go from Here? The Problems of Calcutta Metropolitan Region," in *Calcutta on the Eve of Tercentenary* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990), 56–80.

³ Goswami, "Calcutta's Economy 1918-1970: The Fall from Grace."

⁴ A Mitra, *Census of India 1951: Calcutta City*, vol. 6, Part 3 (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1951); Mitra, "Where Do We Go from Here? The Problems of Calcutta Metropolitan Region."

⁵ A Ghosh, *Census of India 1961: Calcutta the Primate City*, Monograph Series (New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 1950).

Economy and Infrastructure

The partition of the country induced a loss of a large portion of the agricultural hinterland to East Bengal. Increased population pressure on the available land undermined agricultural productivity by declining the man-land ratio, which yielded sustained periods of low growth rate at 1.7 percent against the population growth rate of over 3 percent.⁶ Agriculture, therefore, failed to provide the surplus needed to support the sustainable growth of the city.⁷ Although the immediate years following India's independence had been a witness to Kolkata's economic lead, relative to Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, the city, however, failed to defend its industrial viability in the subsequent years.⁸ A number of factors had cumulatively contributed to the city's dismal industrial productivity. Firstly, before independence, Bengal primarily comprised of export-oriented economy, with tea and jute products constituting the base of such export. Post-independence, the change in the geographical landscape of the country led to the loss of fertile jute fields to East Bengal and severed the communication links necessary for the export of tea, which disrupted the function of the jute and subsidiary tea supply industries in and around the city.⁹ Secondly, the imposition of the freight equalisation policy by the central government in 1952 injured Bengal's industrial potential by depriving it of its competitive advantage in coal and steel.¹⁰ As a result, the industrial projects undertaken during the first plan period of 1951-1956 in Durgapur and Asansol failed to provide adequate support. Thirdly, during the mid-1960s, East India experienced severe drought conditions causing India balance of payment crisis. Further, the massive defence expenses due to the Indo-Pak War in 1965 crippled the country's economy by the late 1960s. One of the significant impacts of the country's economic recession during this time was a substantial cut in importing industrial inputs. West Bengal, which specialised in heavy engineering industries, particularly the production of railway wagons, was drastically hit. By 1966, orders for railway

⁶ J Boyce, *Agrarian Impasse in Bengal: Institutional Constraints to Technological Change* (Oxford University Press, 1987), cited in Amiya Kumar Bagchi, "Studies on the Economy of West Bengal since Independence," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 2973-2978.

⁷ Goswami, "Calcutta's Economy 1918-1970: The Fall from Grace"; Mitra, "Where Do We Go from Here? The Problems of Calcutta Metropolitan Region."

⁸ Asok Mitra, "Calcutta India's City," in *Calcutta on the Eve of Tercentenary* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990), 13-26.

⁹ Bagchi, "Studies on the Economy of West Bengal since Independence."

¹⁰ Introduced in 1952, Freight Equalisation Policy aimed at equitable development of industries across the country, which accounted to equalisation of transportation cost of certain raw materials like iron, steel, coal and petroleum. The policy resulted in the elimination of the locational advantages of the mineral rich states in the eastern part of country like West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

wagons fell sharply, which led to the fall of all the other ancillary industries in the state, with a large number of plant closures and layoffs.¹¹ This precarious economic situation led to widespread labour protests across the state, gravely impacting the decisions of private investors in Bengal. Finally, and a somewhat debatable factor is attributed to the managerial inefficiency of the natives relative to their colonial counterparts in supervising industrial operations in post-independence Bengal.¹² Refuting this factor to be an error of analysis, Goswami has argued that the presence of the Marwari entrepreneurs in the industrial pursuits of Bengal can be traced back to colonial times.¹³ He affirmed that the Marwaris did not restrict themselves to the domestic industrial sectors of paper and sugar mill industry but, in fact, ventured into the traditional European sectors of jute and tea. By the 1960s, major industries in Eastern India came to be under the control of the Marwari leadership. However, Asok Mitra has propounded that Kolkata's waning prosperity during the 1960s made the city's industrialists turn to Mumbai. Drawing relations to the origin of these industrialists, he noted,

The city's big industrialists and businessmen came from elsewhere with no thought of a stake in the city to start with. Very many of them remained, and still remain, aloof from the affairs of the city, some out of a sense of diffidence, and of not belonging, others from an unwillingness to get more involved than is good for their work.¹⁴

Thus, weakening industrial prospects combined with increased unemployment had profound impacts on the daily life expenses of many middle-class families in the city, pushing large sections of the people towards poverty and deprivation.¹⁵ By 1951, the *bustee* (a term used for legally authorised slum by the KMC) population in Kolkata was more than six lakhs, with Manicktala (north) having the highest proportion, followed by Beliaghata (north-east), Entally (central) and

¹¹ D Bandyopadhyay, *Labour Mood in West Bengal* (Kolkata: Labour Department and Information & Public Relations Department, Government of West Bengal, 1973); Sreemanta Dasgupta, "West Bengal and Industry: A Regional Perspective," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 3049–3060.

¹² Bagchi, "Studies on the Economy of West Bengal since Independence."

¹³ Omkar Goswami, "Then Came the Marwaris: Some Aspects of the Changes in the Pattern of Industrial Control in Eastern India," *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 22, no. 3 (1985): 225–249.

¹⁴ Asok Mitra, "Calcutta India's City," in *Calcutta on the Eve of Tercentenary* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990), 23.

¹⁵ Donner, "Locating Activist Spaces."

Ekbalpur (south-west).¹⁶ Continued conditions of precarious living amid gross inadequacies of housing, water supply, electricity, sanitation, and sewerage, led to the outbreak of cholera in the city, necessitating the attention of the World Health Organisation.¹⁷ WHO's intervention in the city caught global attention, which marked the formulation of Kolkata's first planning strategy since independence under the leadership of the US-based Ford Foundation.

Kolkata's Planning Process

West Bengal Chief Minister Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy (1948-1962) invited the American Ford Foundation to prepare the developmental plan for the city in 1960. During this time, Dr. Roy also devised the idea of Saltlake Township. Amidst the ailing condition of Kolkata, the vision of a planned township on the reclaimed wetlands, backed by economic resilience and complete with physical, recreational and social amenities, provided a utopian relief to the hurting sight of the disordered Kolkata. The arrival of the Ford Foundation in the city marked the entry of a foreign agency into West Bengal's urban territory. The Ford Foundation insisted on setting up a planning body in the city to evaluate the Foundation's proposals and oversee the planning tasks.¹⁸ Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation (CMPO) was resultantly set up in 1961 and was placed under the direct supervision of the Chief Minister. The area upon which CMPO was to administer its plans was delineated in the subsequent years between 1962-1964, which led to the emergence of the Calcutta Metropolitan District (CMD).¹⁹ Post the legislation of Calcutta Metropolitan Area Act 1965, CMD was officially recognised to be covering an area of 490 sq. miles.²⁰ The CMPO commenced its planning process with the publication of the Basic Development Plan (BDP) in

¹⁶ A Mitra, *Census of India 1951: Calcutta City*, vol. 6, Part 3 (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1951); Siddhartha Sen, "Decolonizing Kolkata," in *Colonizing, Decolonizing, and Globalizing Kolkata* (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 133–182.

¹⁷ Andrew Rumbach, "'Between the Devil and the Bay of Bengal': The Ford Foundation and the Politics of Planning in Post-Independence Calcutta," *Planning Perspectives* 36, no. 5 (2021): 1025–1051.

¹⁸ Tridib Banerjee and Sanjoy Chakravorty, "Transfer of Planning Technology and Local Political Economy: A Retrospective Analysis of Calcutta's Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 60, no. 1 (1994): 71–82.

¹⁹ Calcutta Metropolitan District was later redefined as Calcutta Metropolitan Area under the West Bengal Town and Country Planning Act of 1979. After the modification in the name of the city from 'Calcutta' to 'Kolkata' in 2001, the term was changed accordingly. This change in the term post the modification of the city's nomenclature applies to all administrative bodies and organisations under the city.

²⁰ NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper*.

1966. The BDP presented an outline of the proposed developmental projects up till 1986. The proposed projects were meant to prepare CMD for a population of 12.3 million, covering housing and infrastructural development related to clean drinking water supply, education and health, slum improvement, facilitation of transport, upgraded expansion of drainage, and increased industrial capacity. It divided the CMD into three broad zones, with the metropolitan centre, comprising the city of Calcutta and Howrah falling under Zone I, the Kalyani-Bansberia Centre under Zone II and the remaining part of the CMD area under Zone III (Figure 3.9).²¹ In view of the city's exhausted infrastructure, the plan initiated its operation with the objectives of economic growth, a socially satisfactory and sustainable urban environment, enhanced developmental planning mechanism and strengthened local government with effective citizen participation.²² However, the plan's implementation suffered a delay thereafter, as the politico-economic condition of Kolkata and Bengal at large worsened during the latter half of the 1960s. Food and fuel shortages owing to the droughts of 1965-67, rising unemployment following industrial disputes, Naxalite insurgency, and unstable tenure of the state government led to chronic disorder in the state with inescapable impacts on the city. The situation got palpable enough for the central government to step in, resulting in the imposition of the President's rule in Bengal in March 1970.

The period under President's rule helped Kolkata regain some order for the proposed plans to work. Following the grant of central financial assistance, Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority or CMDA (presently known as KMDA) was established in 1971.²³ The formation of CMDA was deemed essential by the World Bank, which found the municipalities within CMD to be too small to be effective. With a grant of US\$200 million, CMDA commenced its operation to work upon the BDP's proposed projects.²⁴ Implementation of the World Bank-supported projects under BDP was initiated periodically by launching three Calcutta Urban Development Projects, CUDP-I, 1969/70-1976/77, CUDP-II, 1977/78-1981/82, and CUDP-III, 1982/83-1988.²⁵ However, given the changes in the growth of the metropolitan structure of CMD and also outmodedness of the mainstream developmental approach of BDP by 1976, CMDA took it upon itself to formulate a

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Sanyal and Tiwari, *Politics and Institutions in Urban Development: The Story of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority*.

²⁴ Banerjee and Chakravorty, "Transfer of Planning Technology and Local Political Economy"; Sen, "Decolonizing Kolkata."

²⁵ NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper*.

new Development Perspective Plan or DPP.²⁶ Containing many of the originally proposed developmental projects of the BDP, the DPP sought to follow a multi-centre development approach. However, the development during this period was slow because of the lack of experience in handling a project of this stature besides bureaucratic delays. But one of the positive outcomes of the decade following the lift of the state emergency rule had been the progress of the Bustee Improvement Programme. Out of all the projects undertaken by CMDA during this period, the Bustee Improvement Programme or BIP, which brought about an *in situ* slum improvement, was the most significant.²⁷ By 1986, BIP could successfully improve the living conditions of around 1.7 million people by undertaking the tasks related to the layout of paved roads, provision of water and electricity, and sanitary toilet conversion.²⁸ BIP's scope was widened, particularly during CUDP-II, when the World Bank granted a loan of Rs. 478 million.²⁹ Siddhartha Sen, in his book called, *Colonizing, Decolonizing, and Globalizing Kolkata*, opines that the significance of BIP emanates from the fact that it was one of the first attempts to address the housing needs of the poor in the Global South, directing the course of development towards a holistic improvement of the underprivileged, encompassing physical and social aspects.³⁰ The launch of CUDP-II coincided with the inception of the Communist era in Bengal.

In 1977, the CPI(M) led Left Government came to power. It pioneered decentralised planning in the state and advanced the Municipal Development Programme (MDP), whereby the municipalities and the municipal corporations were empowered to carry out their respective urban development tasks. In pursuit of strengthening the urban local bodies through decentralisation, the state government introduced West Bengal Municipal Finance Commission to oversee the fiscal status of the urban bodies and the Central Valuation Board to ensure a fair and efficient system of property tax collection. Additionally, efforts were expanded toward decongesting Kolkata. In connection with this West Bengal Urban Development Strategy Committee was formed in 1980, to focus on locating alternate centres of growth and urban resource allocation across the state.³¹

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Banerjee and Chakravorty, "Transfer of Planning Technology and Local Political Economy"; Pugh, "The World Bank and Urban Shelter in Calcutta"; Sanyal and Tiwari, *Politics and Institutions in Urban Development: The Story of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority*.

²⁸ NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper*.

²⁹ Pugh, "The World Bank and Urban Shelter in Calcutta".

³⁰ Sen, "Decolonizing Kolkata."

³¹ NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper*.

Such an approach to decongesting the metropolis through the creation of alternate centres was comprehensively adopted under the Perspective Structure Plan of 1983. The PSP replaced the DPP to establish hierarchical order-based urban centres (Figure 3.10).³² Kolkata witnessed some of its major urban projects like the Saltlake Township and Eastern Metropolitan Bypass materialising during this period. The state government revised the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act of 1951 and replaced it with the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act of 1980. The new legislation provided for a cabinet system of municipal government and redefined the administrative boundary of the municipal corporation by incorporating the southern municipalities of South Suburban, Garden Reach, and Jadavpur, dividing KMC into 141 wards and 15 boroughs.

During the execution of the CUDP-III, the Municipal Development Programme was put into effect through the Borough Committee,³³ and the Bustee Improvement Programme was brought under the purview of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation to be integrated with the municipal development programmes. In regard to the *bustees*, the Thika Tenancy Act of 1949 was reformed with the Thika Tenancy Act of 1981. Under such a system of thika tenancy, initially, the private landholdings were leased by the individual landowners to the "*thika* tenants" or the builders, who could build temporary structures on it, called "*kutch*a structures," either to be inhabited by himself or to be further rented out to a subtenant, called "*Bharatia*."³⁴ It made the *bharatia*, i.e., *bustee* dweller, subject to the erratic whims and exploitation of the *thika* tenants and the landlords. Even though post-independence, the regularisation of thika tenancy was implemented through the Calcutta Thika Tenancy Act of 1949, the conditions of the *bustees* improved a little, as both the *thika* tenant and the landlord sought to secure their own interests by reducing the expenditures on their rental agreements to the minimum. The reformed Act of 1981 withdrew the provision of the 'individual landlord' from the three-tiered system of thika tenancy. With the elimination of the landlord, the

³² Ibid.

³³ The KMC wards were divided into boroughs with each borough having a committee comprising of the elected councillors of every ward. The Borough Committee headed by an elected chairperson from among the councillors was made in charge of the municipal responsibilities of each wards under an individual borough, namely, water supply, drainage, collection and disposal of solid waste, disinfection, immunisation, bustee services, electrification, and maintenance of local roads and parks. The borough committee was to prepare a plan according to the existing issues and submit it to the mayor-in-council of the KMC. Funds were then allocated to the borough by the municipal corporation for the implementation of the programmes based on priority.

³⁴ Government of West Bengal, *The Calcutta Thika Tenancy (Acquisition and Regulation) Act, 1949*. WB Act No. 2 of 1949 (Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary, 1949).

thika tenant was to pay directly to the state, who became the new landlord.³⁵ The reform was meant to ensure the protection of the *thika* tenant, against the manipulation of the landlord, and secure the tenure status of the *bharatia*, by conditioning the *thika* tenant to consult a government-appointed 'controller' before evicting the *bharatia* or raising the rent. The act is noted to achieve remarkable success by guaranteeing the tenancy rights to numerous *thika* tenants and *bustee* dwellers.

Table 3.5. Benefits and drawbacks of the Basic Development Plan (1966-1988)

| <i>Benefits</i> | <i>Drawbacks</i> |
|---|--|
| 1. Increase in water supply capacity from 84 mgd to 300 mgd. | 1. Inability to reach the targeted water supply capacity of 667 mgd. |
| 2. Construction of more than 20,000 pipes to improve water distribution in <i>bustees</i> . | 2. Insufficient development in the city's power supply capacity. |
| 3. Installation of sewerage system plants in Howrah and Serampur. | 3. Unsatisfactory outcomes of drainage and sewerage works in Calcutta. |
| 4. Initiation and reclamation of new areas for Saltlake, East Calcutta, Baishnabghata Patuli and West Howrah Townships. | 4. Inability to develop Saltlake into a government complex and insufficient acquirement of land for the new area development of townships. |
| 5. Development of Second Hooghly Bridge and North-South extension of Calcutta Metro. | 5. Inadequate development in public transport capacity of only 2.8 million against 6.8 million. |
| 6. Increase in solid waste collection and disposal capacity up to 25,000 tons. | 6. Highly disappointing results in boosting the economic development of the metropolitan district. |
| 7. Uplift of living conditions in the <i>bustees</i> , benefitting 1.7 million people under BIP | 7. New area development in Kalyani-Bansberia could not be achieved as desired. |
| 8. Conversion of more than 50,000 privies to sanitary toilets. | 8. Lack of the desired improvement in the local revenue base. |
| 9. Construction of 100 new primary schools and renovation of 600 old schools. | 9. Deficiency of funds for the maintenance of the completed projects. |

Source: Prepared from NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper* (New Delhi: National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1986).

³⁵ Government of West Bengal, *The Calcutta Thika Tenancy (Acquisition and Regulation) Act, 1981*. WB Act No. 37 of 1981 (Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary, 1981).

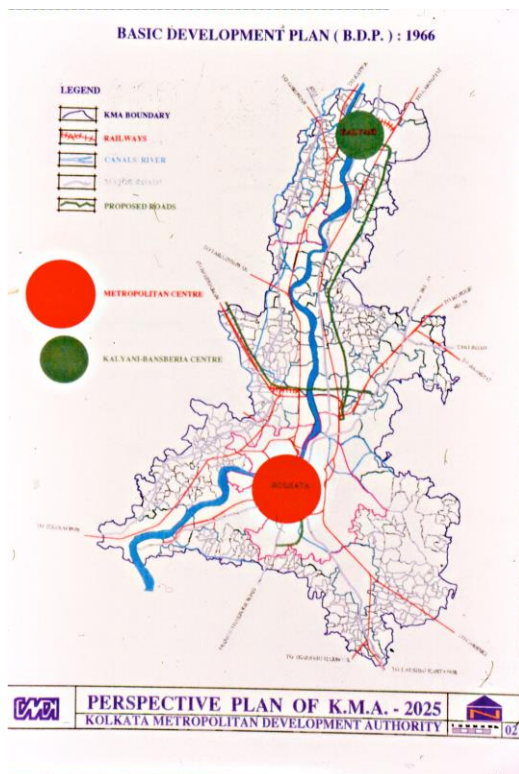


Figure 3.9. Basic Development Plan of 1966, showing the bi-nodal developmental model with Kolkata (marked in red) comprising the centre and the Kalyani-Bansberia (marked in green) as the alternate site of growth. Perspective Plan of KMA: 2025, KMDA.

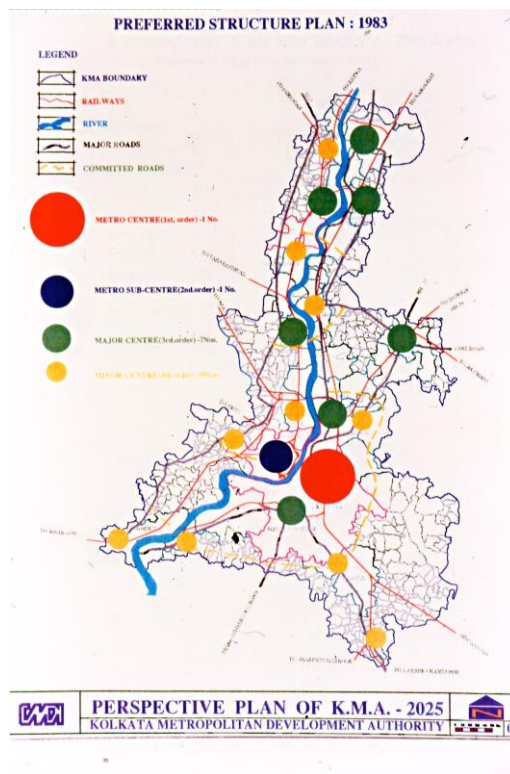


Figure 3.10. Perspective (Preferred) Structure Plan of 1983 showing the distribution of the proposed hierarchical order based urban centres across KMA. Perspective Plan of KMA: 2025, KMDA.

Note: The red (Kolkata) is the 1st order metro centre, blue denotes 2nd order metro sub centre, and green and yellow depict 3rd order major and

Transition in the 1980s

It is a paradox that the period during which the city earned some of its harshest criticisms had been instrumental in the discourse of its urban development.³⁶ After the trembling decade of the 1950s, the city had been volatile during the 1960s. But from the decade of the 70s onwards, Kolkata has shown some noteworthy strength towards urban regeneration. By bringing about radical reforms

³⁶ Kolkata was called a “dying city” by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Elisabeth Bumiller, “As Calcutta Lies Dying, Beauty and Squalor Embrace,” *Washington Post*, August 18, 1985, accessed June 5, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1985/08/18/as-calcutta-lies-dying-beauty-and-squalor-embrace/6be68b65-9683-4943-b078-f4f18981850d/>. The city had also been described to be a representative of “urban disaster”. Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 3.

in the sphere of the city administration, Kolkata has been one of the firsts to revisit the centralised mechanism of urban management. The municipal level planning enabled the state to build linkages in the overall urban planning process, which later facilitated it in delegating the tasks across the local urban bodies during the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment.

Interestingly, in complete contrast to events, and equally contrasting corners of the world, while New York, prompted by its fiscal crisis, was set to be saved by the market, Kolkata during the 70s was being resuscitated through increasing state efforts. Besides the measures of *bustee* improvement and rent-tenure security, the city witnessed some of its foremost initiatives towards affordable public housing during this time.³⁷ The Land Ceiling Act of 1976 was introduced to make excess land held under private ownership available for public purposes. As Saltlake was being geared in the direction of such an initiative, land for the Baishanabghata Patuli Township in EM Bypass was undergoing the acquisition process. Nonetheless, the development in this period had been scattered and despite some significant efforts towards transport (like Barrackpore-Kalyani Expressway, EM Bypass), and infrastructure (like Haldia dock complex, Asansol-Durgapur industrial complex), the endeavours were not adequate to lift the city out of its general state of chaos. But the real change to the city came in the 80s.

By the end of the 1980s, the share of West Bengal in the country's industrial output declined from a hefty 22 percent to a mere 8 percent with a large number of factory closures in the city, labour militancy was almost wiped out, and the lack of revenues stripped the Kolkata Municipal Corporation of its fiscal powers.³⁸ The cumulative impacts of the state's deteriorating manufacturing base, infamous business environment, lack of employment-generating outlets, sustained poverty, and political volatility of the 60s and 70s made the 80s quite indifferent to civic life, marking the flight of the middle-class youths from the city. Capturing a glimpse of Kolkata during the 1980s, political scientist Ranabir Samaddar comments,

[B]y the 1980s [the city] felt fatigued and defeated. The revolutionary crust of the society had been decimated. There were also new aspirations now. Students did not want to study in Kolkata, there was an exodus to Delhi, the middle class wanted to send their children abroad

³⁷ Urmi Sengupta and Allan G. Tipple, "The Performance of Public-Sector Housing in Kolkata, India, in the Post-Reform Milieu," *Urban Studies* 44, no. 10 (2007): 2009–2027.

³⁸ Amaresh Bagchi, "Planning for Metropolitan Development: Calcutta's Basic Development Plan, 1966-86: A Post-Mortem," *Economic and Political Weekly* 22, no. 14 (1987): 597–601.

for higher education. Thus one was faced with the first backlash of the defeats of the 1960s and 1970s.³⁹

Such characterisation of Kolkata's detracted urban terrain is often held to be the outcome of years of political constraints rather than planning failures. Critics have argued that the city's planning exercises since the introduction of the Basic Development Programme and increased centrality of KMDA in the 1960s and 70s to the implementation of its decentralised planning in the 80s have been more reflective of the relentless political wrangles between the Congress and the Left Party, rather than the rigour of the issues.⁴⁰ But then, cities have always been the sites of contestation. The heterogeneity of forces acting upon a city with different stakes inherently leads to conflicts. Nonetheless, the spirit of a city lies in engendering a social value amid such conflict by tapping into the differences to seek mobilisation capable of challenging the hegemonic narratives.⁴¹ Colonial cities like Kolkata are adept at such practices because the urban terrains in these cities have historically been the chief site of reclaim. Hence, it is evident that post-independence, as nations are nascently involved in making modernity, cities become subject to political contestations due to the encounter of diverse approaches to and forms of life.⁴² According to Brenda Yeoh,

In as much as the centrality of the historical experience of colonialism and the weight of Eurocentric culture is most clearly felt in the cities and ports of colonial societies, it is also in the urban nodes that one often locates the crucibles of nationhood and the sites of postcolonial politics.⁴³

However, as long as diverse voices claiming different mediums of representation persist, the city continues to offer hope, no matter how disarrayed it is. For it is the strength of those voices which

³⁹ Ranabir Samaddar, "'It Does Not Die' – Urban Protest in Kolkata, 1987-2007" (South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal (SAMAJ), December 30, 2011), accessed June 4, 2022, <https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/3230>.

⁴⁰ Banerjee and Chakravorty, "Transfer of Planning Technology and Local Political Economy"; Anirban Pal, "Scope for Bottom-up Planning in Kolkata: Rhetoric vs Reality," *Environment and Urbanization* 18, no. 2 (2006): 501–521; Sanyal and Tiwari, *Politics and Institutions in Urban Development: The Story of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority*.

⁴¹ Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*, cited in Stuart Lowe, *Urban Social Movements: The City after Castells*.

⁴² Sudipta Kaviraj, "Modernity and Politics in India," *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 137–162.

⁴³ Brenda S.A. Yeoh, "Postcolonial Cities," *Progress in Human Geography* 25, no. 3 (2001): 456.

sought to spearhead the movement of land rights of the *bustee* dwellers in the 50s and the 60s, resulting in the eventual grant of the tenancy rights in Kolkata. It is only when the vigour of such diverse voices weakens does the city start waning and become defenceless. The decade of the 80s had been representative of such happenings for Kolkata. Asok Mitra marked the surfacing of two crucial processes from this time.⁴⁴ First the growth of private investment in the city's real estate sector, as "this activity found an outlet for pent-up capital which had stopped being ploughed in any quantity in industry around Calcutta since 1962-63."⁴⁵ Majority of which were addressed towards the high-income immigrants to the city hailing from the professional-managerial class. Second, the development of a new industry of unskilled workers (mostly immigrants) centred around this "real estate spurt," increasingly involved in the manual labour of construction and transportation, with their lives highly dependent upon the pavement provisions of shelter and services. The early signs of these two processes appeared as warnings to the diversity of the city amidst a looming spectre of a bifurcated social spectrum. For the sustenance of these processes in the absence of diversity offering resistance would eventually roll out the exploitative socio-spatial realities of the colonial structure. Depicting the fallout of one such reality, the 1980s Kolkata represented a break, a transition in the mode of production by progressively conforming to the principles of capital switching.⁴⁶

The onset of the Reformed Economy

When India adopted economic liberalisation and its concomitant neoliberal adjustments in 1991 under the imperatives of structural reform, the Communist regime in the state of Bengal had already crossed its decadal mark. Being the heart of such an establishment, Kolkata garnered particular curiosity as to how it would respond to the market-oriented directives of economic change. It has been thirty years since the reforms, and in these years, just as Bengal had been a witness to yet another round of historic mandate, which replaced the longest-serving Communist Government in a democracy with the mighty force of Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC), Kolkata had been a witness to the withdrawn vitality of public sector, committed

⁴⁴ Mitra, "Where Do We Go from Here? The Problems of Calcutta Metropolitan Region."

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴⁶ David Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2, no. 1-3 (1978): 101-131.

inclination towards *sorkari chakri* (government or public sector jobs), commonplace practices of retail markets, humble reliance on traditional means of transport, generational preference for *nijer bari* (single dwelling houses) and accountable awareness of its indigenous ecology.

The introduction of economic reforms enabled the market to regulate the economic activities, causing a new institutional set-up with enhanced support from the state. Over the years, the city's transition from a state-controlled economy to a market-controlled one has followed a step-like pattern under the administrative framework of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Model. The state has played an active role in determining the sectoral location of the market as and when it deemed necessary. Such interaction of the state and market has not only led to the proliferation of the service industry, particularly Finance and IT services, but that the operation of such an economy essentially relying upon the relational dynamics of the transnational network, has entailed a series of infrastructural developments by reconfiguring the spatial layout of the city. The outcomes of these go beyond the exercise of infrastructural up-gradation to impact the "imaginary and material spatialities."⁴⁷

Effects on Industries

The new economic reforms ushered vast scope for Bengal by eliminating the constraints of the freight equalisation policy and central authoritative system of industrial licensing.⁴⁸ Appropriating these advantages of the changed economic condition, the state sought to revitalise its moribund economy by pursuing private investments in petrochemicals, ancillary and other agro-based industries. The West Bengal Industrial Policy of 1994 explicitly expressed the state's disposition towards welcoming foreign technology and private investment in its industrial sphere.⁴⁹ Consequently, improvement and up-gradation of the industrial infrastructure was given the highest

⁴⁷ Caroline Herbert, "Postcolonial Cities," in *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*, ed. Kevin R. McNamara, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 200.

⁴⁸ The Industries Development and Regulation Act, 1951, provided the government to issue written permission to an industrial undertaking for setting up industries, expansion of existing industries and diversification of manufacturing products. Post the introduction of the economic reforms in 1991, industrial licensing system has been abolished except for a handful industries, restrictions on investments and expansion has been removed, and easy access to foreign technology and foreign investments has been granted

⁴⁹ Government of West Bengal, *Policy Statement on Industrial Development* (Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1994).

priority. Construction of Industrial Parks and Special Economic Zones were envisaged as crucial initiatives in this direction. Haldia Industrial Park in East Midnapur has been Bengal's flagship industrial project post-reforms, housing some of the major industrial companies like Mitsubishi Chemicals Ltd., South Asian Petrochemicals Ltd., Exide, and Hindustan Lever, among others. While close to the city, Bantala Leather and Tannery Complex was established under the public-private partnership model. In the periphery of Kolkata, at a distance of around 60kms., the Falta Export Processing Zone, originally developed in 1984, was transformed into a Special Economic Zone in 2006. Besides, the Manikanchan Gem and Jewellery Park in the satellite township of Saltlake began to be operated in 2004. Developed under the joint venture of ICICI Limited and West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC), Manikanchan Park constitutes the first sector-specific SEZ in the country.⁵⁰ Currently, the Kulpi Port Project adjoining an SEZ is set to be revived after more than a decade. Initially conceived in 1997, the West Bengal Government signed an agreement with a consortium led by England-based shipping company P&O UK to develop the Kulpi Port (South 24 Parganas) in 2004. However, the project implementation got delayed thereafter owing to the complexities of multi-party involvement. Recently, at the Bengal Business Summit of 2019, the project received a fresh investment proposal from the Dubai-based multinational logistics enterprise, DP World, having a stake of 74 percent.⁵¹

Nonetheless, post the economic reforms, West Bengal's performance in the industrial sector did not register any improvement. The state's share of industrial output continued to decline from 10 percent in 1981 to 6 percent in 1991 to around 4 percent in 2011. The growth, on the contrary, has primarily emanated from the service sector, where financing, insurance, real estate, and business services have emerged as key contributors (Table 3.6). The expansion of the IT and ITES-based business services has led to a renewed significance of the state, particularly Kolkata. Although the IT services in Kolkata lag behind Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mumbai, it is the only city in eastern India to enjoy relative supremacy (Table 3.7). The IT Park at Sector V of Saltlake is the largest IT hub in eastern India. Defined as a "Hi-Tech happening point," the park sprawls over an

⁵⁰ Government of West Bengal, *West Bengal Special Economic Zone Act 2003: Preamble*, 2003.

⁵¹ "Bengal Govt Gives Nod to Rs 3,000-Cr Kulpi Port Project," March 7, 2019, accessed June 14, 2022, <http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/bengal-govt-gives-nod-to-rs-3000-cr-kulpi-port-project-343745>; Jayatri Nag and Krishna Kumar, "Villagers Want Port Project to Be Restarted in Trinamool Turf Kulpi," *The Economic Times*, April 3, 2021, accessed June 14, 2022, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/villagers-want-port-project-to-be-restarted-in-trinamool-turf-kulpi/articleshow/81877242.cms>.

area of 430 acres. In 2006, Saltlake Sector V was accorded the status of an industrial township, following which it was renamed as the Nabadiganta Industrial Township. Close to the Nabadiganta Industrial Township and the Kolkata International Airport, the township of New Town Kolkata is also being developed along a similar line. Initiated in 1993, New Town Kolkata was a part of the Calcutta Mega City Programme. Materialised under the enhanced entrepreneurial stance of the erstwhile Communist Government, the township has emerged as West Bengal's prized location for catering the modern economy. With an area of around 200 acres, the IT park in the township, called the Bengal Silicon Valley IT Hub, has been shaped to serve as the "beacon for the IT industry." Currently these two IT parks in the periphery of Kolkata house 74 IT companies, supporting "cutting-edge technology" aimed at boosting future investments in the state. In recent times, the township has been marketed as the "FinTech Hub" of the eastern region. A study prepared by McKinsey Global Institute claims New Town Kolkata to be evolving as a major financial sector by 2030.⁵² Riding on the promotion of its smart infrastructure, maintained by a sustainable system of public transport, and projecting itself as an E-City, with WiFi-enabled communication system and online delivery of government services, place marketing of this township has been successful in constructing its "FinTech" image, attracting leading financial institutions across the country.

Table 3.6. Sectoral composition of GDP of West Bengal at constant prices (2004-05)

| Industry | Years | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2004-05 | 2005-06 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
| Primary Sector | 25.3 | 24.3 | 23.1 | 22.5 | 21.0 | 20.7 | 19.1 | 18.5 | 17.9 | 17.2 | 16.7 |
| Secondary Sector | 20.3 | 19.8 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 18.7 | 19.1 | 19.2 | 17.9 | 18.4 | 18.2 | 17.9 |
| Tertiary Sector | 54.4 | 55.9 | 57.0 | 57.4 | 60.3 | 60.2 | 61.7 | 63.6 | 63.8 | 64.5 | 65.5 |
| a. Transport, Storage & Communication | 8.9 | 9.1 | 9.5 | 9.9 | 10.5 | 9.6 | 9.9 | 10.8 | 10.3 | 10.2 | 10.5 |
| b. Trade, Hotel & Restaurant | 15.7 | 15.9 | 16.2 | 15.9 | 15.9 | 16.3 | 17.6 | 16.1 | 16.3 | 16.0 | 15.3 |
| c. Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services | 13.7 | 14.5 | 15.4 | 16.1 | 16.5 | 16.3 | 16.1 | 18.0 | 18.5 | 19.3 | 20.2 |
| d. Community, Social & Personal Services | 16.1 | 16.4 | 15.9 | 15.6 | 17.4 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 18.7 | 18.8 | 19.1 | 19.5 |

Source: Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Department of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of West Bengal.

⁵² "Kolkata to Emerge as a Big Financial Centre by 2030," *Outlook*, January 10, 2018, accessed November 18, 2021, <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/kolkata-to-emerge-as-a-big-financial-centre-by-2030/1227254>.

Table 3.7. State-wise rankings based on software exports through STPI Units in India from 2001-2020

| States | Years | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 | 2003-2004 | 2004-2005 | 2005-2006 | 2006-2007 | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
| Karnataka | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Maharashtra | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Tamil Nadu | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Haryana | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 6 |
| Delhi | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 8 |
| West Bengal | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 |

| States | Years | | | | States | Years | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 |
| Karnataka | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Karnataka | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Maharashtra | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | Maharashtra | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | Telangana | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Tamil Nadu | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | Tamil Nadu | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Haryana | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | Haryana | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | Uttar Pradesh | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| West Bengal | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | West Bengal | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |

Source: STPI Annual Reports, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.

Note: After the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and the creation of Telangana in 2014, Andhra Pradesh has moved further down the ranking order and its former position has been replaced by Telangana owing to the prominence of Hyderabad in the software industry.

Effects on Infrastructure and Urban Planning

Kolkata's comprehensive arrangement of urban development in the post-reform period principally began with the introduction of the Mega City Programme. Considered to be the first major urban policy under the liberalised structure of the reformed economy,⁵³ the centrally sponsored Scheme of Infrastructural Development in Mega Cities was declared in 1993 to address infrastructure development in five major cities of the country, namely, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad

⁵³ Sanjoy Chakravorty, "Too Little, in the Wrong Places? Mega City Programme and Efficiency and Equity in Indian Urbanisation," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 35/37 (1996): 2565–2572.

and Bangalore.⁵⁴ These cities, being the prime centres of urban migration across the country, were regarded for the programme in view of their immense economic potential. The funding of the programme was decided to be shared by the central and the state governments in the ratio of 25:25, while the remaining 50 percent was to be obtained through the financing institutions and capital market. The programme covered a series of developmental projects in the urban fringe and core areas concerning slum improvement and rehabilitation, housing, establishment of new towns/areas, drainage and sewerage, water supply, solid waste management, transport, construction of trade and commercial centres, and city beautification. The implementation of these developmental projects was broadly listed under three categories of financing, i.e., no cost recovery, partial cost recovery, and total cost recovery.⁵⁵ In Kolkata, the principal agency, KMDA, undertook the responsibility of the project implementation, focussing on the new town/area development as the cost recovery sector.⁵⁶ The founding of New Town Kolkata, as the satellite township of the city has been the outcome of such an initiative.

In 1994, KMDA enumerated a concept plan underscoring the need to develop a new town/area to balance the city's growing population. Banking upon the success of the previously planned township of Saltlake, the state government sought to adopt the establishment of another planned township adjacent to it in the north-eastern part of the city. Almost three times the size of Saltlake, the establishment of New Town Kolkata covered an area of over 7000 acres, entailing large-scale agricultural conversion, and was directly assumed by the state government through its executionary agency called the West Bengal Housing Board. Later in 1999, an SPV named West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation or WBHIDCO Ltd. was installed to operate in the township with 51 percent of government shares. Of the initially planned 9000 acres, 7052 acres of land have been acquired yet, 97 percent of which has been appropriated by the state, while the remaining 3 percent is the purchase land.⁵⁷ Sanjoy Chakraborty and Gautam Gupta, in an informative article, *Let a hundred projects bloom* have shown how the Mega City Programme expenditure on the cost recovery sector of new town/area development was advanced at the

⁵⁴ Government of India, *Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Infrastructural Development in Mega Cities: Guidelines* (New Delhi: Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment, 2005).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Chakravorty, "Too Little, in the Wrong Places?"

⁵⁷ WBHIDCO, *Landuse and Development Control Plan for New Town Planning Area*, 2012; WBHIDCO, *Annual Report 2017-2018*, 2018.

expense of the projects under no cost and partial cost recovery sectors, i.e., drainage and sanitation, solid waste management, transport and slum improvement.⁵⁸ The development of the township, therefore, has not been much of a decongestion effort as it has been an overt expression of the post-liberal version of Kolkata. Riding high on the market value of the undertaken projects, the township has become the home to major real estate companies, namely, Unitech, Tata Housing, Shapoorji Pallonji, DLF, Bengal Ambuja, Shranchi and Siddha Group. Presently, WBHIDCO aims to transform the township into a "futuristic smart city" equipped with all modern amenities- the largest urban park in the country, a GIS integrated database, a Silicon Valley modelled IT Park, and an eco-friendly, technology-enhanced infrastructure. With state-of-the-art housing arrangements and expansive office spaces, New Town Kolkata has emerged to be a leading destination for the elites in the city and is hailed to be one of the most successful projects of planned townships across the country.⁵⁹

It is important to note that in the post-reform period, housing needs in the city have been increasingly directed towards creating new towns/areas. The planning document of Vision 2025: Perspective Plan of KMA lays specific stress on this aspect. A continuation of the Perspective Structure Plan of 1983 and Perspective Plan for Calcutta 1990, Vision 2025, published in 2005, is a 25-year plan for KMA.⁶⁰ It provided that given the financial crunches in the state exchequer and the consequent importance of private investments in housing development, the private sector would meet 75 percent of the future housing needs in the Kolkata Metropolitan Area. Originally a part of the JNNURM scheme, Vision 2025 structured its housing plan centering on the previous success of middle and upper-middle class settlements like Saltlake, East Kolkata Township and Baishnabghata Patuli Township. Although originally planned to cater to the people from mixed-income backgrounds, these townships have essentially served the needs of the higher income group, attaining a rather class character over the years.⁶¹ While the plan acknowledged the criticality of the housing needs among the lower rungs of the population, its solutions were more

⁵⁸ Sanjoy Chakravorty and Gautam Gupta, "Let a Hundred Projects Bloom: Structural Reform and Urban Development in Calcutta," *Third World Planning Review (TWPR)* 18, no. 4 (1996): 415–431.

⁵⁹ Sonali Chakravarti Banerjee, *Public - Private Partnerships in Kolkata: Concepts of Governance in the Changing Political Economy of a Region, Working Papers*, Working Papers (Kolkata: IDSK, 2014).

⁶⁰ KMDA, *Vision 2025: Perspective Plan of KMA: Draft Final Report*, 2005.

⁶¹ Ananya Roy, "Re-Forming the Megacity: Calcutta and the Rural–Urban Interface," in *Megacities: Urban Form, Governance, and Sustainability*, ed. Andre Sorensen and Junichiro Okata (Tokyo; Dordrecht; Heidelberg; London; New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2011), 93–109; Sengupta, "The Hindered Self-Help."

reflective of the demands of the middle and upper-middle class. Development of these new towns/areas has had vast implications in the post-reform years by tipping the real estate business and its associated practice of land speculation. Such endeavours have formed a crux of the new urbanisation programme, aiming at altering the city's spatial character in line with the global standards. Largely an outcome of the changed economic pattern, these areas are progressively built to cater to the new economic workforce engaged in the business services. The scale and the category of the constructions involved here, therefore, not only seek the foreign investors but also foreign aspirations of high-rises and gated communities to foster urbanisation. The urban amenities that come with these constructions correspondingly feature glitzy malls and fancy cafés replete with international tastes as sources of recreation. In the process of fastening transnational connections, such exercise of post-liberalisation city making, attends Harvey's logic of global city emulation as the golden path to survival.⁶² According to the Marxist critics, satellite townships have become the foremost expressions of urban capital accumulation, for they are "not only developed, but also conceived, by the private sector."⁶³ Their act of homogenising space with costly, luxurious endowments performs elimination of diversity to create a mimic of the 'urban' to be exclusively experienced by the rich. Thus, while the pre-reform efforts concentrated on the aspect of public affordability to cater to the housing problem in the city, post-reform housing development focused on a completely contrasting idea of marketability. Enhanced marketability has resulted in the facilitative convertibility of housing into liquid capital through the increased practices of land and property speculation, which in turn have had a fallout in creating "ghost cities" due to the gross mismatch between the demand and supply of housing categories.⁶⁴ In India, an estimated 7.5 lakh apartments remain unsold across major cities of the country- Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bangalore, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata, owing to the disparities in demand and supply.⁶⁵ In his book *Urban Development in India*, Pablo Shiladitya Bose has provided a detailed account of the property-frenzied practices involved in the making of such a "ghost township" in

⁶² David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17.

⁶³ Max Rousseau and Tarik Harroud, "Satellite Cities Turned to Ghost Towns? On the Contradictions of Morocco's Spatial Policy," *International Planning Studies* 24, no. 3–4 (2019): 343.

⁶⁴ Yanpeng Jiang et al., "Sorting through Neoliberal Variations of Ghost Cities in China," *Land Use Policy* 69 (2017): 445–453.

⁶⁵ Abhirup Bhunia, "India's Unplanned Urbanisation Is Far from 'Smart,'" *The Wire*, January 12, 2017, accessed June 14, 2022, <https://thewire.in/culture/india-urbanisation-smart-cities>.

Kolkata West International City (KWIC).⁶⁶ Located in the adjacent district of Howrah, across the River Hooghly, KWIC was one of the proposed townships alongside New Town Kolkata. In fact, it was the first township in the state whose enactment was wholly delegated to the private sector.⁶⁷ Encompassing an area of 395 acres with a capacity to support a population of around 50,000, the township was developed as a PPP project, having one of the highest foreign direct investments in real estate across the country.⁶⁸ However, after decades of failed implementation, KWIC has not materialised as a successful project. The property-led development here has been unable to deliver the desired results, with a large number of houses lying unsold and vacant. From being derided for its location within the overcrowded, industrial district of Howrah to being criticised for its involvement with the investors infamous for illegal land grabs elsewhere in West Bengal, this planned township to the west of Kolkata has been gathering dust over the years.

With the domination of neoliberal discourse since the 1990s, PPPs have come to mean the facilitating role of the state in mediating market operations across different avenues of infrastructural provisions. Besides the proliferation of PPPs in the housing and commercial sectors, which marked a major shift in the elementary trajectory of Kolkata's repositioning as a potential site of global consumption, PPP initiatives were introduced in other infrastructural realms like power, transport, telecommunication, water supply, waste management and drainage.⁶⁹ The construction of Nivedita Setu over River Hooghly, connecting Howrah to Kolkata across the pilgrim spot of Dakshineswar, is considered one such remarkable accomplishment of PPP to infrastructure development in West Bengal.⁷⁰ The associated connotation of PPP underlining the financialisation of services has primarily continued at the expense of the protectionist state. According to Harvey, the extraordinary capacity of PPP has been to invoke the entrepreneurial stance of the government irrespective of ideological differences.⁷¹ The administrative adjustments made by the erstwhile Communist Government in West Bengal amid the hegemonic forces of global integration

⁶⁶ Pablo Shiladitya Bose, "New Housing Developments: Global Living in Kolkata," in *Urban Development in India: Global Indians in the Remaking of Kolkata*, Routledge Series on Urban South Asia (London; New York: Routledge, 2015), 130–153.

⁶⁷ Banerjee, *Public - Private Partnerships in Kolkata*.

⁶⁸ Bose, "New Housing Developments: Global Living in Kolkata"; KMDA, *Vision 2025: Perspective Plan of KMA: Draft Final Report*.

⁶⁹ Banerjee, *Public - Private Partnerships in Kolkata*.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism."

reverberate Harvey's proposition, triggering the socio-spatial realities of privatisation in the subsequent years.

The Emergence of a New Housing Preference

The involvement of the private sector in Kolkata is not necessarily a post-reform phenomenon. Earlier, during the formulation period of the BDP, acute housing problems in the city combined with the deplorable conditions of the *bustees* had the planners propose the participation of the private sector for the construction of 1.3 million new housing units besides the provisions of the BIP.⁷² However, on recognising the average low-income level of the metropolitan population, the BDP abandoned the proposal of new house construction and instead sought to improve the general income level of the people through economic development programmes. Similarly, during the initial years of the BDP project implementation, when the political instability of West Bengal deterred the effective operation of the plans, making the central government reluctant to advance further grants for the Calcutta project, the state government sought to create the Urban Development Corporation calling upon the financial support of the business and industrial entities for funding the undertaken projects. However, the central government later agreed to provide the grant, while the remaining had to be procured through public borrowings, which ultimately led to the imposition of the Octroi Tax in Bengal.⁷³ Thus, although economic reforms necessitated private sector association in public undertakings and privatisation of public entities, instances from the city's previous planning process reveal that large-scale expenses in infrastructural development had always provided for the implicit participation of the private sector. In fact, by the late 1970s, KMDA, upon realising the highly unsatisfactory outcome of the BDP in generating employment for the city youths, aimed at redirecting its efforts towards creating lucrative infrastructure that would eventually attract the probable entrepreneurs.⁷⁴ This shift in KMDA's planning process offered a glimpse of the impending change in the economy and the associated shift in the policy discourse, which, although initially started as a scheme to rid the city youths of their unemployment problems, subsequently modified its inclination to provide specialised

⁷² NIUA, *Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper*.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

employment. Later, the neoliberal economy capitalised on such type of specialised employment, mainly IT and ITES-based business services.

The rise of the IT services in Kolkata and worldwide has not only provided employment to those who can afford the specialised training for it, producing a skewed volume of "immaterial labour" force,⁷⁵ but because of their global connections has also offered a readily available chance of social ascent to the vastly blendable choices of the urban middle-class members, thereby exacerbating the social friction among the masses. Saskia Sassen has argued that the emergence of this new business class has deepened the social hierarchy by extremising the employment structure between a cluster of specialised, highly-paid professionals and a majority of underpaid, subsidiary office workers.⁷⁶ The globalised nature of such jobs presents a host of tasks which are tied to the international realm, binding it upon the employees to function from and at a similar scale. Constant readjustments of one's work approach combined with the irrefutable exposure to the global front seldom operate in isolation without influencing one's overall life approach, the most dominant expression of which is found in one's altered lifestyle choices. Residential preference is one of the bluntest outcomes of such altered lifestyles. In his consumption side theory of gentrification, Ley has related such transformed housing preferences due to the growing popularity of the white-collar jobs with the escalation of upscaled residential neighbourhoods.⁷⁷ In Kolkata, outright gentrification of neighbourhoods in the core city is a thin possibility, as the spatial structure is too complexly befuddled by social imperatives, and the elites still constitute a slender minority to challenge the inherent character of the core city. Transformed housing preferences have therefore engendered either transformation of the recently amalgamated sections of the city, including small-scale fragmented gentrification, or the creation of new towns/areas, which are explicitly designed to deliver upon the upscaled housing choices of the exclusive population. While the foreign influences instigated the public interest and private investments to intensify the creation of

⁷⁵ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004); Kalyan Sanyal and Rajesh Bhattacharya, "Bypassing the Squalor: New Towns, Immaterial Labour and Exclusion in Post-Colonial Urbanisation," *Economic and Political Weekly* (2015): 7–8. Hardt and Negri define immaterial labour to be involved in the production of outcomes that are intangible (immaterial) related to "knowledge, information, communication" or services that induce "emotional responses".

⁷⁶ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁷⁷ David Ley, "Alternative Explanations for Inner-City Gentrification: A Canadian Assessment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 76, no. 4 (1986): 521–535.

'exceptional spaces',⁷⁸ offering vistas of high-end housing options, budgetary allocations of low-end housing expenditures and slum improvements suffered a decline in the post-liberalised process of reformed urbanisation.⁷⁹

Transformation of South and South-East Kolkata

In this respect, the southern and eastern parts of the city afford vital insights, as Kolkata is essentially growing outwards. A large portion of the southern part of the present municipal bounded area (KMC wards 101-141), being amalgamated in the recent past, after 1980, has offered crucial opportunities for spatial transformations. Unlike the city's core, where the built-up structure is relatively fixed, with extreme congestion, the southern part is still evolving. The evolutionary character of the southern part is caused due to the outward growth of Kolkata away from its saturated core (as shown in Figure 3.2). These areas having relatively low land prices (as indicated by the third component of the PCA), and greater space, have lured real estate developers, to construct mini townships allowing micro-scaled projects of gentrification, for instance, South City Condominium and Westwind Jadavpur, including PPP housing projects like Highland Park and Udayan Condoville. Additionally, many of the extended southern wards comprise colony land, where the refugee families, after receiving their land deeds from the government, and especially after gaining the right to sell the land, have either proceeded with the sale, facilitating property speculation, or have undertaken the construction of their houses on the land through real estate developers in a multi-storeyed apartment system. Such a system of construction ensures the owner of the land a dwelling of his own along with a cash amount from the developer as per the contemporary valuation of the land. At times, the owner can retain more than one dwelling unit of the same apartment, depending upon the arrangement with the developer, while the latter puts the remaining units for sale. The proliferation of these apartments has benefited middle-class immigrants, especially those eager to own property in the city. Over the past year (2020-2021),

⁷⁸ Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, *Neoliberalism as Exception* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2006). I use the term 'exception' after Ong's reference to "zones of exception" (2006) to denote both the scale of grandeur and the convenient mode of legality followed in the process of materialising urban transformational projects.

⁷⁹ Urmi Sengupta, "Housing Reform in Kolkata: Changes and Challenges," *Housing Studies* 22, no. 6 (2007): 965–979; Sengupta, "The Hindered Self-Help."

Kolkata registered a nearly 65 percent increase in house sales, with the South Kolkata comprising one-third of it.⁸⁰ As the disbursement of home loans has been on the rise (Figure 3.11), its concomitant impact is well manifested in the demand for larger house spaces in the city. According to global real estate consultancy Knight Frank, Kolkata witnessed a three times increase in apartment bookings for the capacity of 500-1000 sq. ft., and over three times for capacity greater than 1000 sq. ft., with an almost 30 percent rise in the preference for high-end, luxurious housing.⁸¹ The embezzlements of such reformed urbanism have been captivating enough to entail a series of constructions in these areas (Figure 3.12), transforming them not just spatially but also socio-culturally by inviting people and their practices from different parts. Once being a seat of the East Bengal refugees, the colony areas in this southern part of the present-day Kolkata strived towards integration with the main city, decades later, they are way past their integration to gradually become the dynamic participants of altered urbanism in the same city.

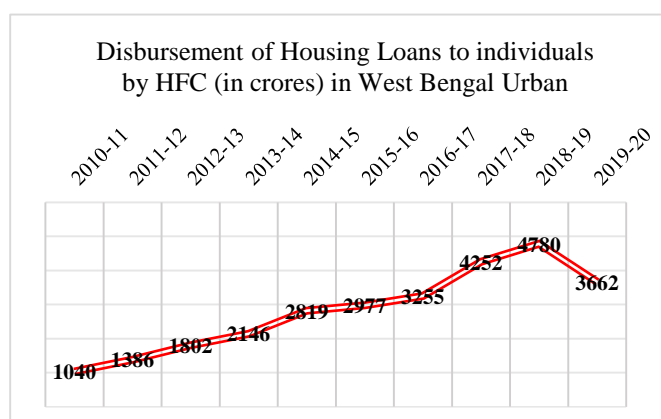


Figure 3.11. Trend of the disbursed housing loans in West Bengal Urban areas from 2010-2020. Data from National Housing Bank Reports.

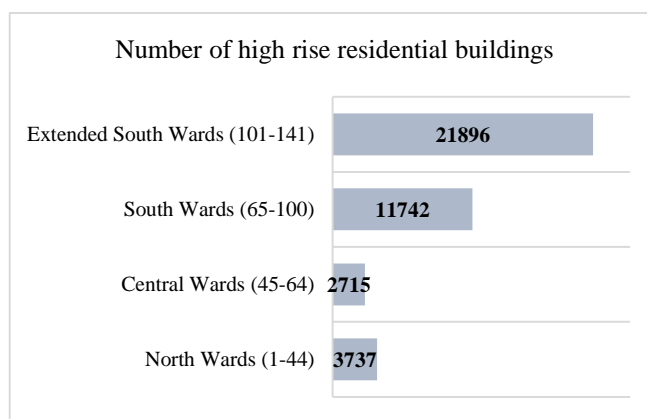


Figure 3.12. Ward-wise number of high-rise buildings sanctioned in KMC from 1st January 1980 to 1st January 2021. Data from Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

⁸⁰ “Registration of Homes in Kolkata down 10% in December 2021: Report,” *ET Realty (Online)*, January 10, 2022, accessed February 14, 2022, <https://realty.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/residential/registration-of-homes-in-kolkata-down-10-in-december-2021-report/88813173>; Pradipta Mukherjee, “Why Flat Prices in Kolkata Are Rising, Bucking the Trend in Some Other Metros,” *Mint*, January 24, 2020, accessed February 14, 2022, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/why-flat-prices-in-kolkata-are-rising-bucking-the-trend-in-other-cities-11579844043864.html>.

⁸¹ “Registration of Homes in Kolkata down 10% in December 2021.”

The spatial depiction of the second component of the PCA is compatible with such developments in Kolkata. The second component, which loads positively with three parameters, namely, population growth, sex ratio and declining slum growth, denotes the nature of urban growth in the city. The trend analysis (Figure 3.13) performed on the factor scores of the second component of the PCA helps understand the spatial pattern of this nature of growth. When interpreted with the decadal change in the built-up forms of the city (Figure 3.14), it is revealed that the nature of urban growth in Kolkata is compatible with the southern and south-eastward expansion of the city. The positive relationship between population growth and declining slum growth (from the third component), when combined with the positive relationship between distance from the CBD and households owning cars (from the first component), and the expansion of the city away from the core (as indicated by its south-eastward development), exhibit the influence of the middle-income groups in contributing to such expansionary growth of the city. The increase in the proportion of households owning cars farther away from the CBD suggests that most people settling in the south-eastern part of Kolkata have sufficient means to locate in the extended part of the city.

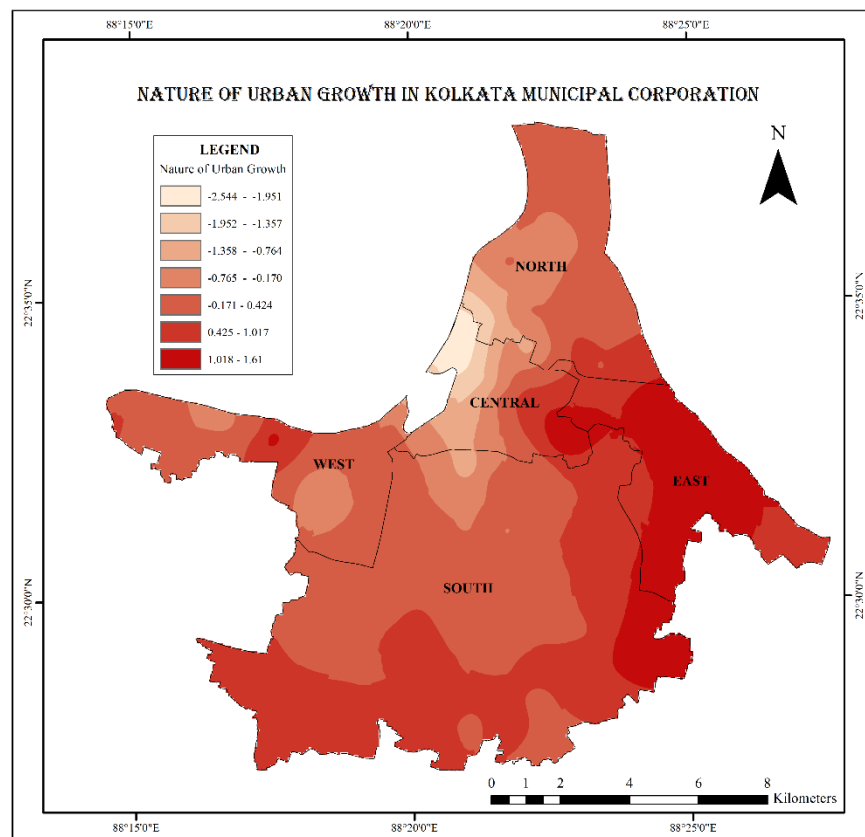


Figure 3.13. Trend Analysis based on the second component of the PCA, depicting southern and south-eastern pattern of urban growth.

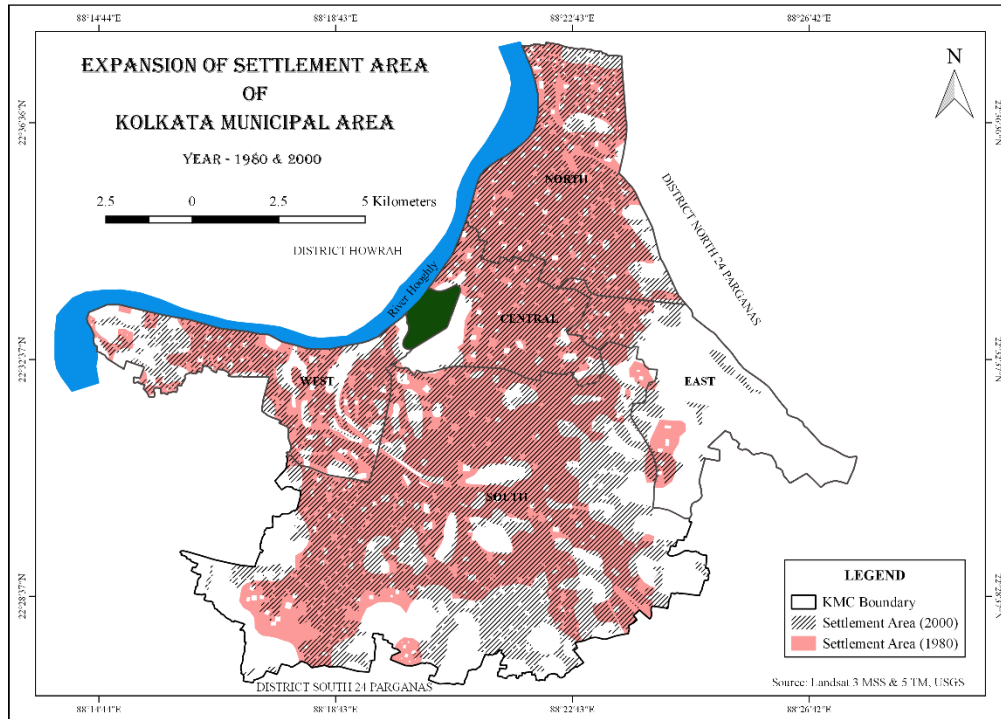


Figure 3.14. a. Southern and south eastern expansion of settlement area in KMC between 1980 and 2000.

Note: Solid red denotes the settlement area in 1980 and the shaded lines denote the same during 2000.

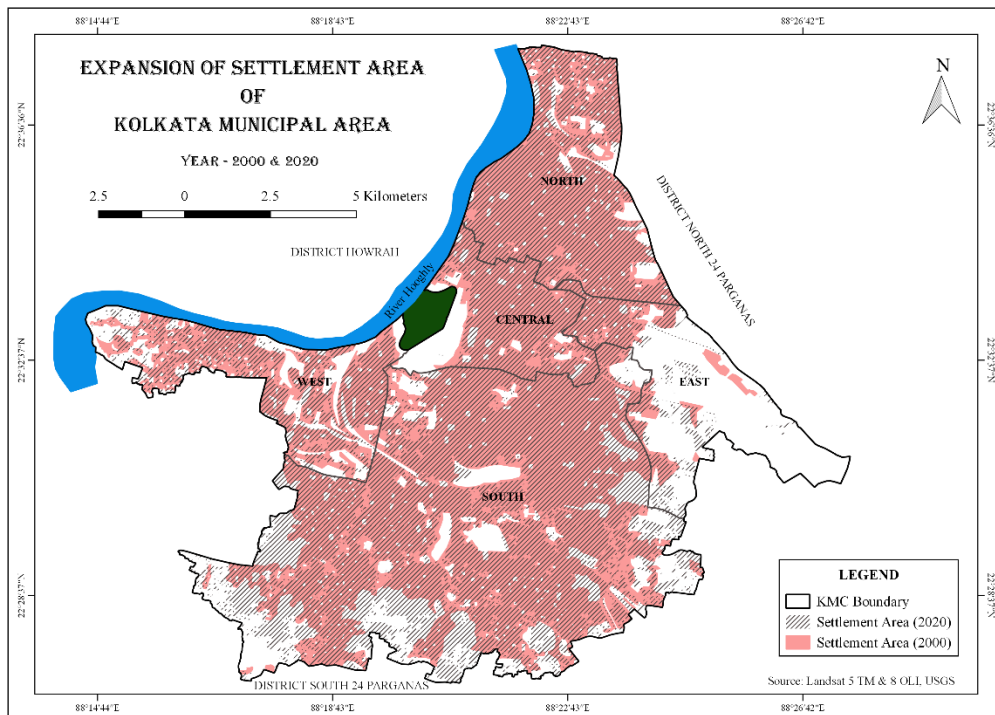


Figure 3.14. b. Southern and south eastern expansion of settlement area in KMC between 2000 and 2020.

Note: Solid red and shaded lines denote the settlement area in 2000 and 2020 respectively.



Figure 3.15. Flyer demonstrating the enhanced state of real estate development in the East Kolkata neighbourhood of Tangra. NK Realtors, *Real Ties: Kolkata's only real estate Magazine*, vol. 9, 3, 2013.

developers to convert them into high-rises. Many tanneries and rubber units in Tangra, Topsia, and Tiljala, prominent neighbourhoods in the east, have been converted into residential high-rises and restaurants. Additionally, the facilitated connectivity of the city's southern part to the EM Bypass, which is also a gateway to the IT sectors of Saltlake and New Town, has imparted a largely residential character to its spatiality.

The most dominant proportion of such residential character is constituted by the urban middle-class. The middle-class dwell in a somewhat buoyant position. Their state of buoyancy emanates

Bounded by the river on the West, the earlier eastward extension of the city was related to the railways and the presence of the industries, particularly leather and tanneries.⁸² However, presently most of these industries have been shifted elsewhere, as, with the increased potentiality of the land here, developments that were previously impossible in the city core are being materialised today in the eastern section. Most of the well-known private hospitals in the city are located on the Eastern Metropolitan (EM) Bypass, along with many government institutions. Besides luxurious developments, mainly in the form of hotels and restaurants, some of which hail from global brands like JW Marriot, have rendered the area increasingly unfit for industrial purposes. As a result, formerly owned industrial sites in the east have lured the capital-rich

⁸² Murphey, "The City in the Swamp."

from the fact that they face the bluntest impact of all economic policies.⁸³ As a result, their success is always conditioned upon how well they can adapt to the prevailing economic conditions by turning its associated imperatives to their advantage, making their lives prone to the perpetual state of redefinition. Those who accomplish such ability continue to float (remain buoyant), while those who cannot, carry on with their search for a saving straw, intensifying the intra-class stratification. Swati Chattopadhyay, while distinguishing between the privileged natives in Kolkata during the colonial times, has noted that the novice city of Kolkata back in the 19th century offered many *dhani* (elites) and *maddhyabitta* (middle-class) to shed their low caste baggage and claim a powerful societal position primarily based on their economic achievements.⁸⁴ The pre-eminence of such a class-based classification has allowed today's middle-class to continue operating in economic buoyancy. Often with two wage earners, the middle-class strives hard to maintain this buoyancy, for it not only determines their present social position, but also their future sustainability in this increasingly private world. Their ability or rather privilege to strike a balance between, or even substitute expenses on lifestyle habits with expenses on human capital, exercising choice, characterises their blendability and keeps the hope of their social ascent alive. In fact, post-liberalisation, the changing pattern of the white-collar jobs, and the preferential shift of employment from public to the private sector have indorsed many who were formerly left out of its precincts to make this ascent.⁸⁵ The aspirational quotient of the emergent middle-class has therefore burrowed deep beyond the comforting security of the once so significant government jobs and traditional houses to necessitate thriving consumerism of both their needs and wants, be it education, healthcare or recreation and leisure. In doing so, they are creating a new urban narrative, one that is heavily borrowed from the image of the up-market global cities of the West, entailing repeated haggle of urban space at the expense of dispossession and exclusion. Irrespective of its internal segregations and complexities, this class is involved in a constant process of socio-economic evolution, essentially possessing the key to change the ratio of the power structure in the society, and it is them that the city of Kolkata is gearing towards. Like this

⁸³ Henrike Donner, "Whose City Is It Anyway? Middle Class Imagination and Urban Restructuring in Twenty-First Century Kolkata," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 46 (2012): 129–155; Saskia Sassen, "The Middle Classes: An Historic Actor in Today's Global World," *Juncture* 20 (2013):125-128.

⁸⁴ Swati Chattopadhyay, "Locating Mythic Selves," in *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 136–178.

⁸⁵ Henrike Donner, "Making Middle-Class Families in Calcutta," in *Anthropologies of Class: Power, Practice, and Inequality*, ed. Don Kalb and James G. Carrier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 131–148; Donner, "Whose City Is It Anyway?"

class, the city is striving hard to secure its future, it is hopeful and aspiring to be at least illuminated in the background, as promising forthcoming participants, when the flashlight befalls upon the success stories of the global cities, and for that, it is not ready to be settled for or by anyone less.

The Dynamics of Spatial Transformation

In her concept of "Global Street," Saskia Sassen cites the commonality of the protest movements occurring in the current times across diverse countries against the state actions in promoting socio-spatial inequalities. She has noted that the experiences shared by the people in these movements, irrespective of their nationality, are capable of garnering a history. To discern such capacity of history making she made a critical distinction of space usage between the streets and the classic European-styled boulevards. While the latter is more after the conventional idea of public activity, the former has an inherent "rawness" to it, such that it is meant for causes larger than its confined conventional purpose. According to her proposition, one of the vital capabilities of the urban sphere lies in its character of public space, one that is transformative beyond its conventional purpose, inhabiting an environment to represent and vocalise alternate social and political order.⁸⁶

Kolkata, in this sense, has been deeply urban, regardless of its density. Not only its streets but also its diverse forums of public space, like theatres, colleges, and parks, have repeatedly let flow alternate voices, voices which are capable of bringing about a new order and making a new history. Since the time of the freedom struggle, it is a city that has exhibited some of the most potent demonstrations of the deprived or the "powerless," expressing the transformative capacity of Kolkata's public spaces. The destructive outcomes of colonial surplus generation, exploitation, and discrimination have always been countered by the constructive creativity engendered within such spaces. Occupations of parks and squares for public meetings and gatherings imparted a note of defiance against the British rulers, which were further bolstered through the actions of public processions and marches across the prominent streets of the city in a bid to reclaim its social and physical space.⁸⁷ Early accounts of Bengal's protest against the partition in 1905 signal the

⁸⁶ Saskia Sassen, "The Global Street: Making the Political," *Globalizations* 8, no. 5 (2011): 573–579; Sassen, "The Middle Classes."

⁸⁷ Sudipta Kaviraj, "Filth and the Public Sphere: Concepts and Practices about Space in Calcutta," *Public Culture* 10, no. 1 (1997): 83–113.

importance of places like Goldighi, now College Square, which is originally a site of a water body situated amidst College Street, famous for numerous prominent colleges of the city. On the 7th of August, 1905, when the British administration officialised the Bengal Partition, Goldighi witnessed the assemblage of thousands of students, who then marched to the historic meeting at the Calcutta Town hall that later spelt the formal resolution of the Swadeshi Movement.⁸⁸ Later during the 50s, 60s and 70s, College Street, particularly centred around Presidency College, emerged as the hub of radical movements that disseminated far beyond Kolkata in challenging the governing mechanisms of that time. College Street, together with its spatial characteristics, amalgamating the students, youths, teachers and the residential locals, was perceived as the voice of change. It did not need to persistently function as the physical space for the protest demonstrations every time social discrepancies surfaced to instigate the popular conscience. Instead, like any other busy neighbourhood of the central city, it continued to participate in the daily, mundane lives of the city dwellers. Classes in the colleges were held as usual during the day, the College Square tank carried on with its swimming sessions, the publishing houses ran just the usual with their routine and occasional publications, and the theatres in and around the area remained true to their purposes.⁸⁹ Yet, the unification of all these "ritualised" activities had an inherent power to invoke enlightened sentiments, extensive mobilisation, and creative synergies, either through the staging of revolutionary plays in the nearby theatres or via formal and informal interactions among the intellectuals, activists, organisational leaders, students and the locals, in the college premises and beyond, which not only obscured the class or religion margins but also essentially managed to have a wider outreach than the physical confines and occupations of space. Such that College Street began to be viewed as the architect of alternate voice every time the predictable socio-political order went mayhem, and herein lies its transformative character. Post-independence, the decaying sobriety of the city not only foregathered the citizens and the refugees over disputes related to housing, employment, access to resources and delivery of city services, but that their shared resentment towards the city government for failing them to meet the post-independence hopeful diction of betterment strengthened the transformative capacity of the entire city. Kolkata's declining economic and infrastructural status elicited the creation of such a sociality

⁸⁸ Swati Chattopadhyay, "Cities of Power and Protest: Spatial Legibility and the Colonial State in Early Twentieth-Century India," *International Journal of Urban Sciences* 19, no. 1 (2015): 40–52.

⁸⁹ Ranabir Samaddar, "Occupy College Street: Student Radicalism in Kolkata in the Sixties," *Slavic Review* 77, no. 4 (2018): 904–911.

that a sense of discontent engulfed the lives of all its inhabitants irrespective of their origin, repositioning both the citizens and refugees as the urban subjects.⁹⁰

The city's vocal atmosphere has enhanced its urban space. Although the same atmosphere did infamously earn it a notion of violence and "goondaism,"⁹¹ the vocal atmosphere of the same urban space also made "history possible, giving rise to a new civic."⁹² Enhancement of such urban space, according to Sassen, weaves the power to obliterate essential differences and evoke joint responses in a messy, chaotic city to face the ongoing challenges by coalescing varied groups and emphasizing their mutual interdependencies, thereby stimulating the inherent cityness that fundamentally makes cities so incredibly diverse and complex.⁹³ The vast difference between the supposed urban modernity associated with the generous developmental-interventionist approach of the newly independent state and the reality of the city life in Kolkata, predominantly in the wake of the industrial decline and flight of entrepreneurial investments, produced inevitable synonymy in the demands of the refugees and the average population of the city.⁹⁴ Amid the growing closures of firms, worker layoffs, and dwindling employment opportunities for the educated youths, the rise in food, fuel and transport prices had overlapping impacts on the city's poor and many middle-class families.⁹⁵ Weiner writes,

We know that refugees have taken part in many Calcutta demonstrations. Occasionally, but less commonly, there are demonstrations of the villagers, who have come into the city...Above all, the Bengali middle classes- white collar workers, the educated unemployed, school and college students are active participants in demonstrations.⁹⁶

Such mutual dependencies exhibited by the inhabitants of the city from all walks of life during this

⁹⁰ Saskia Sassen, "Urban Capabilities: An Essay on Our Challenges and Differences," *Journal of International Affairs* 65, no. 2 (2012): 85–95.

⁹¹ Myron Weiner, "Violence and Politics in Calcutta," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (1961): 276.

⁹² Saskia Sassen, "Cities Help Us Hack Formal Power Systems," in *Architecture and the Social Sciences Inter- and Multidisciplinary Approaches between Society and Space* (Springer, 2017), 3–11; Sassen, "Does the City Have Speech?"; Sassen, "Urban Capabilities: An Essay on Our Challenges and Differences."

⁹³ Sassen, "Cities Help Us Hack Formal Power Systems"; Sassen, "Does the City Have Speech?"

⁹⁴ Donner, "Locating Activist Spaces"; Anwasha Sengupta, "Tram Movement and Teachers' Movement in Calcutta: 1953-1954," in *People, Politics and Protests I Calcutta & West Bengal, 1950s – 1960s, Policies and Practices* (Kolkata: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, 2016).

⁹⁵ Donner, "Locating Activist Spaces"; Nandini Gooptu, "Economic Liberalisation, Work and Democracy: Industrial Decline and Urban Politics in Kolkata," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 21 (2007): 1922–1933.

⁹⁶ Weiner, "Violence and Politics in Calcutta", 277.

time, bedimming the internal differences and creating "enough people"⁹⁷ to unite, raise a voice against the government and repeatedly confront it with regard to the discrepancies, dissatisfactions and injustices, even though contrasted the post-independence urban discourse of cities elsewhere, particularly relative to Delhi and Bombay,⁹⁸ did categorise Kolkata to be a city having speech, a speech that has in effect conceived its cityness. Involvement of the refugees, working-class, middle-class, students, teachers, government employees, and professionals from all spheres in the popular movements of the city helped in the transformative capacity of Kolkata's streets and public spaces. Just as the engagement of the refugees in the demonstrations against the increase in second class tram fares or for the teachers' demands ensured their colonies and the areas nearby to be the signposts extending the urban voice of resistance, so also the association of the students and the average middle and working-class population of the city in the rallies and protest marches in favour of the refugee demands and against the police atrocities towards them confirmed the refugee foothold in Kolkata. Such mutual strengthening of causes generated a social dependency, and this mutuality emanated primarily because most of the city's inhabitants were embroiled in the same situation, subjects of the same helpless, decaying city. Donner records that most of the movements unfurled from local disputes. The momentum of the movements and their political nature surfaced widely as more and more people began to connect the causes with their own individual lives and the daily difficulties they encountered over access to basic amenities like water, electricity, housing and jobs.⁹⁹ Grant of these amenities meant as much to the refugees, who were struggling to establish their rights to citizenship,¹⁰⁰ as it did for the striving citizens of Kolkata, who were eager to re-ascertain their positions within the post-independence discourse of developmentalist urban modernity. And it is here that the refugee movements in Kolkata coincided with the urban movements at large by appealing to the inhabitants of the city in general, who were not necessarily refugees, and producing a new type of politics, which not only bolstered the collective alternate voice, and witnessed the grant of urban rights to the inhabitants irrespective of their origin, but

⁹⁷ Sengupta, "Tram Movement and Teachers' Movement in Calcutta: 1953-1954", 47.

⁹⁸ Donner, "Locating Activist Spaces."

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Sucharita Sengupta and Paula Banerjee, "Refugee Movement: Another Aspect of Popular Movements in West Bengal in the 1950s and 1960s," in *People, Politics and Protests I Calcutta & West Bengal, 1950s – 1960s* (Kolkata: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, 2016).

also made Kolkata a space, possible for the powerless to gain "presence vis-à-vis both power and each other."¹⁰¹

Thus, even in a state of utter disarray, Kolkata never lost its speech. Time and again, the city has risen to numerous social upheavals throughout its history of existence. The transformable capacity of the city's space has been able to successfully challenge the aimed narrative, making Kolkata a grounded place for those without power. But in recent times, the city's transformability is being increasingly countered by the sweeping waves of reformed urbanism, ringing weight to Sassen's anticipation of imperilled cityness before the "deurbanising forces" of privatised space making amid the concrete yet hollow practices of "urban gigantism."¹⁰² The splintering 'exclusivity' in the post-liberalised logic of urban space structuring has not only entailed dehumanising practices of social exclusion and physical dispossession of home to thousands, but has also put "cityness" of Kolkata at risk by tampering the spirit of its public spaces through recurrent exertions towards homogenisation of the city's sociality. The dominance of private spaces and their associated segregational qualities have aimed at promoting a different kind of transformation of space, one that is in contrast to the inherent transformability of Kolkata's space. Such transformation of space riding on the propaganda of exclusivity underscores the value of class and power to overcome any problem. It necessitates privatisation of the very problem so as to deliver their exclusive, individualised solutions based on the purchasing capacity of the citizens turned users. Thus, the usual city problems related to water or electricity supply are no longer common here but splintered as per the capacity of the user. And in this process of splintering, the residents of the same city are pitted against one another, deluded by the provocation of the 'other' being a threat to its own living, and such delusion is sustained every time for the sake of the profiteering capital. Kolkata's contemporary spatial logic is marketed under the same agenda, whereby the city is being progressively shaped to impart a 'class character' belittling the diversity and mutuality it once had leverage upon, while the less privileged are subjected to traverse the leftover city on their own, often by clamping the dodgy edge of vote bank politics.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Sassen, "Urban Capabilities: An Essay on Our Challenges and Differences", 86.

¹⁰² Saskia Sassen, "The City: A Collective Good?," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2017): 124.

¹⁰³ Partha Chatterjee, "Chapter Three: The Politics of the Governed," in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Conclusion

Up until the onset of the liberal economy, the city's decrepit decolonised past, characterising a host of internal problems on grounds of declining economic base, political skirmishes, straining urban services and refugee influx, largely directed Kolkata's urban development towards arresting its decline. Post-liberalisation, with the enhanced process of global integration, the city has discovered a propitious chance to start afresh. The subsequent change in middle-class lifestyle, especially in terms of housing, and the consequent proliferation of the real estate sector re-prompted Kolkata's economic prominence.¹⁰⁴ Harvey has argued that amid deindustrialisation and the changing structure of employment, the corporatized agents of place making fostering inter-city competition have persuaded the urban governments of different political inclinations pursue class coalition in city administration.¹⁰⁵

In 1972, when the Congress Government initiated hawker eviction in the Chowringhee area, several hawker associations, including those backed by the oppositional Left affiliated Forward Block, vehemently protested the move.¹⁰⁶ But after nearly two decades, the government formed out of the alliance of the same Left ideology launched the widely criticised Operation Sunshine.¹⁰⁷ Forward to the 2000s, Mamata Banerjee served as the face of the human shield to most anti-eviction movements across Bengal throughout the decade. Waging arduous protest demonstrations to oppose the acts of former Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee against the slum dwellers of Gobindapur Railway Colony (near the South Kolkata neighbourhood of Dhakuria), Mamata Bannerjee and her party could successfully stall this notable eviction drive in the city repeatedly up until late 2005.¹⁰⁸ In fact, the monumental Singur Movement under Mamata Banerjee's leadership in the Hooghly district of Bengal swiped the long-lived Left Government off the Bengal Vidhan Sabha in 2011 and catapulted her into the seat of the government. The movement's success propped up the sloganeering fulcrum of "Maa Mati Manush" by epitomising the victory of the

¹⁰⁴ Pablo Shiladitya Bose, "Home and Away: Diasporas, Developments and Displacements in a Globalising World," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008): 111–131.

¹⁰⁵ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism."

¹⁰⁶ Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, "Politics of Archiving: Hawkers and Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta," *Dialectical Anthropology* 35, no. 3 (2011): 295–316.

¹⁰⁷ Kaviraj, "Filth and the Public Sphere"; Roy, "Re-Forming the Megacity."

¹⁰⁸ "Eviction drive in Kolkata called off," *Rediff*, March 2, 2005, accessed March 1, 2022, <https://www.rediff.com/news/2005/mar/02kolkata.htm>; "Squatters halt rail eviction drive," *The Times of India*, May 5, 2002, accessed March 1, 2022, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/squatters-halt-rail-eviction-drive/articleshow/8902955.cms>.

local peasants and farmers against the mammoth forces of privatisation by Tata Nano. A few years later, in 2017, in the same district of Hooghly, a village called Goghat caught attention concerning the forcible acquisition of a pond that threatened the livelihood of at least 50 fishermen families. Protests surfaced in the village when the railway authority, approved by the new state government, proceeded to fill the pond in pursuit of a proposed railway track.¹⁰⁹ Within the city, merely a few months into the new government, Kolkata's Nonadanga witnessed a fresh bout of brutal eviction in the interest of a proposed IT Park.¹¹⁰ Instances of such hawker and slum eviction continued unabated in the following years, at times to make space for major events in the city, like the Kolkata Mega Book Fair and FIFA under 17 World Cup.¹¹¹ In the context of such an unaltered attitude of the government, Mair has noted that liberal democracies operating under the imperatives of market economy has led to the "increasing convergence" of both left and right "on a consensual center."¹¹² He concedes that the integrational efforts towards the global economy post 1989 entail the incorporation of such policy challenges that compel the governments, irrespective of their partisan ideology, to act within a specific rubric of conditional governance, one that marks the erasure of distinct oppositional approaches. Such conditional governance has to constantly navigate its way between beneficial investments and prospective vote banks. Meanwhile, the lives which are muddled in this dichotomy of conditional governance and its incongruous public claims continue with their own struggle of mediation. They either learn to adapt to the modalities of such

¹⁰⁹ Falguni Banerjee, "Come what may, rly project must go ahead at Bhaba Dighi: Mamata Banerjee," *The Times of India*, April 6, 2017, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/come-what-may-rly-project-must-go-ahead-at-bhaba-dighi-cm/articleshow/58036573.cms>; "Villagers clash with cops, TMC Men over lake fill-Up," *The Times of India*, March 17, 2017, accessed March 17, 2022, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/villagers-clash-with-cops-tmc-men-over-lake-fill-up/articleshow/57676920.cms>.

¹¹⁰ Dwaipayan, "Changing face of 'Paribartan' : Movement in Nonadanga," *Sanhati*, April 22, 2012, accessed March 2, 2022, <http://sanhati.com/articles/4949/>; "Decks cleared for IT Park at Nonadanga," November 3, 2017, accessed March 2, 2022, <http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/decks-cleared-for-it-park-at-nonadanga-269505/>; "On the situation in Nonadanga," *Sanhati*, May 1, 2012, accessed March 2, 2022, <http://sanhati.com/articles/5004/>; Suman Chakraborti, "KMDA may lease out Nonadanga land," *The Times of India*, April 17, 2012, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/kmda-may-lease-out-nonadanga-land/articleshow/12697960.cms>.

¹¹¹ "No rehabilitation for 'Paperless' slum-dwellers," *The Times of India*, December 28, 2017, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/no-rehabilitation-for-paperless-slum-dwellers/articleshow/62273424.cms>; Ratoola Kundu and Anushyama Mukherjee, "Demolition drive against street vendors in Salt Lake City, Kolkata," *BlogURK*, December 20, 2017, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://theblogurk.wordpress.com/2017/12/20/demolition-drive-against-street-vendors-in-salt-lake-city-kolkata/>; Snehal Sengupta, "Eviction in Book Fair run-up," *The Telegraph Online*, December 22, 2017, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/eviction-in-book-fair-run-up/cid/1396352>.

¹¹² Peter Mair, "Left-Right Orientations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, 2007.

governance in the interest of immediate security or they counter it. The railway project at Goghat is held up till date due to the ongoing protest of the villagers against the acquisition of the pond.¹¹³

Given these socio-political complexities, the transformational capacity of the core city continues to be fragmented and scattered, highly dependent on the mobilisation of the local contextual causes. As a consequence, Kolkata at present is aspiring to start over once again, to rebuild its idea instead of its structure. The construction of new towns/areas is geared towards such an exercise of rebuilding idea. New Town Kolkata, in this case, offers the city its "golden path to urban survival."¹¹⁴ Except for the name 'Kolkata', it has nothing in common with the city. Not only does its location grossly misguide one of Kolkata's original location, but its nature of development is aimed at obscuring the city's inherent character, history, and years of resilience amid repeated stretches of socio-political storms. Yet the perilously close location of New Town is driven to take advantage of Kolkata's widespread prominence, and its familiarity at the world level. Such construction indeed seems reasonable with Harvey's contention that the specificity of 'urban' under the capitalist mode of production cannot be realised without the radical transformation of its reality.¹¹⁵ This transformation of reality has made the original city fall prey to spatial politics, whereby its popularity is cashed upon to create a new identity, which allows concluding that the post-liberal construction of Kolkata has not only disillusioned its people but also the very city of Kolkata.

¹¹³ "Tarakeshwar - Bishnupur New BG Line (NL), ER.," *Project Summary*, February 10, 2022, accessed March 3, 2022, http://www.cspm.gov.in/ocmstemp/PROJ_SUMMARY?prcd=220100272&stat=O.

¹¹⁴ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism", 10.

¹¹⁵ Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism."

Chapter 5

Spatial Transformation in South Kolkata

This chapter briefly focuses on the spatial impacts of the New Economic Policy in Kolkata by drawing on the narratives of six case studies in South Kolkata. In its attempt to address the transformation of urban space, the chapter goes back and forth in analysing such phenomena within the context of the post-liberal administrative shift in West Bengal. Amid the backdrop of a declining industrial base of the city and the state at large, the chapter explores the flexibility induced into the instrumentalities of the urban land laws towards the compensating mechanism of real estate-led urban competitiveness of the state.

Introduction

It takes close to an hour and a half from Howrah Station to reach my place near Jadavpur. Every time I visit home, the hour-long ride through the city never fails to amaze me with its kaleidoscope of disparate settings. Each of these settings is so characteristically different, yet they all form part of the same city. Struggling amid the busy crowd thronged in and around the station area, when the ride crosses the Howrah Bridge, the sight of the River Ganga leisurely flowing underneath momentarily captivates the onlooker with the evocative charm of Kolkata's modernism during the 19th and early 20th century. But this charm might potentially hit a brick wall on stumbling upon the noisy traffic at Burrabazar. The old, decrepit buildings here, frequently patronising the clamouring small vendors to squeeze in between, might have long passed their days of imperial glory. Still, they remain significant enough to maintain Burrabazar's stature as the city's commercial hub. Only a little further away, steering past the colonial and many post-colonial edifices of the CBD, the wide stretches of the paradiel Red Road would soon blur away the irritable memory of the traffic. Bordered by lush green on either side, it marks one of the many surprises the concretised city has to offer. Taking a turn towards Park Street, when the ride approaches the landmark bookstore of Oxford, a sequential mix of pubs and restaurants briskly replaces the ordered green of the formal Red Road. Up until here, the city's, administrative, commercial, and business spaces dominate the

linearity of the ride from the station. However, the more one continues to glide through the internal contours of the city, routing amidst the prominent neighbourhoods of Park Circus, Ballygunje, Gariahat, Dhakuria to further south, Kolkata's urban canvas becomes increasingly muddled with juxtaposed spatial entities. Schools, colleges, residences, offices, malls, marketplaces, retail shops, and restaurants are all "thrown together,"¹ whereby the spaces among them are meant to be treaded as per one's purpose and convenience. It is startling to find how the ride reels before the eyes the changing scapes of the city, encapsulating the transformations from the mighty victorian structures of the colonial past to the present-day newly launched tallest skyscraper of the city- 'the 42', peeking in and around the Chowringhee and Park Street area. The scenic transformation is rapid, and as the ride progresses away from the station area, southwards, the transformational tones, although disarrayed, get strengthened with a surfeit of branded advertisements, luxurious high-rise apartments, immaculately rated hotels, contemporary parlours, new generational office spaces, and the ostentatious reflections of the malls. The savour of the past remnants of the city, which has been so central in the initial miles of the ride, get almost occluded before the scrambled imageries of the globalised present. Plodding through the routes of such present, passing a discorded string of defunct factories, gated apartments, outsized slums, and an opulent mall, I find my home awaiting as the ride crosses a little past the University premises.

I specifically lay stress on the way from the station because the route from the city airport offers the sight of a somewhat different Kolkata. While the former, bearing the remnants of the colonial paraphernalia, traces the evolutionary process of Kolkata's transformation to the present-day aspirational city of the global drive, the latter exhibits the sight of a wholly regenerated city. The fragmented skyline adorning the entire stretch of EM Bypass is vividly illuminated by the assuring responses to the plurality of "stimuli"² emanating from the West-dominated frenzied orthodoxy of

¹I borrow this term from Doreen Massey who used it to define the continuous construction of space through the interaction and the combination of diverse "human and nonhuman" elements at a given place in largely unpredictable ways resulting in a particular "here and now". Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2005), 140.

² Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Urban Sociology Reader*, ed. Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, 2nd ed., Urban Reader Series (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 23–31. In relation to modernity, Simmel has argued that the city or the metropolis is at the heart of its manifestations. Comparing the lived experiences of city and small towns, he propounded that the "slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm" of the rural existence profoundly contrasts that of the metropolis where the "many sidedness" of the "money economy" creates violent and multiple stimuli at every aspect of "economic, occupational and social life" giving rise to impersonal social relationships and detachment of individuals from their surroundings. In the process of adaptation to such "swift and changing tempo" of the metropolitan life, the metropolitan individual depend on their intellect to react

consumerism. After the subjugation to a prolonged lull of oblivion, the pro-market efforts of refurbishing the cityscape, more so in pursuit of Kolkata's 'London dreams'³ find the most domineering expression through the materialisation and valorisation of the mega-urban projects in this peripheral section of the city, thereby effecting a relative disjuncture from its older, organic parts.

A shift in the administrative position of the Left Government in Bengal

The origin of the experiences of neoliberal urbanisation in Kolkata has been under the rule of the Left Government in Bengal, which had to rejig its administrative principles amid the necessities of the New Economic Policy to become a worthy participant in the competitive market economy.

Declining share of Urban Votes

The material transformation of the city seems odd, particularly in the context of the city's history of radical politics. Kolkata, which once had been the pivot of labour rights and Marxist activism today, aspires to seek refuge beneath the canonical wings of the proliferating liberal market economy. The city space, which once had been a witness to the rumbles against the exploitative power structures, is presently subsumed under the hegemony of the market principles, subordinating all forms of social justice. Such characteristic transformation of the city has received considerable attention in the academic circle. Scholars have argued that the administrative trajectory of the longest-ruling party in the state- the CPI(M) led Left Front, underwent a massive readjustment in alignment with the liberalising policies of the country.⁴ The shift in the

rationality to the various types of emergent stimuli. I use this term to indicate the diverse forms of consumption gateways generated by the central force of market economy through explicit appropriation of urban space.

³ This is in relation to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's widely announced ambition of urban makeover, which wishes to transform Kolkata after the global city of London. During 2011, after coming to state power, the Chief Minister called upon the public-private partnerships to initiate her "dream project" of remaking the capital city of West Bengal according to the plan model of London. Raktima Bose, "Mamata Wants to Turn Kolkata into London," *The Hindu*, March 8, 2011, sec. National, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mamata-wants-to-turn-kolkata-into-london/article2317137.ece>.

⁴ Partha Pratim Basu, "'Brand Buddha' in India's West Bengal: The Left Reinvents Itself," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 2 (2007): 288–306; Pranab Kanti Basu, "Political Economy of Land Grab," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 14 (2007): 1281–1287; Ritanjan Das and Zaad Mahmood, "Contradictions, Negotiations and Reform: The Story of Left Policy Transition in West Bengal," *Journal of South Asian Development* 10, no. 2 (2015): 199–229; Abhijit Guha, *Land, Law, and the Left: The Saga of Disempowerment of the Peasantry in the Era of Globalization* (New Delhi:

administrative agenda of a government, which had granted the state one of the most celebratory successes of agrarian land reforms in the country,⁵ towards plutocratic investments, marked a significant departure from its widely acclaimed stance of redistributive reforms. Pranab Kanti Basu argued that the current hegemonic policy of global integration offers little choice to the government in power to exercise economic independence, irrespective of "the public posture of the party."⁶ Protests, resistance movements, and condemnation against the enormities of the state power are vital to foreground peoples' vulnerability before the forces of market-centric development. However, until and unless the authoritarian practice of rent extraction by the global allies is restrained in the interest of the local conditions, state-aided primitive accumulation of capital will continue unabated.⁷ While CPI(M)'s electoral strategy of middle-class alliance in West Bengal is regarded to tarnish its radical disposition since the time of its attaining the government office⁸, its skewed focus on rural Bengal, which propelled the party to power out of its oppositional constraints, is accused to continued largely at the expense of urban neglect.⁹ Sustained disregard towards the urban civic amenities resulted in their deteriorating efficacy over the years. Problems like pitiful road conditions, irregular clearance of street and household garbage,¹⁰ frequent power cuts,¹¹ poor maintenance of drains accentuating the flooding problems, limited connections of

Concept Publishing Company, 2007); Ananya Roy, "The Blockade of the World-Class City: Dialectical Images of Indian Urbanism," in *Worlding Cities* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2011), 259–278.

⁵ Theodor Bergmann, *Agrarian Reform in India : With Special Reference to Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal*, Agricole Monographs ;24 (New Delhi, India: Agricole Pub. Academy, 1984); Atul Kohli, "West Bengal: Parliamentary Communism and Reform from Above," in *The State and Poverty in India: The Politics of Reform*, Cambridge South Asian Studies 37 (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 95–143; Sunil Sengupta, "West Bengal Land Reforms and the Agrarian Scene," *Economic and Political Weekly* 16, no. 25/26 (1981): A69–75.

⁶ Basu, "Political Economy of Land Grab", 1281.

⁷ Basu.

⁸ For details, see Amrita Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon: The CPI(M) in West Bengal," in *Parties and Party Politics in India*, ed. Zoya Hasan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 317–50.

⁹ Prasenjit Bose, "Missed Goals," *Economic and Political Weekly* 51, no. 16 (2016): 51–54; Bidyut Chakrabarty, "1998 Elections in West Bengal: Dwindling of the Left Front?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 50 (1998): 3214–20; Siddhartha Sen and Sudeshna Ghosh, "Contradictions between Global Spaces and Informal Marginal Settlements : The Case of Kolkata," in *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Megacities in the Global South*, ed. Deden Rukmana (New York: Routledge, 2020), 177–90.

¹⁰ Bidyut Chakrabarty, "1998 Elections in West Bengal: Dwindling of the Left Front?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 50 (1998): 3214–20.

¹¹ Dipankar Sinha, "Development and Decay in a Third World City: A Humanizing Approach for Calcutta," *Journal of Third World Studies* 6, no. 2 (1989): 97–114.

piped water supply,¹² favouritism, and party-based discrimination in access to public services,¹³ were prevalent. Additionally, the dismal industrial trend of the state caused the previous enthusiasm for the Left to fade into a more cynical disillusion, leading to a severe loss of the Left Front's share of urban votes. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation or KMC election results of 1995 and 2000 testify to the city's growing disenchantment with the Left Government (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Left Front's share of votes in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Elections of 1990, 1995, and 2000

| Year | CPI(M) led Left Front | Congress | TMC-BJP | Others |
|------|-----------------------|----------|---------|--------|
| 1990 | 99 | 37 | ... | 5 |
| 1995 | 71 | 66 | ... | 4 |
| 2000 | 60 | 15 | 61 | 5 |

Source: Soutik Biswas, "Congress(I) Makes Impressive Gains in Calcutta Civic Poll," *India Today*, August 15, 1995, accessed April 22, 2022; Labonita Ghosh, "Mamata Banerjee Shatters Left Front's 15-Year Run in Calcutta Municipal Corporation Polls," *India Today*, October 7, 2000, accessed April 22, 2022.

Dismal Industrial Scenario of West Bengal

In 1977, when the Left coalition came to power, the state's economic conditions, let alone industrial production, was grim. The per capita SDP declined in the decades following 1960.¹⁴ The state not only consistently lagged behind the national average, but the gap was found to widen during the 1970s and the 80s.¹⁵ On the industrial front, West Bengal's total production declined from 24 percent

Table 5.2. Percentage share of West Bengal to India: Number of Factories and Net Value Added in Manufacturing Industries

| Year | Number of Factories | Net Value Added |
|------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1971 | 9.87 | 14.38 |
| 1981 | 6.60 | 10.41 |
| 1991 | 5.01 | 6.29 |
| 2002 | 4.74 | 4.16 |

Source: P Das, "Output, Employment and Productivity Growth in Indian Manufacturing Industries: 1970-71 to 2002-03: A Comparative Study of West Bengal and Gujarat" (Calcutta University, 2007), cited in Planning Commission, Government of India, *West Bengal Development Report* (New Delhi, 2010), 64.

¹² Udayan Majumdar, "Urban Renewal in Calcutta: A Perspective Study," in *Environment, Population, and Development: Felicitations Volume in Honour of Prof. S.L. Kayastha*, ed. Prithvish Nag, Chandra Shekhar Kumar, and Smita Sengupta (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2001), 295.

¹³ Chakrabarty, "1998 Elections in West Bengal," 1998; Prasanta Sen Gupta, "The 1995 Municipal Election in West Bengal: The Left Front Is Down," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 10 (1997): 905–17, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645612>.

¹⁴ Das and Mahmood, "Contradictions, Negotiations and Reform"; Ratan Khasnabis, "The Economy of West Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 52 (2008): 103–15.

¹⁵ Biswajit Chatterjee, "Poverty in West Bengal: What Have We Learnt?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 3003–14.

in 1947 to almost 12 percent by the late 1970s.¹⁶ As Table 5.2 indicates, the percentage share of West Bengal in net value added for manufacturing industries continued to decline since 1971. Analysing the state's diminishing industrial potentiality, Amrita Basu noted, "[t]he Left Front Government inherited a negative industrial growth rate; since 1977-78 it has 'achieved' stagnation."¹⁷ The growth rate of the manufacturing sector went down to below two percent almost throughout the decade of 1980, only to rise a little above three percent by the end of 1980s to early 1990s.¹⁸ Output growth had an inescapable reflection on the West Bengal's negative employment growth in registered manufacturing (Table 5.3). Large scale closure of factories and industries in the state has also been responsible for the adverse employment figures (Table 5.2).¹⁹

Table 5.3. Nature of growth in Registered Manufacturing

| Period | Employment | Labour Capital Ratio | Capital Output Ratio | Output per firm | Number of Firms |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1970-71 to 1985-86 | -0.6 | -1.8 | -1.6 | 3.7 | -0.9 |
| 1985-86 to 2002-03 | -2.3 | -5.5 | 0.1 | 2.5 | 0.5 |
| 1970-71 to 2002-03 | -1.5 | -3.7 | -0.7 | 3.1 | -0.2 |

Source: P Das, "Output, Employment and Productivity Growth in Indian Manufacturing Industries: 1970-71 to 2002-03: A Comparative Study of West Bengal and Gujarat" (Calcutta University, 2007), cited in Planning Commission, Government of India, *West Bengal Development Report* (New Delhi, 2010), 68.

In fact, contrary to the popular assumption of Bengal's infamous culture of worker militancy, industrial closures and lockouts led to a significant loss in the number of workdays. Except for some intervening years, as shown in Table 5.4 and 5.5, worker militancy has accounted for a relatively less share of factory/industrial closures and loss of workdays even during the tumultuous years of the late 60s and early 70s. Post-1980, the Left Front Government grew particularly averse to worker militancy in the interest of the state's industrial environment. In 1983, 81 percent of work suspension was due to lockouts over 19 percent to worker strikes.²⁰ In 1985, factory/industrial

¹⁶ Khasnabis, "The Economy of West Bengal."

¹⁷ Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon," 326.

¹⁸ Abhirup Sarkar, "Political Economy of West Bengal: A Puzzle and a Hypothesis," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 4 (2006): 341-48.

¹⁹ Planning Commission, Government of India, "West Bengal Development Report" (New Delhi, 2010).

²⁰ Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon."

lockouts caused close to 99 percent of the loss of workdays.²¹ Figure 5.1 depicts the loss of workdays owing to strikes and lockouts in the state since 1980.

Table 5.4. Closures and Gheraos

| Year | No. of Closures | No. of Gheraos | No. of Closures due to Gheraos | Percentage of Closures due to Gheraos |
|------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1967 | 123 | 311 | 2 | 1.63 |
| 1968 | 140 | 30 | 1 | 0.71 |
| 1969 | 183 | 517 | 1 | 0.55 |
| 1970 | 322 | 60 | 1 | 0.31 |
| 1971 | 143 | 20 | ... | ... |
| 1972 | 151 | 32 | ... | ... |

Source: "Labour in West Bengal" 1972, cited in D Bandyopadhyay, *Labour Mood in West Bengal* (Kolkata: Labour Department and Information & Public Relations Department, Government of West Bengal, 1973), 7.

Table 5.5. Workdays lost

| Year | Total Workdays lost (strike and lockouts) | Workdays lost due to lockouts | Percentage of workdays lost due to lockouts |
|------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 1967 | 5015852 | 3483518 | 69.5 |
| 1968 | 6722548 | 3565840 | 53.0 |
| 1969 | 9381086 | 1717959 | 18.6 |
| 1970 | 9425300 | 3648217 | 38.7 |
| 1971 | 4508805 | 2810567 | 62.3 |
| 1972 | 3707120 | 2676567 | 72.2 |

Source: "Labour in West Bengal" 1972, cited in D Bandyopadhyay, *Labour Mood in West Bengal* (Kolkata: Labour Department and Information & Public Relations Department, Government of West Bengal, 1973), 6.

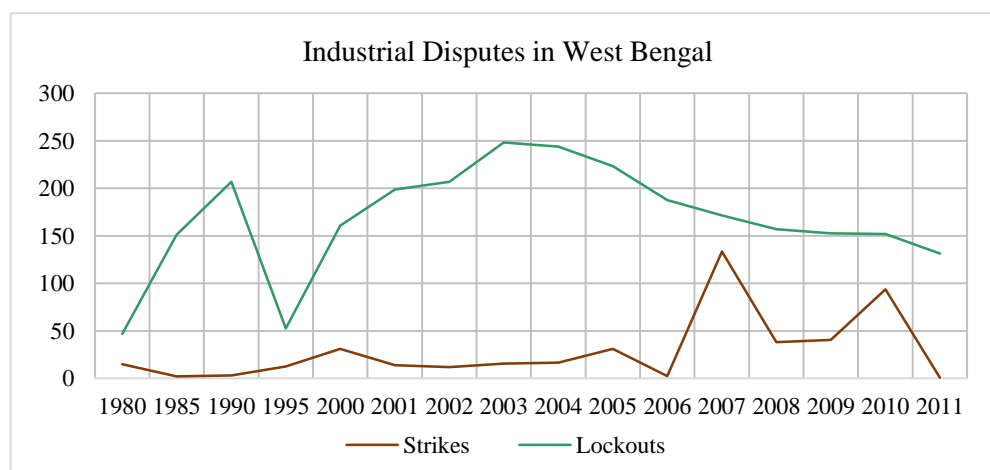


Figure 5.1. Number of Workdays lost (in lakhs) due to strikes and lockouts in West Bengal for the period 1980-2011. Data from Government of West Bengal, *Economic Review of West Bengal 2011-12*, 2012, 112.

²¹ Khasnabis, "The Economy of West Bengal."

West Bengal had been a centre of four major industries, namely jute, coal, tea plantation and wagon-based heavy engineering.²² The economic recession that grasped the state and the country during the mid-1960s struck a significant blow to these industries. The drastic decline in the railway machine equipment industry could not be recovered in the decades thereafter, resulting in a severe "industrial recession" in the state.²³ Partition had caused a severe disruption in the export-based industries of tea and jute; later, the freight equalisation policy of the central government robbed Bengal of its industrial opportunities and advantages, as the production costs spiked up for the indigenous industries. Worker agitation in the sheer threat of unemployment heightened during this time. The lack of central government assistance towards industrial investments in the state, combined with the disapproval of the private investors on account of the state's highly publicised "militant labour culture,"²⁴ especially post the chaotic years of the 1960s reinforced Bengal's murky industrial fate.²⁵ When the Left formed the government in 1977, its policy to boost industrial growth and strengthen the working-class by expanding employment opportunities failed to procure promising results.²⁶ The conflictual relation between the central and the state government had also been responsible for the lack of productive investment climate in the state.²⁷ The state government had been consistently scornful of the central industrial policies and its disinterest in Bengal regarding licensing, funding, and access to financial resources.²⁸ Except for some investments in the medium-scale industries, the fall in the percentage share of West Bengal in the total value of the country's industrial output continued in the years to follow (Figure 5.2).²⁹ Besides closure, many industrial units were declared sick. During the 1990s, West Bengal accounted for the second-highest number of sick industries in the country after Maharashtra.³⁰ Resultantly, the economic

²² D Bandyopadhyay, *Labour Mood in West Bengal* (Kolkata: Labour Department and Information & Public Relations Department, Government of West Bengal, 1973).

²³ Sreemanta Dasgupta, "West Bengal and Industry: A Regional Perspective," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 3049–60.

²⁴ Bandyopadhyay, *Labour Mood in West Bengal*, 5.

²⁵ Amiya Kumar Bagchi, "Studies on the Economy of West Bengal since Independence," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 2973–2978; Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon"; Dasgupta, "West Bengal and Industry."

²⁶ Government of West Bengal, *Statement on Industrial Policy* (Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1978).

²⁷ Bagchi, "Studies on the Economy of West Bengal since Independence"; Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon."

²⁸ James Mayers, "Economic Reform and the Urban/Rural Divide: Political Realignment in West Bengal 1977–2000," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 24, no. 1 (2001): 17–42.

²⁹ Dasgupta, "West Bengal and Industry."

³⁰ Deepak Gupta, *Industrial Sickness- Issues and Options* (Bombay: Reserve Bank of India, 1992).

security of the industrial workers had little improvement, as employment opportunities withered with the loss of the state's industrial viability.³¹

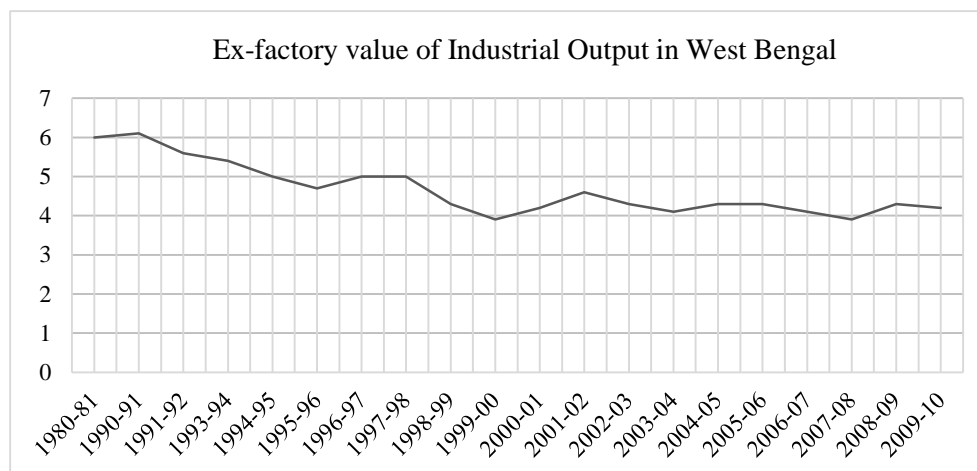


Figure 5.2. Percentage share of West Bengal in total value of output in the country.

Source: Government of West Bengal, *Economic Review of West Bengal 2011-12*, 2012, 110.

Marx argued that high unemployment rates would eventually undermine the bargaining power of the trade unions.³² Much later, Michal Kalecki propounded that the political and social changes associated with full employment inherently contradict the authoritative powers of the industrial capitalist class, as such a condition strengthens labour power and unity at the expense of the supremacy and interests of the capitalists.³³ Evidences from many European countries have exhibited the weakening of trade union powers in the aftermath of large-scale unemployment.³⁴ Sarath Devala highlighted numerous such incidences of weakening trade union leadership and the growing distrust of the workers towards the party trade unions in the early 1990s, particularly in

³¹ Planning Commission, Government of India, "West Bengal Development Report."

³² Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I. The Process of Capitalist Production*, trans. Fowkes Ben (London: Penguin Books and New Left Review, 1976).

³³ Matt Bruenig, "What Michal Kalecki Meant by Full Employment," *People's Policy Project* (blog), December 5, 2021, <https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/2021/05/12/what-michal-kalecki-meant-by-full-employment/>; Jan Toporowski, "Michal Kalecki and the Politics of Full Employment," *Jacobin*, January 18, 2022, <https://jacobinmag.com/2022/01/michal-kalecki-keynes-full-employment-political-economy>.

³⁴ Tito Boeri, Agar Brugiavini, and Lars Calmfors, eds., *The Role of Unions in the Twenty-First Century: A Report for the Fondazione Rodolfo Debenedetti* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Bernhard Ebbinghaus and Jelle Visser, *Trade Unions in Western Europe since 1945*, The societies of Europe (London, New York: Macmillan Reference ; Grove's Dictionaries, 2000).

the jute mills of Bengal, which had been one of the hardest-hit industries of the state.³⁵ This was also when the total number of live registered trade unions dropped from 14055 in 1992 to 9604 in 1998.³⁶ The trade unions' diminishing influence in the state was also evident in its increased share of factory/industrial lockouts (Figure 5.1). Dasgupta has noted that the bleak industrial scenario of Bengal, owing to the fall of its traditional industries, pressurised the trade unions of the jute and cotton industries to accept some of the unthinkable terms of the management class.³⁷ Thus, even after the state government's advocacy of collective bargaining, the materialisation of its outcomes in the lives of the industrial workers awaited active renewal of the state's industrial policies.³⁸

Introduction of the NEP and dilemma of the Left Government

When India adopted New Economic Policy in 1991, West Bengal found itself on the receiving end of the much-needed industrial overhaul. Responding to the country's flagging fiscal condition, the Indian Government undertook the project of economic realignment as per the anticipatory conditionalities of the Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP).³⁹ The realignment of the economic system came to be known as the New Economic Policy of 1991. Following such adoption, as the Indian economy was opened up for transnational investments and the trade relations were liberalised, the centrally regulated policies of industrial licensing and freight equalisation were abrogated. These measures, indicating the elimination of the central influence in determining

³⁵ Sarath Davala, "Independent Trade Unionism in West Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 52 (1996): L44–49.

³⁶ Sudipta Adhikary and Rita Biswas, "An Overview of Trade Union and Its Cultivation in West Bengal," *A Journal of Composition Theory* 12, no. 7 (2019): 260–66.

³⁷ Dasgupta, "West Bengal and Industry."

³⁸ Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon"; Dasgupta, "West Bengal and Industry"; Prasanta Sen Gupta, "The 1995 Municipal Election in West Bengal: The Left Front Is Down," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 10 (1997): 905–917.

³⁹ The United Nation Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944 led to the emergence of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, as the two principal institutions designed to regulate international economic relations along the lines of liberalisation, by replacing gold with US dollar as the medium of international exchange. Such exercise of financial institutionalisation is essentially rooted within the framework of the US-led capitalist economic system, which came to be threatened post the Second World War with the return of communism on the geopolitical map. Since 1980, these institutions have played a critical role in disseminating the political ideology of neoliberalism across the globe, through their vigorous promotion of structural adjustments. These adjustments, which primarily take the form of an open market economy, are binding upon the debtor countries of the IMF in return for the financial assistances.

industrial decisions, were to the decades-long anticipated advantages of Bengal and were viewed as the initial means to refurbish the state's industrial stagnancy.⁴⁰

However, the NEP-induced placement of 'market' at the heart of the country's economic system led the Bengal Left Government into a politico-ideological quandary.⁴¹ Much under the compulsions of the centre-state power relations and the grim industrial circumstance of the state, the CPI(M) led Left Government embodied the spirit of NEP in their new industrial policy of 1994.⁴² The policy acquiescently welcomed the same foreign investments and technology to Bengal, of which the government had been so contemptuous in the past.⁴³ It actively espoused a promotional strategy through the remodeled configuration of WBIDC to convince the foreign and domestic investors in pursuit of the state's economic progress and competitiveness.⁴⁴ About such enhancement of state competitiveness, Das and Mahmood have contextualised the transition of the Left in Bengal within the framework of inter-state economic competition, which, post the retraction of the licensing system, became increasingly dependent upon the individual state's ability to network and effect business-friendly relations.⁴⁵ They argued that Bengal's budgetary shortcomings, combined with the uncertainty resulting from an ideologically "lone fight" against the central policies of NEP, furthered the government's inclination towards privatisation.⁴⁶ Kalecki once observed that "[t]he tragedy of investment is that it causes crisis because it is useful."⁴⁷ The exercise of governmental ambition alike entailed an enormous ideological conflict within the Leftist forces of the state. The party was accused of exhibiting "anti-communist" mannerisms, especially towards the working-class, by disfavoured labour activism and favouring foreign investments in the state.⁴⁸ Amrita Basu reasoned that CPI(M)'s "reformism" or "deradicali[s]ation" had partly been an outcome of a necessity, which ascended from the lagging condition of Bengal

⁴⁰ Government of West Bengal, *Policy Statement on Industrial Development* (Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1994).

⁴¹ Ritanjan Das and Zaad Mahmood, "Contradictions, Negotiations and Reform."

⁴² Ranjit Das Gupta, "Industrial Development Policy: A Critical View," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 30 (1995): 1896–1901.

⁴³ Government of West Bengal, *Policy Statement on Industrial Development*.

⁴⁴ Government of West Bengal; Mayers, "Economic Reform and the Urban/Rural Divide."

⁴⁵ Das and Mahmood, "Contradictions, Negotiations and Reform."

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴⁷ Michal Kalecki, "A Theory of the Business Cycle," *The Review of Economic Studies* 4, no. 2 (1937): 77–97, cited in Jayati Ghosh, "Michal Kalecki and the Economics of Development," in *The Pioneers of Development Economics*, ed. K. S. Jomo (New Delhi and London: Tulika Books and Zed Books, 2005), 112.

⁴⁸ Gupta, "The 1995 Municipal Election in West Bengal", 915.

and the federal structure of the Indian state.⁴⁹ She contended that the incompatible relationship between the Leftists in Bengal and the Congress Government at the centre made outright radical reforms exceedingly complicated.⁵⁰ Comparing the similarities of these complications among all communist governments across the pro-capitalist world, she further noted, "[t]he CPI(M) has adopted the Leninist dual-stage theory of revolution, which postpones the socialist stage until after capitalism is achieved. The familiar price paid is a refusal to challenge capitalist exploitation."⁵¹ Years later, Basu's claim found resonance in Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's words, "[w]e are not in a pre-revolutionary situation. Capitalism is unlikely to collapse now...[w]e are surrounded on all sides by capitalism. You cannot practice socialism by insulating yourself from this environment."⁵²

Thus, although the advent of NEP was vehemently protested against by the CPI(M) at its all-India organisation level, it received cognizance at the state level for two significant reasons. Firstly, after its post-independence diction of "modernity gone astray,"⁵³ the policy mandates under the pretext of neoliberalism dispensed novel opportunities to Bengal to move beyond the politicised rhetoric of antagonistic business environment for augmenting the state economy. Asim Dasgupta, the finance minister in Bengal under the Left Front Government (1987-2011), confided, "[w]hen we are taking industrialists into confidence, we are also ready to break our traditional ways in the interest of industrialisation of the state."⁵⁴ Secondly, it partially freed Bengal from the constraints of the central loans, as the renewed policy overtly emphasised funding individual state expenses through private businesses. Previously, the heavy expenditure on the part of the state often made the state reliant upon central aid, either in the form of grants or loans. However, the irregularity and often the inability of loan repayment by the states marred the dynamics of the centre-state fiscal relations.⁵⁵ The administrative relationship between Bengal and the government at the centre was anyway strained due to politico-ideological differences. Further, the accruing debts of the state

⁴⁹ Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon."

⁵⁰ Basu.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 321.

⁵² Ushashi Chakraborty, "Kintu Purono Model Aar Cholbena," *Ananda Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta, May 16, 2006), quoted in Basu, "'Brand Buddha' in India's West Bengal," 292.

⁵³ Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

⁵⁴ Arup Chanda, "Comrades, Capitalists, Camaraderie: Bengal's Brush with Industrialisation," Rediff on the Net, Business Special, January 27, 1999, <https://www.rediff.com/business/1999/jan/27bengal.htm>.

⁵⁵ Stuart Corbridge, John Harriss, and Craig Jeffrey, "How Did a 'Weak' State Promote Audacious Reform?," in *India Today: Economy, Politics and Society* (Cambridge; Malden: Polity Press, 2013).

relegated it to a disadvantageous position among all other states, each contending for central assistance. As the neoliberal policies restructured the centre-state fiscal relation to make the states independent of their revenue sources, the central government's regulatory mechanism took a departure to stimulate the states in creating investment-friendly apparatus. Such stimulation pitted the states against one another as each got involved in wooing the private investors, who essentially engineered the application of the 'global' within the local context of the state. When the state aligned its institutional framework to facilitate these private businesses by putting the principles of "exception" in place, either through tax exemption or flexible conversion of land, the resultant realignment repositioned the very entity of the state in the hierarchy of the spatial units.⁵⁶ According to Brenner, it not only makes the state a site of the global capital, but that the "glocal" set-up of it turns the state into a primary channel through which the nation is integrated within the global economy.⁵⁷ Since the "complex composite" of the urban local is the most profitable outlet for the capital to proliferate, the "glocalised" re-territorialisation of the state further initiates the active promotion of the urban locals, often leading the individual states to engage in enhanced inter-state competition to capture the highly mobile capital.⁵⁸ The imperatives of such competition set the process of "provincial Darwinism" in motion so that the states, in vigorous pursuit of the pro-market reforms, bring about increased flexibility in their respective administrative laws.⁵⁹

Post-liberal changes in Urban Land Laws

Post the announcement of the liberal policies during the 1990s, the successful business ventures following land reforms in major states like Maharashtra, Gujrat, and Punjab made the Left Government in Bengal consider the abolition of the Urban Land (Ceiling & Regulation) (ULC) Act of 1976.⁶⁰ By imposing a ceiling limit on the possession and ownership of vacant land, this act provides the state to acquire any such vacant land in excess of the ceiling limit to prevent land

⁵⁶ Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, *Neoliberalism as Exception* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁵⁷ Neil Brenner, "Global Cities, Glocal States: Global City Formation and State Territorial Restructuring in Contemporary Europe," *Review of International Political Economy* 5, no. 1 (1998): 1–37.

⁵⁸ Brenner, "Global Cities, Glocal States," 3; David Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2, no. 1–3 (1978): 115.

⁵⁹ Corbridge, Harriss, and Craig Jeffrey, "How Did a 'Weak' State Promote Audacious Reform?," 135.

⁶⁰ Nikita Sud, "The State in the Era of India's Sub-National Regions: Liberalization and Land in Gujarat," *Geoforum* 51 (2014): 233–42.

hoarding and speculation (Table 5.6).⁶¹ Later, disagreements at the organisation level of the CPI(M) ultimately refuted such consideration.⁶² In 1999, when the central government passed the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Repeal Act, West Bengal was one of the few states to not have adopted the repeal. A few years later, in 2005, the launch of the JNNURM made the state-wise

Table 5.6. Land ceiling limit for different categories of Urban Agglomerations

| Category of Urban Agglomeration | Ceiling Limit |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Category A: For metropolises of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai | Vacant land upto 500 sq. meters |
| Category B: For a population of 10 lakhs and above. | Vacant land upto 1000 sq. meters |
| Category C: For a population between 3 to 10 lakhs. | Vacant land upto 1500 sq. meters |
| Category D: For a population between 2 to 3 lakhs. | Vacant land upto 2000 sq. meters |

Source: Government of India, “Schedule 1, Section 4,” in *The Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976. Act No. 33 of 1976* (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, 1976).

release of funds for the proposed urban projects contingent upon the dissolution of the Urban Land Ceiling Act.⁶³ The pro-market logic of this urban redevelopment mission contradicted the provisions of the law. Although CPI(M) among the Left Front alliance was in favour of the dissolution, it failed to convince its allies.⁶⁴ The idea of such dissolution was once again dropped in view of the government's history of redistributive land reforms. Under these circumstances, the Left Government resorted to the individualised provision of land through the Land Acquisition Act to make way for the SEZs and other industrial establishments in the state.⁶⁵ It further exempted the real estate industry from the land ceiling constraints to expedite the township development

⁶¹ Government of India, *The Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976. Act No. 33 of 1976* (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, 2006).

⁶² Sud, “The State in the Era of India’s Sub-National Regions.”

⁶³ Swapna Banerjee-Guha, “Neoliberalising the ‘Urban’: New Geographies of Power and Injustice in Indian Cities,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 22 (2009): 95–107.

⁶⁴ Probal Basak and Swati Garg, “Bengal Set to Amend Urban Land Ceiling Act,” *Business Standard India*, January 21, 2013, https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/bengal-set-to-amend-urban-land-ceiling-act-112010200098_1.html.

⁶⁵ Sud, “The State in the Era of India’s Sub-National Regions”

projects in the meantime.⁶⁶ Previously, tea gardens, mills, factories, workshops, poultry farms, dairy, and livestock breeding firms were the only exempted industrial categories under the Land Ceiling Act.⁶⁷ Under a special provision of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953, exemptions to these categories allowed the excess land of the factory premises to be converted and developed for other purposes, but only on the approval of the state government.⁶⁸ Difficulties in the obtainment of such approval led to large-scale illegal building activities on the factory land premises. According to the West Bengal Land Department estimates, by 1997, there were at least 200 such cases of illegal residential land-use conversions. Many of these cases were concentrated in the Howrah and the Barrackpore subdivisions of the neighbouring districts of Howrah and North 24 Parganas respectively.⁶⁹ Over the years, the declining industrial base of the state rendered many industrial units dysfunctional, resulting in their closures or lockouts for decades. Taking their condition into consideration, the West Bengal Economic Survey Report for the year 2001-02, had stated, "[f]or the sake of revival of the sick industries, West Bengal Government, has asked the Ministry of Industrial Reconstruction to investigate the possibility of the sale of the vacant land lying in possession of such sick industries."⁷⁰ In 2004, a WB Government consultancy firm, Webcon Ltd. reported that nearly 500 closed factories in and around Kolkata locked up approximately 41,078 acres of land.⁷¹ To free up the land locked in such sick industrial disputes, the Left Government initiated their legal conversion to residential and commercial ventures by bringing about an amendment to the Section 14Z of the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955. Previously, the said section provided the government to resume any unused industrial land held under lease in excess of the ceiling limit.⁷² However, the new amendment in 2004 sought to facilitate the industrial owners by converting the resumed land from their lease-hold status to a

⁶⁶ "Land Ceiling for Townships," *The Times of India*, November 28, 2013, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/land-ceiling-for-townships/articleshow/26489662.cms>.

⁶⁷ Basak and Garg, "Bengal Set to Amend Urban Land Ceiling Act."

⁶⁸ "Govt to Reclaim Land Locked by Closed Units," *The Times of India*, November 17, 2010, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/govt-to-reclaim-land-locked-by-closed-units/articleshow/6938433.cms>.

⁶⁹ Naba Dutta, "Jay Engineering- Shilpo Punorgothoner naame Protarona [Jay Engineering-Betrayal in the name of Industrial Revival]," *Manthan Periodical*, no. September-October; (in Bengali) (2006): 30–31.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; 31.

⁷¹ Romita Datta, "Law to Free Locked Land May Not Meet Expectations in West Bengal," *mint*, July 2, 2010, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/aiyvxAgD8r3mVxhMmZsfYM/Law-to-free-locked-land-may-not-meet-expectations-in-West-Be.html>.

⁷² Government of West Bengal, *West Bengal Land Reforms Act 1955. WB Act. No. 10 of 1956 (As Modified up to the 1st January, 1999)* (Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1999).

Table 5.7. Proposals (by industries) to convert industrial land in excess of the purpose to residential category

| Proposed land | Industrial Units |
|---------------|---|
| 7.5 acres | Sahagunj Unit of Dunlop |
| 4 acres | Gramophone Company in Dum Dum |
| 300 acres | Hindustan Motors |
| 10 acres | Selected Jute mills in and around Kolkata |

Source: “A Report on Locked-out Factories, Plight of Workers and Urban Space” (Kolkata: Nagarik Mancha, 2005).

Note: Of these Hindustan Motors has already been permitted to build a township in Uttarpara, a municipality in Hooghly district.

free-hold status so as to be auctioned in the market for the sake of industrial revival.⁷³

The development of the South City Project in the South Kolkata neighbourhood of Jadavpur, from the closed industrial unit of Jay Engineering Works, in 2003 is one of the earliest manifestations of such land-use conversion efforts. A government report in 2005-06 mentioned that a total of six industrial units, irrespective of their functional status, have acquired permission to convert the excess land of their factory

premises for residential purposes.⁷⁴ The conversion of the 237 acres integrated township of Calcutta Riverside, at the site of the Bata Shoe manufacturing firm in the Maheshtala Municipality of South 24 Parganas was one of them.⁷⁵ However, later in 2009, amid the land controversies of Singur and Nandigram, the Left Government was compelled to abrogate the provision of industrial land-use conversion by passing the West Bengal Estates Acquisition (Amendment) Act, 2009.⁷⁶

Industrial Land Conversion- Case Studies in South Kolkata

In light of such land conversion practices in the urban areas, the following section of the chapter discusses six case studies concerning the state-aided transformational process of the locked-out or closed factory land in the southern part of Kolkata. Located in and around the neighbourhood of

⁷³ “West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955,” Bare Acts Live: Central Acts and Rules Amended and Updated, 2012, <http://www.bareactslive.com/WB/WB010.HTM>.

⁷⁴ Dutta, “Jay Engineering- Shilpo Punorgothoner naame Protarona [Jay Engineering-Betrayal in the name of Industrial Revival].”

⁷⁵ Government of West Bengal, “Environmental Clearance for the Proposed ‘Calcutta Riverside Township’ by M/s. Riverbank Developers Pvt. Ltd. & IT SEZ by M/s. Riverbank Holdings Pvt. Ltd., at Batanagar, Maheshtala Municipality, Dist. - 24 Parganas (South).” (Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal, June 19, 2008), https://web.archive.org/web/20110721155551/http://enviswb.gov.in/Env_application/EIA/uploads/Riverbank%20-%20Batanagar%5B1%5D.pdf#.

⁷⁶ “Govt to Reclaim Land Locked by Closed Units.”

Jadavpur, the industrial units or the factories pertaining to these case studies have either become dysfunctional over the years or have shifted their manufacturing establishments elsewhere in the outskirts of the city, thereby facilitating the conversion of the resultant freed-up land in the process. Such conversions have not only served as the material manifestation of the city's eroding industrial base, but have also produced innovative uses of land as per the consumable dynamics of the contemporary market economy. The class-alliance mode of governance has facilitated the prosperity of these uses, leading them to occupy the centre stage in the discourse of Kolkata's post-liberal identity formation.

During the 1950s, Jadavpur used to be the home to quite a few industries. Its location, just outside the administrative precincts of the city, served the industries adequate reasons to thrive. Their prominence soared not only because of their productive capacity, but also on account of their humanitarian disposition, as they grew significant sources of employment for the East Pakistan refugees. In the following years, with the successive expansion of the city and the consequent integration of Jadavpur, the neighbourhood witnessed a sea change in its spatiality, particularly in the celebratory context of post-liberal urbanism. As its colony houses have given way to apartment buildings, some of the previous necessities, such as the neighbourhood ponds, local schools, colony committee clubs, and sprawling factories, have become redundant amid the whirlpool of post-liberal urbanity. The following case studies constitute a part of an attempt to capture this post-liberal transformation of space. The data related to these case studies have been collected primarily through personal interviews, further supplemented with materials gathered during the field survey.

Jay Engineering Works Limited - South City Project

Jay Engineering Works Ltd. or JEWL had been one of the subsidiary units of the Usha Shriram Group of Industries in Kolkata. Established in 1935, at Prince Anwar Shar Road, close to Jodhpur Park in the Jadavpur neighbourhood, this unit, commonly known as Usha Sewing Machine Division, was involved in the manufacture of diverse machinery equipment of sewing machines. The other unit, the Usha Fan Division, was established later at Roynagar in Bansdroni, further south of the city. Economic losses were believed to be in place since the early 1980s, having its impact on labour recruitment, which was almost discontinued by the end of the 1980s. In 1994,

JEWL was declared 'sick' by the BIFR,⁷⁷ which appointed an Operating Agency (OA), IDBI (Industrial Development Bank of India), to formulate a scheme for the revival of the company. Subsequently, in 1997 a scheme of revival was proposed to the BIFR, by when the company's accumulated losses were reported to be approximately 81 crores. In the proposal, the company suggested to integrate the Usha Sewing Machine Division with the Fan Division at Roynagar, Bansdrone, sale of the 31.14 acres of land of Sewing Machine Division at Prince Anwar Shah Road, and economic cutback of additional manpower strength through Voluntary Retirement Service (VRS). The sale of the JEWL sewing machine land was proposed as the most significant measure towards the revival of the company, as a part of the sale's proceed was estimated to settle the company's bridge loan. The revival proposal of the company stated,

[t]he extent of losses that our company has suffered can only be recovered through interest-free transfer, which is possible only through the sale of the land. We firmly believe that any effort towards the revival of the company will fail to materialise without the sale.⁷⁸

After the scheme got approved by the BIFR, a tripartite agreement was signed in 1998 among the three parties, namely, the WB Government, the company management, and the four workers' unions, namely, CITU, INTUC, AITUC, AICCTU.⁷⁹ As per the agreement, JEWL Sewing Machine Division at Prince Anwar Shah Road was shut down to be integrated with the Usha Fan Division at Bansdrone and collectively taken over by Usha International Limited. Besides, several employees, especially those close to their age of superannuation, were retrenched through VRS, and a tender was released concerning the sale of the JEWL land. This was the first time the state government officially permitted any industrial establishment to sell the land held in excess of the ceiling limit. In the subsequent years, however, the land sale could not materialise owing to transactional complexities between the buyer and the company. Resultantly, as per the BIFR order,

⁷⁷ Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), established under the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act (SICA) 1985, is a quasi-judicial body, which determines the sickness incidence of industrial establishments and suggests adequate measures in the interest of their revival so as to prevent the culmination of their sick performances into irrecoverable losses. Its appellate body is called Appellate Authority for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (AAIFR). In November, 2016, BIFR and AAIFR have been dissolved to be replaced by National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).

⁷⁸ Dutta, "Jay Engineering- Shilpo Punorgothoner naame Protarona [Jay Engineering-Betrayal in the name of Industrial Revival]," 31.

⁷⁹ CITU- Centre of Indian Trade Unions; INTUC- Indian National Trade Union Congress; AITUC- All India Trade Union Congress; AICCTU- All India Central Council of Trade Unions.

a new tender was released in 2000. In the meantime, the production of sewing machines plummeted at the Kolkata unit (Usha Fan Division at Roynagar, Bansdrani) and had to be abandoned in the latter half of 2001 due to "completely unviable operations when compared to the cost and working conditions in the Ludhiana [unit of the company]."⁸⁰ Thus, at the end of 2001, when the company's accumulated losses were estimated to be over 114 crores, the Usha Kolkata unit was declared 'sick' by the BIFR. Finally, in 2002, the JEWL land on Prince Anwar Shah Road was sold to Emami Limited. As per the terms, the sale of the land was proposed to take place in two parts, whereby part A consisted of a transaction of 35.5 crores for the 26 acres of land of Usha Sewing Machine Division, and part B amounted to a transaction of 5.5 crores for the 5.14 acres of land of the residual colony quarters. Subsequently, on the 31st January, 2003, the sale got finalised through a tripartite agreement among the state government, JEWL management, and the workers' union. Additionally, manpower strength was decided to be cut down to ensure the company's sustainable operation, particularly after the termination of the sewing machine production. A new VRS was proposed to over 900 permanent staff and workers, irrespective of their years of service or age. The proceeds from the sale of the land were accordingly planned to fund the VRS. Initially, the company had decided to retrench all but 85 employees; however, at the request of the state government and the workers' union, another 65 employees were retained. Later on, the company's managerial decision of employee retrenchment was legally challenged by the employees in Alipore Court, Kolkata.

On the other hand, the factory cum workers' quarter demolition works followed almost immediately after the sale and consequent handover of the land, while the construction of the South City Project got commenced in the early half of 2004. Hailed as "eastern India's largest mixed-use real estate development," the South City Project included an international school, a shopping mall, and a condominium comprising five residential towers. Having an average height of over 300ft. the South City Condominium is one of the tallest residential buildings in the city. Even though the project's construction involved a host of legal issues concerning environmental violations and labour security, most of these issues have been silenced over the years. Today, the ostentatious reflections of the project have ruptured the past geographies of life to win over the post-liberal battle of images.

⁸⁰ "Voluntary Retirement Scheme-Workers/Staff-Kolkata," Executive Director, Usha Fan Industries, June 5, 2002.

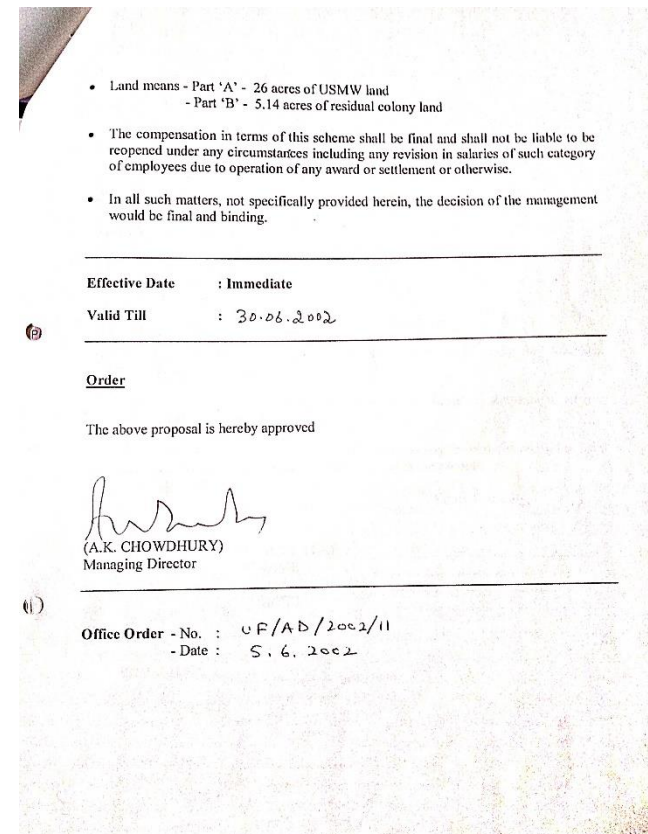
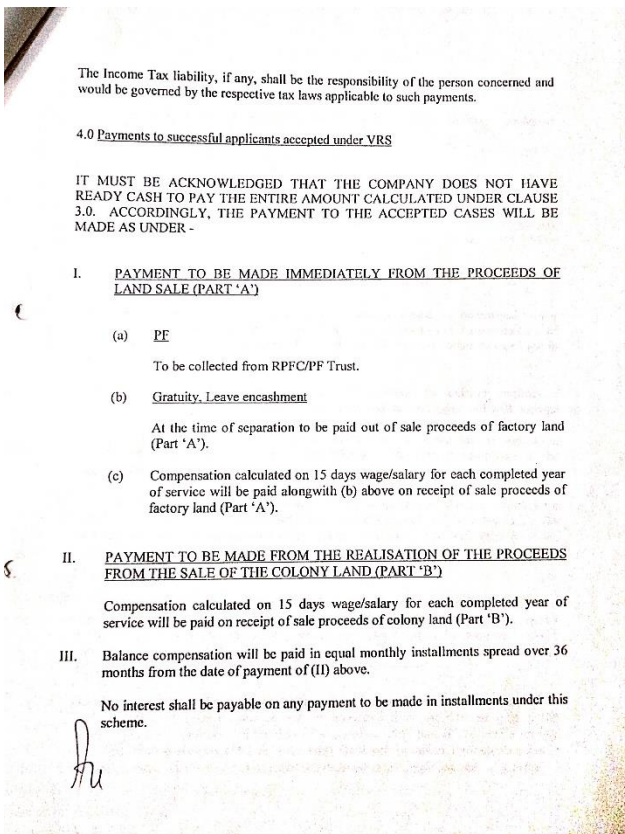
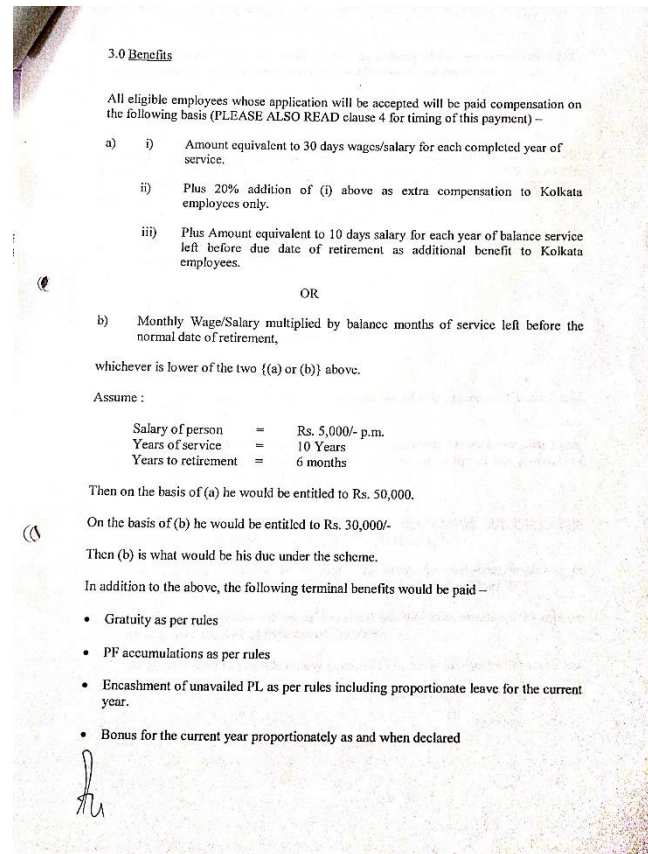
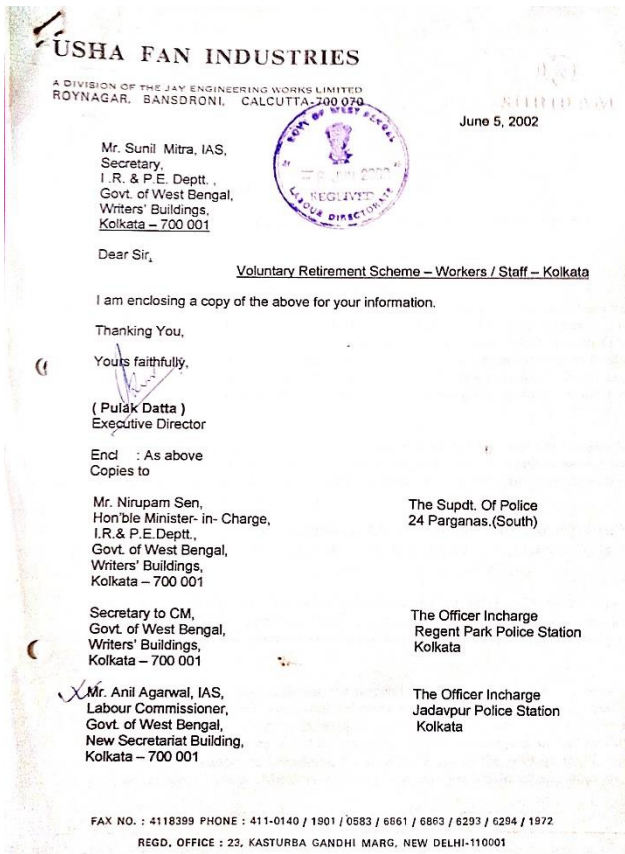


Figure 5.4. Letter sent to the Ministry of Public Enterprises and Industrial Reconstruction, West Bengal from the Executive Director of Usha Fan Industries, Kolkata, enclosing a copy of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme, prepared in the interest of manpower reduction in 2002. Image scanned from the data collected during field survey in March 2021.



Figure 5.5. Usha Fan Division at Roynagar, Bansdroni, currently under Usha International Limited. Photograph taken during field survey in March 2021.

Bengal Lamps Limited

Bengal Lamps Limited or BLL, founded in 1932 by some local entrepreneurs based in Kolkata, was the country's first national company to manufacture electric bulbs. The thriving capacity of the business led to the establishment of its second unit in Bangalore in 1970. BLL's proliferation during this time made Phillips Electrics their biggest competitor in the country. However, from the 1980s onwards, BLL witnessed a downturn in its productive capacity on account of stiff competition in the production of GLS (glass shell) and FLT (fluorescent) lamps, caused by the sudden entry of a large number of small lamp manufacturers. The resultant impacts of aggressive price cutting and squeezed profit margins led to its huge financial losses, ultimately causing the company to suspend its operation at both its units in 1989. As a consequence of the erosion of its net worth under Section 3(I) of the Sick Industrial Companies Act, 1985, the company was referred to the BIFR, which declared BLL a 'sick' company on 9th October 1990. It subsequently ordered

the company to prepare a rehabilitation scheme under the supervision of the Operating Agency, IIBI (Industrial Investment Bank of India Limited). However, the matter thereafter got embroiled in protracted legal cases.

We went to BIFR so that we could get protection from the bank loans not increasing to such an extent of the working capital that could get us into debt. The bank had already given us a loan for refurbishing Bangalore and Calcutta. So we went to BIFR with a full functioning scheme. The idea was to register under BIFR to get the concessional interests for the repayment of loans, and within six months, we would restart by refurbishing both the units in Bangalore and Kolkata.⁸¹

In 1991, BIFR ordered the OA to update the company's initial proposal by seeking a resourceful promoter who could revive the company through the change of management. However, the company's existing management, the Roy Brothers (Tapan Kumar Roy and Tapas Kumar Roy), were opposed to such a change. They appealed before the AAIFR against the decision of the BIFR, which asked the latter to reconsider its decision. In the following year, a new OA was appointed by the BIFR; however, it reinstated its order concerning the appointment of a new promoter (management). The existing management was apprehensive of Phillips taking over. In response, it filed a case before the AAIFR and demanded a stay order on the decision of the BIFR. Later, in 1993, AAIFR dismissed the case and reinstated the decision of the BIFR. To which the BLL management filed a writ petition in Calcutta High Court. While the BIFR ordered the new OA, ICICI Bank, to continue exploring the possibilities of bringing a new promoter, it also conformed to the High Court judgment and allowed the existing promoter to submit a fresh rehabilitation scheme. In 1994, when the company submitted its revised rehabilitation scheme, BIFR observed that it was not in a position to meet the norms of the scheme. As a result, the BIFR bench ordered the ICICI Bank to release an advertisement seeking the revival of the company through takeover, lease, or merger. Once again, the existing BLL management objected to the same and challenged the BIFR order by appealing before the Calcutta High Court.

Meanwhile, in 1995, responding to the OA's advertisement, a local real estate company named OM Developments Limited exhibited an interest in the takeover of the company. The real estate developer garnered strong support from the workers' union of Kolkata, which allowed it to

⁸¹ Ramona Adhikari (director of the Bengal Lamps Limited), during personal interview, Kolkata, March 31, 2021.

intervene in the appeal filed by the BLL management before the Calcutta High Court in demand of a stay order. The High Court, however, dismissed the petition of both the parties (BLL management and OM Development Ltd.) and adjudicated the BIFR to reconsider their respective schemes. At about the same time, the BLL management sought to obtain permission from the Karnataka High Court regarding the sale of the excess land in Bangalore, which the Bengal Lamps Workers' Union challenged in the Supreme Court. The workers, by this time, had been waiting for their compensation for long; thus, any prospects of sale of the BLL property, in the absence of consent from the union, were considered detrimental to their future negotiations of the compensation amount. However, both the Supreme Court and the Karnataka High Court dismissed the plea of the respective parties. The following year, OM Development Ltd. and the BLL management submitted their rehabilitation schemes to the BIFR. In response, the BIFR bench ordered the OA to appoint a consultant who could conduct a techno-viability study (TVS) of the BLL assets. It also directed the OA to evaluate the proposals of the intending entrepreneur (OM Developments Ltd.) and the BLL management against the TVS report. In 1999, when both parties resubmitted their proposals based on the provisions of the TVS report, BIFR ruled in favour of the BLL management, while OM Developments Ltd. sided out. This revised proposal of the BLL management sought to collaborate with Bajaj Electricals Limited. At the BIFR hearing on 27th June 2000, the bench ordered the proposal to be further revised to incorporate the provisions of financial settlements with banks and other institutes in relation to the sale value of the land in Kolkata and Bangalore. Subsequently, the workers' Union (of Kolkata and Bangalore) and the company management signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). However, the bureaucratic procedures took so long that, in 2001, Bajaj Electricals Limited eventually backed out, and the BLL management failed to finalise the agreement.

When BIFR was adamant about changing the management, we got a high court order saying that if you will, you may opt for a change in management, but at least you will have to permit us to submit a scheme. We submitted a scheme in collaboration with Bajaj. But the intervening procedures and the court hearings took so long that Bajaj lost interest, and we were back to what to do?⁸²

⁸² Adhikari, personal interview.

Thus, in the absence of a resourceful managing partner and given the uncertainties of selling large plots of land, the BLL management now sought to collaborate with a real estate developer who would undertake the development of their property in Kolkata. The management decided and prepared a proposal accordingly to involve a reputable real estate developer who would be in a position to finance their rehabilitation scheme.

Bengal Lamps could not wait, as it needed money immediately to relocate and restart. Hence, we thought of a joint development, where a pan India level developer would be involved, who would give us enough advance to relocate and restart. Anyway, the production would not have started straight away in full swing, so as the development would progress, we would get the money in installments and meet the production demand. It would ensure both the development and revival of the company. This was the scheme we later prepared, which was about to get sanctioned.⁸³

However, what later ensued was a battle between the BLL management and the workers' union concerning the selection of the real estate developer. In September 2002, when the BLL management submitted the said scheme to the BIFR, it proposed the involvement of United Credit Belani Limited, a Kolkata-based real estate company. The WB government ensured the necessary clearances under the ULC Act, 1976, subject to the approval of the BIFR. The following year, BIFR conformed to the scheme, and accordingly, a Draft Rehabilitation Scheme (DRS) was updated and circulated in November 2005. As per this scheme, the company had proposed to start operations at its two units from October 2006 onwards by undertaking the necessary start-up and capital expenditures. However, in pursuit of efficient development of the property in Kolkata, the BLL unit in the city was to be relocated to a suitable location at a reasonable distance, within two years from the date of BIFR sanction, i.e., 14th February 2006. The total requirement of funds for this purpose was estimated to be around 400 lakhs, which the company had proposed to incur over a period of three years. Likewise, the development of the Kolkata land would be carried out in three phases over four years commencing from February 2006.

Nonetheless, the scheme failed to proceed further when the Bengal Lamps Workers' Union objected to the collaboration with United Credit Belani Group. On the contrary, just before the

⁸³ Adhikari, personal interview.

final hearing of the BIFR in February 2006, the workers' union of Kolkata entered into a MOU with another real estate company called the Shranchi Infrastructure Finance Limited. The union opposed the former collaboration primarily on three grounds. First, it was of the view that the United Credit Belani Group did not have any necessary industrial experience. Second, it considered the DRS prejudicial to the interest of the workers. Third, according to the union, the land valuation in the Kolkata and Bangalore units was not conducted with due care. Alongside, the union pointed out that the proposal of Shranchi Infrastructure stood way better than that of the United Credit Belani Group. Table 5.8 shows the revival scheme proposed by Shranchi Infrastructure against the joint venture of BLL management with United Credit Belani Group.

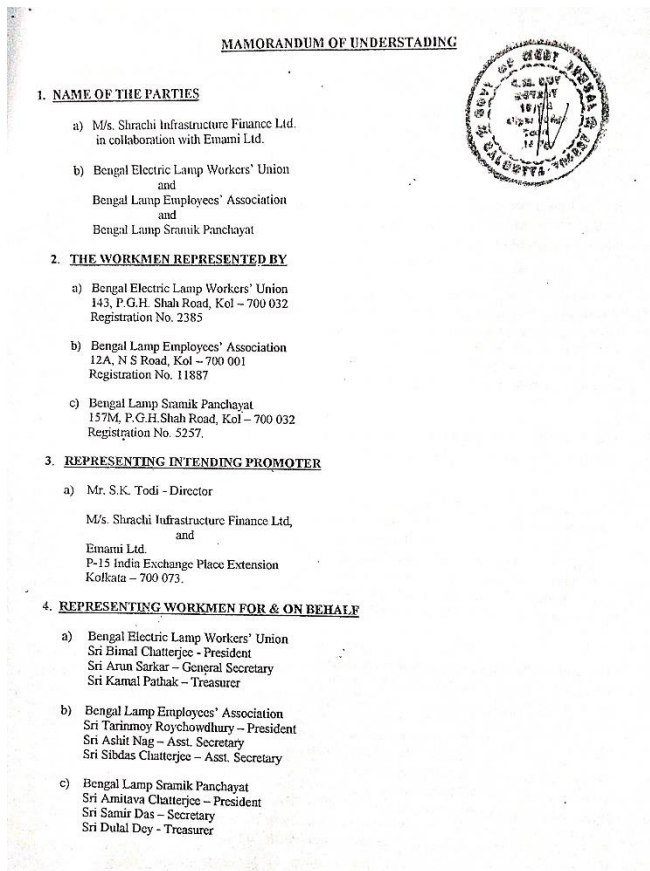


Figure 5.6. Document in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the workers' union of Bengal Lamps Kolkata unit and Shranchi Infrastructure Finance Ltd. Image scanned from the data collected during field survey in September 2021.

Table 5.8. Difference in the revival scheme between Shranchi Infrastructure Finance Ltd. and United Credit Belani Ltd.

| Heads | Shranchi Infrastructure Finance Ltd. | United Credit Belani Ltd. |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Revival Cost | 66.78 crores | 28.17 crores |
| Realisation from real estate development in Kolkata and sale of excess land in Bangalore | 46.89 crores | 24.17 crores |
| Promoter's contribution | 20 crores | 1.5 crores (as proposed by the existing BLL management) |
| Workers' compensation | 27.38 crores (Rs. 2 lakh per worker) | No compensation as such, except Rs. 14,000 per worker towards arrears. |

Source: Data collected during field survey in September 2021.

In view of these differences, the union appealed before the BIFR, which failed to recognize the union's stance, thereby sanctioning the scheme in favour of the BLL management on 14th February 2006. Aggrieved by such judgement, the BLL Workers' Union of Kolkata and the contending bidder Shranchi Infrastructure challenged the BIFR judgement by filing before the AAIIFR. AAIIFR set aside the implementation of the BIFR order, and asked the BLL management to submit an integrated proposal addressed towards the revival of both its units in Bangalore and Kolkata, within 12 weeks from the date of the order on 28th March 2007. But instead of submitting such a proposal, the BLL management moved the Delhi High Court against the said order of the AAIIFR. In response, the workers' union and the contending bidder, Shranchi Infrastructure, moved the Calcutta High Court. Presently, all these cases are sub-judiced before the Kolkata and Delhi High Courts, as both the BLL Workers' Union and the existing management have been unable to reach an amicable settlement on the relevant issues.

On the other hand, post the dismissal of the Left Front Government in Bengal, the Bengal Lamps matter got further enmeshed in circumstantial disputes. The urban land ceiling exemption that the company had obtained under the previous government permitting the change in land-use is no longer applicable under the present TMC Government, having its background rooted in the pro-peasant movements of Singur and Nandigram. Within a few months of coming to power in 2011, Partha Chatterjee, the head of the WB Ministry of Commerce and Industries, had stated, "I have clearly told the [city-based entrepreneurs] that only industry can come up on land meant for industry. And we will not count hospitals or education[al] institutions as industries."⁸⁴

It was worse for us after the change of government. Our scheme was proposed based on the necessary clearances from the ULC Act, 1976, and the permit of land-use change. But the TMC government is neither interested in allowing ceiling exemption, nor change in land-use. So we thought of mortgaging the Bangalore land, as it was not under the ULC [Act, 1976]. Since 2011, I have been in talks for the Bangalore land, because the bank, in return for the mortgage, wants to be assured of the saleability of the land. Since BIFR got abolished in 2016, we have been able to approach the bank independently. When under BIFR, one cannot pay off the lenders unless it is in the BIFR scheme, but the scheme has been stuck in court for years now. So after the abolition of the BIFR, we negotiated with the bankers individually and made our loan arrangements against the land. Right now, we are interested

⁸⁴ "Bengal Bans Realty on Factory Land," The Telegraph Online, July 20, 2011, <https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/bengal-bans-realty-on-factory-land/cid/367615>.

in paying off our dues, and then we will think of revival. The current scenario is that we are arranging funds to pay off our liabilities in the hope of reviving the company.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the Bengal Lamps workers are continuing their lives in utter distress. Their claims regarding the compensation have been sinking into the depths of despair with each passing year. At the same time, their days in Ananda Mess (Bengal Lamps quarters) are fraught with uncertainties in anticipation of the sale of the Kolkata land, for they have nothing else to lay their claim upon. Over the past 30 years, most of the workers have died, many without adequate treatment, while their families have survived through petty jobs. Their apprehension about the sale of the Kolkata land emanates from the fact that an unlawful, one-sided deal by the BLL management would eventually lead to their eviction from the Ananda Mess quarters without legitimate compensation. On this note, the current president of the Bengal Lamps Workers's Union, Rana Mitra says,

The land of the Ananda Mess quarter is our only ground to negotiate; other than that, we have nothing else to assert our rights.⁸⁶

I have heard from the union members of the Bangalore unit that the management has been able to strike a deal concerning the Bangalore factory land, where the workers have been notified to produce their identity proofs for getting their dues. Though the union there hasn't responded yet, its members have informed us of such happenings. So in protest, on 26th February 2021, we held a meeting in front of the Bengal Lamps gate. Our main demand is that without deciding anything for the Kolkata unit, no handover is to be done either in Kolkata or Bangalore. The Kolkata unit is the largest of the two. At least 60 people were present in the meeting, including some former workers and their families. We are really unsure of what is going on internally for the Kolkata land. Without paying our dues, nothing can be done. The present director has also aged; if anything happens to her, we will be at a further loss. She has repeatedly shied away from conducting any discussion. If any development takes place on this land, the workers, who have provided their labour to the company and have been living without their rightful dues for all these years, have a right over its profit.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Adhikari, personal interview.

⁸⁶ Rana Mitra (president of Bengal Lamps Workers' Union), during personal interview, Kolkata, April 1, 2021.

⁸⁷ Narayan Das (secretary of Bengal Lamps Workers' Union), during personal interview, Kolkata, March 24, 2021.



Figure 5.7. Advertisement released in Deccan Herald, Karnataka, in pursuit of a settlement between Bengal Lamps management and the workers' union of the Bangalore unit. Image scanned from the data collected during field survey in March 2021.



Figure 5.8. Placard, displayed on the wall of the Bengal Lamps Ltd. office in Jadavpur, in protest against the alleged sale of the Bangalore land. Photograph taken during field survey in March 2021.



Figure 5.9. Present condition of the Bengal Lamps factory in Kolkata. Photograph taken during field survey in March 2021.

Thus, while the Bengal Lamps workers and their families are continuing their daily battles of life and livelihood, cramming the against the jaded walls of the old quarters, they have firmly held onto the quarter land in the hope of revival, making this lived space representational of their struggle and perseverance. Although in the past, the emergence of the quarters was centred around the needs of the factory, today the same quarters have become determinative of the factory's outcome. The power of the practices played out in the spatial context of the Ananda Mess quarters, now looms over the lack of human practices within the factory premises.⁸⁸ Such that the sprawling ruins of the Bengal Lamps factory stand small before the invincible ethos of the mess quarters.

Sulekha Ink – Devaloke Residences

Born out of the nationalist sentiments of empowering people, Sulekha Ink represented the "indomitable spirit of self-reliance" during the times of colonial rule. The establishment of the company in the 1930s was, therefore, a swadeshi effort undertaken by the Maitra Brothers, namely, Shankaracharya Maitra and Nani Gopal Maitra. In 1938, the production base of Sulekha Ink was shifted from Rajshahi, in erstwhile East Pakistan, to Kolkata at Bowbazar. Subsequently, in 1946, the factory operations were moved to Jadavpur by leasing a plot of land to the south of the Jadavpur University. The land was, however, later purchased under the name of Sulekha Works. During its glorifying years of the 1950s and 60s, Sulekha Ink reached heights by registering the largest share of sales in the country and exporting ink to several countries, like China, Myanmar, Australia, and England, among others. Increased production led to the establishment of its second factory in Sodepur, a locality of North 24 Parganas, in 1952. During the 70s, the company was a major source of employment for the East Pakistan refugees settling in and around Jadavpur. However, the glory could not be sustained further. With the decline in the market of the fountain pen post with the emerging dominance of the ball-point pen, ink production at Sulekha suffered a setback from the late 70s onwards. Additionally, the socio-political condition of Bengal during this time hindered its export practices. The production shrank to such a low that in 1988, Sulekha declared suspension of work, and on 1st January 1989, the company finally shut its production at both the factories.

⁸⁸ David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

Regarding the prospects of reopening the factory, the company management proposed that such a possibility would exist only in the context of product diversification and the subsequent sale of the Jadavpur land. According to their proposal, the potential reopening of the factory depended on the sale of the excess Jadavpur factory land and curtailment of labour power. The sale proceeds were suggested to be used for product diversification, which would be made by retaining only 200 employees of the approximate strength of 600, while the remaining would be terminated through VRS. After the workers vehemently protested such a move by the management, numerous rounds of discussion followed between the management and the workers. However, none of these discussions saw any light of materialisation. Resultantly, in 1991, Sulekha went into liquidation. Although, in the mid-1990s, there was a proposal to sell the assets of the Sodepur factory for reviving the Jadavpur unit, it was discarded thereafter. Finally, in 2005, the excess factory land at Jadavpur (approximately 2 acres or 87,000 sq. ft) was sold to a local property developer called the Devaloke Group. The state government complied, as with the South City Project, the change in urban industrial land-use had become an enabled process. Moreover, after the closure, the employees lived without compensation for over a decade. Many had lost their lives in the meantime. Thus, the sale was also partially facilitated by the workers' union in the hope of getting the much-awaited compensation. However, the compensation money received by the workers later was meagre compared to the contemporary price level. At the same time, there were instances where the workers did not receive any compensation, for which they accused the union of practicing favouritism.

There was no definite, structured process of distributing the compensation money among the workers post the sale of the Jadavpur factory land. Nonetheless, in response to the sale, the company management announced their plan to reopen the Jadavpur unit with a limited workforce to address the needs for product diversification. Some of the previous employees were subsequently asked to join the factory. A few, aged with lost ability, sent their son to work on their behalf. Thus, on 21st August 2006, Sulekha Works was formally reopened at Jadavpur, under the directorship of Kaushik Maitra, with product diversification in home and hygiene care. Later, the production was also extended to stationery items and solar-powered products. On the reopening of the factory, Maitra expressed,

When we thought of reopening we had to go beyond the ink and move into other high volume

items of daily use...[w]e are back on track after we started operations in November 2006. Since it is an era where ball-point makers have dominance, we have diversified into many other sectors. Now, the company is into stationary, homecare and other solar-powered product sectors.⁸⁹

Presently the factory runs with a strength of 50-60 permanent employees, while the rest are contractual and hired when the production demands. The factory premises worth 22,000 sq. ft border the residential apartment of Devaloke Heights, which came up on the Sulekha land. Next to it is another apartment in the name of Devaloke Fort. The construction of these residential buildings was completed in 2009. Recently, a commercial branch of the Senco Jewellery store has also surfaced adjoining the buildings. The spatial arrangement of this transformation has allowed the buildings to stand tall, facing the arterial road of Raja S.C Mullick. The building heights have occluded the sight of the factory behind. So much so that for anyone unaware of the locality, the existence of the factory is easy to be missed. Such an arrangement is metaphorical of the state's economic pattern, where the dominance of the real estate businesses has relegated manufacturing activities to toil behind, against the forces of oblivion.



Figure 5.10. *Left*, At the entrance of the present-day Sulekha Factory in Jadavpur; *right*, On the premises of the Sulekha Factory. Photographs taken during field survey in February and September 2021.

⁸⁹ “65 Years of Freedom: Trip Down the Memory Lane-Sulekha Industry,” *Hindustan Times*, August 15, 2012; Shine Jacob, “Sulekha: Writing a Comeback Story,” *Business Standard India*, April 6, 2011, https://www.business-standard.com/article/management/sulekha-writing-a-comeback-story-111040600076_1.html.



Figure 5.11. *Left*, Senco Jewellery Store adjoining the Devaloke Residences; *right*, Entrance of Devaloke Heights Residential Complex. Photographs taken during field survey in February and September 2021.

Krishna Silicate and Glass Works Limited

Located adjacent to the Sulekha factory, Krishna Glass constitutes one of the rarest instances of vacant land within the city. Since the 90s, this industrial land has been voluntarily turned idle post the closure of the industrial unit. Today, the factory sheds stand derelict on its deserted site, overgrown with weeds. Back in the 50s and 60s, the running furnace of the Krishna Glass factory whirred across its walls and beyond to remind the neighbourhood of its functional existence. However, after accruing huge financial loss in 1969, the company owner, Bibhuti Sarkar, decided to terminate the production in both its firms, one in Jadavpur and the other in Baruipur, a municipality in South 24 Parganas. For the following two years, the company remained closed. It was reopened in 1973, only to be taken over by the Central Government in 1974 under Section 18FA of the Industries (Development and Regulation Act), 1951. However, limited revival efforts by the centre resulted in the company's takeover by the WB Government, which nationalised it in 1987 under the Krishna Silicate and Glass Works Limited (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1986. While the operations remained suspended till then, the production was

formally stopped in 1991. Around the mid-1990s, the state government investigated the idea of a public-private partnership to revive the company. But the idea was dropped given the possibility of employment retrenchment. The employees, a total of 700, were already without work for a long time; however, they continued to receive their wages in the interim period. Additionally, resuming the factory operations in the Jadavpur unit was almost impossible during the 1990s, as, by this time, the neighbourhood had developed a thick residential character, whereby re-setting of the glass furnace did not stand a chance without disrupting the neighbourhood temper. Therefore, at the end of the 1990s, the state government decided to shift the entire production to the Baruipur unit, located on the outskirts of the city, with a population of only 37,000. Alongside it was decided to diversify from glass production to ceramic tile production. As with the proliferation of plastic, mainly acrylic, the revival of the company through the sole dependence on glass production was not feasible. Accordingly, the government sanctioned a sum of 11.5 crores for the revival, and in 1999, the entire production set-up was shifted to Baruipur. Thus, since 1999, the Jadavpur unit of Krishna Glass had been formally closed to be abandoned to its present status.

Meanwhile, in the Baruipur unit, the success of the revival efforts was short-lived. A market survey revealed inadequacies in the demand for the structural size of the tile to be produced as a part of the revival. Therefore, in 2001, the production was once again stalled, and finally, in 2005, the state government decided to shut down Krishna Glass by clearing all the employee dues. The employees, irrespective of their age, were subsequently given voluntary retirement. Besides, a pension scheme was released for all the employees who had joined the company post 1976. By this time, most of the employees had already aged, as there had been no new recruitment since the late 1980s. Presently, only one employee is retained by the state government to oversee the occasional documentation work of the closed factory. After the TMC Government came to power in 2011, there had been a renewed interest in Krishna Glass, particularly concerning the 14.5 acres of factory land in Baruipur, which had been lying vacant since its closure in 2005. Finally, in 2017, WBIDC decided to sell the entire Baruipur property of Krishna Glass to Somani Ceramics, one of the leading ceramic companies in the country.

However, the land in Jadavpur, approximately 4 acres, is still held under state ownership. Years of neglect have rendered the entire plot a garbage dumping site. The dilapidated status of the former factory buildings poses danger to the nearby houses, while the overgrown parts have

surfaced as the breeding ground for diseases and illegal activities. Its location in the heart of a prominent South Kolkata neighbourhood has led to many attempts of illegal ownership through falsified property documents. Reports have suggested that after the state takeover, the Jadavpur land is yet to be registered in the Block Land and Land Reforms records of Kolkata. The process has not been initiated since then. Complexities involved in the further process of land transfer between the hierarchical divisions of the state and the municipal corporation have hindered the efforts on the part of the ward councilor towards ensuring a practical usage of the land. She voiced,

The entire property of Krishna in Jadavpur currently belongs to the state government. Over the years, people have stolen whatever remained of the factory. The entire property is prone to collapse. Every year, during the monsoon, we try to clean the area, but it is difficult given the condition of the plot. No one knows what is going on inside. I have drafted several letters regarding this concern to the Kolkata Mayor and the Ministry of Industry. I even consulted with the MLA of Jadavpur, but nothing has been achieved so far. However, god forbid if any accident occurs in the area due to its fragile status, it is the ward councilor who will be held responsible. If the site can be in any way used for local development causes, then at least a fruitful purpose will be served.⁹⁰

A little less than one kilometer from the factory, there lie the Krishna quarters, which were previously used to house the workers of the Jadavpur unit. After the closure, the workers, especially those hailing from the villages of the neighbouring states, have continued staying here. The varying hopeful possibilities of earning a livelihood in the city have made these people averse to returning to their native places. In many cases, the worker has died, but the son has moved in with his family. A total of 15 families are presently residing in these quarters. Over the years, the condition of the quarters has deteriorated. The precarious structures of their single rooms have been somehow managing to sustain these families. They admit to having received their dues post the closure, but at the same time confide that the rising cost of living expenses and child-rearing have been straining their meagre income. Thus, as the factory land awaits coherent government plans, these families in the Krishna quarters are counting their days of uncertain future.

⁹⁰ Rinku Naskar (former councillor of KMC ward no. 102), during personal interview, Kolkata, February 26, 2021.

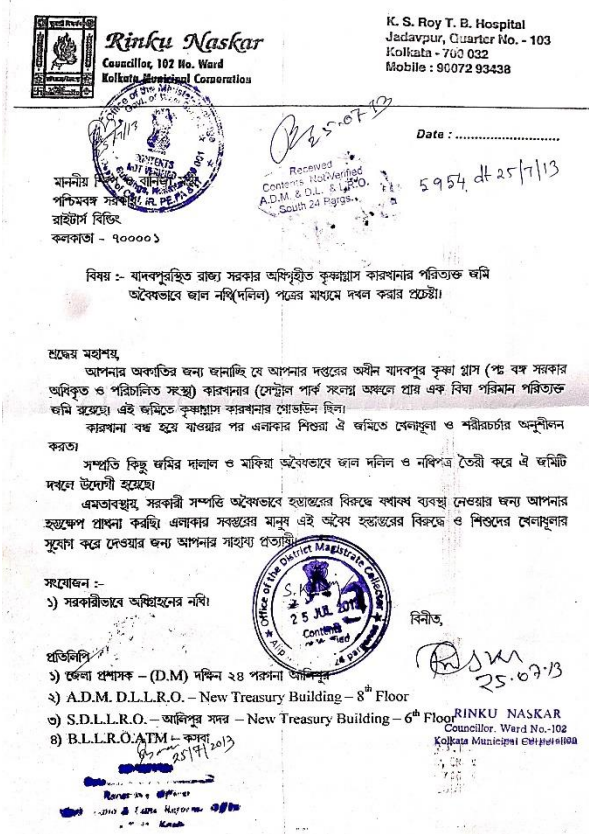


Figure 5.12. Letter (in Bengali) by the Ward Councillor, Rinku Naskar to the WB Ministry of Commerce and Industry, stating the concerns of illegal claims of ownership made towards the Krishna Glass property in Jadavpur in 2013. Image scanned from the data collected during field survey in February 2021.



Figure 5.13. Up and down, The decrepit factory sheds and buildings of Krishna Silicate and Glass works. Photographs taken during field survey in February and March, 2021.



Figure 5.14. Left, Krishna Quarters. Photograph taken during the field survey in February 2021.

Annapurna Glass Works- Ekta Heights

During its crowning years, Krishna Glass faced tough competition from Annapurna Glass Works. The adjacency of these two glass factories had provided their workers a modest edge over their employers. The two factories shared mutual dependencies in terms of technology and labour. Such that any equipment, which was a success in one was subsequently adopted in the other. Their dependence had perhaps over-extended a bit. Thus, when Krishna Glass dropped its shutters, a few years later, in 1981-82, Annapurna too followed its suit. According to the former employees, the company, held under private ownership, had been evading its excise tax for a long time. When, on a fine morning, the inspection officers came to inspect, they acquired all the documents and left. Soon, the management declared a suspension of work the following week. Although the reasons cited by the management included the issues of raw material shortages and drained productive capacity, the employees countered that the factory had always been brimming with raw material inputs. While the workers initiated several rounds of discussion post its formal closure in 1982, the Annapurna management failed to reciprocate their concerns. Resultantly, the workers awaited their compensation for the longest time, including the Provident Fund (PF) money, which they accused of never being deposited in the PF account. In view of the inconsiderate attitude of the company management, the workers pooled funds together to file a case demanding their dues. Initially, about 1200 workers joined the case, however, a year later, in around 1984, many withdrew due to the delayed court response and its burdening expenses.

The case was becoming expensive, and without the compensation, it was hard to continue the case. Still, we tried. The management used to avoid the court hearings, which further delayed the case. The workers' union held several meetings in front of the factory gate, but there was hardly a response from the management. A year later, many gave up and left for their native places in Bihar.⁹¹

The court case lingered for about five years with a remaining few members; it lost rigour towards the end when the management was accused of colluding with selected employees. The remaining members, therefore, had to accept whatever paltry amount was offered. The workers, by then, had already lost hope. Besides, weak trade union leadership and fragmentation within the party unions

⁹¹ Gopal Chandra Ghosh (former factory manager of Annapurna Glass Works), during personal interview, Kolkata, March 15, 2021.

led to the further plight of the workers. Towards the end of the 1980s, a year after the withdrawal of the case, the factory land of 2.5 acres was decided to be sold. Since most of the workers awaited their rightful compensation, they launched a collective protest opposing the sale. As a result of the objection, the management stipulated that an amount as minuscule as 1000 was to be paid to all the workers, irrespective of their sum of accrued dues. In response to the loss of their PF money, the workers complied and withdrew their opposition to the sale. Post such withdrawal, in the early 1990s, the sale of the Annapurna factory land was effectuated.

In 2005, the land developed into a gated apartment called Ekta Heights. Built by a Mumbai-based real estate company, Ekta World, this residential complex was one of the first few gated apartments to have come up in the Jadavpur neighbourhood.



Figure 5.15. Ekta Heights Residential Complex. Photograph taken during field survey in March 2021.

Dabur India Limited- Westwind Jadavpur and Iris Multispeciality Hospital

Further south of Jadavpur, in a place called Ganguly Bagan, Dabur had its manufacturing unit (Garia Factory) and warehouse (Kusum Kanan) about 1 kilometer apart. In between stood the Dabur quarters, which housed the employees hailing primarily from Bihar and Orissa. Around the early 1980s, the transforming residential characteristics of the area influenced the Dabur authorities to shift their manufacturing unit to a previously purchased site in Narendrapur, located in the immediate vicinity of the city, at a distance of around 8 kilometers from Jadavpur. In 1984, following an agreement between the company management and the workers' union, the shift of the Garia factory was implemented by transferring the workers to Narendrapur. Bus services were consequently arranged for the daily conveyance of the workers from the quarters and the nearby areas to the new factory site. However, even after the transfer of the manufacturing unit, the Garia Factory continued to operate as the company warehouse for the imported materials. The complete shift of the unit, therefore, did not occur until the early 1990s, when the factory land in Ganguly Bagan was finally proposed to be sold. The sale was reasoned on the ground of declining profits due to the poor utilisation of the company's non-performing assets. By the latter half of 1997, the sale was almost finalised with a real estate company named Eshna Housing Projects Ltd., and in the following year, the state government formally declared the resultant change in the categorisation of the Dabur land. A weakened influence of the workers' union, on account of ideological conflicts and intra-group differences, could hardly counter the management decision.

In the later years, the factory land was sold to separate entities, eventually developing a gated apartment and a private hospital. The gated apartment, Westwind Jadavpur, was launched in 2004 by the Keventers Group on the land of the Garia factory. Developed as an integrated mini township, Westwind Jadavpur contains seven residential towers adorned with all the up-market amenities of self-sustainable urban living, including a tennis court, swimming pool, rainwater harvesting system, and a 24/7 power backup tool. Projected as one of the best maintained residential projects in Kolkata, the Westwind garden was declared the best in the city by the Agri Horticultural Society of India for nine straight years. After its development, the entire stretch of Ganguly Bagan to Ramgarh witnessed a boost in real estate investments. Such investments have been further massive with the establishment of the Iris Multispeciality Hospital in 2010 on the site of Kusum Kanan, the Dabur warehouse unit.

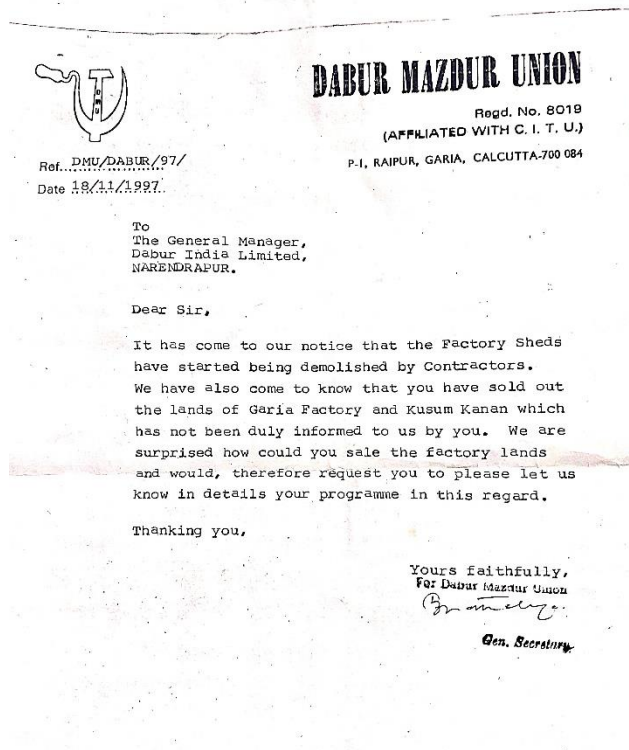


Figure 5.16. Letter to the General Manager of Dabur India Ltd., Narendrapur from the General Secretary of the Dabur Workers' Union regarding the concerns of the sale of the Dabur factory land in Ganguly Bagan in 1997. Image scanned from the data collected during field survey in September 2021.

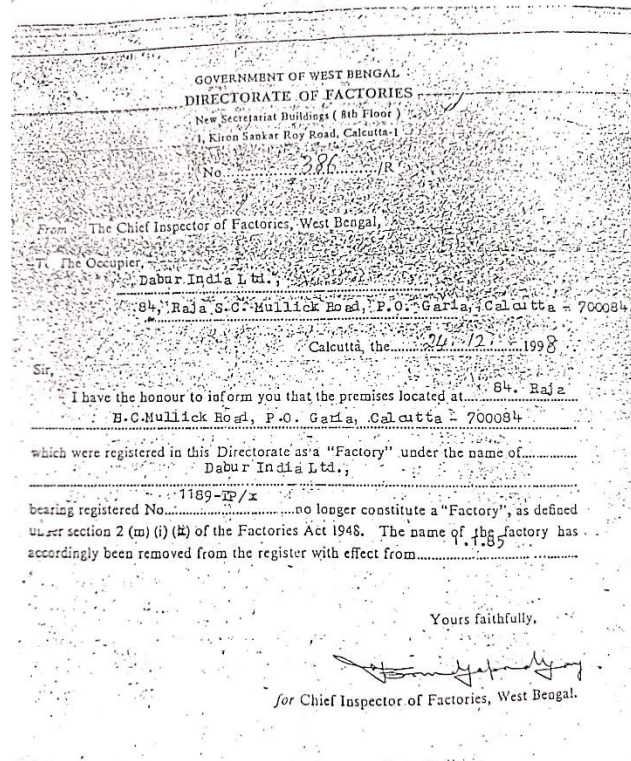


Figure 5.17. Letter from the Chief Inspector of Factories, West Bengal in 1998, confirming the change in the categorisation of the Dabur factory land in Ganguly Bagan. Image scanned from the data collected during field survey in September 2021.

Post the successes of the sale, the Ganguly Bagan factory quarter was subsequently targeted. In 2006, the Dabur management declared a Voluntary Retirement Service after terminating its production in the Narendrapur factory for over a year. It pre-conditioned the recommencement of production on retaining only 100 of the approximate 250 permanent employees. To this, many employees, especially those hailing from out of Bengal, readily agreed. For, post the termination of production, these employees were in a particular state of dilemma. They were neither able to join work nor were they able to return to their native places in anticipation of recommencement of work. However, when the rest of the employees objected to such a scheme of early retirement, the management sought to transfer them to the Ghaziabad factory in Uttar Pradesh. In view of these conditions, many employees chose to opt for the VRS. As a result of this dual policy, the management could strategically retrench the excess labour, and the quarter was left with a mere

strength of 30 employees. At the same time, it also impacted the bargaining power of the workers' union, as most of the union members were either retired or transferred out of the state.

Nonetheless, the employee quarters were still occupied. In response, the company management sought to raise the quarter rent. In 2009, it made an agreement whereby the management allowed 50 percent of basic pay as house rent for the employees residing outside the quarters and 20 percent for those availing the company quarters. Such tactical revision of the house rent charges created a division among the employees. For, those residing outside favoured the decision of the management. Accordingly, a few employees left the quarter to share accommodation outside, while those who continued to stay were later served with transfer notice. Finally, around 2013, the Ganguly Bagan factory quarter could be strategically vacated. However, the plot could not be sold further due to certain legal complexities. Guarded against trespassers, today, the boundary of the deserted quarter premises already stands disconnected from the neighbourhood.



Figure 5.18. Near the gate of the Dabur Factory Quarters in Ganguly Bagan, Kolkata. Photograph taken during field survey in September 2021.



Figure 5.19. Inside the Dabur factory quarters, Ganguly Bagan, Kolkata. Photographs taken during field survey in September 2021.

Conclusion

According to the Marxist principle, social structures are driven by the differing instrumentalities of production. Since technology forms the crux of such instrumentality, changes in the mode of technology, for instance, from hand-mill to steam-mill, fuel the transition of the social structure from feudalism to capitalism.⁹² Continued changes in technological development consequently give way to the successive stages of capitalism.⁹³ Therefore, in this process of socio-structural transition, the propagation of a new technology primarily takes place at the expense of the redundancy of the former one, a property embedded within the capitalist anatomy of creative destruction. Such that the inherent characteristics of a particular form of production, i.e., technology, engender the creation of its successor, triggering a whole gamut of social repercussions.⁹⁴ This decline in technology eventually led to the downfall of all the above-mentioned industrial units in the city, be it for the glass industries like Annapurna and Krishna or that involved in the production of fountain pen ink like Sulekha. Even for establishments like Bengal Lamps, the substantial cost advantage enjoyed by its small-scale competitors during the

⁹² Joseph A. Schumpeter, “Marx The Sociologist,” in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (USA: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 9–20.

⁹³ Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” *New Left Review*, 1984, 53–92.

⁹⁴ Schumpeter, “Marx The Sociologist.”

centrally launched rural electrification programme of Kutir Jyoti Yojana in 1988 was possible chiefly because of the minimalism involved in producing the GLS bulbs. Once these small manufacturers mastered the art of manually producing the GLS bulbs, simultaneous production by numerous such small manufacturers created a glut in the GLS bulb market, eventually making the giant machinery of the BLL units redundant for the purpose. Thus, contrary to the highly publicised notion of labour militancy, it is the dispensability of technology that led to the collapse of these industrial units, thereby engendering the production of its successor. In these cases, the successor has surfaced through what Harvey essentially calls the "switching of capital to the secondary circuit," transforming the previous industrial capitalism into a new phase of "consumer capitalism."⁹⁵ Jameson believes such consumer or multinational capitalism to be the third or even fourth stage of technological development within the social structure of capitalism. Its dissemination through the secondary circuit, i.e., urban built forms, is fundamentally centred on aesthetic representation.⁹⁶ The likes of which are increasingly expressed through projects like South City and Westwind. The incessant projection of their images, in sync with the westernised stimuli, is fabricated through the media and advertisements by the producer of this multinational capital. Who generates multivarious gateways of consumption through urban built-forms, either in terms of shopping malls, luxurious apartments, or exclusive leisure amenities, to enable the consumer with a range of choices under the pretext of "consumer fetishism," entailing a massive reorientation of urban space in the process.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism"; Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism."

⁹⁶ Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism."

⁹⁷ Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, Culture & Society* 7, no. 2-3 (1990): 295-310.

Chapter 6

Institutional Interventions in Transforming the Landscape

The chapter draws on the field research conducted for this study. It attempts to relate the occurrences of the case studies with the influence of the different levels of institutions, like the state, trade union, or political party, in shaping the relationship between labour and capital. By navigating through the interview narratives, the chapter focuses on how changing spatial forms amid the mediating influences of the state can undermine social cohesion and make class-based biases the order of the contemporary urban regime.

Introduction

One of the most crucial tenets of the Marxist theory is the contradiction between the forces of production (ability to produce) and relations of production (ownership or control). The mechanism of such a contradiction to human society emanates from the fact that humans, being innately creative, actively seek to participate in the production process to realise their goals. In this way, the production of use-value through labour inputs has historically determined the development of productive forces.¹ However, the creation of this use-value comes into conflict when the capitalistic power relations exploit the labour inputs to extract a surplus use-value. Thus, when the innate process of value production (labour) is interrupted through the valorisation process of surplus value appropriation (exploitation of labour), material contradictions to capitalism emerge.² Such contradiction is characteristically entrenched within capitalism in terms of its intrinsic disposition to produce a surplus. But an incessant creation of surplus necessitates the instrumentalisation of a complementary channel or numerous channels to absorb the surplus, to mediate effective demand for realising the surplus value. For, in the absence of adequate consumer demand to meet the surplus labour, the capitalist system risks the crisis of over-production.

¹ Matt Vidal, “Contradictions of the Labour Process, Worker Empowerment and Capitalist Inefficiency,” *Historical Materialism* 28, no. 2 (2019): 170–204.

² David Gartman, “Marx and the Labor Process: An Interpretation,” *Insurgent Sociologist* 8, no. 2–3 (1978): 97–108; Vidal, “Contradictions of the Labour Process, Worker Empowerment and Capitalist Inefficiency.”

Michael Kalecki captured similar essence of the capitalist system when he propounded that increased investment in every cycle of production could potentially impact the investment decisions of the successive cycles by raising the capacity, which, if fails to be realised in the market, can limit the output in the future cycles.³ Capitalism itself is an incongruous system, such that driven by its tendency of surplus production, the capitalist class creates crisis and is "its own grave-diggers."⁴ According to Kirkland, economic or political crises are constructed in the interest of "agenda setting," which facilitates the agents to not only stir the encircling debate towards it, but also allocate significant resources to charter solutions in their favour, by legitimising the ensuing policies.⁵ He considers that the political temper of a crisis transpires from the practice of blaming, which at all times is directed to insinuate the removal of the blamed causes or participants for the system to resume on the supposedly right course.⁶ The instances of factory shutdown or lockouts from the mentioned case studies could be contextualised within a similar politico-economic framework of crisis creation. The crisis or the contradictions which resulted from the incompatibilities of the production process led to declining profits. A sustained period of declining profit could potentially culminate in disaster for the company, in anticipation of which the entrepreneurs terminated the production, blaming labour activism in the process and strengthening the metanarrative of Bengal's "militant labour culture."⁷ Such that the blame for these industrial failures was constructively shifted to the fundamental existence of labour rights, i.e., their rights to secure "the prime necessities of life."⁸ Marx writes,

when the working people...prepare 'to share' in the profits from their own industry, then they are accused of communistic tendencies...[How come] 'the demands of the working people may be submitted to when urged in a *respectful manner*' [?] What has *respect* to do with 'the eternal laws of demand and supply'? Has any one ever heard of the price of coffee rising at Mincing-lane when 'urged in a respectful manner'? The trade in human flesh and blood being

³ Michal Kalecki, "A Theory of the Business Cycle," *The Review of Economic Studies* 4, no. 2 (1937): 77–97, cited in Jayati Ghosh, "Michal Kalecki and the Economics of Development," in *The Pioneers of Development Economics*, ed. K. S. Jomo (New Delhi and London: Tulika Books and Zed Books, 2005).

⁴ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, New to this Edition:, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 18.

⁵ Christopher Kirkland, "Introduction," in *The Political Economy of Britain in Crisis: Trade Unions and the Banking Sector*, Building a Sustainable Political Economy: SPERI Research & Policy (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 1–52.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ D Bandyopadhyay, *Labour Mood in West Bengal* (Kolkata: Labour Department and Information & Public Relations Department, Government of West Bengal, 1973), 5.

⁸ Karl Marx, "On Strikes and the Value of Labor," trans. Andy Blunden, *New York Daily Tribune*, October 17, 1853, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1853/09/27.htm>.

carried on in the same manner as that of any other commodity, give it at least the chances of any other.⁹

Given the latent friction between technical expertise and hierarchical authority, as noted by Weber, it is easier for the entrepreneurial class to seek the protection of the hegemonic narrative by transferring the accountability of the failures to the working-class, bringing about necessary changes in the governing mechanism, which otherwise would not have been possible.¹⁰ This occurred when on account of severe industrial decline, Bengal's Left Front Government shifted its stance on labour movements and actively sought to endorse bilateral negotiations between the labour and the entrepreneurs from the late 1980s onwards.¹¹ However, the rising share of factory lockouts thereafter, relative to the incidences of labour strikes, well indicated the management's inability to mitigate crises to the further distress of the labourers.¹²

The propagation of such exercises eventually leads to a power struggle between the blamed and those who are blaming, not only because the former is relentlessly involved in negating the blames, but also because the resultant policies restructure the entirety of governing mechanism by necessitating their exclusion.¹³ The development of new software-based industries in Bengal during the early 1990s foregrounded the initiation of such a system devoid of labour bargaining practices. Thus, crises emanating from these economic contradictions result in two counteractive forces. Suppose one of these forces propels changes in favour of social revolution, as Marx has predicted. In that case, the other counters such force by directing changes to preserve the existing class-based, fragmented social, through specific immediate crisis alleviation techniques. Harvey's arguments regarding capital switching constitute one such technique whereby, in the interest of retaining the supremacy of the capitalist power, the operational practice of capital circulation is

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Richard Hyman, "Strategy or Structure? Capital, Labour and Control," *Work, Employment and Society* 1, no. 1 (1987): 25–55; Christopher Kirkland, "The Trade Union Crisis of 1976–1979," in *The Political Economy of Britain in Crisis: Trade Unions and the Banking Sector*, Building a Sustainable Political Economy: SPERI Research & Policy (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 53–103.

¹¹ Amrita Basu, "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon: The CPI(M) in West Bengal," in *Parties and Party Politics in India*, ed. Zoya Hasan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 317–50; Ritanjan Das and Zaad Mahmood, "Contradictions, Negotiations and Reform: The Story of Left Policy Transition in West Bengal," *Journal of South Asian Development* 10, no. 2 (2015): 199–229.

¹² Subhash C. Ray, "The Political Economy of Decline of Industry in West Bengal: Experiences of a Marxist State Within a Mixed Economy," *University Of Connecticut*, Department of Economics Working Paper Series, Working Paper 2011-10 (2011).

¹³ Kirkland, "Introduction."

changed, and the crisis-enmeshed capital is switched from the primary circuit of the industrial sphere to the secondary circuit of the built environment, triggering a series of land-use policy changes in the process.¹⁴ As noted in the selected case studies, the incidences of land-use conversion reinforce the process of such preservation at the cost of legality, livelihood security and survival. According to Kevin Lynch, social and physical landscapes are complementary to one another.¹⁵ They influence each other through the actions and attitudes of people, which often makes it difficult to disentangle their combined outcomes. Thus, while policy transformations facilitate physical changes in space, social transformations ensue, with the impacted victims resorting to different modes of survival.¹⁶ They create new politics of power, which enable them to gain presence in the city, even if they do not get necessarily empowered, as Sassen has implicated,¹⁷ and in doing so, these people relentlessly counter the aimed narrative of the supposedly transformed, designed urban spaces.¹⁸

Capital, labour and Trade Union

The notion of 'economic life' has primarily been the construct of capitalism. In the sense that changes to material life on account of the accumulative process of profit appropriation introduced an altered dimension of, and distinguished the materiality of life experienced during the pre-capitalist era. The overwhelming dependence of this materiality on the socio-economic relations of profit appropriation has come to dominate such notion of economic life. Following Marx, scholars like Jameson and Schumpeter have greatly emphasised the dynamic character of capitalism, and it is the fueling element of technology that drives such dynamism.¹⁹ Schumpeter holds the technological "mutation" to "revolutionise the economic structure [of capitalism] from

¹⁴ David Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2, no. 1–3 (1978): 101–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.1978.tb00738.x>.

¹⁵ Kevin Lynch, "But Is a General Normative Theory Possible?," in *Good City Form* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: MIT Press, 1984), 99–108.

¹⁶ Partha Chatterjee, "Chapter Three: The Politics of the Governed," in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 53–78.

¹⁷ Saskia Sassen, "Cities Help Us Hack Formal Power Systems," in *Architecture and the Social Sciences Inter- and Multidisciplinary Approaches between Society and Space* (Springer, 2017), 3–11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53477-0_1.

¹⁸ Saskia Sassen, "Does the City Have Speech?," *Public Culture* 25, no. 2 70 (2013): 209–21.

¹⁹ Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, 1984, 53–92.

within."²⁰ For such "mutation" not only influences the market by creating new consumer goods, but also potentially refurbishes the entire range of industrial organisations. Market, on the other hand, has a reinforcing impact on technology by inducing competition within the production sphere, eventually diluting the profit margin. Schumpeter emphasises,

the competition from the new commodity, the new technology, the new source of supply, the new type of organi[s]ation...competition which commands a decisive cost or quality advantage and which strikes not at the margins of the profits and the outputs of the existing firms but at their foundations and their very lives.²¹

Such foundational impacts could be observed in Detroit when the emergence of an alternate technology offering "cost and quality advantage" in Japan partially led to the decline of the former's automobile industry with a significant change in lives. When each changing technology, through its refurbishment of industrial organisation, substitutes the previous set of labour requirements, it brings about a potential shift in the social set-up. It is this connection between economy and social that Doreen Massey bolsters when she puts forward the central argument of her book, *Spatial Divisions of Labour*, as "economic space [being] the product of the differentiated and intersecting social relations of the economy."²²

Thus, when a new technology in terms of plastic, notably transparent plastics of the thermoplastic group with greater durability and flexibility, came up, it led to sustained gaps between the productive capacity and the demands in the glass production sector, causing a gradual decline in the profit margins of the concerned industries from the case studies. Over time, the decline culminated to a point where the running of production operations was no longer profitable. This, in turn, resulted in either unscrupulous tendencies, as in the case of Annapurna Glass Works, which was alleged to be evading its excise tax for long, or complete termination of production such as the Krishna. Likewise, the capture of the fountain pen market by the ball-pointers over time was influential in deterring the operational process of Sulekha Ink production. The redundancy of

²⁰ Joseph Alois Schumpeter, "The Process of Creative Destruction," in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (USA: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 83.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

²² Doreen Massey, "The Issues," in *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production* (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1995), 1.

technology involved in these replacement processes has, therefore, initiated a series of industrial reorganisations through spatial reconfigurations of the relations of production, much the same way Massey and Schumpeter have predicted. Caught up in a similar fix of "cost and quality advantage", the mighty production of Bengal Lamps too suffered at the expense of the proliferation of its small-scale competitors. Their use of simple techniques went far ahead in meeting the cost-effective mass supply needs of the public. Marx has defined relations of production as the relation of ownership of the means of production- reflected in the perpetual conflict between labour and capital.²³ Any disruption in the process of retaining this capitalist ownership triggers changes in the industrial organisation, which may often take spatial form. The redundancy caused in the production of glass, ink or lamps to the concerned factory owners, owing to technological imperatives and innovations, occasioned similar disruptions in their authoritative process of retaining control over the relations of production. The cumulative losses not only fiscally constrained the factory owners, but also indicated their loosening grip over the labour force, which led to the ensuing exercise of industrial reorganisation, wherein the ink or glass production was terminated to be eventually replaced by alternate types of production, i.e., the production of built environment, with exceeding market value, as evident in the form of residential entities like Ekta and Devaloke, and commercial set-up like Senco Jewellery, implying different outcomes on the existing social. The resultant outcome not only enabled the owners of Annapurna and Sulekha to acquire their share of profit through the sale of the land, but that too at the expense of labour compensation. Thus, Massey's "spatial organisation [or reorganisation] of relations of production" in producing economic space not only corresponds within individual industrial sectors, but also across the varied industrial sectors, entailing spatial "reworkings" in the process, either through land-use change or functional division of labour, to essentially "reproduce" the "class relations of capitalist production".²⁴

Conforming to the Marxist idea of production as a social process, Massey urges us to consider factors like industrial organisation, locational distribution, shift, and the changes in labour process

²³ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I. The Process of Capitalist Production*, trans. Fowkes Ben (London: Penguin Books and New Left Review, 1976).

²⁴ Doreen Massey, "Social Relations and Spatial Organisation," in *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*, ed. Doreen Massey (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1995), 15; Massey, "The Issues," 3.

within the broader context of the conflict between labour and capital.²⁵ Changes in technology and its associated labour process are, therefore, all a part of this play of conflict, employed by the profit-motivated capitalist class to reestablish their control over the production process. For it is not always needed and does not emanate from the search for a technologically superior solution, but essentially from the class conscience of the capitalists, which perpetually drives them to seek a supreme role in the production process, guaranteed by the integration of separate tasks performed by the specialised labour into a productive, marketable whole.²⁶ Thus, when Usha Sewing Machine production was abandoned in Kolkata to be continued in Ludhiana, the locational shift in the production was undertaken in the interest of such capitalist control. Ludhiana's cost and working conditions were found favourable compared to Kolkata primarily on the ground of facilitated availability of contractual labour. The shift, however, had been step-wise. At first, during the 1980s, the manufacture and assemblage of the sewing machine parts in the Kolkata unit were replaced by only assemblage of the already manufactured parts from elsewhere, to be ultimately terminated in 2001. Such a shift in the practice of production from manufacture to merely an assemblage of the parts was achieved principally based on the functional division of labour. It impacted the labour force in the Kolkata unit by initially freezing recruitment during the 1980s and then through its final shutdown, involving Voluntary Retirement Service. The subsequent phenomenon has not only allowed the management to cheapen the production process, but also control it by gaining the power to regulate productivity in response to the market demand for sewing machines. Marx acknowledged this means of power acquisition through functional division of labour by the bourgeois as a strategy to centralise authority. He reflects, "[t]he division of labour within manufacture presupposes a concentration of the means of production in the hands of one capitalist...it implies the undisputed authority of the capitalist over men, who are merely the members of a total mechanism which belongs to him."²⁷ While Massey has called this process as "deskilling" of labour, a practice involved in the course of fragmentation and the consequent specialisation of tasks.²⁸ Thus, by making the workers' technical knowledge of the overall work process redundant, the capitalists seek a refurbishment of industrial organisation, often manifesting

²⁵ Massey, "Social Relations and Spatial Organisation."

²⁶ Stephen Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do? The Origins and Functions of Hierarchy in Capitalist Production, Part I," *The Review of Radical Political Economics* 6, no. 2 (1974): 60–112.

²⁷ Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I. The Process of Capitalist Production*, 476.

²⁸ Massey, "Social Relations and Spatial Organisation," 32.

spatial implications, such as the locational shift of the sewing machine production from Kolkata to Ludhiana, to reaffirm the supremacy of capital at the expense of extreme restriction of labour independence.²⁹

However, Marglin points out that this division of labour is not a product of only capitalist society, but is inherent in all complex societies.³⁰ He draws his argument from the traditional Hindu society, whereby occupational division of labour has been based upon caste segregation since its inception. But he contends that the problem with the contemporary capitalist system lies in its intricate nature of the occupational division of labour, which entails such minute specialisation, that it eventually robs the labour of the capacity for independent production, leaving them entirely dependent upon the capitalist to access the market. He speaks of this capitalist strategy of control as "divide and conquer", whereby the capitalist deliberately effect such division by creating occupational hierarchies in the process and works ceaselessly to retain the hierarchy, because in the absence of the specialised division, the capitalist would have no role to play in the production process. His sole function of integrating the parts into the whole would no longer be a necessity if the workers or the producers acquired the skill of such integration. They, in that case, would then directly access the market without the intermediation of the capitalist. Hyman's study on the strategies of managerial control of labour underlines that direction, surveillance and disciplinary subordination are the key instruments of different strategies of labour control.³¹ On account of such a deliberative strategy of labour control, the social hierarchy under capitalism is rigid, where the capitalist class consciously prevents mobility up the social hierarchy. On the flip side, the specialised division of labour introduced several hierarchies within the bifurcated structure of capitalism. The different tasks performed by different types of workers not only create hierarchies within the production sphere of bourgeois and proletariat but, since the production process is reflective of the social structure, superimposes the same hierarchical structure on the society as a whole.³²

Within the bifurcated production structure of bourgeois and proletariat, the role of a trade union, as Marx has posited, as an organised body concerned with inculcating the knowledge of "class

²⁹ Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do?"; Massey, "Social Relations and Spatial Organisation."

³⁰ Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do?"

³¹ Hyman, "Strategy or Structure?"

³² Massey, "Social Relations and Spatial Organisation."

consciousness" to the workers, is discernable.³³ But with the increased specialisation of tasks and growing hierarchical divisions among the workers, the role of a trade union becomes exceedingly challenging, as each of such divisions is involved in paradoxical terms of exploitation and control concerning its position within the hierarchy. The emergence of new forms of labour with different degrees of autonomy has fractured the working-class culture prevalent during the times of industrial capitalism, by introducing new tiers to the class structure and impacting the relevance of trade unionism in the process. Their differing experiences concerning employment, working conditions, and social status become incompatible with the overall operational process of the trade unions. Such fragmentation of the class structure is, therefore, instrumental in producing conflicts of interest within different classes of labour, resulting in trust issues regarding the legibility of the union motives, as evident from the incidences of some of the prominent Jute Mills in Bengal.³⁴ V.L Allen stresses loyalty in gearing the united action of the trade union.³⁵ Conflicting interests among the different levels of workers question the accountability of the union leaders. Similar instances could be traced during the lockout of Sulekha Ink Factory in Jadavpur, when the workers accused the union leaders of practising favouritism while determining and allocating the compensation amount post the sale of the land. Or even during the sale of the Garia factory land of Dabur, when a section of the Dabur Mazdur Union was alleged to be colluding with the management in facilitating the sale, thereby deliberately weakening the union influence towards resisting it. Allen argues that the overwhelming expectations attached to the role of the trade union leaders often leave their actions open to misinterpretation. But at the same time, he maintains that by virtue of their relationship with the employers, these leaders exercise a fair amount of power, the evaluation of which is best done by the regular members during their daily interaction. He marks,

On the whole the union leaders' behavior with employers and the effects of meeting them frequently are hidden from the purview of ordinary trade unionists and the member who dislikes his general secretary is left with much scope for imaginative creation. The public

³³ Pravin J. Patel, "Trade Union Participation and Development of Class-Consciousness," *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 36 (1994): 2368–77.

³⁴ Sarath Davala, "Independent Trade Unionism in West Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 52 (1996): L44–49.

³⁵ V. L. Allen, "The Ethics of Trade Union Leaders," *The British Journal of Sociology* 7, no. 4 (1956): 314–36.

activities of the general secretaries, however, can be assessed more accurately by ordinary members because they are more easily observed.³⁶

However, such loyalty issues may also emanate from the penetrating influence of political leadership having their own ideological conflicts. A study on the cement industry in Andhra Pradesh demonstrates how the unhealthy intrusion of political leaders within trade unions can lead to groupism and internal factionalism, ultimately diluting its efficacy in addressing labour grievances.³⁷ Dabur Mazdoor Union too, stood alleged on similar grounds of increased intra-group differences, which resulted in a strong feeling of distrust among the workers and its members towards the conduct of the office bearers. The harmful interference of the political leaders not only leads to biased decisions often regarding internal union functioning and leadership, but also impacts its collective bargaining power, causing a hostile environment within the union.³⁸ Growing disapproval towards the General Secretary of the Dabur Mazdoor Union post the sale of the factory land in Garia, owing to sectarian politics of intra-party lobbyism, triggered increased tension within the union, eventually leading to a democratic change in the union body. Marglin held trade unions to be the outcomes of the society, such that any changes within it are reflective of the societal operations. In the light of this view, the overarching politico-economic aspirations related to the emerging variants of divisional class values have had severe repercussions contributing to the growing instability of the trade unions.

Reconstruction of city spaces

During the 1980s and early 1990s, when the mounting pressures of weakening profit margins engulfed these industrial units against the fused backdrop of declining industrial viability of West Bengal and the incipient logic of liberalisation by the state, the material sanctity of the concerned industrial land increased manifold. Not only was the land viewed as the liberator for the crisis-enmeshed capital, but its prospects of inducing speculative investments were also noted with great

³⁶ Ibid, 318.

³⁷ D. Masthan, L. Venugopal Reddy, and B. Ramachandra Reddy, "Political Leadership in Unions: Helpful or Harmful?," *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations* 31, no. 1 (1995): 91–105.

³⁸ M. V. D. Bogaert, "Dynamics of Political Unionism - A Study of Calcutta Dock Unions," *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations* 4, no. 2 (1968): 99–214.

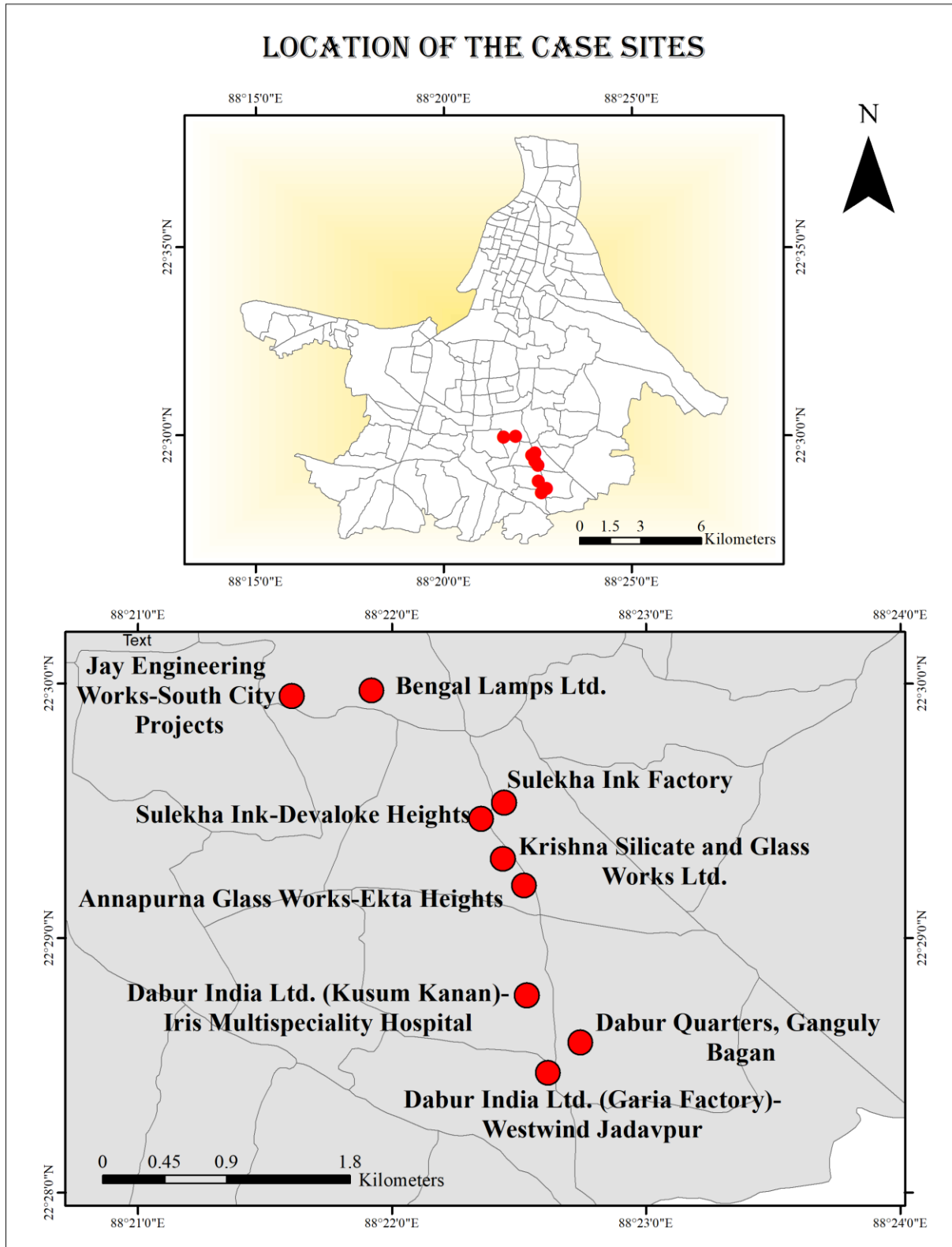


Figure 6.1. Map showing the location of the case studies in and around Jadavpur, Kolkata.

enthusiasm. Such development was particularly crucial in light of the state's changing planning agenda, which, post the adoption of the New Economic Policy, introduced several budgetary provisions in pursuit of urban reforms.³⁹ Their cumulative boost in reconstructing cities was focused mainly on the proliferation of real estate and the visibility of large urban infrastructural projects in terms of skyscrapers, flyovers, shopping malls, metros, or airports, as evident from the experiences of JNNURM. The efficacy of these projects was foregrounded in their capacity not only to match contemporary global standards, but also to bring back the colonial practices of civilised place-making.⁴⁰ The increased reliance of these projects on monopolising spaces in remaking cities, particularly with respect to the cities like Kolkata and Mumbai, having their individual history of industrial departure, has narrowed the entirety of urban discourse to a skewed set of profit-enriching economic motives through the embrace of global capital, apart from ensuring as Partha Chatterjee says "the security and stability of home for the Indian middle-class."⁴¹ Thus, given these pursuits of post-industrial valorisation of aestheticised city space restructuring, a marketable realisation of the former industrial land, as in the case of the Mumbai mill land⁴² or the industrial units pertaining to the case studies, is illustrative of the shifting focus of the urban policy discourse from public housing to the housing of "glocal"⁴³ projects as a part of the world-wide networked economy, championed under the nexus of real estate capital, a clustering group of the emerging middle-class, and the state.

The marketable exercise involved in such land-use conversion implements the transformation of a gamut of spatial settings, bringing about a concomitant change in the socio-economic landscape of the area, geared to promote indelible creations in the name of local boosterism. Given Kolkata's average low-rise residential morphology, these initiatives like the Westwind, Ekta, Devaloke or South City, often manifesting their sky-reaching aspirations, indeed create a lasting contrast to

³⁹ For details, see Lalit Batra, "A Review of Urbanisation and Urban Policy in Post-Independent India," Working Paper Series (New Delhi: Centre for the study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2009).

⁴⁰ For details on colonial practices of city making, see Anthony D. King, "Exporting 'Planning': The Colonial and Neo-Colonial Experience," *Urbanism Past & Present*, no. 5 (1977): 12–22; Howard Spodek, "City Planning in India under British Rule," *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 4 (2013): 53–61.

⁴¹ Partha Chatterjee, "Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois At Last?," in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 141.

⁴² Dwiparna Chatterjee and D. Parthasarathy, "Gentrification and Rising Urban Aspirations in the Inner City: Redefining Urbanism in Mumbai," in *Sustainable Urbanization in India: Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. Jenia Mukherjee, Exploring Urban Change in South Asia (Singapore: Springer, 2018), 239–55.

⁴³ Neil Brenner, "Global Cities, Glocal States: Global City Formation and State Territorial Restructuring in Contemporary Europe," *Review of International Political Economy* 5, no. 1 (1998): 1–37.

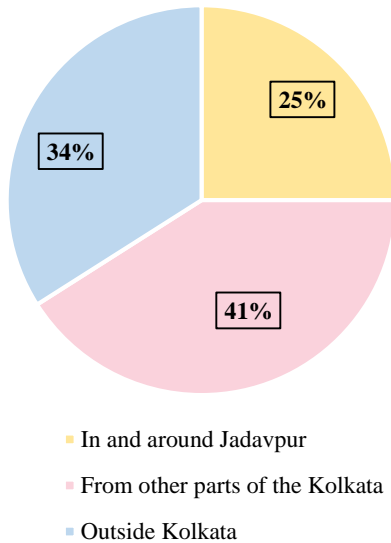


Figure 6.2. Share of residents in Devaloke Fort, based on immediate previous place of residence. Data from questionnaire survey, February 2021. (N=26)

the entire gamut of recently developed retail establishments, has somehow managed to render the historical anecdote of the area into oblivion. The resultant visual landscape, bustling with emerging commercial entities, is too fluid to hold into account that many hawkers of the adjacent Sukanta Bazaar are ex-factory workers. Strained by the compulsions of livelihood, these workers grabbed onto whatever faint chances life threw their way, after the closure of Sulekha factory (Figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3. *Left*, Sulekha Junction with Devaloke Fort against the backdrop; *right*, Sukanta Setu Bazaar located adjacent to the Sulekha Ink Factory and Devaloke apartments. Photographs taken during field survey in September 2021.

their surrounding landscape. The replacement of the redundant factory units with these gated apartments and other private and commercial entities superimposes micro images of a seemingly ordered, clean, west-dominated notion of sophisticated living on the existing landscape of ambiguous and often contested living arrangements prevalent in the city. The development of these projects has not only ruptured the original identity of the concerned areas but has also created disruptive narratives of the same. The sparkling facade of the Devaloke, housing the new middle-class entrants to the area (Figure 6.2), together with

Likewise, the spectacle of South City conceals its implicit role in stirring the internal ruptures of the existing neighbourhood. Its old residents no longer feel connected to the area, amidst the showy pomp of the mega project and the presence of "the new rich," that it has brought in.⁴⁴ The changing spatial character of the area, with facilitated transportation, has been magnanimously supported by an increased proportion of modern parlours, eateries, and contemporary shops brandishing global and high-end Indian brands. Their coalescing footprints have spiralled the land value in and around Jadavpur and the neighbouring Jodhpur Park (Table 6.1 and 6.2), transforming its inherent residential structure. In response, many of the old inhabitants, especially in the neighbouring colony area of Bikramgarh, Azadgarh, and Katjunagar have redeveloped their property into residential apartments, whose individual dwelling units were subsequently sold to the new residents.

The land value has increased tremendously over the years, Bikramgarh is now packed with apartments. With such development, the old residents have moved out, while new people have moved in. The area has become so new that we, the locals, have become unknown to the place. We, too, have redeveloped our house into an apartment and retained our unit. However, since we already sold the other units, we hardly get to know if the current owner sells it to any third person, even though the land originally belonged to us.⁴⁵

South City has changed everything, previously, only a single bus (Numbered 37) used to cover the area, now it is one of the most affluent and prime sites of South Kolkata; all the VIPs reside here. Business opportunities have improved to a great extent. It has a lot to offer to the younger generation. But for us, the aged ones, the rising chaos is overwhelming. I want to move out of this commotion, however, my son is unwilling.⁴⁶

Considering the socio-spatial configuration and functionality of urbanisation, Harvey asserted:

Urbanisation also throws up certain institutional arrangements, legal forms, political and administrative systems, hierarchies of power, and the like. These, too, give a "city" objectified qualities that may dominate daily practices and confine subsequent courses of

⁴⁴ Leela Fernandes, "The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India," *Urban Studies* 41, no. 12 (2004): 2415–30.

⁴⁵ Subbir Jana, male, 71, and Manasi Jana, female, 63 (Husband and Wife), residents of Bikramgarh, during personal interview, Kolkata, August 19, 2021.

⁴⁶ Dipankar Halder, male, 69, resident of Bikramgarh, during personal interview, Kolkata, August 19, 2021 David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 6.

action. And, finally, the consciousness of urban inhabitants is affected by the environment of experience out of which perceptions, symbolic readings, and aspirations arise. In all of these respects there is a perpetual tension between form and process, between object and subject, between activity and thing. It is as foolish to deny the role and power of objectifications, the capacity of things we create to return to us as so many forms of domination...

Thus, when the changing "institutional arrangements" of land-use conversion enabled the development of the South City Project to import the materiality of the 'globalised' urban to South Kolkata, defining new legalities of urban land, the structural dichotomy between the new South City towers and the existing residences spilt out to illustrate the "hierarchies of power," dictating the contrasting "daily practices" surrounding the new and the old residents of the area. The veracity of the consequent disruptive narrative of the site is, therefore, palpable through "a perpetual tension between form and processes," which dominates the anonymity of the neighbourhood and the lifestyle choices, thereby informing the conscience of the old residents of their subjective differences and their perception of the place.

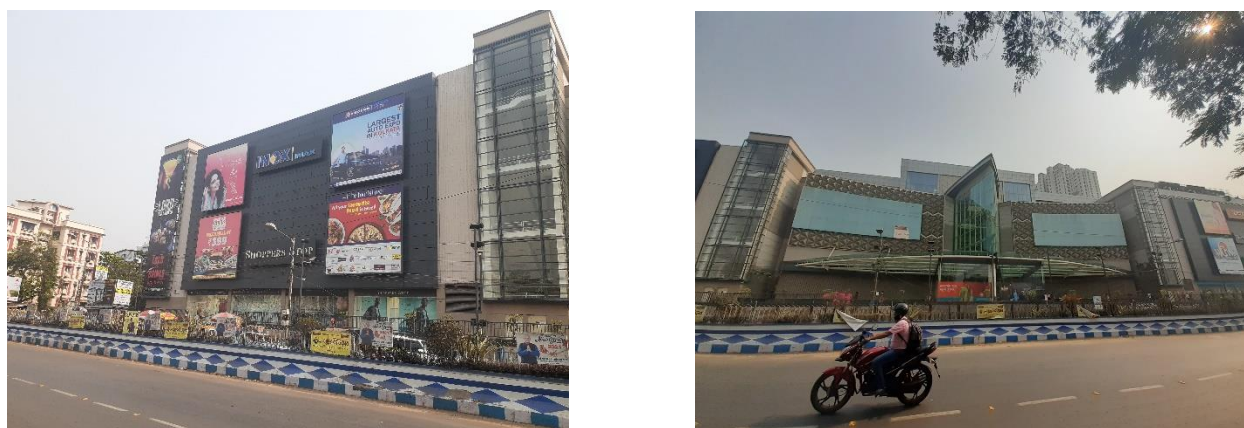


Figure 6.4. South City Mall. Photographs taken during field survey in March 2021.

Table 6.1. Land rates in selected places of Kolkata

| Land Rate/Cottah | Price |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Jodhpur Park | 80-100 Lakhs |
| Jadavpur | 50-80 Lakhs |
| Saltlake | 50-55 Lakhs |
| VIP Road | 45-60 Lakhs |
| Tollygunje | 35-50 Lakhs |

Source: NK Realtors, *Real Ties: Kolkata's only real estate Magazine*, vol. 9, 3, 2013.



C. P. Tiwari, Secretary, South City Apartments Owners Association, explains what makes South City a mini-township. Equipped with its own water treatment plant, water body, sewerage treatment plant and drainage system, among others, it has transformed the very dynamics of living in gated complexes.



Figure 6.5. Flyers depicting the ‘all-embracing’ capacity of the South City Project. NK Realtors, *Real Ties: Kolkata’s only real estate Magazine*, vol. 10, 2, 2014, 16-18.

Table 6.2. High-End Residential Prices, 2013 and 2014

| High-End Residential (2013) |
|--|
| Category A+ (Rs. 4 crores and above) |
| Gurusaday Road, B.C Road, Mayfair Road, Ballygunje Park Road, Ballygunje Park, Queens Park, Sunny Park, Alipore, Theatre Road, Southern Avenue |
| Category A (Rs. 1.5-4 crores) |
| Ballygunje Place, Palm Avenue, Palm Place, Ballygunje Phari, Gariahat, Mandeville Gardens, Bhowanipore, New Alipore, EM Bypass, Kankurgachi, Tollygunje, Prince Anwar Shah Road, Jodhpur Park , Topsia. |

Source: NK Realtors, *Real Ties: Kolkata’s only real estate Magazine*, vol. 9, 3, 2013, 24.

| High-End Residential (2014) |
|--|
| Category A+ (Rs. 4 crores and above) |
| Gurusaday Road, B.C Road, Mayfair Road, Mayfair Road, Ballygunje Park Road, Ballygunje Park, Queens Park, Sunny Park, Alipore, Theatre Road, Southern Avenue, Camac Street, Elgin Road |
| Category A (Rs. 1.5-4 crore) |
| Ballygunje Place, Palm Avenue, Palm Place, Ballygunje Phari, Gariahat, Mandeville Gardens, Bhowanipore, New Alipore, EM Bypass, Kankurgachi, Tollygunje, Prince Anwar Shah Road, Jodhpur Park , Topsia. |

Source: NK Realtors, *Real Ties: Kolkata’s only real estate Magazine*, vol. 10, 2, 2014, 44.

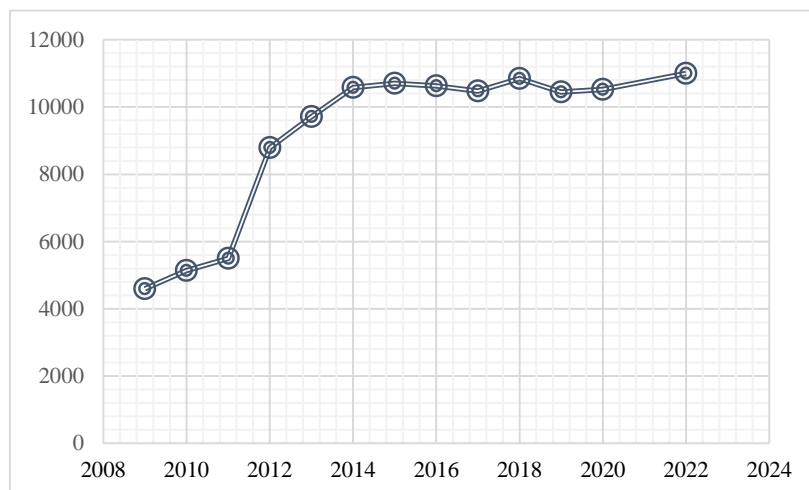


Figure 6.6. Price (per sq.ft.) of residential property in Prince Anwar Shah Road since the completion of South City Project in 2008. <https://www.magicbricks.com>

A distinct contributor to such perception is also produced through visuals- visuals driven by the principle of globalised repertoires of built-up forms, the outcomes of which are manifested through what Don Mitchell calls "deterritorialisation," in the homogeneity of urban spaces produced worldwide.⁴⁷ More than their aesthetical architecture, the tangibility of these spaces lies in their strength to light what Jameson phrases as the "cognitive map" of the inhabitants. The homogenised physicality of these high-end spaces enables its users to locate their position perceptually against their immediate surroundings.⁴⁸ To which he writes,

Surely this is exactly what the cognitive map is called upon to do, in the narrower framework of daily life in the physical city: to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of the city's structure as a whole.⁴⁹

Such "enabled situational representation" complements the users' feeling of 'exclusivity'. Likewise, the visuals and the imageries imparted from such spaces instil a conscience of difference among

⁴⁷ "Deterritorialisation" is meant to indicate the increased obscurring of global boundaries due to the unifying forces of cultural, economic and political realities. For details on "Deterritorialisation", see Donald Mitchell, "Geographies of Belonging? Nations, Nationalism, and Identity in an Era of "Deterritorialization," in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 273-74.

⁴⁸ I use the term 'users' purposefully, considering the highly consumable nature of these projects, which drives their design and the intent.

⁴⁹ Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," 90.

the old existing inhabitants. This resultant feeling of difference, which works mutually, thus not only splinters the space between the rich and the poor, but also devours the sociality of an existing neighbourhood upon which these escalated structures have been superimposed. Westwind Kolkata stands on one such neighbourhood. Besides the massive structure of this gated community, its practice of social exclusivity has left the space disconnected from the surrounding neighbourhood, where most of the inhabitants are either unaware or hesitant of its residents (Figure 6.9). The exclusivity of these gated communities demonstrated through their monopolising tendencies, either in terms of space or architectural structures, have brought back the colonial tradition of exhibition and assertion of power and might. Similar to the colonial rulers, who, post the defeat of the Mughals, assumed the authority to take over their practice of representations like *darbar*, these exclusive classes of the recent times, based on the power of their capital, have replaced the colonial ancestors in their display of power and pageantry.

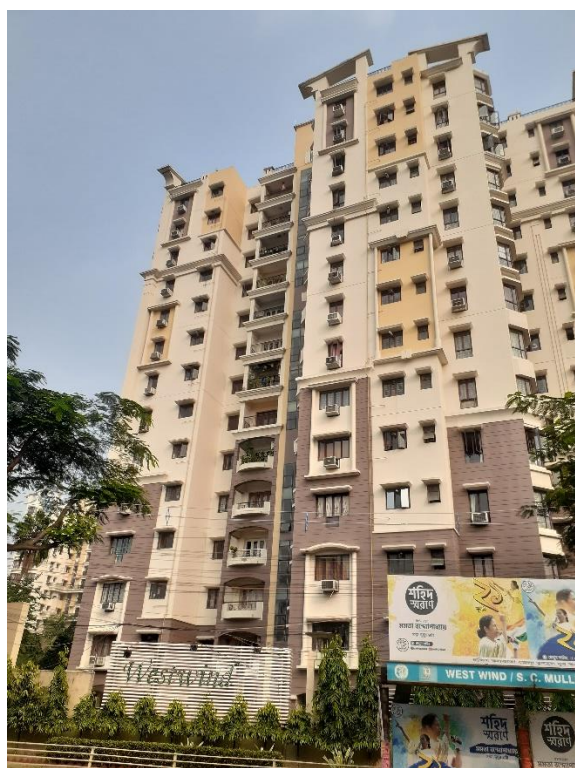


Figure 6.7. Westwind at the site of Dabur Garia Factory. Photograph taken during field survey in September 2021.



Figure 6.8. Iris Multispeciality Hospital, in Kusum Kanan (Dabur Warehouse) Photograph taken during field survey in September 2021.

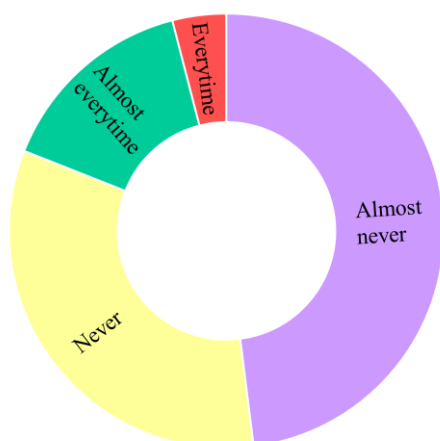


Figure 6.9. Response of the neighbouring inhabitants to how often do they speak with the Westwind residents. Data from questionnaire survey in March 2021. (N=27)

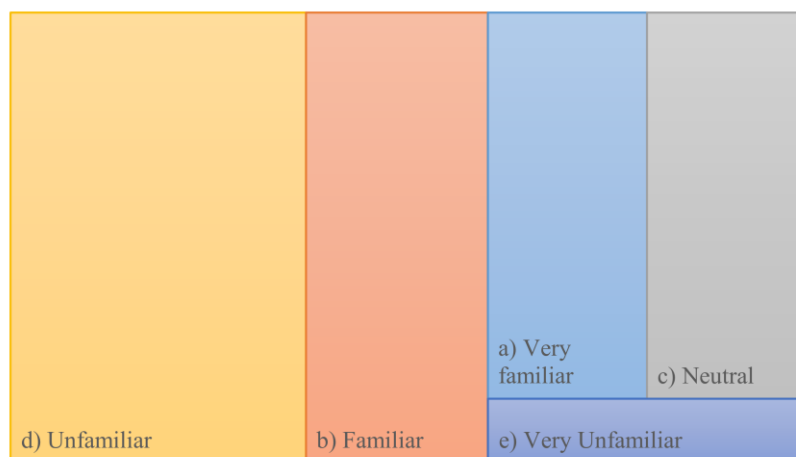


Figure 6.10. Response of the Ekta Heights residents to how familiar they are with the people outside their gated apartment. Data from questionnaire survey in March 2021. (N=34)

And it is the rippling impacts of such display that generate further "stimulations" in economic and social life, which Simmel has spoken about in relation to the multiplicity of a city's manifestations.⁵⁰ These stimulations have found logic not only in a variety of spaces, but also in their unrooted specificity from the history of the place, like the Iris Multispeciality Hospital or the South City International School. Their unrootedness lies in the fact that despite being located in neighbourhoods known for their years-long refugal struggle for inclusivity, the very heart of these institutions beats in an exclusionary rhythm of hierarchic power-based relations. Jameson calls this characteristic typical of consumer capitalism, which has caused "the entire contemporary social system...to live in a perpetual present."⁵¹ Thus, it is to be assumed that the enormity of these exclusive structures comes into full play only when they manage to ingrain these stimulations into the ways of life, such that it engenders a particular form of culture, as Mitchell puts it, "'culture' – like economic unity - is actively made. It is a product of the work of millions of people... [whose job is] to solidify ways of life in place, by showing us taste and style, by producing the images and

⁵⁰ Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Urban Sociology Reader*, ed. Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, 2nd ed., Urban Reader Series (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 23–31.

⁵¹ Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *Postmodern Debates*, ed. Simon Malpas (London: Macmillan Education UK, 2001), 33.

things by which we come to know ourselves and our place in the world."⁵² The highly designed detailings of these seemingly ordered spaces are, therefore, purposefully curated to symbolise and exude an archetypical way of life, turning it into a culture. The pursuit of which or even the harbouring of such aspirations focuses so much on the 'presentness' that it necessitates investments in the preference and use of the most contemporary forms of inevitabilities like education (international) and health care (privatised). This preferential practice of life, thus, proceeds through the "commodification of reality", which has reduced the notion of self-worth to a skewed set of class-based checkboxes, fueling the further course of stimulations through massive investments in the creation and re-creation of variegated spaces- fancy boutiques, cafes, and salons, much like the ones lined up in the South City Mall and on the road outside.⁵³

Such an exercise of recapitalising land through the manufacture of a space, which serves to represent "material and symbolic production" of consumption, forms the crux of spatial transformation here.⁵⁴ While some scholarly readings have termed this exercise under the process of 'gentrification,'⁵⁵ it is unanimously accepted that such a process in Global South not only does not conform to the western assumptions of its occurrence but also emerges from a different set of complexities.⁵⁶ Chatterjee and Parthasarathy have noted how relentless negotiation for better living by the working-class is intricately involved and co-exists with the spatial expressions of the aspirational elites in case of Mumbai's mill land gentrification. Similarly, Bhattachjee's work on Mulund demonstrates that the process's key assumption of displacement or replacement of the working-class is fuzzy, when applied to a multicultural, pluralistic society. The case studies mentioned here bear certain distinct similarities with the broad production-side and consumption-side theories of gentrification. The incurred losses by the industrial units and their subsequent shutdown and sale of the land can be assumed to follow the logic of capital flight, as forwarded by

⁵² Donald Mitchell, "From Values to Value and Back Again: The Political Economy of Culture," in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 83-84.

⁵³ Jon Goss, "The 'Magic of the Mall': An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, no. 1 (1993): 20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ See Sujayita Bhattacharjee, "Comprehending the Gentrification of a Suburb: The Case of Mulund, Mumbai," *GeoJournal* 86, no. 1 (2021): 133-43; Chatterjee and Parthasarathy, "Gentrification and Rising Urban Aspirations in the Inner City"; Tathagata Chatterji and Souvanic Roy, "Gentrification and Post-Industrial Spatial Restructuring in Calcutta, India," in *Gentrification around the World, Volume II*, trans. Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena, Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 269-88.

⁵⁶ See Chatterjee and Parthasarathy, "Gentrification and Rising Urban Aspirations in the Inner City"; Asher Ghertner, "India's Urban Revolution: Geographies of Displacement beyond Gentrification," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46, no. 7 (2014): 1554-71, <https://doi.org/10.1068/a46288>.

Ley and Smith, although under different circumstances.⁵⁷ However, as mentioned by Ghertner, Smith's locational assumption of inner city disinvestment carries little weightage in the process occurring here, especially in colonial cities like Kolkata, where the inner areas have always held the highest significance. Additionally, Kolkata's socio-spatial arrangement has been traditionally confounded, with the slums frequently accompanying the elite residences to discern any significant socio-spatial segregation and the consequent pattern of disinvestment.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, in all the redeveloped cases from the study, i.e., South City, Westwind, Devaloke and Ekta, there existed a "rent gap", as Smith has suggested, with significant differences between the ground rent incurred during the purchase of these land by the private entities and the one earned by them post their redevelopment into gated communities and shopping mall, entailing what Ghertner marks as "a reinvestment of capital in already once-capitali[s]ed urban spaces."⁵⁹

But considering Glass's original contention of creating privileged-class residences through the uproot of working-class quarters, it is difficult to term the overall transformation process in the case studies under the rubric of gentrification. Except for South City, which witnessed the destruction of a five-acre Jay Engineering Workers' quarter post the sale of the factory land, none of the remaining redevelopment projects relating to the case studies was necessarily undertaken at the cost of the displacement of the workers' quarters. While Sulekha Ink Factory (Devaloke Heights and Devaloke Fort) and Annapurna Glass (Ekta Heights) did not have any individual working-class quarters, the development of Westwind essentially took place on the site of the Dabur Factory, its quarters continue to stand vacant. However, this does not in any way belittle the austere character of such transformations, because, if not displacement, these projects have certainly caused the replacement of working-class space, i.e., the factory. More than any process,

⁵⁷ David Ley, "Alternative Explanations for Inner-City Gentrification: A Canadian Assessment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 76, no. 4 (1986): 521–35; Neil Smith, "Toward a Theory of Gentrification A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45, no. 4 (1979): 538–48.

⁵⁸ For details on spatial arrangement and segregation of residences in colonial Kolkata, see Sanjoy Chakravorty, "From Colonial City to Globalizing City? The Far-from-Complete Spatial Transformation of Calcutta," in *Globalizing Cities*, ed. Peter Marcuse and Ronald Van Kempen (USA; UK; Australia: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2000), 56–77, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470712887.ch4>; Swati Chattopadhyay, "The Limits of 'White' Town," in *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 76–135; Siddhartha Sen, "Colonizing Kolkata," in *Colonizing, Decolonizing, and Globalizing Kolkata* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 37–76.

⁵⁹ Ghertner, "India's Urban Revolution"; Smith, "Toward a Theory of Gentrification A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People."

such a type of spatial transformation is an attack on the very means of production.⁶⁰ The creation of spaces that it necessitates through the shift of capital from the industrial sphere to the built environment involves new mechanisms of production, whose means and use-value are not only beyond the control of the working-class, but are also increasingly coercive.⁶¹ Their coercive nature emanates from the "material and symbolic production" of consumption, which thrives on the emergence of such a culture that helps maintain the symmetry of this latest phase of consumer capitalism by implicating pressure and competition.⁶² For instance, the emergence of these gated communities, promoting enhanced amenity-filled quality of life and facilitative access to myriad forms of consumption, and their overwhelming dissemination through advertising media bear the power to influence people in ways that its aspiration might encourage a clerk to accept hostile and stressful work conditions. Such an act of coercion by changing the production mechanism through the claiming and replacement of working-class space with innovative, class-based, aspirational spaces of consumption lies at the heart of this form of spatial transformation.

While Bengal Lamps awaits such transformation, as evident from the former efforts towards involving the real estate developers in determining its alternate land-use, only time can tell what the state plans to do with Krishna Glass land. With its ownership directly lying to the state, any such decision can be consequential on the area's social fabric. Decades of abandonment post the closure of the industrial units have already altered the character of these industrial land, turning them into scrubland. Other decisions with regard to the realisation of their use-value will involve a further transformation of their character.

⁶⁰ According to Marx, means of production denotes the process by which the workers make use of the production instruments and raw materials to produce the use-value of the commodities. In other words, it indicates the extent of control the workers, who are the direct producers, can exercise over the production of the use-value of the commodities. He noted that this extent of control would vary according to the different modes of production, i.e., the regime of an economic system. For instance, under the feudal mode of production, the direct producers of the land, i.e., the peasants, even in the absence of their legal ownership of the land, exercised control over the manner of cultivation of agricultural produce on the land. However, under the capitalist mode of production, it is the capitalist class that owns and controls the means of production by alienating the workers from the production process. David Gartman, "Marx and the Labor Process."

⁶¹ Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism"; Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I. The Process of Capitalist Production*.

⁶² Donald Mitchell, "Metaphors to Live By: Landscapes as Systems of Social Reproduction," in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 121–44; Goss, "The 'Magic of the Mall,'" 20.

Role of the State

Changing production mechanisms impact the associated social to manifest the spatial realities in favour of the privileged class, whose increased domination in the social structure is directly related to the politico-economic interests of the state under the neoliberal regime. Attraction and retention of such a class have become a conscious strategy of the entrepreneurial government involved in a constant quest to further its revenue base.⁶³ It is viewed as one of the prime ways of survival for the state and its cities, especially in the liberalised context of the economy, in which the market and its practising agent, the private entities, have been accorded precedence in funding the state finances. Such transformed economic structure of the state has, therefore, helped consolidate the class in ownership of capital to work in favour of their aligned interests through the functionalities of the state instruments. The active mediation of the state in this "class-project"⁶⁴ is often conspicuous in the manipulation of laws, relaxation of rules, disregard of liabilities, and creation of corporatised benefits, which cumulatively reinforce the class-based politics to "construct and reconstruct categories of legitimacy and illegitimacy."⁶⁵

The case of the South City project can be contextualised within the framework of such redefined legality. When the 31.14 acres Jay Engineering land on Prince Anwar Shah Road went up for sale, the advertisement for the same on Economic Times, dated 27th of January 2001, claimed:

Approximately 31.14 acres of prime land consisting of freehold (approx.28.28 acres), leasehold (approx. 1.55 acres with unexpired period of roughly 950 years which is transferable) and a waterbody (approx. 1.31 acres) located on the double carriageway of Prince Anwar Shah Road bounded by boundary walls on eastern, western and northern sides. On the southern side, the land is bounded by boundary wall/ water body. The entire land is held by the Jay Engineering Works Ltd. [JEWL] (Company) and is available for sale on 'AS IS WHERE IS' basis.⁶⁶

The aforementioned water body of 1.3 acres was originally a part of a lake known as the

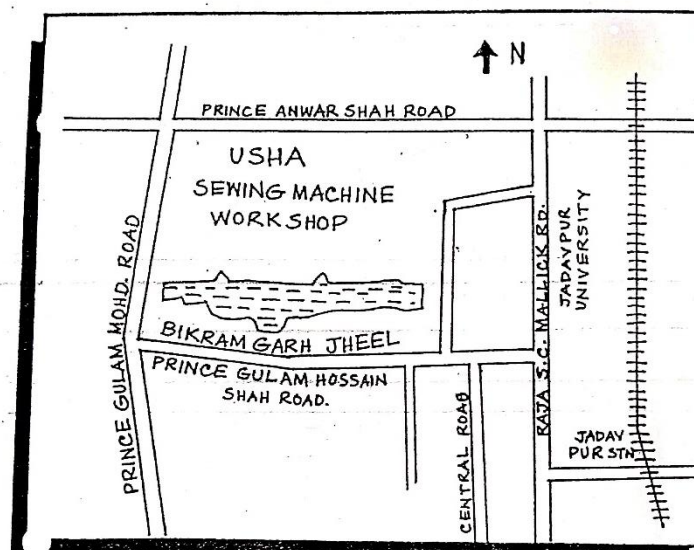
⁶³ See Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith, "The Changing State of Gentrification," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 92, no. 4 (2001): 464–77; Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism."

⁶⁴ David Harvey, Their crisis, our challenge, March 15, 2009, <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/Their-crisis-our-challenge/>.

⁶⁵ Ananya Roy, "Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71, no. 2 (2005): 149.

⁶⁶ Vasundhara, *South City Controversy: Selected Documents* (Kolkata, 2008).

Bikramgarh Jheel. Bikramgarh, a neighbourhood situated between Jadavpur and Tollygunje is located in KMC ward number 93. Sprawling over an area of about 7 acres, the Bikramgarh Jheel is one of the largest water bodies in the southern part of the city (Figure 6.11). Although, over the years, the jheel has been subjected to gradual encroachment by the nearby residences, this unique mix of wetland and waterbody supports a vibrant ecosystem. Its western part is rich with aquatic plants, and weeds, creating a niche for the birds and the fishes here.



SAVE BIKRAMGARH JHEEL NOW

Figure 6.11. Vasundhara leaflet showing the location of the Bikramgarh Jheel and the adjoining erstwhile Usha Factory (Jay Engineering Works Ltd.). Vasundhara, South City *Controversy: Selected Documents*, (Kolkata, 2008).

When the land was sold, and the construction of the mini township was initiated in 2003, the state granted the project proponent the right to fill-up the 1.31 acres water body within the factory premises, on the condition of creating an alternative waterbody of 1.4 acres, for which the latter was provided to execute a guarantee of 20 lakhs. However, this permission was modified in 2005, when the West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) allowed the South City developers to proceed with the closure of the waterbody before the creation of any alternative one. By mid-2004, while the developers were halfway through the closure, no requisite measures were adopted even

to identify an area for the alternate pond. On 2nd of January, 2006, when Vasundhara Foundation, a Kolkata-based environmental organisation filed a complaint to the Chief Minister and the WBPCB, an investigation was ordered towards the same, whereby the WBPCB sent an independent committee to the site. The committee survey report stated that besides the partial fill-up of the jheel, there was no clear boundary demarcating the portion of the jheel falling within the factory premises. It also reported that in addition to the 1.3 acres, there had been a further encroachment of approximately 1 acre of the waterbody area, of which 0.4 acre have already been reclaimed for the construction of the third and fourth towers of the residential project. Accordingly, the committee recommended the immediate suspension of the South City Project and the demolition of the towers that came up on the illegally reclaimed land. Nonetheless, the project continued, quashing Vasundhara's appeal to the Kolkata High Court on the ground of delayed objection.

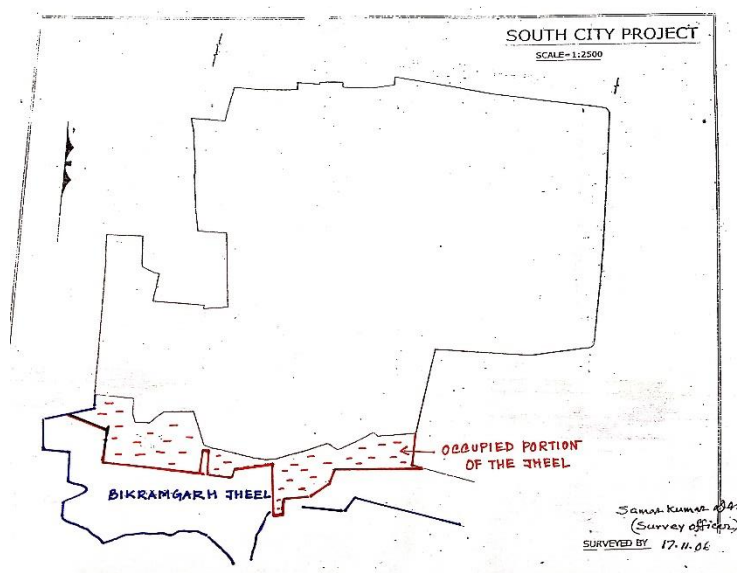


Figure 6.12. Map showing the portion of the Bikramgarh Jheel occupied by South City Project. Image scanned from the data collected during field survey in March 2021. Vasundhara, *South City Controversy: Selected Documents*, (Kolkata, 2008).



Figure 6.13. Southern part of the South City township overlooking a part of the remaining portion of the Bikramgarh Jheel flooded with aquatic plants. Photograph taken during field survey in March 2021.

Such an exercise of redefined legality whereby the state environmental department and the pollution control board not only manipulated its own conditions and allowed the partial fill-up of

one of the largest water body in the heart of the city, but also protected the interests of the developers by conditioning them to pay a mere amount of 20 lakhs, amidst a scenario, when the land price of the Prince Anwar Shah area had been soaring high, demonstrates the class politics in urban governance. The relaxation of the rules pertaining to the encroachment of the waterbody and non-creation of an alternate one are only some of the many instances enacted by the entrepreneurial state to, in Harvey's words, "lure highly mobile and flexible production, financial and consumption flows into space."⁶⁷ Roy has called this discretionary power of the government, whereby it can define the terms of legalities and illegalities at its own will, depending on the speculative advantages, as a type of governance. It allows the state to "unmap" certain areas, to redefine their legalities.⁶⁸ The fill-up of the waterbody and its further encroachment had been possible under such an exercise of unmapping, which has sanctioned the state to consider it under a separate category whose legal use can be manipulated. And in all these instances, the state's role is a "deeply informali[s]ed one, [in] that it actively utili[s]e informality as an instrument of both accumulation and authority."⁶⁹ Besides the above-noted recommendations, the independent committee report of the WBPCB also advocated for the suspension of the concerned officers who authorised the fill-up of the waterbody; however, post the dismissal of the case, nothing has been known further about this action. The class politics of urban governance, therefore, lies in cordoning and even preserving the illegalities of market entities having high aesthetic values like gated communities or shopping malls while visibilising and censuring the illegalities of the poor because here, the neoliberal aspirations of global integration make the image factor supersede the legal factor.⁷⁰

Impacts on livelihood

India's integration with the global economy has necessitated the accommodation of the upmarket lifestyle of the privileged class at the cost of the increased plight of the working-class.⁷¹ The

⁶⁷ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism," 11.

⁶⁸ Roy, "Urban Informality"; Ananya Roy, "Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities: Informality, Insurgence and the Idiom of Urbanization," *Planning Theory* 8, no. 1 (2009): 76–87.

⁶⁹ Roy, "Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities," 81.

⁷⁰ Asher Ghertner, "Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi," in *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, ed. Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong, First (Chichester, West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011), 279–306.

⁷¹ See Swapna Banerjee-Guha, "Shifting Cities: Urban Restructuring in Mumbai," *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 2 (2002): 121–28; Fernandes, "The Politics of Forgetting."

disengagement of the state from the industrial economy post the advent of the New Economic Policy has not only deepened poverty by introducing new types of unemployment in hitherto healthy sectors, but also attacked the working-class organisation. Thus, in 2003, a few years after integrating the two units of JEWL, when the management decided to terminate the sewing machine production and proposed a VRS to retrench all but 150 employees from the sewing machine division, the workers' union were hardly able to negotiate further. Amid a scenario of widespread industrial lockouts and their consequential impact on unpaid worker dues, the very offer of VRS by the JEWL management seemed an opportune solution to the otherwise irreversible condition. The bleak industrial scenario resulting in high unemployment, therefore, weakened the bargaining power of the unions. Although later, the decision was opposed by more than 200 employees in court, by the end of 2004, except for 14 opposing employees, the rest eventually agreed to the terms of the management.

They released the notice saying that it was VRS, but in reality, it was more of a CRS [Compulsory Retirement Service]. The management came out with a specified list of 150 employees. Hence, many were compelled to accept the offer. Presently, only eight employees are fighting the case, of whom three are from Bihar. Most of these people have already lost many years of service, surviving only through petty jobs. The union sometimes reaches out to them in need of financial assistance, but that is often insufficient.⁷²

Thus, while in 2005, the state approved the building plan of the South City Project and halved their penalty to 50 lakhs for the illegal extension of building heights, the opposing employees were prosecuted by the JEWL management in the Kolkata Alipore Court for invading the smooth running of business and breaching of contract.

Such relentless biases towards the claims of different social groups and interests, igniting a "politics of forgetting" social discrepancies, constitute the essence of the kind of urbanism that the reformed state seeks to institute in the city.⁷³ Its altered role in the neoliberal context has led to a simultaneous alteration of labour justice in pursuit of defending monopolistic interests. But then, the constitutional configuration of the state necessitates its reliance on the vast sections of the disadvantaged working-class population to guarantee its continued legitimacy, the process of

⁷² Pelab Mukherjee (president, Jay Engineering Workers' Union (CITU)), during personal interview, Kolkata, March 3, 2021.

⁷³ Fernandes, "The Politics of Forgetting."

which engenders new politics of governance.⁷⁴ Such politics foregrounds the imperatives of political mobilisation in a society fraught with contrasting realities of formal rights. The methods of urban governance, therefore, emanate from their roots, reflecting a perpetual tension between a vision to create a refurbished, suave urban vision and the integral demands of retaining political power. The contemporary politics of delegating legal and illegal titles to amenities and settlements too inherits such a tension, allowing different modes of negotiation within the political landscape of the society.

A part of these varying modes of negotiation has formed the realities of the lives of the Bengal Lamp workers. After the closure of Bengal Lamps Limited (BLL), the workers in the quarters have continued to survive largely through political connections and party activism. Their affiliation to the ruling political party has been the only rational ground to gain access to services like water and electricity in the quarters. Amid extreme financial difficulties, these people, many of whom work as daily wage labourers, plumbers, or security guards, have managed to derive their rights and retain their claim on the quarters from their crucial role in enhancing numbers either during elections or political rallies. The political parties too have appropriated their advantages from time to time. Their piecemeal approach towards any improvement in the conditions of the BLL workers underlines the nature of urban politics, whereby the perpetuation of their condition is a deliberate constitution to make way through political bargains. The workers and their days of hardships have been witnesses to many tragedies like the burden of medical expenses on deteriorating health and deaths from untreated illnesses. Yet, their continued hopes from the city have sustained these families and propelled them to engage in daily negotiations.

We hail from Murshidabad, my father used to work in Bengal Lamps. Since it closed we did not return to the native anticipating that it will open soon. Instead my father and I got trained in plumbing. If my father had retired from the factory, we would have to return to Murshidabad, but staying here in such a prominent location [referring to Jadavpur] have yielded some advantages. In the absence of any compensation, it is our right to lay claim on this quarter. I will not accept any money as per the previous valuation.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ See Partha Chatterjee, "Chapter Two: Populations and Political Society," in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 27–52.

⁷⁵ Lalu Das, son of an ex-Bengal Lamps worker, during group interview, Kolkata, March 10, 2021.

Sassen has discussed at length about the inherent capabilities of cities which allow the disadvantaged, the "powerless" to make their presence.⁷⁶ Its possibility is perceptible through the numerous undefined rules of engagement, which enable the powerless to mark their presence by rendering various services. The case of Bengal Lamp Workers resonates with similar efforts. Thus, as the contemporary practice of ordered urban reconstruction is being realised in relation to the networked economy, the diversity of the city enables to "hack" these practices, such that the powerless can also make use of these practices to their advantage. Through numerous bouts of political negotiations and painful uncertainties, these workers, amid the lack of any compensation, have been compelled to strike a way to hack such powerful practices to their favour, countering the aimed hegemonic narrative by visibilising their presence.



Figure 6.14. Bengal Lamps quarters. Photographs taken during field survey in March 2021.

⁷⁶ Sassen, "Does the City Have Speech?"; Sassen, "Cities Help Us Hack Formal Power Systems"; Saskia Sassen, "When the Center No Longer Holds: Cities as Frontier Zones," *Cities, Urban Borderlands*, 34 (2012): 67–70.

Conclusion

Time and again, power structures have determined the legitimacy of the claims made by the disadvantaged social groups, and arbitrated their fate depending on discriminatory interests. Economic restructuring combined with the dismissal of the industrial economy from the state, especially from the 1980s onwards, have had significant influences not only on the built environment but also in fragmenting the working class union. The gradual commodification of the survival elements in the city has therefore aided the sectoral shift of the industrial capital embroiled in the disputes related to the redundancy of technology and competitive markets to the built environment, producing innovative spaces capable of splintering the existing neighbourhood. The instances of spatial transformation from the case studies inform such modern-day execution of urban restructuring in the city, whereby the state has often been an ally in the process either through its own policy provisions or relaxation of those provisions. Its involvement in producing a class-based culture of consumption is increasingly coercive, manifesting its targets through the unabashed replacement of working-class spaces, in a relentless quest to introduce a curated narrative of an ordered urban landscape. But the imperatives of the constitutional conformation of the state allow various modes of negotiations within this landscape, enabling the disadvantaged to strategise these negotiations to their advantage and mark their visibility, creating an alternate narrative to the supposedly aimed ones.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The fundamental basis of the origin of cities has been their diversity. The diversity of their congregational elements has found one of the most prominent manifestations under the economic order of capitalism. The inherent disposition of capitalism towards profit appropriation has always held cities and the purpose of their existence as the means to their goal of accruing surplus. The all-encompassing character of cities has, therefore, perpetually provided buffering support to capitalism, demonstrating their mammoth capacity to absorb any economic shocks that capitalism has fallen into time and again.

When the crisis of over-accumulation, particularly in the developed world of the United States, hit large-scale inflation and unemployment during the 1970s, the solution toward deepening state control was largely disapproved by the capitalist class, concerned with the pitfalls of increased state intervention, especially on the freedom of market power. Amid the contemptuous air of the aggrieved public regarding state intervention and the hostile impacts of its alliances with the corporate elites in determining the terms of individual rights and social justice, the alternate order of neoliberalism was launched on the ideal of individual freedoms. It primarily culminated in the freedom of the market and the eventual reinstatement of class-based corporate power.

The proliferation of this ideology to different parts of the world took some time, and over the years, countries have adjusted their institutional framework to adapt to this new economic order by entailing a qualitative transformation of the role of their state, whereby the state has assumed the function of protecting the interests of the market at the cost of its people, to implement greater integration with the global economy. India adopted the neoliberal economy in 1991 by embracing the New Economic Policy under the imperatives of the Structural Adjustment Programme. Since the introduction of the reformed economic structure, there has been a reconfiguration in the relationship between the central and the state governments. Unlike the developmental regime of the immediate post-independence period, where the state governments were fundamentally dependent upon the centre for their expenditural funds, the New Economic Policy mandated the individual states to accrue their own funding via corporate investments. Hence, the previous

regulatory, interventionist function of the central government gave way to kindling a competitive spirit among the state governments, such that they designed their institutional frameworks to suit the demands of the corporate investors, pitching their state as 'business-friendly.' In response to this shift in the economic structure, the individual states have focused all their aspirations and resources on upgrading their cities to curate them by readjusting their spaces as per the conditional requirements of the corporate investors.

In this context, Kolkata, situated at the heart of West Bengal, has been subject to intense spatial readjustment to suit the neoliberal corporate-friendly apparatus of global integration. Amid the backdrop of a declining industrial base, the neoliberal offerings of profiteering private capital provided the city with a favourable prospect to gain ground in reconstructing its economy, particularly through the real-estate sector, which has invoked innovative means to capitalise on the city and its space. The hegemonic expression of such spatial logic, especially in class-based preferences, has brought back the discriminatory practices of the times when the city served as the capital of British colonialism in the country. In relation to this development, the study has attempted to understand the spatial change that the city of Kolkata has witnessed over the years, especially in the context of deindustrialisation.

By adopting a qualitative approach, the study locates the present spatial structure of Kolkata amid its transforming landscape since the colonial period. It attempts to relate the process of its spatial transformation with the changing role of institutions under the contemporary urban regime of the reformed economy. By drawing on the knowledge of the field concerning six case studies in South Kolkata, the study arrives at the exclusionary, coercive process of urban restructuring entailing a reconfigured relationship between the state, labour and capital.

The study establishes that the present spatial structure of the city with a compact north and a relatively less physically contiguous south owes its origin to the characteristic pattern of the city's inception. The northern part of Kolkata surrounding the CBD comprises the history of its emergence as a major trading centre on the eastern bank of the River Hooghly. Over the years, with a gradual increase in the might and population of the city, the northern part of Kolkata developed as its major site of habitation. Although spatial segregation between the colonised and the colonisers was effected through the demarcations of the Black Town and White Town, the boundaries were often blurred, featuring the existence of many native hutments among the British

palatial houses. On the other hand, the appearance of the south mainly transpired in the context of suburban housing. The southern areas like Chowringhee and Alipore served the needs of garden houses for the Britishers and many wealthy natives, some of whom found its unhindered vastness to be ideal for setting up their industrial units.

Post-independence, the development of the southern part of the city could be related to the housing needs of the rapidly rising population. The influx of partition-inflicted refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan was particularly crucial in transforming the landscape of this southern part. The establishment of the refugee colonies, particularly in the extended parts of the present-day South Kolkata, like Azadgarh, Bijoygarh, Ramgarh, Jadavpur, Netaji Nagar, or Dhakuria, occurred through an intense refugial struggle for space and rights in the city. The emergence of these areas as the foothold of the refugees initially conferred a distinct character to their socio-spatiality. Besides functioning as a self-sustainable neighbourhood replete with colony schools, clubs and market, the nearby industrial units acted as the source of employment for the refugee youths under the empowered spirit of post-independence solidarity and nationhood.

Nonetheless, amid the burdening pressure of population and deteriorating infrastructure, Bengal's declining industrial viability during this period, particularly in light of the hostile impacts of the central licensing system and freight equalisation policy, resulted in large-scale industrial closures, unemployment and growing labour unrest, which infamously labelled Bengal for manifesting unnecessary "labour militancy". Whereas in reality, the dismal industrial conditions undermined the bargaining power of the trade unions, contributing to the increased plight of the labour force. The inability of the ruling Left Front Government to reverse the industrial scenario amidst the accusations of its skewed focus on rural Bengal engulfed the urban public in a general state of discontent. Further, the ideological differences between the central and the state government in Bengal led to skirmishes in the centre-state relationship, marring Bengal's vitality among all the other states.

Thus, against such a background, the implementation of a reformed economy, riding high on the power of a new industry, largely structured around the demands of an IT and ITES-based service sector, bestowed Bengal with an optimistic vision of refurbishing its ailing economy without being dependent upon the of the grants and the approvals of the central government. It not only allowed the Left Front Government to alter the predominant narrative of its parochial allegiance to the rural

electorates, but also attract private investments by quelling the notion of Kolkata's unreceptive environment, which dominated its post-independence discourse, particularly in the context of labour unrest. In line with this shift, the city witnessed massive developments concerning IT Parks, specialised economic zones and real-estate enclaves involving significant readjustments in urban land laws to meet the demands of the burgeoning service economy. Departing from its previous stance on pro-labour implementations, the aspirational demands of the new economy had the Left Front Government manipulate its socialist principles by actively endorsing bilateral negotiations between the labour and the entrepreneurs. Consequently, the institutionalisation of the urban plans also witnessed an increased focus on spatial restructuring through high-end developments, especially within the housing division, to attract capital and people in ownership of such capital.

The most explicit expression of such restructuring has occurred in the city's southern and eastern parts and is visible through its expansionary spatial pattern. The congestion prevalent in the northern part has resulted in the growth of the city away from its core, whereby the ongoing evolutionary character of the extended parts of South and East Kolkata has lured the real-estate developers by offering relatively larger land at low prices. Subsequently, many mini townships, including micro-scaled gentrification projects, have surfaced, leading to a proliferating practice of 'bourgeoisisation' of space. Secondly, the grant of the colony land ownership to the refugees by the Left Front Government in the post-1980 period further stimulated the transformation of the south, involving substantial real-estate developments around the growing service-based middle-class income.

In tandem with this practice of reconstructing spaces, there has been a parallel political manoeuvre to capture empty or marginal land such as former industrial parcels for speculative urban development. To expedite the process, the state government not only exempted the real estate industry from the land ceiling constraints, but also amended the legal provisions for freeing up the land locked up in industrial disputes to convert their land-use to commercial purposes. Such provisions have resulted in the development of a number of real-estate-led enclave apartments on former industrial land, comprising the South City Projects, Devaloke Residences, Ekta Heights and Westwest in and around the Jadavpur neighbourhood of Kolkata.

Some of the specific findings related to the transformation of these industrial spaces are as follows:

Contrary to the highly publicised notion of labour militancy in Bengal, the dispensability of technology led to the collapse of these industrial units, namely the glass units of Annapurna and Krishna, ink production of Sulekha and bulb manufacturer, Bengal Lamps.

The change in technology has refurbished the entire range of industrial organisations through spatial reconfigurations of the relations of production, substituting the previous set of labour requirements, and bringing about a shift in the social set-up.

The redundancy caused in the production of glass, ink or lamps to the concerned factory owners, owing to technological imperatives and innovations, occasioned disruptions in their authoritative process of retaining control over the relations of production. The cumulative losses not only fiscally constrained the factory owners, but also indicated their loosening grip over the labour force, which led to the ensuing exercise of industrial reorganization. Resultantly the ink or glass production was terminated to be eventually replaced by alternate types of production, i.e., the production of the built environment, with exceeding market value, as evident in the form of residential entities like Ekta and Devaloke, and commercial set-up like Senco Jewellery, implying different outcomes on the existing social.

The inherent redundant characteristic of technology has, therefore, engendered the production of its successor, which has surfaced through what Harvey essentially calls the "switching of capital to the secondary circuit," transforming the previous industrial capitalism into a new phase of "consumer capitalism." Such channelisation of capital through spatial conduits has reproduced the class relations of capitalist production.

Growing hierarchical divisions within the labour force attacked the working class culture leading to precarity in the role of the trade unions, and threatening the efficacy of its united action. Conflicting interests among the different levels of workers questioned the accountability of the union leaders, thereby weakening its overall influence.

Increased internal factionalism, owing to sectarian politics of intra-party lobbyism, triggered tension within the union, resulting in a strong feeling of distrust among the workers and its members towards the conduct of the office bearers and diluting the measures of addressing labour grievances.

The eventual transformation of the industrial land into class-based, exclusionary spaces of consumption like gated apartments (namely, South City Projects, Devaloke Residences, Ekta Heights and Westwest) have changed the spatial character of the area with enhanced land value at the cost of their ruptured identity.

The import of the materiality of globalised urban to these built-forms introduced a new structural dichotomy between the superimposed apartments and the existing residences. Its manifestations are palpable through stark contrasts in the class-based practices of life, having strong impacts on rescinding the sociality of the area by splintering the space through increased neighbourhood anonymity and detachment.

Riding on Jameson's proposition regarding consumer capitalism, the aesthetic representation of these reconstructed projects impart high-end westernised stimulations. The likes of which are illustrative in the production of a variety of spaces, such as the redeveloped Iris Multispeciality Hospital or the South City International School, which are completely unrooted from the history of the place. The exclusionary practices of these present establishments disconnect them from the past of their locations, comprising years-long refugeal struggle for inclusivity.

The infiltration of these stimulations has also engendered a new way of life, a culture, based on the commodification of reality, which has reduced the notion of self-worth to a skewed set of class-based checkboxes.

Thus, such a type of spatial transformation is an attack on the very means of production. The creation of spaces that these practices of spatial transformation entail, introduces new mechanisms of production, whose means and use-value are beyond the control of the working-class.

They are also exceedingly coercive, for the production of these spaces of consumption thrives on the culture of commodification that helps maintain the symmetry of consumer capitalism by implicating pressure and competition in ways that its aspiration might encourage a clerk to accept hostile and stressful work conditions. Such an act of coercion by changing the production mechanism through the claiming and replacement of working-class space with innovative, class-based, aspirational spaces of consumption lies at the heart of this form of spatial transformation.

The overwhelming influence of the reformed economy on the qualitative transformation of the state's role has been significant in aiding these processes of transformation. Entailing a highly biased approach to domesticate mobile capital, the government induced increased flexibility in defining the legalities of the class-based transformational projects. The institutional abrogation of the environmental violations against the South City Projects demonstrates the class politics of urban governance, which lies in cordoning and preserving the illegalities of market entities with high aesthetic values like gated apartments or shopping malls while visibilising and censuring the illegalities of the poor.

Thus, while the state approved the illegalities of the South City Project and halved their penalty, the opposition by the former JEWL employees against forceful retrenchment was held accountable in the Kolkata Alipore Court.

However, the constitutional configuration of the state necessitates its reliance on the vast sections of the disadvantaged working-class population to guarantee its continued legitimacy, which engenders Partha Chatterjee's new politics of governance through various modes of negotiation in exchange for electoral bargains. These negotiations have formed the realities of the lives of the Bengal Lamp workers. Amid extreme financial difficulties due to the lack of compensation, they have managed to derive their rights and retain their claim on the BLL workers' quarters from their crucial role in enhancing numbers during elections or political rallies.

Although these numerous undefined modes of negotiation enable the powerless to make a presence in the city by rendering various forms of services, the splintered transformation of space has severed the inherent transformable capacity of Kolkata. The foundation of such transformable capacity was based on unity and the mutual dependencies among the city's inhabitants from all walks of life, making Kolkata a grounded place for those without power. But these incessant enactments of homogenising the city's sociality through the "deurbanising" hollow processes of privatised space making imperilled, in Sassen's word, the "cityness" of Kolkata, which once wielded power to obliterate the internal differences to raise a collective voice on justice and rights. The contemporary class-inflected spatial logic of urban making has, therefore, undermined the diversity, the city once had leveraged, involving relentless othering of the disadvantaged, who are essentially subjected to traverse the city often by clamping the dodgy edge of vote bank politics.

Works Cited

- Adhikary, Sudipta, and Rita Biswas. "An Overview of Trade Union and Its Cultivation in West Bengal." *A Journal of Composition Theory* 12, no. 7 (2019): 260–66.
- Allen, V. L. "The Ethics of Trade Union Leaders." *The British Journal of Sociology* 7, no. 4 (1956): 314–36. <https://doi.org/10.2307/586696>.
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Theory, Culture & Society* 7, no. 2–3 (1990): 295–310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327690007002017>.
- Arnason, Johann P. "Theorizing Capitalism: Classical Foundations and Contemporary Innovations." *European Journal of Social Theory* 18, no. 4 (November 1, 2015): 351–367.
- Bagchi, Amaresh. "Planning for Metropolitan Development: Calcutta's Basic Development Plan, 1966-86: A Post-Mortem." *Economic and Political Weekly* 22, no. 14 (1987): 597–601.
- Bagchi, Amiya Kumar. "Studies on the Economy of West Bengal since Independence." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 2973–78.
- Bare Acts Live: Central Acts and Rules Amended and Updated. "West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955," 2012. <http://www.bareactslive.com/WB/WB010.HTM>.
- Batra, Lalit. "A Review of Urbanisation and Urban Policy in Post-Independent India." Working Paper Series. New Delhi: Centre for the study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2009.
- Bandyopadhyay, D. *Labour Mood in West Bengal*. Kolkata: Labour Department and Information & Public Relations Department, Government of West Bengal, 1973.
- Bandyopadhyay, Ritajyoti. "Politics of Archiving: Hawkers and Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta." *Dialectical Anthropology* 35, no. 3 (2011): 295–316.
- Banerjee, Falguni. "Come What May, Rly Project Must Go Ahead at Bhaba Dighi: Mamata Banerjee." *The Times of India*, June 4, 2017. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/come-what-may-rly-project-must-go-ahead-at-bhaba-dighi-cm/articleshow/58036573.cms>.
- Banerjee-Guha, Swapna. "Neoliberalising the 'Urban': New Geographies of Power and Injustice in Indian Cities." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 22 (2009): 95–107.
- Banerjee-Guha, Swapna. "Shifting Cities: Urban Restructuring in Mumbai." *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 2 (2002): 121–28.
- Banerjee, Sonali Chakravarti. "Public - Private Partnerships in Kolkata: Concepts of Governance in the Changing Political Economy of a Region." *Working Papers*. Working Papers. Kolkata: IDSK, 2014. <https://ideas.repec.org/p/ess/wpaper/id5683.html>.

Banerjee, Tridib, and Sanjoy Chakravorty. "Transfer of Planning Technology and Local Political Economy: A Retrospective Analysis of Calcutta's Planning." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 60, no. 1 (1994): 71–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369408975553>.

Bardhan, Ronita, Kiyo Kurisu, and Keisuke Hanaki. "Linking Urban Form & Quality of Life in Kolkata, India." In *Liveable Cities, Urbanising World – Meeting the Challenge*, 12. Wuhan, China, 2011.

Barman, Dhiraj. "'Global'-izing Indian Cities: A Spatial Epistemological Critique." In *City, Space, and Politics in the Global South*, edited by Bikramaditya K. Choudhary, Arun K. Singh, and Diganta Das. Oxford; New York: Routledge, 2020.

Basak, Probal, and Swati Garg. "Bengal Set to Amend Urban Land Ceiling Act." *Business Standard India*, January 21, 2013. https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/bengal-set-to-amend-urban-land-ceiling-act-112010200098_1.html.

Basu, Amrita. "Parliamentary Communism as a Historical Phenomenon: The CPI(M) in West Bengal." In *Parties and Party Politics in India*, edited by Zoya Hasan, 317–50. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Basu, Partha Pratim. "'Brand Buddha' in India's West Bengal: The Left Reinvents Itself." *Asian Survey* 47, no. 2 (2007): 288–306. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2007.47.2.288>.

Basu, Pranab Kanti. "Political Economy of Land Grab." *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 14 (2007): 1281–87.

Basu, Ranjan, and Sarbendu Bikash Dhar. "In-Migration, Commutation and Urban Sprawl: A Case Study of Kolkata Metropolitan Area." *Spaces and Flows: An International Journal of Urban and ExtraUrban Studies* 3, no. 3 (2013).

Beauregard, R. A. "Capital Switching and the Built Environment: United States, 1970–89." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 26, no. 5 (1994): 715–32. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a260715>.

Beaverstock, Jonathan V., and Joanne Smith. "Lending Jobs to Global Cities: Skilled International Labour Migration, Investment Banking and the City of London." *Urban Studies* 33, no. 8 (1996): 1377–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098966709>.

Bergmann, Theodor. *Agrarian Reform in India: With Special Reference to Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal*. Agricole Monographs ;24. New Delhi, India: Agricole Pub. Academy, 1984.

Bervoets, Wouter, and Maarten Loopmans. "The Divisive Nature of Neoliberal Urban Renewal in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso." In *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*, translated by Tony Roshan Samara, Shenjing He, and Guo Chen, 60–80. London; New York: Routledge, 2013.

“Bengal Govt Gives Nod to Rs 3,000-Cr Kulpi Port Project,” July 3, 2019.

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/bengal-govt-gives-nod-to-rs-3000-cr-kulpi-port-project-343745>.

Bhattacharjee, Sujayita. “Comprehending the Gentrification of a Suburb: The Case of Mulund, Mumbai.” *GeoJournal* 86, no. 1 (2021): 133–143.

Bhimji, Fazila. “Visibilities and the Politics of Space: Refugee Activism in Berlin.” *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 14, no. 4 (2016): 432–50.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2016.1145777>.

Bhowmick, Susmita, and Lakshmi Sivaramakrishnan. “Growth Behaviour of Census Towns in Kolkata Metropolitan Region, West Bengal, India.” *Transactions of the Institute of Indian Geographers* 43, no. 1 (2021): 12.

Bhunia, Abhirup. “India’s Unplanned Urbanisation Is Far from ‘Smart.’” *The Wire*, December 1, 2017. <https://thewire.in/culture/india-urbanisation-smart-cities>.

Blechynden, Kathleen. *Calcutta, Past and Present*. London: W. Thacker & Co., 1905.

<http://archive.org/details/calcuttapastand02blecgoog>.

Boeri, Tito, Agar Brugiavini, and Lars Calmfors, eds. *The Role of Unions in the Twenty-First Century: A Report for the Fondazione Rodolfo De Benedetti*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0199246580.001.0001>.

Bogaert, M. V. D. “Dynamics of Political Unionism - A Study of Calcutta Dock Unions.” *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations* 4, no. 2 (1968): 99–214.

Bose, Nirmal Kumar. “Calcutta: A Premature Metropolis.” *Cities* (1966): 59–74.

Bose, Pablo S. “Bourgeois Environmentalism, Leftist Development and Neoliberal Urbanism in the City of Joy.” In *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*, edited by Tony Roshan Samara, Shenjing He, and Guo Chen, 127–51. London; New York: Routledge, 2013.

Bose, Pablo Shiladitya. “Home and Away: Diasporas, Developments and Displacements in a Globalising World.” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008): 111–31.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860701759964>.

———. “New Housing Developments: Global Living in Kolkata.” In *Urban Development in India: Global Indians in the Remaking of Kolkata*, 130–53. Routledge Series on Urban South Asia. London; New York: Routledge, 2015.

———. *Urban Development in India: Global Indians in the Remaking of Kolkata*. Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2015.

Bose, Prasenjit. “Missed Goals.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 51, no. 16 (2016): 51–54.

Bose, Raktima. “Mamata Wants to Turn Kolkata into London.” *The Hindu*. March 8, 2011, sec. National. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mamata-wants-to-turn-kolkata-into-london/article2317137.ece>.

Boyce, J. *Agrarian Impasse in Bengal: Institutional Constraints to Technological Change*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

Brenner, Neil, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore. "After Neoliberalization?" *Globalizations* 7, no. 3 (2010): 327–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731003669669>.

Brenner, Neil, and Nik Theodore. "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism.'" *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 349–79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00246>.

Brenner, Neil. "Global Cities, Glocal States: Global City Formation and State Territorial Restructuring in Contemporary Europe." *Review of International Political Economy* 5, no. 1 (1998): 1–37.

Brown, G. "Utopian Cities." In *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift, 125–130. Oxford: Elsevier, 2009. Accessed September 18, 2021. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B978008044910401110X>.

Bruenig, Matt. "What Michal Kalecki Meant by Full Employment." *People's Policy Project* (blog), December 5, 2021. <https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/2021/05/12/what-michal-kalecki-meant-by-full-employment/>.

Bumiller, Elisabeth. "As Calcutta Lies Dying, Beauty and Squalor Embrace." *Washington Post*, August 18, 1985. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1985/08/18/as-calcutta-lies-dying-beauty-and-squalor-embrace/6be68b65-9683-4943-b078-f4f18981850d/>.

Burte, Himanshu, and Lalitha Kamath. "The Violence of Worlding Producing Space in Neo-Liberal Durban, Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro" 52 (2017): 66–74.

Caldeira, Teresa. "Review of Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space." *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)* 48, no. 1 (1994): 65–67.

Castells, Manuel. "Beyond the Myths of the Urban Crisis: The US Model." In *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*, translated by Alan Sheridan, 381–92. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, 1977.

———. *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Berkeley; Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1983.

Chakrabarty, Antarin. "The Mischievous City: The Kolkata Poor and the Outsmarting of Neoliberal Urbanism." *Planum: The Journal of Urbanism* 1 (2013).

Chakrabarty, Bidyut. "1998 Elections in West Bengal: Dwindling of the Left Front?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 50 (1998): 3214–20.

———. "1998 Elections in West Bengal: Dwindling of the Left Front?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 50 (1998): 3214–20.

Chakravorty, Sanjoy. "From Colonial City to Globalizing City? The Far-from-Complete Spatial Transformation of Calcutta." In *Globalizing Cities*, edited by Peter Marcuse and Ronald Van

Kempen, 56–77. USA; UK; Australia: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2000.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470712887.ch4>.

Chakravorty, Sanjoy, and Gautam Gupta. “Let a Hundred Projects Bloom: Structural Reform and Urban Development in Calcutta.” *Third World Planning Review (TWPR)* 18, no. 4 (1996): 415–31.

Chakravorty, Sanjoy. “Too Little, in the Wrong Places? Mega City Programme and Efficiency and Equity in Indian Urbanisation.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 35/37 (1996): 2565–72.

Chakraborti, Suman. “KMDA May Lease out Nonadanga Land.” *The Times of India*, April 17, 2012. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/kmda-may-lease-out-nonadanga-land/articleshow/12697960.cms>.

Chakraborty, Ushashi. “Kintu Purono Model Aar Cholbena.” *Ananda Bazar Patrika*. May 16, 2006.

Chanda, Arup. “Comrades, Capitalists, Camaraderie: Bengal’s Brush with Industrialisation.” Rediff on the NeT, Business Special, January 27, 1999.
<https://www.rediff.com/business/1999/jan/27bengal.htm>.

Chatterjee, Biswajit. “Poverty in West Bengal: What Have We Learnt?” *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 3003–14.

Chatterjee, Dwiparna, and D. Parthasarathy. “Gentrification and Rising Urban Aspirations in the Inner City: Redefining Urbanism in Mumbai.” In *Sustainable Urbanization in India: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Jenia Mukherjee, 239–55. Exploring Urban Change in South Asia. Singapore: Springer, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4932-3_13.

Chatterjee, Himadri. “Partitioned Urbanity.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 53, no. 12 (2015): 93–100.

Chatterji, Joya. “‘Dispersal’ and the Failure of Rehabilitation: Refugee Camp-Dwellers and Squatters in West Bengal.” *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 5 (2007): 995–1032.

———. “Dispositions and Destinations: Refugee Agency and ‘Mobility Capital’ in the Bengal Diaspora, 1947–2007.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 2 (2013): 273–304.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417513000030>.

———. *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Chatterji, Monidip. “Before Calcutta.” In *Calcutta, the Living City-The Past*, Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 1990.

Chatterjee, Nilanjana. “The East Bengal Refugees: A Lesson in Survival.” In *Calcutta, the Living City-The Present and Future*, Vol. 2. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Chatterjee, Partha. "Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois At Last?" In *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, 131–48. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/chat13062>.

———. "Chapter Three: The Politics of the Governed." In *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, 53–78. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

———. "Chapter Two: Populations and Political Society." In *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, 27–52. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Chatterji, Tathagata, and Souvanic Roy. "Gentrification and Post-Industrial Spatial Restructuring in Calcutta, India." In *Gentrification around the World, Volume II*, translated by Jerome Kruse and Judith N. DeSena, 269–88. Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41337-8>.

Chattopadhyay, Haraprasad. *Internal Migration in India: A Case Study of Bengal*. Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Co., 1987.

Chattopadhyay, Soumyadip. "Neoliberal Urban Transformations in Indian Cities: Paradoxes and Predicaments." *Progress in Development Studies* 17, no. 4 (October 1, 2017): 307–321.

Chattopadhyay, Swati. "*Bourgeois Utopias*?" *The Rhetoric of Globality in the Contemporary Suburban Landscape of Calcutta*. Sweden: Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies. Lund University, 2009. <https://dataspace.princeton.edu/handle/88435/dsp01m613mx61n>.

———. "Cities of Power and Protest: Spatial Legibility and the Colonial State in Early Twentieth-Century India." *International Journal of Urban Sciences* 19, no. 1 (2015): 40–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12265934.2014.980303>.

———. "Locating Mythic Selves." In *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed., 136–78. London: Routledge, 2006.

———. *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2006.

———. "The Limits of 'White' Town." In *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny*, 1st ed., 76–135. London: Routledge, 2006.

Childe, V. Gordon. "The Urban Revolution." *The Town Planning Review* 21, no. 1 (1950): 3–17.

Chopra, Rohit. "Neoliberalism as Doxa: Bourdieu's Theory of the State and the Contemporary Indian Discourse on Globalization and Liberalization." *Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3–4 (May 1, 2003): 419–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950238032000083881>.

Christophers, Brett. "Revisiting the Urbanization of Capital." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 6 (2011): 1347–64.

- Clapson, Mark. "The Suburban Aspiration in England since 1919." *Contemporary British History* 14, no. 1 (2000): 151–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13619460008581576>.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. "Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America Is Evolving Toward Africa." *Anthropological Forum* 22, no. 2 (2012): 113–131.
- Cotton, Evan. *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City*. Calcutta: W. Newman, 1907. <http://archive.org/details/calcuttaoldandn00cottgoog>.
- . "The Founding of Calcutta." In *Calcutta, Old and New: A Historical & Descriptive Handbook to the City*, 1–12. Calcutta: W. Newman, 1907.
- Corbridge, Stuart, John Harriss, and Craig Jeffrey. "How Did a 'Weak' State Promote Audacious Reform?" In *India Today: Economy, Politics and Society*. Cambridge; Malden: Polity Press, 2013.
- Datta, Partho. *Planning the City: Urbanization and Reform in Calcutta, c. 1800 - c. 1940*. New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2012.
- Dasgupta, Anwasha. "Calcutta in the 1950s and 1970s: What Made It the Hotbed of Rebellions?" Political History of: 1947-1977, August 8, 2019. https://www.sahapedia.org/calcutta-1950s-and-1970s-what-made-it-hotbed-rebellions#_edn12.
- Das, Ritanjan, and Zaad Mahmood. "Contradictions, Negotiations and Reform: The Story of Left Policy Transition in West Bengal." *Journal of South Asian Development* 10, no. 2 (August 1, 2015): 199–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150915591392>.
- Dasgupta, Sreemanta. "West Bengal and Industry: A Regional Perspective." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 3049–60.
- Datta, Romita. "Law to Free Locked Land May Not Meet Expectations in West Bengal." *mint*, July 2, 2010. <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/aiyvxAgD8r3mVxhMmZsfYM/Law-to-free-locked-land-may-not-meet-expectations-in-West-Be.html>.
- Das, Ritanjan, and Zaad Mahmood. "Contradictions, Negotiations and Reform: The Story of Left Policy Transition in West Bengal." *Journal of South Asian Development* 10, no. 2 (2015): 199–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150915591392>.
- Davala, Sarath. "Independent Trade Unionism in West Bengal." *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 52 (1996): L44–49.
- Dear, Michael, and Steven Flusty. "Postmodern Urbanism." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 1 (1998): 50–72.
- Deb, Binaya Krishna. *The Early History and Growth of Calcutta*. Calcutta: Romesh Chandra Ghose, 1905.
- "Decks Cleared for IT Park at Nonadanga," March 11, 2017. <http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/decks-cleared-for-it-park-at-nonadanga-269505>.

Delanty, Gerard. "The Future of Capitalism: Trends, Scenarios and Prospects for the Future." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 19, no. 1 (2019): 10–26.

Domhoff, G. William. "The Class-Domination Theory of Power." In *Who Rules America? Challenges to Corporate and Class Dominance*. New York: McGraw-Hill., 2009.

———. "The Four Networks Theory of Power: A Theoretical Home for Power Structure Research." *Who Rules America?* Last modified April 2005. Accessed September 20, 2021. https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/theory/four_networks.html.

Donner, Henrike. "Locating Activist Spaces: The Neighbourhood as a Source and Site of Urban Activism in 1970s Calcutta." *Cultural Dynamics* 23, no. 1 (2011): 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0921374011403352>.

———. "Making Middle-Class Families in Calcutta." In *Anthropologies of Class: Power, Practice, and Inequality*, edited by Don Kalb and James G. Carrier, 131–48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316095867.010>.

———. "Whose City Is It Anyway? Middle Class Imagination and Urban Restructuring in Twenty-First Century Kolkata." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 46 (2012): 129–55. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0896634600001539>.

Dutta, Naba. "Jay Engineering- Shilpo Punorgothoner name Protarona [Jay Engineering- Betrayal in the name of Industrial Revival]." *Manthan Periodical*, no. September-October; (in Bengali) (2006): 30–31.

Dwaipayan. "Changing Face of 'Paribartan': Movement in Nonadanga." *Sanhati* (blog), April 22, 2012. <http://sanhati.com/articles/4949/>.

Ebbinghaus, Bernhard, and Jelle Visser. *Trade Unions in Western Europe since 1945*. The Societies of Europe. London; New York: Macmillan Reference; Grove's Dictionaries, 2000.

Elliott, James R. "The Work of Cities: Underemployment and Urban Change in Late-20th-Century America." *Cityscape* 7, no. 1 (2004): 107–33.

ET Realty (Online). "Registration of Homes in Kolkata down 10% in December 2021: Report," October 1, 2022. <https://realty.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/residential/registration-of-homes-in-kolkata-down-10-in-december-2021-report/88813173>.

Executive Director, Usha Fan Industries. "Voluntary Retirement Scheme-Workers/Staff-Kolkata." Executive Director, Usha Fan Industries, June 5, 2002.

Fainstein, Susan S. "Cities and Diversity: Should We Want It? Can We Plan For It?" *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 1 (2005): 3–19.

Fainstein, Susan S., and Norman I. Fainstein. "Economic Restructuring and the Rise of Urban Social Movements." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1985): 187–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004208168502100204>.

- Ferguson, James, and Akhil Gupta. "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality." *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4 (2002): 981–1002.
- Fernandes, Leela. "The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India." *Urban Studies* 41, no. 12 (2004): 2415–30.
- Fields, Gary. "Urbanization and the Transition from Agrarian to Industrial Society." *Berkeley Planning Journal* 13, no. 1 (2012). Accessed September 21, 2021. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7242m3b1>.
- Fishman, Robert L. "American Suburbs/English Suburbs: A Transatlantic Comparison." *Journal of Urban History* 13, no. 3 (1987): 237–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009614428701300302>.
- Florida, Richard. *Who's Your City?*, 2008. Accessed September 17, 2021. <https://www.basicbooks.com/titles/richard-florida/whos-your-city/9780465018093/>.
- Gartman, David. "Marx and the Labor Process: An Interpretation." *Insurgent Sociologist* 8, no. 2–3 (1978): 97–108. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089692057800800212>.
- Ghertner, Asher. "Gentrifying the State, Gentrifying Participation: Elite Governance Programs in Delhi." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 504–532.
- . "India's Urban Revolution: Geographies of Displacement beyond Gentrification." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46, no. 7 (2014): 1554–71. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a46288>.
- . "Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi." In *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, edited by Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong, First., 279–306. Chichester, West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011.
- Geddes, Mike. "Neoliberalism and Local Governance – Cross-National Perspectives and Speculations." *Policy Studies* 26, no. 3–4 (2005): 359–377.
- Ghosh, A. "Census of India 1961: Calcutta the Primate City." Monograph Series. New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 1950.
- Ghosh, Jayati. "Michal Kalecki and the Economics of Development." In *The Pioneers of Development Economics*, edited by K. S. Jomo, 109–22. New Delhi and London: Tulika Books and Zed Books, 2005.
- Giri, Pabitra. "Urbanisation in West Bengal, 1951-1991." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 47/48 (1998): 3033–38.
- Glaeser, Edward L., Jed Kolko, and Albert Saiz. "Consumer City." *Journal of Economic Geography* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 27–50.
- Glass, Ruth. *London: Aspects of Change*. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964.
- Gooptu, Nandini. "Economic Liberalisation, Work and Democracy: Industrial Decline and Urban Politics in Kolkata." *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 21 (2007): 1922–33.

- Gordon, Peter. "Spontaneous Cities." *Advances in Austrian Economics* 16 (2012): 181–209.
- Goss, Jon. "The 'Magic of the Mall': An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, no. 1 (1993): 18–47.
- Goswami, Omkar. "Calcutta's Economy 1918-1970: The Fall from Grace." In *Calcutta, the Living City-The Present and Future*, Vol. 2. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- . "Then Came the Marwaris: Some Aspects of the Changes in the Pattern of Industrial Control in Eastern India." *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 22, no. 3 (1985): 225–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001946468502200302>.
- Gotham, Kevin Fox. "Creating Liquidity out of Spatial Fixity: The Secondary Circuit of Capital and the Subprime Mortgage Crisis." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 2 (2009): 355–371.
- Government of India. *Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Infrastructural Development in Mega Cities: Guidelines*. New Delhi: Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment, 2005.
- Government of India. *The Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976. Act No. 33 of 1976*. New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, 2006.
- Government of West Bengal. "Environmental Clearance for the Proposed 'Calcutta Riverside Township' by M/s. Riverbank Developers Pvt. Ltd. & IT SEZ by M/s. Riverbank Holdings Pvt. Ltd., at Batanagar, Maheshtala Municipality, Dist. - 24 Parganas (South)." Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal, June 19, 2008. https://web.archive.org/web/20110721155551/http://enviswb.gov.in/Env_application/EIA/uploads/Riverbank%20-%20Batanagar%5B1%5D.pdf#.
- . *The Calcutta Thika Tenancy (Acquisition and Regulation) Act, 1949*. Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary, 1949.
- . *The Calcutta Thika Tenancy (Acquisition and Regulation) Act, 1981. WB Act No. 37 of 1981*. Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary, 1981.
- . *Policy Statement on Industrial Development*. Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1994.
- . *Statement on Industrial Policy*. Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1978.
- . *West Bengal Land Reforms Act 1955. WB Act. No. 10 of 1956 (As Modified up to the 1st January, 1999)*. Calcutta: Government of West Bengal, 1999.
- . *West Bengal Special Economic Zone Act 2003: Preamble, 2003*.
- Guha, Abhijit. *Land, Law, and the Left: The Saga of Disempowerment of the Peasantry in the Era of Globalization*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2007.

- Gunn, Simon. "Class, Identity and the Urban: The Middle Class in England, c.1790-1950." *Urban History* 31, no. 1 (2004): 29–47.
- Gupta, Deepak. *Industrial Sickness- Issues and Options*. Bombay: Reserve Bank of India, 1992.
- Gupta, Prasanta Sen. "The 1995 Municipal Election in West Bengal: The Left Front Is Down." *Asian Survey* 37, no. 10 (1997): 905–17. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645612>.
- . "The 1995 Municipal Election in West Bengal: The Left Front Is Down." *Asian Survey* 37, no. 10 (1997): 905–17. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645612>.
- Gupta, Ranjit Das. "Industrial Development Policy: A Critical View." *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 30 (1995): 1896–1901.
- Gururani, S., and Rajarshi Dasgupta. "Frontier Urbanism: Urbanisation beyond Cities in South Asia." *Economic and Political Weekly* 53 (March 24, 2018): 41–45.
- Gururani, Shubhra. "Cities in a World of Villages: Agrarian Urbanism and the Making of India's Urbanizing Frontiers." *Urban Geography* 41, no. 7 (August 8, 2020): 971–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2019.1670569>.
- Hackworth, Jason, and Neil Smith. "The Changing State of Gentrification." *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 92, no. 4 (2001): 464–477.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004.
- Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. OUP Oxford, 2007.
- . "Chapter 1: Freedom's Just Another Word." In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 5–38. New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . "Chapter 2: The Construction of Consent." In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 39–63. New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . "Chapter 3: The Neoliberal State." In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 64–86. New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . "Chapter 4: Uneven Geographical Development." In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 87–119. New York, United States: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . "Class-Monopoly Rent, Finance Capital and the Urban Revolution." *Regional Studies* 8, no. 3–4 (1974): 239–255.
- . "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17.
- . "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix.'" *Geographische Revue* 2 (2001): 23–30.
- . *The Enigma of Capital and The Crisis of Capitalism*. Profile, 2010.

- . “The Right to the City.” *New Left Review*, no. 53 (2008): 23–40.
- . *Social Justice and the City*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010.
- . “The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2, no. 1–3 (1978): 101–131.
- . “Their Crisis, Our Challenge,” March 15, 2009. Accessed September 10, 2021. <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/Their-crisis-our-challenge/>.
- Hall, Peter. “The Containment of Urban England.” *The Geographical Journal* 140, no. 3 (1974): 386–408. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1796533>.
- Haque, M. S. “Governance Based on Partnership with NGOs: Implications for Development and Empowerment in Rural Bangladesh.” *Scopus* (2004). Accessed September 24, 2021. <https://scholarbank.nus.edu.sg/handle/10635/23447>.
- Herbert, Caroline. “Postcolonial Cities.” In *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*, edited by Kevin R. McNamara, 200–215. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139235617.017>.
- Hindustan Times. “65 Years of Freedom: Trip Down the Memory Lane-Sulekha Industry.” August 15, 2012.
- “Historical Materialism by Karl Marx.” *Social Theory Re-Wired*. Last modified 2016. Accessed June 25, 2022. <https://routledgesoc.com/category/profile-tags/historical-materialism>.
- Hyman, Richard. “Strategy or Structure? Capital, Labour and Control.” *Work, Employment and Society* 1, no. 1 (1987): 25–55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017087001001004>.
- Jacob, Shine. “Sulekha: Writing a Comeback Story.” *Business Standard India*, April 6, 2011. https://www.business-standard.com/article/management/sulekha-writing-a-comeback-story-111040600076_1.html.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Vintage Books, 1992.
- Jaffee, David. “Neoliberal Urbanism as ‘Strategic Coupling’ to Global Chains: Port Infrastructure and the Role of Economic Impact Studies.” *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 37, no. 1 (2019): 119–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654418771134>.
- Jameson, Fredric. “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.” *New Left Review*, 1984, 53–92.
- Jameson, Fredric. “Postmodernism and Consumer Society.” In *Postmodern Debates*, edited by Simon Malpas, 22–36. London: Macmillan Education UK, 2001. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-04505-8_3.
- . “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.” *New Left Review*, 1984, 53–92.

Jordy, William H. "Review of *The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright, Morton*." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49, no. 4 (1963): 683–685.

Jiang, Yanpeng, Nalini Mohabir, Renfeng Ma, and Pengyu Zhu. "Sorting through Neoliberal Variations of Ghost Cities in China." *Land Use Policy* 69 (2017): 445–53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.09.001>.

Kalecki, Michal. "A Theory of the Business Cycle." *The Review of Economic Studies* 4, no. 2 (February 1, 1937): 77–97. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2967606>.

Kapuscinski, Ryszard. *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*. Translated by William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczlwwslw-Brand. San Diego; London; New York: A Helen and Kurt Wolff Booh Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1983.

Kaviraj, Sudipta. "Filth and the Public Sphere: Concepts and Practices about Space in Calcutta." *Public Culture* 10, no. 1 (1997): 83–113. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-10-1-83>.

———. "Modernity and Politics in India." *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 137–62.

Keil, Roger. "'Common-Sense' Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada." *Antipode* 34 (2002): 578–601.

Kemeny, Thomas. "Cultural Diversity, Institutions, and Urban Economic Performance." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 44, no. 9 (2012): 2134–2152.

Khasnabis, Ratan. "The Economy of West Bengal." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 52 (2008): 103–15.

King, Anthony D. "Colonial Cities: Global Pivots of Change." In *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, edited by Robert J. Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, 7–32. Comparative Studies in Overseas History. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1985. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-6119-7_2.

King, Anthony D. "Colonialism and Urban Development." In *Cities of the Global South Reader*, edited by Faranak Miraftab and Neema Kudva, 29–39. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2015.

King, Anthony D. "Exporting 'Planning': The Colonial and Neo-Colonial Experience." *Urbanism Past & Present*, no. 5 (1977): 12–22.

Kirby, Jack Temple. "The Transformation of Southern Plantations c. 1920-1960." *Agricultural History* 57, no. 3 (1983): 257–76.

Kirkland, Christopher. "Introduction." In *The Political Economy of Britain in Crisis: Trade Unions and the Banking Sector*, 1–52. Building a Sustainable Political Economy: SPERI Research & Policy. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-59238-1_2.

KMDA. "Vision 2025: Perspective Plan of CMA: Draft Final Report," 2005.

- Kohli, Atul. "West Bengal: Parliamentary Communism and Reform from Above." In *The State and Poverty in India: The Politics of Reform*, 95–143. Cambridge South Asian Studies 37. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Kothari, Rajni. "State and Statelessness in Our Time." *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, no. 11/12 (1991): 553–58.
- Krätke, Stefan. "Cities in Contemporary Capitalism." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 5 (2014): 1660–1677.
- Krishnan, Sandhya, and Neeraj Hatekar. "Rise of the New Middle Class in India and Its Changing Structure." *Economic and Political Weekly* 52 (2017): 40–48.
- Kundu, Ratoola. "'Their Houses on Our Land': Perforations and Blockades in the Planning of New Town Rajarhat, Kolkata." In *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South*, edited by Ayona Datta and Abdul Shaban, 123–47. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. London; New York: Routledge, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315797830-16>.
- Kundu, Ratoola, and Anushyama Mukherjee. "Demolition Drive against Street Vendors in Salt Lake City, Kolkata." *BlogURK* (blog), December 20, 2017. <https://theblogurk.wordpress.com/2017/12/20/demolition-drive-against-street-vendors-in-salt-lake-city-kolkata/>.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Urban Revolution*. Translated by Robert Bononno. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Accessed September 10, 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt5vkbkv>.
- Ley, David. "Alternative Explanations for Inner-City Gentrification: A Canadian Assessment." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 76, no. 4 (1986): 521–35.
- . "Inner-City Revitalization in Canada: A Vancouver Case Study." *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe Canadien* 25, no. 2 (1981): 124–48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.1981.25.2.124>.
- Lorraine Dearstyne Fowlow. "City as Theme Park: The Mickeyization of the Urban Landscape," 1996.
- Lowe, Stuart. "The City and the Grassroots." In *Urban Social Movements: The City after Castells*, 1st ed., 29–48. New York: Red Globe Press London, 1986. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-349-18175-9>.
- . *Urban Social Movements: The City after Castells*. 1st ed. New York: Red Globe Press London, 1986.
- Lynch, Kevin. "But Is a General Normative Theory Possible?" In *Good City Form*, 99–108. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: MIT Press, 1984.

Majumdar, Sushobhan, and Lakshmi Sivaramakrishnan. "Mapping of Urban Growth Dynamics in Kolkata Metropolitan Area: A Geospatial Approach," 9–24, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23796-7_2.

Majumdar, Udayan. "Urban Renewal in Calcutta: A Perspective Study." In *Environment, Population, and Development: Felicitation Volume in Honour of Prof. S.L. Kayastha*, edited by Prithvish Nag, Chandra Shekhar Kumar, and Smita Sengupta. Concept Publishing Company, 2001.

Mair, Peter. "Left–Right Orientations." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270125.003.0011>.

Marglin, Stephen. "What Do Bosses Do? The Origins and Functions of Hierarchy in Capitalist Production, Part I." *The Review of Radical Political Economics* 6, no. 2 (1974): 60–112.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I. The Process of Capitalist Production*. Translated by Fowkes Ben. London: Penguin Books and New Left Review, 1976.

———. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume III. The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*. Chicago: Charles H Kerr & Company, 1909.

———. "On Strikes and the Value of Labor." Translated by Andy Blunden. *New York Daily Tribune*, October 17, 1853. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1853/09/27.htm>.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. New to this Edition: Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Marx Engels: Selected Works. London: Lawrance and Wishart Ltd., 1950.

Massey, Doreen. "Globalisation: What Does It Mean for Geography?" *Geography* 87, no. 4 (2002): 293–96.

———. *For Space*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2005.

———. "The Issues." In *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*, 1–11. London: Macmillan Education UK, 1995. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24059-3_1.

———. "Social Relations and Spatial Organisation." In *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*, edited by Doreen Massey, 12–64. London: Macmillan Education UK, 1995. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24059-3_2.

———. *Spatial Divisions of Labor: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*. London: Macmillan Education UK, 1995.

Massey, Douglas S., and Jonathan Tannen. "Suburbanization and Segregation in the United States: 1970–2010." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 9 (2018): 1594–1611. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1312010>.

Masthan, D., L. Venugopal Reddy, and B. Ramachandra Reddy. "Political Leadership in Unions: Helpful or Harmful?" *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations* 31, no. 1 (1995): 91–105.

Mayers, James. "Economic Reform and the Urban/Rural Divide: Political Realignment in West Bengal 1977–2000." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 24, no. 1 (June 1, 2001): 17–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856400108723422>.

Mayer, Margit. "Neoliberal Urbanism and Uprisings Across Europe." In *Urban Uprisings: Challenging Neoliberal Urbanism in Europe*, edited by Margit Mayer, Catharina Thörn, and Håkan Thörn, 57–92. Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-50509-5_2.

Mills, C. Wright. *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Miller, Zane L. "Pluralism, Chicago School Style: Louis Wirth, the Ghetto, the City, and 'Integration.'" *Journal of Urban History* 18, no. 3 (May 1, 1992): 251–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009614429201800301>.

Mitchell, Donald. "From Values to Value and Back Again: The Political Economy of Culture." In *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*, 66–88. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

———. "Geographies of Belonging? Nations, Nationalism, and Identity in an Era of "Deterritorialization." In *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*, 259–83. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. <http://digitool.hbz-nrw.de:1801/webclient/DeliveryManager?pid=3838824>.

———. "Metaphors to Live By: Landscapes as Systems of Social Reproduction." In *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*, 121–44. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

Mitra, A. *Census of India 1951: Calcutta City*. Vol. 6. Part 3. Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1951.

———. "Calcutta India's City." In *Calcutta on the Eve of Tercentenary*, 13–26. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990.

———. "Three Elements of CMD's Growth." In *Calcutta on the Eve of Tercentenary*, 45–55. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990.

———. "Where Do We Go from Here? The Problems of Calcutta Metropolitan Region." In *Calcutta on the Eve of Tercentenary*, 56–80. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990.

Mukherjee, Pradipta. "Why Flat Prices in Kolkata Are Rising, Bucking the Trend in Some Other Metros." *Mint*, January 24, 2020. <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/why-flat-prices-in-kolkata-are-rising-bucking-the-trend-in-other-cities-11579844043864.html>.

Mukherjee, Jenia. "Transformed Infrastructures." In *Blue Infrastructures: Natural History, Political Ecology and Urban Development in Kolkata*, 151–177. Exploring Urban Change in South Asia. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore Pvt. Ltd, 2020. Accessed October 6, 2021. <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811539503>.

- Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961.
- Murphey, Rhoads. "The City in the Swamp: Aspects of the Site and Early Growth of Calcutta." *The Geographical Journal* 130, no. 2 (1964): 241–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1794585>.
- Murray, Martin J. "Frictionless Utopias for the Contemporary Urban Age: Large-Scale, Master-Planned Redevelopment Projects in Urbanizing Africa." In *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South*, edited by Ayona Datta and Abdul Shaban, 31–53. London; New York: Routledge, 2016.
- . "Waterfall City (Johannesburg): Privatized Urbanism in Extremis." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 47, no. 3 (2015): 503–20. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a140038p>.
- Moroni, Stefano. "Urban Density after Jane Jacobs: The Crucial Role of Diversity and Emergence." *City, Territory and Architecture* 3, no. 1 (2016): 13.
- Nag, Jayatri, and Krishna Kumar. "Villagers Want Port Project to Be Restarted in Trinamool Turf Kulpi." *The Economic Times*, March 4, 2021. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/villagers-want-port-project-to-be-restarted-in-trinamool-turf-kulpi/articleshow/81877242.cms>.
- Nair, P. Thankappan. "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta." In *Calcutta, the Living City-The Past*, 1:10–23. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Nicholls, Walter J., and Justus Uitermark. "The Cooptative State: The Pacification of Contentious Immigrant Politics in Amsterdam." In *Cities and Social Movements: Immigrant Rights Activism in the US, France, and the Netherlands, 1970-2015*, 138–56. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2017.
- NIUA. "Calcutta's Basic Development Plan: A Background Paper." New Delhi: National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1986.
- Ong, Aihwa. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. *Neoliberalism as Exception*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822387879>.
- Outlook. "Kolkata to Emerge as a Big Financial Centre by 2030," October 1, 2018. <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/kolkata-to-emerge-as-a-big-financial-centre-by-2030/1227254>.
- Pal, Anirban. "Scope for Bottom-up Planning in Kolkata: Rhetoric vs Reality." *Environment and Urbanization* 18, no. 2 (2006): 501–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247806069628>.
- Park, Robert E. "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment." *American Journal of Sociology* 20, no. 5 (1915): 577–612.
- Park, Robert Ezra. *Human Communities: The City and Human Ecology*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1952.

Paris, C. "Social Theory and the Urban Question†: Reviews, Critiques, and Reply: Whatever Happened to Urban Sociology? Critical Reflections on Social Theory and the Urban Question." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 1, no. 2 (1983): 217–225.

Parnell, Susan, and Jennifer Robinson. "(Re)Theorizing Cities from the Global South: Looking Beyond Neoliberalism." *Urban Geography* 33, no. 4 (2012): 593–617.

Pascal, Anthony. "The Vanishing City." *Urban Studies* 24 (1987): 597–603.

Patel, Pravin J. "Trade Union Participation and Development of Class-Consciousness." *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 36 (1994): 2368–77.

Peck, Jamie. "Geography and Public Policy: Constructions of Neoliberalism." *Progress in Human Geography* 28, no. 3 (2004): 392–405.

Peck, Jamie, and Adam Tickell. "Neoliberalizing Space." *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 380–404. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00247>.

Planning Commission, Government of India. "West Bengal Development Report." New Delhi, 2010.

Pritchett, Wendell E. "Which Urban Crisis?: Regionalism, Race, and Urban Policy, 1960—1974." *Journal of Urban History* 34, no. 2 (2008): 266–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144207308678>.

Project Summary. "Tarakeshwar - Bishnupur New BG Line (NL), ER.," October 2, 2022. http://www.cspm.gov.in/ocmstemp/PROJ_SUMMARY?pred=220100272&stat=O.

Pugh, Cedric. "The World Bank and Urban Shelter in Calcutta." *Cities* 6, no. 2 (May 1, 1989): 103–18. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-2751\(89\)90064-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-2751(89)90064-4).

Racine, Jean, ed. *Calcutta 1981: The City, Its Crisis, and the Debate on Urban Planning and Development*. Calcutta 1981: The City, Its Crisis, and the Debate on Urban Planning and Development. Mondes Indiens/South Asia. Pondichéry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2020. <http://books.openedition.org/ifp/5143>.

Rao, Ursula. "Urban Negotiations and Small-Scale Gentrification in a Delhi Resettlement Colony." In *Space, Planning and Everyday Contestations in Delhi*, edited by Surajit Chakravarty and Rohit Negi, 77–89. Exploring Urban Change in South Asia. New Delhi: Springer India, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-81-322-2154-8_5.

Ray, Manas. "Growing Up Refugee." *History Workshop Journal* 53, no. 1 (March 1, 2002): 149–79. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/53.1.149>.

Ray, Subhash C. "The Political Economy of Decline of Industry in West Bengal: Experiences of a Marxist State Within a Mixed Economy." *University Of Connecticut*, Department of Economics Working Paper Series, Working Paper 2011-10 (2011).

Rediff. "Eviction Drive in Kolkata Called Off," February 3, 2005. <https://www.rediff.com/news/2005/mar/02kolkata.htm>.

- Rizzi, Paolo, and Ilaria Dioli. "From Strategic Planning to City Branding: Some Empirical Evidence in Italy." *PASOS Revista de turismo y patrimonio cultural* 8, no. 3 (2010): 39–49.
- Robinson, Jennifer. "Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26, no. 3 (2002): 531–554.
- Ross, Robert J., and Gerard J. Telkamp. "Introduction." In *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, edited by Robert J. Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, 1–6. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1985.
- Rousseau, Max, and Tarik Harroud. "Satellite Cities Turned to Ghost Towns? On the Contradictions of Morocco's Spatial Policy." *International Planning Studies* 24, no. 3–4 (2019): 341–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563475.2019.1665500>.
- Roy, Ananya. "City Life: Dichotomies in an Urbanizing India," June 18, 2012. Accessed October 2, 2021. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/city-life-dichotomies-in-an-urbanizing-india/>.
- . "Re-Forming the Megacity: Calcutta and the Rural–Urban Interface." In *Megacities: Urban Form, Governance, and Sustainability*, edited by Andre Sorensen and Junichiro Okata, 93–109. Tokyo; Dordrecht; Heidelberg; London; New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-4-431-99267-7_5.
- . "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 2 (2011): 223–238.
- . "The Blockade of the World-Class City: Dialectical Images of Indian Urbanism." In *Worlding Cities*, 259–78. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444346800.ch10>.
- . "The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory." *Regional Studies* 43, no. 6 (2009): 819–830.
- . "Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71, no. 2 (2005): 147–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360508976689>.
- . "Urbanisms, Worlding Practices and the Theory of Planning." *Planning Theory* 10, no. 1 (2011): 6–15.
- . "What Is Urban about Critical Urban Theory?" *Urban Geography* 37, no. 6 (August 17, 2016): 810–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2015.1105485>.
- . "Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities: Informality, Insurgence and the Idiom of Urbanization." *Planning Theory* 8, no. 1 (2009): 76–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095208099299>.
- . "Worlding the South: Towards a Post Colonial Urban Theory." In *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South*, 9–20. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Rumbach, Andrew. "At the Roots of Urban Disasters: Planning and Uneven Geographies of Risk in Kolkata, India." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 39, no. 6 (2017): 783–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2017.1282771>.

Rumbach, Andrew. "'Between the Devil and the Bay of Bengal': The Ford Foundation and the Politics of Planning in Post-Independence Calcutta." *Planning Perspectives* 36, no. 5 (2021): 1025–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2021.1897032>.

Rutenburg, Jeanne, and Arthur M. Eckstein. "The Return of the Fall of Rome." *The International History Review* 29, no. 1 (2007): 109–122.

Samaddar, Ranabir. 'It Does Not Die' – Urban Protest in Kolkata, 1987-2007. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal (SAMAJ)*, December 30, 2011. <https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/3230>.

———. "Occupy College Street: Student Radicalism in Kolkata in the Sixties." *Slavic Review* 77, no. 4 (2018): 904–11. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2018.288>.

Sanyal, B, and M Tiwari. *Politics and Institutions in Urban Development: The Story of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority*. Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, 1990.

Sanyal, Kalyan, and Rajesh Bhattacharya. "Bypassing the Squalor: New Towns, Immaterial Labour and Exclusion in Post-Colonial Urbanisation." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2015, 7–8.

Sanyal, Romola. "Contesting Refugeehood: Squatting as Survival in Post-Partition Calcutta." *Social Identities* 15, no. 1 (2009): 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630802692937>.

Sanhati. "On the Situation in Nonadanga," January 5, 2012. <http://sanhati.com/articles/5004/>.

Sarkar, Abhirup. "Political Economy of West Bengal: A Puzzle and a Hypothesis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 4 (2006): 341–48.

Sassen, Saskia. "Cities Help Us Hack Formal Power Systems." In *Architecture and the Social Sciences Inter- and Multidisciplinary Approaches between Society and Space*, 3–11. Springer, 2017. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53477-0_1.

———. "Does the City Have Speech?" *Public Culture* 25, no. 2 70 (2013): 209–21. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2020557>.

———. "The City: A Collective Good?" *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2017): 119–26.

———. "The Global City: Introducing a Concept." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2005): 27–43.

———. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991.

- . “The Global Street: Making the Political.” *Globalizations* 8, no. 5 (2011): 573–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2011.622458>.
- . “The Middle Classes: An Historic Actor in Today’s Global World.” *Juncture* 20 (2013): 125–128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2050-5876.2013.00738.x>.
- . “When the Center No Longer Holds: Cities as Frontier Zones.” *Cities, Urban Borderlands*, 34 (2012): 67–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2012.05.007>.
- . “Urban Capabilities: An Essay on Our Challenges and Differences.” *Journal of International Affairs* 65, no. 2 (2012): 85–95.
- Saunders, Peter. “Social Theory, Capitalism and the Urban Question.” In *Social Theory and the Urban Question*, 1–29. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Sawyer, Lindsay, Christian Schmid, Monika Streule, and Pascal Kallenberger. “Bypass Urbanism: Re-Ordering Center-Periphery Relations in Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City.” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 53, no. 4 (2021): 675–703.
- Schindler, Seth. “Towards a Paradigm of Southern Urbanism.” *City* 21, no. 1 (2017): 47–64.
- Schmaus, W. “Determinism: Social and Economic.” In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, edited by Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes, 3538–3541. Oxford: Pergamon, 2001. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B0080430767000589>.
- Schöllmann, Andrea, Harvey C Perkins, and Kevin Moore. “Intersecting Global and Local Influences in Urban Place Promotion: The Case of Christchurch, New Zealand.” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 32, no. 1 (2000): 55–76.
- Schumpeter, Joseph A. “Marx The Sociologist.” In *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 9–20. USA: Taylor and Francis, 2013.
- Schumpeter, Joseph Alois. “The Process of Creative Destruction.” In *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 81–86. USA: Taylor and Francis, 2013.
- Scott, Allen J. “Capitalism, Cities, and the Production of Symbolic Forms.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, no. 1 (2001): 11–23.
- Scott, Allen John. *The Urban Land Nexus and the State*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Scott, Allen J., and Michael Storper. “The Nature of Cities: The Scope and Limits of Urban Theory.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 1 (2015): 1–15.
- Sen, Siddhartha. “Colonizing Kolkata.” In *Colonizing, Decolonizing, and Globalizing Kolkata*, 37–76. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048530687-004>.

Sen, Siddhartha. "Decolonizing Kolkata." In *Colonizing, Decolonizing, and Globalizing Kolkata*, 133–82. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048530687-004>.

Sen, Siddhartha, and Sudeshna Ghosh. "Contradictions between Global Spaces and Informal Marginal Settlements: The Case of Kolkata." In *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Megacities in the Global South*, edited by Deden Rukmana, 177–90. New York: Routledge, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003038160-13>.

Sengupta, Anwasha. "Tram Movement and Teachers' Movement in Calcutta: 1953-1954." In *People, Politics and Protests I Calcutta & West Bengal, 1950s – 1960s. Policies and Practices*. Kolkata: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, 2016.

Sengupta, Snehal. "Eviction in Book Fair Run-Up." *The Telegraph Online*, December 22, 2017. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/eviction-in-book-fair-run-up/cid/1396352>.

Sengupta, Sucharita, and Paula Banerjee. "Refugee Movement: Another Aspect of Popular Movements in West Bengal in the 1950s and 1960s." In *People, Politics and Protests I Calcutta & West Bengal, 1950s – 1960s*. Kolkata: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, 2016.

Sengupta, Sunil. "West Bengal Land Reforms and the Agrarian Scene." *Economic and Political Weekly* 16, no. 25/26 (1981): A69–75.

Sengupta, Urmi. "Housing Reform in Kolkata: Changes and Challenges." *Housing Studies* 22, no. 6 (2007): 965–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673030701608217>.

———. "The Hindered Self-Help: Housing Policies, Politics and Poverty in Kolkata, India." *Habitat International - HABITAT INT* 34 (2010): 323–31.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2009.11.009>.

Sengupta, Urmi, and Allan G. Tipple. "The Performance of Public-Sector Housing in Kolkata, India, in the Post-Reform Milieu." *Urban Studies* 44, no. 10 (September 1, 2007): 2009–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980701471927>.

Sharma, R.N. "Mega Transformation of Mumbai: Deepening Enclave Urbanism." *Sociological Bulletin* 59, no. 1 (2010): 69–91.

Shaw, Annapurna. "Inner-City and Outer-City Neighbourhoods in Kolkata: Their Changing Dynamics Post Liberalization." *Environment and Urbanization ASIA* 6, no. 2 (2015): 139–53.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0975425315589157>.

Shaw, Annapurna. "Urban Policy in Post-Independent India: An Appraisal." *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 4 (1996): 224–28.

Shin, Hyun Bang, and Soo-Hyun Kim. "The Developmental State, Speculative Urbanisation and the Politics of Displacement in Gentrifying Seoul." *Urban Studies* 53, no. 3 (February 1, 2016): 540–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098014565745>.

Short, John Rennie, and Lina Martínez. “The Urban Effects of the Emerging Middle Class in the Global South.” *Geography Compass* 14, no. 4 (2020): e12484. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12484>.

Sircar, Srilata. “Placing the Urban in Its Rural Context: A Mixed Methods Case Study of a ‘Census Town’ in India.” *Urbanisation* 2, no. 2 (2017): 98–115. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2455747117740440>.

Simandan, D. “Industrialization.” In *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift, 419–425. Oxford: Elsevier, 2009. Accessed September 21, 2021. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780080449104001784>.

Simmel, Georg. “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” In *The Urban Sociology Reader*, edited by Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, 2nd ed., 23–31. Urban Reader Series. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Sinha, Dipankar. “Development and Decay in a Third World City: A Humanizing Approach for Calcutta.” *Journal of Third World Studies* 6, no. 2 (1989): 97–114.

Smith, Neil. “Gentrification and Uneven Development.” *Economic Geography* 58, no. 2 (1982): 139–55. <https://doi.org/10.2307/143793>.

———. “New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy.” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 427–450.

———. “Toward a Theory of Gentrification A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People.” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45, no. 4 (1979): 538–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944367908977002>.

Spodek, Howard. “City Planning in India under British Rule.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 4 (2013): 53–61.

Sud, Nikita. “The State in the Era of India’s Sub-National Regions: Liberalization and Land in Gujarat.” *Geoforum* 51 (2014): 233–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.06.002>.

The Telegraph Online. “Bengal Bans Realty on Factory Land,” July 20, 2011. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/bengal-bans-realty-on-factory-land/cid/367615>.

The Times of India. “Govt to Reclaim Land Locked by Closed Units,” November 17, 2010. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/govt-to-reclaim-land-locked-by-closed-units/articleshow/6938433.cms>.

The Times of India. “Land Ceiling for Townships,” November 28, 2013. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/land-ceiling-for-townships/articleshow/26489662.cms>.

The Times of India. “No Rehabilitation for ‘Paperless’ Slum-Dwellers,” December 28, 2017. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/no-rehabilitation-for-paperless-slum-dwellers/articleshow/62273424.cms>.

- The Times of India. "Squatters Halt Rail Eviction Drive," May 5, 2002. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/squatters-halt-rail-eviction-drive/articleshow/8902955.cms>.
- The Times of India. "Villagers Clash with Cops, TMC Men over Lake Fill-Up," March 17, 2017. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/villagers-clash-with-cops-tmc-men-over-lake-fill-up/articleshow/57676920.cms>.
- Toporowski, Jan. "Michal Kalecki and the Politics of Full Employment." *Jacobin*, January 18, 2022. <https://jacobinmag.com/2022/01/michal-kalecki-keynes-full-employment-political-economy>.
- Vasundhara. *South City Controversy: Selected Documents*. Kolkata, 2008.
- Vidal, Matt. "Contradictions of the Labour Process, Worker Empowerment and Capitalist Inefficiency." *Historical Materialism* 28, no. 2 (2019): 170–204. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1569206X-00001792>.
- Walker, Richard A. "A Theory of Suburbanization: Capitalism and the Construction of Urban Space in the United States." In *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, edited by Michael Dear and Allen J Scott, 7:383–429. London, New York: Routledge, 2018.
- WBHIDCO. "Annual Report 2017-2018," 2018.
- . "Landuse and Development Control Plan for New Town Planning Area," 2012.
- Weiner, Myron. "Urbanization and Political Protest." *Civilisations* 17, no. 1/2 (1967): 44–52.
- Weiner, Myron. "Violence and Politics in Calcutta." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (1961): 275–81. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2050815>.
- Williard, Kate. "Understanding Political Power: Pluralism, Class Theory and Elite Theory Perspectives." Academic. Academic Blog. Last modified January 3, 2016. Accessed September 22, 2021. <http://www.katewillyard.com/1/post/2016/01/understanding-political-power-pluralism-class-theory-and-elite-theory-perspectives.html>.
- Wirth, Louis. "Urbanism as a Way of Life." *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (1938): 1–24.
- Yang, Myungji. "The Rise of 'Gangnam Style': Manufacturing the Urban Middle Class in Seoul, 1976–1996." *Urban Studies* 55, no. 15 (2018): 3404–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098017748092>.
- Yeoh, Brenda S.A. "Postcolonial Cities." *Progress in Human Geography* 25, no. 3 (2001): 456–68. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913201680191781>.
- Yeoh, Brenda S. A., and T. C. Chang. "Globalising Singapore: Debating Transnational Flows in the City." In *The Urban Sociology Reader*, edited by Jan Lin and Christopher Mele, Second. Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2013.

Yin, Guanwen, Yungang Liu, and Fenglong Wang. "Emerging Chinese New Towns: Local Government-Directed Capital Switching in Inland China." *Cities* 79 (2018): 102–112.

Young, Craig, Martina Diep, and Stephanie Drabble. "Living with Difference? The 'Cosmopolitan City' and Urban Reimaging in Manchester, UK." *Urban Studies* 43, no. 10 (2006): 1687–1714.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Knee-Deep." *London Review of Books*, September 2, 2004. Accessed October 5, 2021. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v26/n17/slavoj-zizek/knee-deep>.

Zou, Yonghua. "Capital Switching, Spatial Fix, and the Paradigm Shifts of China's Urbanization." *Urban Geography* 0, no. 0 (2021): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2021.1956111>.

Annexures

Annexure I. Questionnaire for gated apartment survey

Introduction and Consent

Hi, I am Debapriya Karmakar, an M.Phil Student from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. I am presently working on urban spatial transformation and conducting a survey on the same, for which I humbly request you to fill out the form below. I assure you that the information in this form will not be disclosed directly to anyone and will be used only for the aforesaid research.

Surveyed Individual Number: _____

Apartment Name: _____

Date: _____

A. Personal Background & Socio-economic Status

1. Age

- a) Less than 25
- b) 25-35 years
- c) 35-45 years
- d) 45-55 years
- e) More than 55 years

2. Marital Status

- a) Single
- b) Married
- c) Widowed
- d) Separated
- e) Living with a partner

3. How many people currently live in your household, including yourself?

4. Family Type

- a) Nuclear Family
- b) Joint Family

5. No. of Son/Daughter/grandson/granddaughter

6. Are any of them Children (0-6 years)?
7. Average age of son /daughter/grandson and granddaughter
8. Language spoken at home
9. Description of Home
 - a) It is owned by you (or someone in the household)
 - b) It is rented by you (or someone in the household)
 - c) You live with friends/relatives
10. If rented, which category best describes your monthly rent?
 - a) Less than 15,000
 - b) 15,000-20,000
 - c) 20,000-25,000
 - d) 25,000-30,000
 - e) 30,000-35,000
 - f) More than 35,000
11. No. of Rooms
12. Education level
 - a) 12th grade or less
 - b) High school graduate
 - c) Bachelor's degree
 - d) Master's degree
 - e) Doctoral degree
 - f) others (please specify)
13. Employment Status
 - a) Working full time
 - b) Homemaker
 - c) Working part-time
 - d) Retired
 - e) Not currently employed but looking for work
 - f) Not currently employed but not looking for work
 - g) Disabled
 - h) Other (Please Specify)
14. No. of Employed members in the family
15. Employment Sector
16. Annual Household Income

- a) Less than 3 lakhs per annum
- b) 3-6 Lakhs
- c) 6-9 Lakhs
- d) 9-12 Lakhs
- e) More than 12 Lakhs

17. No. of 4 wheelers

18. Do you take a vacation every year?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes
- d) Almost

19. During the past 2 years (excluding the nationwide lockdown period), how many vacations did you take?

20. Did you take any foreign trips in the past two years?

- a) Yes
- b) No

B. Residential Status and Background

21. In which year did you move in here?

22. Do you live here throughout the year?

- a) Yes
- b) No

23. If No, in terms of months, how long would you describe your period of stay in this apartment in a year?

24. If No, Where do you stay during the rest of the months?

25. If No, Why did you choose to rent or buy the apartment here?

- a) Proximity to work/school/ college/ institutions/ universities
- b) Accessibility to nearby places
- c) Familiar and likeable neighbourhood
- d) Familial or social ties
- e) Availability of budget-friendly housing
- f) As a source of investment
- g) Other (Please Specify)

26. If Yes, Where did you live previously before moving in here?

27. Why did you choose to move in here?

- a) Proximity to work/school/ college/ institutions/ universities
- b) Accessibility to nearby places
- c) Familiar and likeable neighbourhood
- d) Family expansion
- e) Familial ties
- f) Availability of budget-friendly housing
- g) Other (Please specify)

27. What is the likelihood of your staying here in the near future?

- a) Very likely
- b) Likely
- c) Neutral
- d) Unlikely
- e) Very unlikely

28. Reasons for anticipated shifting

- a) Change of Job/ School/ College/ Institutions
- b) High rent
- c) Better accommodation
- d) Requirement of large space
- e) Requirement of small space
- f) Familial ties
- g) Better local environment
- h) Other (Please Specify)

29. How would you like to indicate your level of satisfaction with staying in this residential apartment?

- a) Very Satisfied (5)
- b) Satisfied (4)
- c) Neutral (3)
- d) Unsatisfied (2)
- e) Very Unsatisfied (1)

30. Reasons for satisfaction/ dissatisfaction

- a) Facilities and Amenities of the apartment
- b) Level of cleanliness and maintenance
- c) Social cohesion with people of the apartment block
- d) Peaceful and secured environment
- e) Cooperative attitude of the apartment society
- f) Family ties
- g) Others (Please Specify)

31. How would you like to indicate your level of satisfaction with staying in this locality?

- a) Very Satisfied (5)
- b) Satisfied (4)
- c) Neutral (3)
- d) Unsatisfied (2)
- e) Very Unsatisfied (1)

32. Reasons for satisfaction/ dissatisfaction

- a) Quality of local environment (density of housing, cleanliness, open space, general appearance)
- b) Availability of and proximity to hospitals, markets, local shops and recreational places
- c) Quality of neighbourhood relationships
- d) Transport facility
- e) Budgetary cost of living
- f) Other (Please Specify)

C. Social Connection/ Neighbourhood Relations

33. Outside this gated apartment, how familiar are you with the people of the neighbourhood?

- a) Very familiar
- b) Familiar
- c) Neutral
- d) Unfamiliar
- e) Very Unfamiliar

34. How often do you visit the local market and the local shops?

- a) Every time (4)
- b) Almost every time (3)
- c) Almost never (2)
- d) Never (1)

35. How often do you talk with your neighbours from the apartment?

- a) Every time (4)
- b) Almost every time (3)
- c) Almost never (2)
- d) Never (1)

36. How often do you talk with your neighbours from outside the apartment?

- a) Every time (4)
- b) Almost every time (3)

- c) Almost never (2)
- d) Never (1)

37. In case of an emergency, how likely you are to seek help from

(i) The people in your apartment?

- a) Very likely
- b) Likely
- c) Not sure
- d) Unlikely
- e) Very Unlikely

(ii) The people outside your apartment, from the neighbourhood area?

- a) Very likely
- b) Likely
- c) Not sure
- d) Unlikely
- e) Very Unlikely

D. Consumption Attitude

38. How would you describe yourself as an online consumer?

- a) Very Regular
- b) Regular
- c) Neutral
- d) Not regular
- e) Not regular at all

39. How often do you get your household necessities, medicines and groceries from online shops?

- a) Every time (5)
- b) Almost every time (4)
- c) Sometimes (3)
- d) Almost never(2)
- e) Never (1)

40. Do you consider yourself or your family to be brand conscious in general?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes
- d) Not sure

41. Are you aware of the nearby Ramgarh Big Bazar and its adjoined Iris Multi-Speciality Hospital?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
42. How often do you visit Ramgarh Big Bazar?
- a) Very Often
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Not at all
43. How far do you think having a departmental store, all under one roof, adds to the advantages of the locality?
- a) 5
 - b) 4
 - c) 3
 - d) 2
 - e) 1
44. How would you like to indicate the affordability level of the products found here?
- a) Very affordable
 - b) Affordable
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Unaffordable
 - e) Very Unaffordable
45. Do you think a privately maintained multi-speciality hospital can be a source of relief for all the people in the area?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not Sure
46. Did you ever visit this hospital for any medical purpose of yours or your family member in the past?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
47. Do you think people of lower socio-economic backgrounds could avail the services of this hospital?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not sure
48. Do you think the affordability range of this hospital creates segregation between the local people, as per their socio-economic capacity to support treatment here?
- a) Yes

- b) No
- c) Not Sure

E. Response toward recent changes

49. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the following in regard to whether the change has been positive or negative for the public?
- a. The development of the South City Shopping Mall
 - b. Increased gated community development in the form of residential high-rises in Kolkata
 - c. The gradual decline of *para culture* in Kolkata
- Highly Positive (5), Positive (4), Neutral (3), Negative (2), Highly Negative (1)
50. Do you agree that the South City Project's development has changed the socio-economic face of the Jadavpur Area and South Kolkata?
- a) Very much agreed
 - b) Agreed
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Not agreed
 - e) Do not agree at all
51. Do you think the following have experienced positive or negative changes as a result of the development of the South City Project?
- a. Housing Availability (in and around Jadavpur area)
 - b. Housing Affordability (in and around Jadavpur area)
 - c. Employment
 - d. Public Transport Services (in and around Jadavpur area)
- Highly Positive (5), Positive (4), Neutral (3), Negative (2), Highly Negative (1)

Annexure II. Questionnaire for neighbourhood survey

Introduction and Consent

Hi, I am Debapriya Karmakar, an M.Phil Student from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. I am presently working on urban spatial transformation and conducting a survey on the same, for which I humbly request you to fill out the form below. I assure you that the information in this form will not be disclosed directly to anyone and will be used only for the aforesaid research.

Surveyed Individual Name: _____

Surveyed Individual Number: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

1. Family Type

- a. Joint
- b. Nuclear

2. How many people are currently living in your household, including yourself?

3. Language spoken

- a. Bengali
- b. Hindi

4. Ownership Status of Houses

- a. Owned
- b. Rented

5. Education Level

- a. Matriculation
- b. Higher Secondary
- c. Bachelors
- d. Masters
- e. Other

6. Occupational Status

7. Income

- a. 3-6 Lakhs
- b. 9-12 Lakhs
- c. More than 12 Lakhs

8. Since when are you living in this area?

9. Do you think Westwind's development has resulted in the face uplift of the area?

- a. Agree
- b. Maybe
- c. Do not Agree
- d. Do not agree at all

10. How affordable do you think the Westwind flats are?

- a. Unaffordable
- b. Somewhat Affordable
- c. Affordable

11. To what extent do you think the area's local people are familiar with the people in Westwind?

- a. Very Familiar
- b. Familiar
- c. Somewhat Familiar
- d. Not Familiar
- e. Not Familiar at all

12. How often do you speak with the residents from Westwind?

- a. Every time
- b. Almost every time
- c. Almost never
- d. Never

13. How do you feel about the approachability of the people living in Westwind?

- a. Very approachable
- b. Approachable
- c. Somewhat approachable
- d. Not approachable
- e. Not approachable at all

14. Based on your lived experience, do you agree with the following statement:

A. Gated apartments like Westwind do not become part of the neighbourhood community but are more of enclave cities.

- i. Agree
- ii. Maybe

iii. Do not agree

B. Along with the promise of a social club and swimming pool, gated apartments offer high security with multiple checkpoints between the main gate to the house. Do you think these checkpoints also stand in the way of neighbourhood mixing?

i. Very much agree

ii. Agree

iii. Maybe

15. Given the sense of security these high-rises manifest, how likely are you to seek help from any resident of Westwind compared to any other resident from your neighbourhood (assuming both live at an equal distance from your place)?

a. Likely

b. Somewhat Likely

c. Unlikely

d. Very Unlikely