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URBANIZING CITIZENSHIP

Contested Spaces in Indian Cities

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Chapter 4

The Politics of Persuasion

Gendered Slum Citizenship in Neoliberal Mumbai

Sapana Doshi

As Mumbai's elites embark on projects of redevelopment, thousands of informal 'slum' residents are facing eviction on a massive scale. While bourgeois visions of urban transformation have progressed at the expense of the majority of the urban poor, slum clearances have not been advanced in a simply authoritarian fashion. Land and housing struggles have generated new and often contradictory articulations of citizenship, where slum dwellers themselves have negotiated and facilitated elite-biased redevelopment interventions. This essay ethnographically examines the citizenship discourses and mobilization processes of slum dwellers displaced by a state-led, World Bank-funded infrastructure expansion project, the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP). With the assistance of a non-governmental organization (NGO), slum-based leaders and project-affected residents collectively mobilized to facilitate the clearance and resettlement of their own neighbourhoods. Gendered discourses and women slum dwellers' participation played an especially important role in enabling cooperation under tense political circumstances. I argue that an examination of the gendered discourses of citizenship and the micro-political processes and material outcomes of this resettlement project reveals the inequalities and limitations of participatory movements.

While recent scholarship has explored examples of citizen mobilization in working class neighbourhoods of post-colonial cities, several key silences suggest the usefulness of critical geographical perspectives. First is the minimal attention given to social differentiation within slum spaces and among slum dwellers. While concepts such as 'insurgent citizenship' (Holston 2008), 'political society' (Chatterjee 2004), and 'deep democracy' (Appadurai 2002) offer important insights into urban social movements, they tend to theorize movements of the urban poor in terms of singular groupings based on class

or housing conditions. Even when acknowledging diversity and the influential participation of groups such as women, they underplay the significant role that difference plays in consolidations of power and rule in projects of neoliberal urban transformation. As this ethnographic study shows, spatially produced, overlapping, and hierarchical axes of difference—including gender, ethnicity, and class—fundamentally shape slum dwellers' political subjectivities and governance practices. Such attention to difference is not meant to simply highlight a complex multitude of subject positionalities. Rather, I argue that strategic, spatialized 'couplings of power and difference' (Hall [1992] in Gilmore [2002]) reveal the connections between citizenship practices and broader political economic agendas.

This leads to the second major silence in much of the Third World urban citizenship literature: an analysis of whether and how movements enable or challenge globalized, market-oriented projects of urban transformation. As Nikolas Rose (2000) has argued, modern 'citizenship games'—the rules that define the conduct of citizens—correspond to advanced liberal rationalities of governing societies and political economies. Citizens and private groups take on increased responsibilities as public social welfare resources are curtailed and scepticism about state capacity abounds. As this essay shows, for instance, understandings of citizenship come not only through direct interaction with the state but also through the mediation of NGOs. The actions and discourses of displaced slum dwellers and their representative entities have followed, but also inflected neoliberal rationalities of community and individual responsibility. However, the meaning and actions associated with citizenship have not been constituted through plays of neoliberal logics alone; they are contingent on the political specificities of time and space. It may be useful to think of slum-based mobilizations as 'citizenship formations' (Marston and Mitchell 2004), wherein understandings of self and community and related forms of actions derive from specific histories of local land struggle.

This essay argues that differentiated spatial productions of citizenship and community forged under conditions of large-scale displacement have, in many instances, facilitated slum dwellers' cooperation with elite-biased and market-oriented redevelopment projects. The MUTP case shows how participatory gendered citizenship has harnessed new configurations of community solidarity, while it has also advanced and elided deepening inequalities among the displaced along lines of both class and gender. By exploring the gendered tropes and material processes of cooperative community mobilization, this essay seeks to understand the rocky politico-ethical trajectory of neoliberal urbanization. A brief contextualization of the emergence of

neoliberal slum redevelopment as a paradigm and practice will situate the subsequent ethnographic case study.

MAKING REDEVELOPMENT SPACE: NEOLIBERALISM IN SLUM POLICY AND POLITICS

While real estate development and evictions are not new to Mumbai, neoliberal practices shaping slum redevelopment have yielded significant changes in city politics. We may characterize these developments as neoliberal because of three key features. First, economic liberalization and deeper integration with global markets at the urban and national scale in the 1990s dramatically augmented real estate values, concentrations of wealth, and political pressures to enclose public spaces through slum clearances. Second, the distribution of compensation for eviction harnessed the profit motives of local real estate developers through new market-oriented policies. While state agencies regulated such projects, funding no longer came from public coffers. Third, local municipal government structures and party patronage politics have ceased to serve as the slum dwellers' sole channel of access to the state. Non-governmental organizations have increasingly begun to mediate relations between the state and the urban poor. Thus, neoliberal redevelopment has not only expanded opportunities for urban accumulation but also dramatically reworked the relationship between the state and slum dwellers. Research on 'actually existing neoliberalisms' in the European and North American context addresses similar patterns of urban and city-region governance, but the critical political and cultural dimensions that shape development trajectories are less well explored (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Leitner, Peck, and Sheppard 2007). The Mumbai case demonstrates that the privatization of governance alters urban spaces, populations, and eviction politics in significant ways. The emergence and specificities of new slum redevelopment policies will illustrate these points further.

In 1995, the regionalist and Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena-BJP coalition of parties entered into power in the state of Maharashtra riding on an ambitious campaign promise to the Mumbai electorate: to provide free formal flats to 4 million slum dwellers in the city. Upon its victory, the coalition established the Slum Redevelopment Authority (SRA), which introduced three major changes to slum policy. First, resettlement housing would be guaranteed for all slum and pavement dwellers displaced by redevelopment projects who could prove residency in Mumbai prior to 1 January 1995. Slum dwellers who failed to furnish proof of residency prior to this

'cut-off date' were to be quite literally cut-off from compensation upon demolition.¹ Second, resettlement compensation would be financed entirely by the market; SRA would offer incentives to private developers to build tenements for slum dwellers free of cost in exchange for coveted transfers of development rights (TDR) to build taller buildings throughout the city. Finally, all other public housing and slum improvement schemes were to be phased out and replaced entirely by SRA.

Though it is outside of the scope of this paper to thoroughly discuss the development ramifications of the SRA's neoliberal mandates, a few key outcomes are worth emphasizing. The SRA policy not only expanded the role of the private sector in low-income housing construction but also dramatically multiplied the availability of space for market-rate development because displacement compensation itself became lucrative for developers by creating a vigorous market for transferable development rights. The freed slum land in combination with transferable development rights to build more densely in high-value neighbourhoods was a boon to real estate and infrastructure developers involved in state-sanctioned slum redevelopment projects. Though benefits to developers far outpaced benefits to other parties, SRA's high-density development model has been showcased for other Indian cities as a win-win strategy for 'tax-paying citizens', the state, and slum dwellers (Mukhija 2003).

The SRA consolidated a number of interconnected processes including the rising role of NGOs, the rapid expansion of real estate and infrastructure development, the changing role of the state as a facilitator of the market, anti-migrant and anti-Muslim xenophobia, and increasing elite desires for a slum-free city. While SRA compensates qualified slum dwellers displaced by redevelopment projects, thousands of 'unqualified' slum dwellers are excluded from legal entitlement to compensation. Such eligibility exclusions combined with the pressures of rapid high-end development and state-sponsored demolition sweeps have severely squeezed affordable housing supplies.

Displaced slum dwellers who have qualified for compensation have increasingly relied on NGOs and community leaders to implement resettlement processes and assure fair compensation and protection from the bullying of private developers and state agencies. The MUTP is one example of an NGO-mediated participatory resettlement project in which a non-confrontational form of gendered participation contributed to cooperation in evicted communities. Through harnessing a particular form of gendered citizenship, participatory resettlement politically enabled, to a limit, the relatively smooth implementation of mass slum clearance.

PARTICIPATORY RESETTLEMENT AND THE MUMBAI URBAN TRANSPORT PROJECT

With over 20,000 project-affected households, MUTP is among the world's largest World Bank-funded urban resettlement projects and has been deemed a model for peaceful and participatory slum clearance and resettlement for more than a decade. The project consisted of railroad infrastructure expansion, road construction, and residential and commercial resettlement and rehabilitation ('R&R') financed jointly by the World Bank and the Government of India at a cost of over US\$1 billion. Although the loan was made to the central government, the Bank managed and administered both the infrastructural and resettlement and rehabilitation components directly with a local parastatal entity linked to the State of Maharashtra: the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

Given the fact that past government slum clearance and redevelopment projects entailed very limited, haphazard, and patronage-driven resettlement, the World Bank insisted on universal compensation of all 'project-affected people' (PAP) regardless of tenure status. Bank resettlement policies reflected earlier experiences with public outcry over involuntary displacement in its development projects such as the Narmada Dam. Accordingly, Bank loan conditionalities required the local state implementing agency, the MMRDA, to expand its categories of qualification for compensation and revise its procedures for slum clearance. Thus, the MUTP resettlement policy reflected a compromise between State of Maharashtra slum redevelopment norms and World Bank loan conditionalities. The State of Maharashtra expanded its categories of compensation to include more (though not all) of the displaced according to World Bank mandates. However, resettlement units would still be financed mostly through the market-oriented SRA model, relying almost entirely on profit motives of participating private developers. For slum dwellers located in environmentally sensitive areas or along roads, railways, and other transport infrastructure, resettlement would be off-site in mass-constructed low-cost units on the urban fringes of the city.² Under MUTP, transfers of development rights, in addition to access to the 10 per cent of project funds allocated by the Bank for resettlement, resulted in high profits for participating local developers. However, the impact on evictees was more mixed.

The most publicized aspect of the MUTP was its unique participatory resettlement model. The massive scale of resettlement and the political nature of the project required working with a great number of slum communities along railway tracks and in the path of proposed road projects.

Thus, MUTP was negotiated to incorporate a partnership model wherein MMRDA contracted a local NGO, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), to undertake community-level resettlement tasks including baseline socio-economic surveys, slum maps, and the formation of building cooperative societies. Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres was chosen for its good relationship with the state and its working relationships with two slum-based organizations, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan (a coalition of women slum dwellers), collectively called the Alliance. Over the last 20 years, the Alliance has gained recognition and influence through developing a non-partisan and non-confrontational manner of negotiating with the state and slum dwellers (especially women). The following section provides a brief history of SPARC's gendered form of neighbourhood-based community organization and its work with the state.

THE 'POLITICS OF PATIENCE' AND THE ORIGINS OF GENDERED NON-CONFRONTATIONAL CITIZENSHIP

What is the quality of woman? Woman is money. Woman is information. Woman is communication.... For me these are the basic ingredients of development.... [In] India you name woman as Laxmi. Who is the Laxmi? [In] any common house, how to change your son's behavior? Bring a Laxmi, he will change.... The daughter-in-law comes to the house and he will change. Otherwise he won't change. (A. Jockin, interview with author, 15 December 2007)

A. Jockin, quoted above, is one of the most famous slum community leaders in the world, the male head of the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India, and a key leader of the SPARC Alliance. In describing the role of the women slum dwellers of Mahila Milan in the Alliance, Jockin is echoing a well-known women-in-development mantra. From the World Bank to local NGOs, mainstream development agents extol the virtues of Third World women's participation as key to creating a positive change at the grassroots level. However, well-known critiques from critical development studies (Hart 2001; Mohan and Stokke 2000), urban studies (Mirraftab 2004; Roy 2002), and transnational feminist theory (Mohanty 2003) have deconstructed the empowerment thesis of women's participation in development. Others have exposed the 'tyrannical' potential of local communities (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan 2004), which often reinforce structural inequalities. In many of these views, participation serves

as a neoliberal political strategy for transferring the burden of a shrinking welfare state onto NGOs, communities, and, ultimately, the bodies of working-class women.

Yet, the quote above illustrates a less explored aspect of women in development: the participating woman's moral authority to transform the way development is done. Jockin invokes commonly held Hindu cultural representations of women in the family and extends them to society and development more broadly. A woman's role in the household is likened to that of the goddess of wealth and prosperity, Laxmi. She represents an auspicious contribution to the family and thus has moral authority to change the behaviour of the men around her. Jockin playfully explained that women are the essence of developmental information and communication because it is the housewife who spends her time observing and gossiping about the status and social dynamics of everyone in the family and neighbourhood. Upon asking Jockin to explain women's association with money in light of the fact that men still often control family wealth, his response is again playfully provocative: though the man of the house may control the money, it is the woman who understands where to use it and can indirectly control how the man spends it. 'Men have no idea what to do with their money and must always ask the wife.... [The woman] is in control,' he explained. In this rendering, the daughter-in-law's power—unlike that of the Goddess—comes from her auspiciousness, social role, and culturally ascribed moral authority, which are not necessarily associated with direct power over family wealth.

As we continued our conversation, Jockin advanced the claim that the participation of women in development projects extends beyond the family into the spaces of relations with the state as well as community social dynamics. The role of women in Alliance activities has consisted of ritualized practices of savings, community mobilization, information collection, and engaging with agents of the state in a non-confrontational manner. Arjun Appadurai (2002) has described these women-centred practices as 'the moral core of the politics of patience'. He argues that this is a politics that privileges a gradual path to the social and economic advancement of the poorest by avoiding threatening of the state and its base of power while also preventing co-optation and patronage by political parties. The Alliance leadership has also stressed the importance of a slow and steady mode of negotiation as the principle means of empowerment through increasing the visibility and legitimacy of slum dwellers in urban development policy.

The Alliance's community participation approach and engagement with the state began in the early 1980s with its initial work with women 'pavement dwellers' living on the precarious sidewalks of southeast

Mumbai—the women who originally formed Mahila Milan. Pavement dwellers have historically been among the poorest and most marginalized groups in the city, suffering repeated demolition of their homes. Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres assembled and disseminated information collected by the women of Mahila Milan in a landmark written work titled 'We the Invisible', which documented data on work and living conditions of pavement dwellers in the Byculla area of Mumbai, who were repeatedly evicted by city authorities. The document was distributed to evicting authorities to dispel myths of criminality in official state discourse and to cast light on pavement dwellers' lives as very poor day workers with no other choice but to live on the streets.

The SPARC leaders contrasted their pragmatic strategy with other more confrontational forms of protests. They argued against the confrontational, 'rights-based' strategy dominated in their view by middle-class advocates who often do not understand the needs of the poor. The SPARC prologue to Mitlin and Patel's (2005) paper asserted:

Well-meaning middle class [leaders]...did not consult the pavement dwellers whose cause they espoused. Had they bothered to do so, they would have been told that pavements were the last places where these people wanted to live in—places without water, sanitation, and electricity, and exposed to inclement weather and the hazards of traffic. The people wanted to be resettled in proper housing with secure tenure.

Another SPARC publication, 'From Demolitions to Dialogue' (year unavailable),³ connected the cooperative strategy directly to the women of Mahila Milan. Referring to the anti-eviction actions of NGOs and community-based organizations in the mid-1980s, the document recounted that 'women [pavement dwellers]...had a different perspective and did not want confrontation'.

These quotes exhibit two important discursive elements. First, rights talk and confrontation were positioned squarely as 'middle-class' tactics foreign to the poor.⁴ However, as the subsequent discussion of the MUTP resettlement demonstrates, the eschewal of rights talk did not mean that the ideals of modern citizenship were absent in community organizing in SPARC-led and other mobilizations. Second, cooperative negotiation was relegated to the domain of women as a naturalized response to the experience of eviction. The SPARC Alliance discourse consistently claimed that poor women were more inclined to cooperating and finding solutions than fighting for an abstract set of rights. This discourse thus elided the possibility of a diversity of political strategies among the poor, with cooperation

with the state was evident in the fact that it was the only representative of slum dwellers invited to attend the SRA negotiations during the Shiv Sena government in 1995. In an interview, Sheela Patel, the Executive Director of SPARC, recalled that many of the city's NGO leaders were critical of her organization's involvement with the violent and exclusionary nativist and Hindu-nationalist politics of the Shiv Sena, the party that had instigated some of the bloodiest ethno-religious riots in the city in 1994.⁷ She explained that she was compelled to participate by Jockin of the NSDF, who 'pushed SPARC to go beyond its middle-class role' and represent the interests of the urban poor.

Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres's role in the state-sponsored committee served to promote greater inclusion in slum rehabilitation policy, such as securing resettlement eligibility for 25,000 pavement dwellers and insisting that women's names be listed in resettlement unit titles. As a trade-off, however, the same negotiations also instated eligibility exclusions that subsequently resulted in mass demolitions of several hundred thousand informal structures without resettlement compensation in 2005. Furthermore, local developers maintained a strong foothold in the SRA policy, benefiting from lucrative development rights through their participation. The pro-development stance of SPARC involved not confronting the developers' lobby but instead advocating for compromise solutions. In my concluding sections, I will address some of the contentious politics and uneven geographies of eviction resulting from these compromise solutions.

Aside from these relations with the state and local and transnational agents of development, the SPARC Alliance practices of grassroots organization and gendered participation constituted a significant source of political strength and claim to legitimacy for the NGO. These mobilizational practices were adopted and expanded under the MUTP participatory resettlement, yielding a significantly different set of outcomes, however. With MUTP, the politics of patience and redevelopment cooperation spatialized and morphed to produce not only new gendered citizenship formations but also influential reworkings of notions of community.

FROM PATIENCE TO PERSUASION: MUTP AND THE PRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION

With the launching of MUTP in the late 1990s, the rapid removal of slums and peaceful relocation of slum dwellers emerged as the principal governmental objective for the various state and non-governmental agents

involved. Accordingly, the SPARC Alliance model of gendered participation was directed into different political arenas as new practical and political problems emerged out of the processes of mass relocation. Problems converged on how such a large and dispersed population of slum dwellers would be engaged to facilitate their own relocation within the prevailing paradigms of development and compensation established by the state and World Bank. This required more extensive ethico-political and practical work with displaced slum dwellers as a collectivity.

Accordingly, slum-based participation was also reoriented. If previous gendered 'citizenship games' engaged directly with state agents (with NGO assistance), the MUTP resettlement steered the actions and meanings of citizenship towards a more immediate collectivized identity: that of the community. The women of Mahila Milan involved in MUTP focused their attention squarely on mobilizing 'communities' to address the practical and political problems of efficient slum resettlement. In the process, I argue, the quiet 'politics of patience' transformed into a practice of facilitating cooperation within the community. I call this the politics of persuasion. Understanding this shift requires an examination of a key facet of the MUTP, the participatory resettlement model, and its inevitably uneven implementation.

The participatory resettlement model of SPARC showcased three principal elements: (a) a voluntary and conflict-free relocation of slum dwellers; (b) the participation of slum dwellers, especially women, in information collection and input on design and location of resettlement units; and (c) resettlement resulting in improved quality of life. The model was based on the experience of previous participatory activities in which SPARC Alliance leaders mobilized neighbourhood leaders and residents to help the NGO staff in the process of household surveying and slum mapping (Burra 1999; Patel et al. 2002).

The adoption of the model had very mixed outcomes in different locations and times, especially between the initial and later phases of the MUTP project. Despite difficulties and delays, slum-based leaders and resettled residents involved in earlier and smaller scale phases of the project expressed a fair level of satisfaction with the processes and outcomes. Slum dwellers were informed and organized into committees well before state demolition squads arrived, and resettlement proceeded without a great degree of conflict. In many instances, women helped to facilitate relocation through participating in slum mapping and surveying, processes that helped to promote trust in the resettling neighbourhoods. Though stays in transit camps were long and arduous, many of the displaced slum dwellers

were relocated close to their former neighbourhoods (Sharma 2003). Mahila Milan women also helped garner sustained cooperation by addressing neighbourhood social and environmental concerns during long and difficult stays in transit camps. Later, they facilitated maintenance activities within the cooperative building society (Burra 1999).

Though the participatory model continued to represent the MUTP experience in international and local development circles, few of the subsequent rounds of demolition and resettlement followed its main steps. The demands of the state implementing agency (MMRDA) and anti-slum sentiments of middle-class residents of the city led to rapid court-ordered demolitions in 2000 that strained the participatory process. As the scale and pace of the project expanded into other parts of the city, subsequent evictions were characterized by sudden demolition, involuntary and distant relocation, and long waits in harsh transit camp environments.

Interview data collected among more recently resettled residents revealed several inconsistencies with the participatory model. During the 2001 court-ordered Harbours Line Railways eviction, for instance, the NGO arm of the SPARC Alliance was only notified to administer resettlement after demolitions took place. Evicted slum dwellers began staging riots and railway line blockades. One woman, Asha, who later joined Mahila Milan, likened the demolition to an explosively violent scene from *Bombay*, a highly political Bollywood film about Hindu-Muslim communal riots in the city during the early 1990s: 'People were charging the police with sticks and setting fires on the train tracks.' Though the Alliance sanctioned the blockade (Patel et al. 2002), Asha recounted, Mahila Milan leaders nonetheless later explained that such tactics were 'wrong'. 'Before, we did not know how to behave, always fighting. Now we are improved,' Asha explained. Several other resettled residents relayed their experience of camping out on the cleared railways slum site for up to eight months before moving into the transit camp site. In other cases, slum dwellers were brought into contact with the Alliance less than two weeks before the demolition to quickly facilitate movement into transit camps.

At the time of eviction, many of the evicted slum dwellers attempted to appeal to ward politicians who had served as their main channel of connection to the state. In prior years, such officials offered protection from demolition and basic services in exchange for electoral support. Now, however, ward politicians, with virtually no access to the workings of large-scale projects, directed slum dwellers to their new connection to the state, the SPARC Alliance. This non-governmental entity thus became the organizing structure of resettlement governance and linkage to state power when

slum dwellers no longer had recourse for negotiating with municipal government.

The circulating image of the participatory model thus did not match the experience of the large majority of subsequent MUTP evictions. Nonetheless, the ideal of non-confrontation and community organization and leadership played a critical role. Under the pressures of rapid slum removal and resettlement on the cheap, Mahila Milan leaders from earlier rounds of resettlement were recruited to train women leaders among the newly evicted to participate in various relocation and rehabilitation activities. In the process, participants helped to redeploy and adapt the 'politics of patience' towards the politics of persuasion and cooperation in addressing the problems of resettlement. For instance, as I demonstrate below, Mahila Milan women helped to harness community solidarity and morale by articulating gendered idioms of entitlement through patience. The ethos of non-confrontation did not emerge in the realm of discourse alone. Formative spatial experiences helped to mould new moral paradigms of citizenship and community.

In particular, the transit camp offers an especially revealing site for examining how the 'politics of patience' spatialized and advanced community solidarity and cooperation. The transit camp was an important space of community organizing because the majority of the resettled railway line dwellers spent a significant length of time there even if they had little or no prior history of working with the SPARC Alliance. Project-evicted families lived in transit camp accommodations for as long as five to seven years between slum demolition and resettlement. Uniformly, people look back on their time in the camps as one of extreme hardship, inhuman conditions, and deep suffering—among the worst periods of their lives. Many of these high-density camps lacked water and sanitation and were prone to monsoon flooding. Residents complained of increased incidences of illness and death due to the lack of clean water, pests, and toxic fumes from a nearby chemical plant and adjacent garbage dumps.

In this space of transition and hardship, women volunteers had regular contact with families. Original Mahila Milan leaders trained other women in the transit camps to form savings schemes as a means of not only improving economic security but also as a way to maintain close ties with community members. They made visits to the camps to follow up on the activities and help new members to address problems. New Mahila Milan leaders and other evictees were also invited to assembly meetings with NSDF leaders including A. Jockin. The majority of the attendees were women who recalled how NSDF and Mahila Milan leaders would relay the Alliance

philosophy of participation, non-confrontation, and progress to the participants. They explained the virtues of community cooperation, joint savings and the need for slum dwellers to improve their housing and sanitation situation. One resident recalled that at community meetings, Alliance leaders 'explained to us that the railways was not the right place for us to live, that it was government land and that we needed to progress and move into a better, permanent place'. Another interviewee recounted that when residents confronted the Alliance with complaints of resettlement difficulties, leaders would explain the value of the life improvements they would achieve in their lives. Jockin would often scold residents for the complaints, explaining that improvements to life through resettlement—including environmental sanitation, infrastructure, and the sense of legitimacy of living in formal housing—would require cooperation and patience. 'He kept telling us that before we were living in filth and that he was trying to get us to understand how to come out of it and live a better life,' a resident recalled.

New Mahila Milan members and leaders became involved in a variety of activities in the transit camps. Members explained to me that there were four committees in which women residents could participate. These committees were formed under the guidance of other Mahila Milan and NSDF leaders during the period of stay in the transit camps and continue to exist in the resettlement colonies today. One was a 'finance committee' which organized the communal savings programme. Activities included daily collections of savings contributions throughout the camp or colony and making decisions regarding loan distributions. Another was the 'BMC committee', which dealt with issues of environmental management (garbage collection, water service, and so on).⁸ The third committee was the 'police panchayat', which dealt with issues of conflict management in slums and resettlement colonies in liaison with the local police. Finally, the 'management committee' assisted with various administrative issues in the compound. In the transit camps, and later in the resettlement colonies, the activities of these committees were geared towards what many members described as community and individual progress for a better life. Progress consisted of moving away from the unhygienic and precarious ways that slum dwellers were used to living. These values were reinforced in large meetings where Alliance leaders would motivate newer members to change their lives and the lives of those around them.

Such everyday and special occasion interactions reinforced the Mahila Milan members' efforts to address the challenges of resettlement and advance the Alliance philosophy of community progress and cooperation in interactions with other residents. Building community awareness and

solidarity was not easy under the dire conditions of transit camp life, as several members admitted. One Mahila Milan leader recalled facing distressed and enraged mobs of residents complaining of living conditions in transit camps as being far worse than what they suffered in the slums and fearing that the resettlement flats would never materialize.

In addressing such outbreaks and other problems, women volunteers repeatedly used one word to express the work they would do: *samjhana*. As they described it, *samjhana* consisted of patiently 'persuading' others to cooperate during trying times, 'explaining' the processes of resettlement or 'making them understand' the situation at hand. *Samjhana* also connoted a slow and painstaking process of dealing with diverse strong personalities. In various South Asian cultural narratives, women are positioned as the more flexible gender, naturally more understanding and tolerant of difficult situations. It is precisely a woman's non-complaining, suffering, and self-sacrificing nature that makes her virtuous. Women and men leaders involved in the MUTP resettlement activities regularly referred to this gendered stereotype. In being more understanding, patient, and self-sacrificing for the good of the community, Mahila Milan leaders and members expressed that they had what they deemed to be a natural proclivity and duty to impart understanding and patience to the community at large. In this way, Mahila Milan women worked with the SPARC leadership towards softening the sting of eviction and transit camp conditions that may otherwise have been interpreted as a raw deal.

The collective memory of transit camp experience also had a distinctly gendered character reminiscent of idioms of long and 'silent' suffering of dutiful wives and mothers celebrated in diverse cultural narratives throughout Indian society. One male leader even used the analogy of a wife covering her mouth to silence her own screams while being beaten by her husband to describe how slum dwellers endured the treatment of the government during the transit camp days. In this manner, entitlement, patience, and suffering were articulated in the lived experiences of the transit camps. The gendered discourses and participation helped to stem dissent and garner cooperation under highly adverse circumstances.

As it promoted solidarity, patience, and suffering, such gendered tropes of community and citizenship also established several exclusionary divisions. One hierarchical sentiment fostered in the transit camp experience was a sense of entitlement based on seniority. For example, in discussions with resettlement colony residents in 2007 who gained access to flats after years of transit camp suffering, I observed a marked disdain for newly resettled residents. Because resettlement structures were built en masse,

there were extra buildings built to resettle new rounds of evicted residents affected by the MUTP and other state-sponsored slum clearance projects. Some newly evicted slum dwellers were resettled directly into the apartment buildings without being required to stay in a transit camp beforehand. One irate Mahila Milan volunteer exclaimed, 'They did not suffer the way we did for so many years in the transit camp. We should get the best apartments and they have no right to complain.'

Similarly, when asked about their thoughts on recent mass uncompensated demolition drives of more recently settled slums (in Mumbai, but unrelated to MUTP), residents' opinions diverged. Some sympathized with the evictees while others felt the demolitions were justified. Among the latter group, one resettlement colony resident exclaimed, 'I understand what government thinks. It cannot keep giving housing to everyone. We have been here suffering for years. We deserve this room. Why should the new people have such an easy time?' These observations point to divisions embedded in the articulation of patience and entitlement within and beyond the MUTP project. Such divisions have contributed to instabilities in and resistances to slum redevelopments, an issue that I will address in later sections.

The community-mindedness of Alliance activities and discourse was not mutually exclusive with the strategic use of participation for self-advancement. For some members, participation in Mahila Milan opened the space for negotiating better resettlement from the Alliance leadership. It was common for the most seasoned and powerful leaders—women and men—to receive first choice of flats and even extra rooms. But less powerful members also found a space for negotiation. For example, one Mahila Milan member, Uma, recounted her long battle to correct a misallocation of flats that left her married daughter without her rightful room.⁹ She would spend several hours per day over many weeks at the transit camp office, grandchildren in tow, trying to persuade SPARC Alliance staff to resolve her issue. Uma observed that not everyone had the time or capacity to confront a faulty or unfair flat allocation, like her daughters who worked all day as domestic workers. She also expressed adamantly the need to 'speak loudly' or face the possibility of getting marginalized in the resettlement process. This remark indicated that gendered participation was not always docile. However, as Uma explained, those who are 'not used to' persistent or rowdy complaining would not be able to confront the administrators to address such mistakes. She laughed as she recounted that she taught her daughters to be rude and even curse like men when necessary. The effects of gendered participation thus were not singular. Women instrumentalized their

participation in Mahila Milan for various ends. The following sections will elucidate further the meaning and experience of gendered participation and the resettlement process, especially as they fostered inequalities and difference among residents.

ENTREPRENEURS, HOUSEWIVES, LABOURERS: GENDERED HIERARCHIES OF SLUM CITIZENSHIP

If community participation enabled cooperation with resettlement, it also reworked gender roles in contradictory ways, simultaneously empowering participants but also sharpening inequalities among evictees. However, public discourses on the positive gender impacts of resettlement have generally elided such disparities among women and across resettlement populations. For instance, an independent impact evaluation report commissioned by the World Bank highlighted environmental infrastructure as the greatest benefit accrued to project-affected families, especially for women (Tata Institute for Social Sciences 2007). For over 10 years, SPARC Alliance members and leaders have similarly confirmed the gendered advantages to piped water and toilet facilities (Bapat and Agarwal 2003). While the independent impact evaluation also reported increased work commute times and costs due to the distance of resettlement sites, locational concerns were understood to primarily impact men. However, my ethnographic findings demonstrate a more complex story revealing highly uneven experiences among resettled women. To this end, I argue that the gendered readings of resettlement impacts emerged from an incomplete understanding of women as 'housewives' affected primarily by social reproduction concerns. Both the impact survey and Alliance discourses were silent on the experiences of women engaged in wage labour and other income-generating activities.

The 'housewifization' of women is not new or unique to the discourses of participation and resettlement. Since the 1980s, transnational feminist critiques have chided male-centred development projects for dangerously omitting or underestimating women's work in both productive and reproductive labour (Mies 1998). Yet, the MUTP case demonstrates the discursive repercussions of the domestication of women's roles in the Alliance's participatory resettlement model. Women's empowerment itself was conflated with participation in and access to the reproductive dimensions of housing, namely environmental services and shelter. This partial analytical lens in both developmental impact assessments and Alliance discourse has not only tended towards a homogenized understanding of resettled women's experience, but has also read the cooperative participatory process as an

outgrowth of positive impacts. Indeed, as Jockin often exclaims, slum dwellers do not want to live in slums and are happy to move to resettlement flats. Furthermore, the naturalization of women's volunteer community work—as an extension of household social reproductive roles—has privileged the involvement of women with more leisure time and resources. Women with greater household labour responsibilities or those engaged in wage labour and place-specific piecemeal production work simply could not afford to take up positions within the Alliance. Herein lies the key to what appears in fact to be a deepening of inequalities resulting from the resettlement processes. Ethnographic data elucidates these widening disparities among residents as they are experienced along axes of gender and class difference.

Through the hierarchical channels of participation, a small number of Mahila Milan's key leaders have been able to redirect this domesticated positioning, launching lucrative new business ventures in slum-based construction contracting. In a citywide gathering of Mahila Milan leaders, I spoke with a broad range of women involved in the MUTP and other projects. Leena, an important Mahila Milan leader, explained the difference her involvement in the early rounds of MUTP resettlement had made in her life. Leena was clearly a seasoned interviewee who has represented the SPARC Alliance in many cities and international development venues. Using the terminology of micro-enterprise development, she described how her business grew from a small food-stuffs shop earning less than US\$20 per month to contracts totalling more than US\$300,000. Through her work with SPARC, Leena has won several state contracts to build slum public toilets and small-scale resettlement buildings all over the country. 'Women know a little bit about construction because of working at home and making household repairs; I also learned about construction supplies from my brother-in-law,' she explained. Juggling business-related cell phone calls and interactions with other members, Leena recalled that it was Jockin and the SPARC Alliance who guided her into success. She continues to engage in Mahila Milan's volunteer activities locally as well as in SPARC transnational NGO exchange events.

The Mahila Milan gathering also revealed unequal relations among members of Mahila Milan. As I spoke with Leena, I observed that the other members greeted each other by name but greeted her and two other women as 'madam', signalling a recognized difference in class among the members. Indeed, the dream of success through participation, saving, and work was not realized uniformly. There were marked class hierarchies in the coalition of women forming Mahila Milan despite the Alliance's egalitarian discourse of community participation. Yet, the implications of such hierarchies go

beyond the simple enriching of a few Mahila Milan women over many others. Mahila Milan leaders regularly privilege their roles as housewives, community volunteers, and entrepreneurs working for the SPARC Alliance. Rarely did discussions concerning wage-labouring women emerge in official meeting spaces. Indeed, there was little room in the structure and discourse of participation to address such concerns. Discussions with women in the MUTP resettlement colonies revealed some of these implications.

I spent a morning with Rani, a former member of Mahila Milan, accompanying her on her daily commute from the Mankhurd resettlement site to work as a domestic servant in the central Matunga area of the city where she used to live. Normally Rani is awake before 5 a.m., preparing the day's food and getting the children ready for school before leaving for work at 7 a.m. But for this day Rani asked her employer if she could arrive a bit later so that she could show me around. We walked down five flights of stairs to the main exit and into the dusty main thoroughway of the resettlement colony. Passing through block after block of resettlement buildings, then through a neighbouring slum and down a ditch, we finally arrived at the railway tracks. Along with dozens of other residents on their way to work we walked for 10 more minutes along the tracks to reach the train station. The platform was packed and Rani explained to me that the station could not handle the thousands of people being resettled in the Mankhurd area. She warned me that we may not be able to get on to the first train because of the crowd and that I should not be afraid to push my way in. After more than an hour and half on foot and train, we passed the area where her house once stood. She showed me around explaining that it used to take her only 20 minutes to walk to work. When she lived in the slum she was able to come home to cook and care for her children in between her cleaning jobs. Now her parents pick her children up from school and take care of them until she gets home in the evening. She explained that she was grateful to have a resettlement flat but lamented the effects of the distant resettlement location.

Rani had originally become involved in the Alliance's community-based resettlement activities to seek the best resettlement deal after residents came to the conclusion that there was no alternative but to move. Rani explained that she began to participate just prior to the scheduled demolition to ensure that resettlement was done properly and was located closer to their original homes. The key male leader of the slum neighbourhood had worked closely with Jockin, and they were told that the move to Lallubhai Compound in the eastern suburb of Mankhurd would be temporary; Rani had maintained hope for relocation closer to her former Matunga

neighbourhood in central Mumbai. She was soon forced to quit Mahila Milan activities because of the strain of the increased workload and commute. Rani's building-neighbours had all moved together to the Mankhurd Lallubhai resettlement site (Figure 4.1) from their slum neighbourhood.

FIGURE 4.1. LALLUBHAI COMPOUND RESETTLEMENT COLONY



Source: Courtesy of Jaideep Gupte.

Several building-women recounted that they were also either commuting to their former neighbourhoods for work or had lost their jobs because they could not afford to commute and simultaneously meet their household and child-rearing responsibilities. Their experiences appear to match survey data showing that real household incomes have decreased along with an increase in the cost of living due to transportation and maintenance fees (Tata Institute for Social Sciences 2007). As one resident put it, 'What good are toilets when one can no longer eat?'

One Mahila Milan resettlement site leader, Farzana, has attempted to address the issue of lost wages for women by creating a work cooperative. When I arrived to interview her one day, a group of women were seated in a line on her small apartment floor waiting for payment for work that they had done in a SPARC food production project. Farzana had to explain to them that they would not receive the full day's wage that they had been promised for the work. As they left, she lamented to me the lack of support she received from top SPARC Alliance leaders and the Mahila Milan including Leena and Jockin. She has tried to get paid work for women in SPARC Alliance projects, but their labour is often sorely remunerated. She argued that the success of SPARC and NSDF resulted from the power of women who could 'get work done'. She has tried to get financing from Jockin for some of these activities but has not pushed her demands because she is worried about being construed as a demanding troublemaker. She argued that as the leaders of the SPARC Alliance expanded their work, they were failing to pay attention to the base of women that have long strengthened the movement. Besides the top leaders of Mahila Milan who work in the area of construction contracting, she confirmed, most women are mobilized for voluntary activities and presentation to international visitors. 'They speak of women's empowerment, but perhaps do not want too much of it,' she said.

The foregoing examples reveal the contradictions of women's participation; a small number of women have advanced socially and economically through participating in resettlement and other SPARC Alliance activities while others remain in volunteer and labouring positions. Nevertheless, many active members who continue to work as volunteers cited the honour they received through their membership. They claimed to enjoy the social aspects, the sense of growth and accomplishment of being involved in the SPARC Alliance, and learning from Jockin. It is important to note that, with a few exceptions, these women claimed to have less need to work in wage labour due to the earnings of other family members. Inequalities across Mahila Milan members and other residents in the resettlement colonies have

thus widened through the process of resettlement. The disparate meanings of participation for resettled women and men often map on to these inequalities. Such contradictions of market-based resettlement in subsequent evictions reveal some of the political limits of the Alliance's participatory model.

RESISTING RESETTLEMENT: CITIZENSHIP AND THE LIMITS OF REDEVELOPMENTAL PERSUASION

The ethos of non-confrontational citizenship was challenged when MUTP entered its third phase of expansion into new road construction. When Farzana, a Mahila Milan volunteer from a railway-affected slum, was sent by SPARC Alliance leaders to facilitate the process of slum clearance for an MUTP road project, she was in for a shock. After she visited her first few homes, residents began to threaten her and forced her out of the area. Farzana recalled discovering that her job was not a simple administrative one but one that required 'convincing' a volatile and unwilling group of people to relocate. In 2005, the MUTP resettlement project came under serious international scrutiny due to allegations of faulty displacement and compensation practices. Protests and petitions by evicted slum dwellers led the World Bank to temporarily suspend the release of its funds pending an independent investigation of MUTP. Evicted residents and shop owners found support in the National Alliance for People's Movements (NAPM), a coalition of anti-displacement movements led by the world-renowned Medha Patkar of the Narmada Valley anti-dam movement. The movement propelled MUTP into national and international spotlights.

This newer coalition of movements presented a formidable challenge to projects of urban transformation, which, it argued, marginalized its working-class residents. Charges were made against the Bank and MMRDA for endorsing slum redevelopment projects that unfairly favoured global business and local real estate interests. They demanded resettlement close to their neighbourhoods arguing that distant, offsite relocation for slum dwellers was unfair and negatively affected their livelihoods. Couching their demands in terms of citizenship-based rights to the city rather than simply the right to participate, evicted slum dwellers questioned the very roots of democracy and inclusion in the nation. Though it is outside of the scope of this essay to fully address the political processes and ramifications of this movement, briefly highlighting this divergent political response indicates how spatio-temporal conditions can yield very different citizenship formations.

My future work will compare these distinct ethico-political spaces of slum citizenship.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have ethnographically examined the ethico-political processes of neoliberal slum redevelopment in one resettlement programme. I have shown that while the local state relied entirely on the profit motive of private developers for financing low-cost resettlement on the urban fringes, it also harnessed community groups and an NGO to facilitate slum clearance through participatory mechanisms. Participatory resettlement processes were contradictory in that they simultaneously enabled a space of citizenship and negotiation for evictees but also produced and reinforced other inequalities and relations of power. Gendered participation of women's groups employing non-confrontational discourses of patience and community solidarity helped to politically enable community consent to rapid slum clearance under difficult conditions.

What does this form of political participation mean for the experience of modern urban democracy in cities like Mumbai? Partha Chatterjee has argued that the politics of the urban poor cannot be understood in terms of citizenship at all. He argues that because of their illegal status, slum dwellers cannot claim legitimate rights as citizens, and are instead positioned as populations managed by governmental technologies of welfare (Chatterjee 2004). In one way, the SPARC Alliance discourse against rights-based activism seems to corroborate such a formulation. However, upon deeper ethnographic examination of the MUTP participatory resettlement processes, we can see that gendered participation harnessed the essential feature of citizenship according to T. H. Marshall's (1998) much-cited classic formulation: responsible membership in the modern community. In the MUTP case, we can see that the political engagement of evictees was deeply shaped by neoliberal and gendered cultural ideals of individual and community responsibilities as well as aspirations for modernization through formalization of housing status. Furthermore, these tropes of citizenship also entailed participation and consent to the larger modern project of global city redevelopment.

As the contradictions and inequalities of market-oriented resettlement and neoliberal citizenship have surfaced in other sites in Mumbai, more confrontational articulations of rights-based citizenship have also emerged. In this manner, this ethnography reveals that the politics of the evicted cannot be understood homogeneously. Rather, it is precisely the

spatialized production of difference along multiple axes that has formed the basis of hegemony and consent to neoliberal redevelopment. However, as new projects unfurl for transport infrastructure such as airports and metro-rail, or large-scale commercial and residential redevelopment such as the famed Dharavi project, the question of how citizens stake claim to urban space remains critical. The idioms, practices, and fault lines of citizenship will play a crucial role in whether and how the urban poor will be able to partake of an essential substantive component of democracy: freedom from poverty.

NOTES

1. Exceptional extensions to the cut-off date policy were made for the MUTP in order to meet the 'universal resettlement' conditionalities established by the World Bank. However, significant restrictions remained which continued to exclude informal renters and other unrecognized residents from resettlement compensation.
2. The SRA policy stipulates onsite rehabilitation only for dwellers of slums located on open plots. In these cases, developers would resettle slum dwellers into higher rise units and use the remaining space for market-rate housing. Onsite rehabilitation has been generally more favoured among slum dwellers who are eligible to receive such units and have had protections from developer pressures and corruptions. The majority of the resettlement since 1995 has taken place offsite for infrastructure projects and river basin clearances (statistics from MMRDA). For more on the SRA, see Burra (2005) and Nijman (2008).
3. Available at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/drivers_urb_change/urb_governance/pdf_capa_building/SPARC_Mahila%20Milan_learning_to_talk.pdf (accessed on 7 July 2011).
4. Ample historical and present day evidence of slum-based mobilizations for services and housing security demonstrates that middle-class leaders have not been the only promoters of the 'rights-based approach'. Lower income neighbourhood groups and leaders have also extensively deployed more confrontational, protest-based strategies (see Seabrook [1987] for examples).
5. *Rakhis* are colourful symbolic threads that blood-related or adoptive 'sisters' tie on the wrists of their 'brothers' as a blessing in exchange for material gifts and promises of protection. This bond between sisters and brothers holds immense symbolic value in South Asia, originating as a culturally sanctified promise made by male heirs of family property to ensure the well-being of female siblings who cannot inherit property. The *rakhi* thus partially acts as a moral regulator of unequal and gendered property and inheritance customs.
6. Interview with A. Jockin, 15 December 2007.
7. Interview with Sheela Patel, 18 December 2007.
8. This committee was named after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) since the municipal government is generally the principal provider of environmental services. However, in the transit camps, residents devised their own systems of getting water from private sources and organizing communal clean-ups of camps.
9. The names of all resettled residents and participants have been changed to protect their anonymity.

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Chapter 5

Reengineering Citizenship

Municipal Reforms and the Politics of 'e-Grievance Redressal' in Karnataka's Cities

Malini Ranganathan

The emerging new paradigm worldwide for government organizations is that of an 'enterprising government,' a government which responds to what citizens want in a more market-oriented way, provides good quality services and products, and listens more closely to citizens. The reform steps include: public-private partnership, empowering citizens and clients, minimizing rules, measuring outcomes, redefining clients and customers, decentralizing authority, and employing competition/market-oriented government.

—Sheila Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi*

In line with prevailing global and national rhetoric advocating a lean, business-like, and customer-responsive government, in 2005, the Government of Karnataka (GoK) launched Nirmala Nagara (clean city), a municipal reform programme for 57 cities in the State.¹ The centrepiece of the programme—now being scaled up throughout the State via a World Bank loan—involves the application of information and communication technology in government services, or 'e-governance'. The e-Governments Foundation—a corporate philanthropic trust with influential donors from the high-technology sector and strong allies in the government, including Dixit herself, who had earlier outsourced Delhi's e-governance systems to the foundation—was recruited to design and implement all software modules under the programme. In this chapter, I focus on computerized complaint management, or what I refer to as 'e-grievance redressal', a highly publicized

* Dixit (2006).