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Social Theories of Urban Violence in the Global South

Towards Safe and Inclusive Cities

Edited by
Jennifer Erin Salahub, Markus Gottsbacher, and John de Boer

Social Theories of Urban Violence in the Global South

While cities often act as the engines of economic growth for developing countries, they are also frequently the site of growing violence, poverty, and inequality. Yet, social theory, largely developed and tested in the Global North, is often inadequate in tackling the realities of life in the dangerous parts of cities in the Global South. Drawing on the findings of an ambitious five-year, 15-project research programme, *Social Theories of Urban Violence in the Global South* offers a uniquely Southern perspective on the violence–poverty–inequalities dynamics in cities of the Global South.

Through their research, urban violence experts based in low- and middle-income countries demonstrate how "urban violence" means different things to different people in different places. While some researchers adopt or adapt existing theoretical and conceptual frameworks, others develop and test new theories, each interpreting and operationalizing the concept of urban violence in the particular context in which they work. In particular, the book highlights the links between urban violence, poverty, and inequalities based on income, class, gender, and other social cleavages.

Providing important new perspectives from the Global South, this book will be of interest to policymakers, academics, and students with an interest in violence and exclusion in the cities of developing countries.

Jennifer Erin Salahub managed the Safe and Inclusive Cities initiative, a global research programme jointly funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

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4 The state, violence, and everydayness
Some insights from Delhi

Manoj Bandan Balsamanta and Bhim Reddy

Introduction

Literature on urban violence in India is scarce, except for some studies on communal violence and slum evictions or relocations. In view of this inadequacy, the Institute for Human Development in Delhi undertook exploratory research as part of its Safe and Inclusive Cities project. It sought to explore the links between poverty, inequality, and violence in Delhi, with a focus on urban planning and governance. The study's conceptual framework assumed that certain preconditions and drivers of urban violence existed in India. These included, among others, land policies and legislation, access to basic services, public finance paradigms, spaces for citizen participation, the agency of the state, the agency of civil society, and the phenomenon of social fragmentation.

The definition of violence we use here goes beyond the limited scope of direct violence identified with an agent and intent (Winter 2012); we also include "structural" and invisible violence (Galtung 1969; Farmer 1996). In the course of this study, we identified various forms of violence, focusing particularly on violence *against* the poor, and even *by* the poor. We also believed the state to be more severe in its impact on the lives of the poor—both at the top level, in terms of unequal policy implications, and at the local level, in terms of ongoing hostility by government employees (Gupta 2012). Therefore, our study probed the role of the state as the perpetrator of violence on marginalised populations.

In this chapter, we focus on state-inflicted violence in the city of Delhi. We examine how the state affects the poor in their everyday lives, and how violence is locally experienced and differentially mediated by virtue of varied spatial and material realities. Based on a survey of some 2000 households, as well as qualitative fieldwork, we explain the shifting levels of vulnerability experienced by those at the margins and the overall context of state apathy, hostility, arbitrariness, and contradictions.

Three key issues we will examine in this chapter are:

- the displacement of the poor in Delhi
- the vulnerable status of street vendors
- the infrastructure inequalities in poor areas.

The first issue is well documented by a number of urban scholars such as Bhan (2009, 2014), Dupont (2008, 2011), Kalyan (2014) and Jervis Read (2014). The liberalisation agenda and the urge for global competitiveness have invariably led to slum clearing and repeated demolitions (Dupont 2011).[1] The Commonwealth Games in 2010 (like major sports events elsewhere) acted as a catalyst for urban change. But as the government of Delhi worked to attain international recognition, this change only exacerbated the plight of the poor (Essex and Chalkey 1998). In this ever-growing climate of competitive cosmopolitanism, the poor get trapped between routine "rounds of homemaking and unmaking" (Jervis Read 2014: 197).

The second issue is the treatment of street vendors, of which Delhi has roughly half a million. These people experience daily harassment by the state, particularly by its lower functionaries: police and municipal employees. Street hawking in the city remains a largely informal institution, and it is in a perpetual state of "negotiated (im)permanence" (Schindler 2014: 2596). This informality, or failure of formal regulation, creates ample space for such harassment of hawkers.[2]

The third issue, infrastructure, stems from the lack of proper planning in the slums and the absence of functional infrastructure there.[3] This is an important issue since slum dwellers constitute about 15 per cent of the total population in Delhi (Banda and Sheikh 2014). Slum dwellers face problems with respect to the basic requirements of their lives: water, sanitation, garbage dumping, drainage, and the like. They must also compete for access to the limited amounts of these resources, resulting in tensions and conflicts. Although this dynamic is not unique to Delhi's slums, "infrastructural violence" (Rodgers and O'Neill 2012)—which includes the way poor populations and localities are discriminated against—highlights the conflict-generating attributes of unequal infrastructural practices. In brief, displacement, hawking, and infrastructure are key issues where the everyday struggles of poverty intersect with official harassment. This chapter will discuss these issues in more detail.

Violence as ordinary

Cities in developing countries (especially in Latin America, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa) are often characterised as crime-prone, and vulnerable to large-scale conflicts. Research there routinely focuses on gang activities, organised crime, and gun culture. Some cities are considered to have exceptionally high incidences of lethal violence: their homicide rates range from 30 to 120 per 100,000 population (UNODC 2011, cited in Muggah 2012). In contrast, Indian cities seem to experience less violence. From 2010 to 2014, the average homicide rate in 53 major cities was only 2.2 per 100,000 population, slightly less than the national average of 2.7.[4] This means that research on violence in Indian cities requires a different angle from that used in other developing countries. In light of this, everyday life emerges as an important contextual frame of reference in considering

the roots of violence since intense *everyday* subordinations, exclusions, and conflicts are what seemingly most pervade Indian cities.

Researchers are frequently attracted by extraordinarily violent events. This is not surprising given the human attraction to the dramatic, exceptional, sensational, and remarkable—which also largely preoccupy social scientists (Malinowski 1935; Latif 2012). Meanwhile, unremarkable, inconspicuous, small-scale, and routine phenomena generally receive little attention. However, we feel that treating violence as an event puts disproportionate focus on eruptions, occurrences, and—as Tadjoeddin and Murshed (2007) describe it—"episodic violence", thereby hiding routine and everyday violence. Such event-based approaches to violence are increasingly contested. Scholars such as Schott (1995) and Cuomo (1996) have begun to see violence not as an occasional happening, but as a constant presence. Researchers are increasingly turning to everyday life as a key "site of violence" to study the interaction of the routine and the remarkable, since it reveals constitutive practices and relationships (Latif 2012).

In this chapter, we try to reframe violence within the register of the ordinary. Drawing on Das (2007), we argue that violence is best understood as something implicated in everyday life. For Das, extraordinary violence is not a disruption of the ordinary, it is entangled in it. Therefore, we focus here less on "tipping points" (Moser and Rodgers 2012; Rodgers and Satija 2012) that transform conflicts into violence, and more on how these events are locally internalised—that is, they both mediate and are mediated by people. Moreover, all tipping points may not necessarily result in violence. What prevents conflict from tipping over into violence? That is, what preempts the possibility of a full-blown crisis when the seeds of violence are persistently present? In short, we discuss here how people rebuild themselves and recreate their life possibilities amid perpetual violence (Das 2007; Chatterji and Mehta 2007).

Using the quotidian as a frame of analysis, we consider the routines of everyday life, which is not necessarily as ordinary as it may appear (Neal and Murji 2015). Rather, it is sometimes surprisingly dynamic. It embodies ambivalences, perils, puzzles, contradictions, and transformative possibilities. Although the poor and their ordinary lives do not always involve a "transformatory potential"—as is often argued by scholars like Neal and Murji (2015) and Robinson (2015)—their capacity to resist even state violence cannot be downplayed (Bourgois 2001). Their protests may not always be explicit since they may often have to employ subtle ways of resisting (Scott 1990). And they may be able to use the existing structure to their advantage, when resistance is perceived as impossible or unproductive (de Certeau 1984). They may also individualise solutions to common concerns, when collective responses fail to emerge for a variety of reasons (as proposed by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). In brief, the everyday life of the poor in Delhi involves rich nuances of experiences, struggles, and negotiations, which we discuss in the following sections.

Living violence: everyday life at Viklang Colony

They are 25 families in all. They are extremely poor, and live in makeshift structures they constructed themselves from flimsy materials like bamboo stems, wood, fabric tarpaulins, and polythene sheets. The area they call home is actually a neglected and virtually inaccessible field in the heart of the city, an uneven space filled with trees, shrubs, and grasses, situated between an open sewer and the railway lines. The area is termed a *basti* in Hindi—a common term for slums and other lower-class neighbourhoods. This particular *basti* is known as Viklang Colony (VC), named after the disabled people who used to collect alms at a nearby temple. The settlement has been here since about 2014, after the largely disabled population was evicted from their homes on the opposite side of the sewer canal. Their crime was living too close to the security wall of the Jawarharlal Nehru stadium, where the 2010 Commonwealth Games were held. As part of the renovations to the stadium and surrounding area in preparation for the Games, a flyover was built, and all the nearby residents were evicted. During the evacuation process, the authorities promised all residents land and suitable rehabilitation in the form of a house or financial compensation. Some residents did receive land, but others received no compensation at all. Absent any alternative, those luckless people chose the unused field as their place of residence.

The inhabitants of VC are often poor to the point of starvation. Before the Commonwealth Games, some were petty vendors near the stadium; however, they lost these small businesses after their forced eviction. Now the men generally make money through odd jobs in transient occupations, such as rickshaw pullers or daily labourers. The women work as domestic helpers in nearby neighbourhoods. When neither women nor men can find work, they beg. Widows, who make up a significant portion of the population, face the additional burden of being the sole income earner of the family. However, despite the social and structural disadvantages they face, the VC dwellers refuse to give up. They come together to fight for land and a roof—that ever-elusive home—and, in the course of this struggle, they try to make sense of their collective plight. Their problems include:

- a desperate urge for a feeling of belonging
- vulnerability to government action
- ongoing harassment not only by officials, but also by more affluent neighbours
- the threat of eviction
- repeated demolition of their homes
- the needlessly complex bureaucratic processes to claim their resettlement rights
- the system of dependence on the government for their livelihood.

We discuss this situation in more detail below.

Displacement

VC residents identify the shortage of land and money as their main problems, along with repeated harassment by municipal authorities. There is a pattern to this behaviour. VC sits quite close to some nearby middle-class and affluent neighbourhoods, and these people are unyielding in their hostility to VC residents, who they perceive as dirty and prone to crime. Residents of those neighbourhoods frequently complain to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), which sends its employees to make unannounced raids on the settlement. The MCD considers VC an illegal encroachment on city property and its residents to be illegal occupants. Accordingly, its officers make occasional surprise visits to threaten, coerce, and abuse the residents. They harass women, steal belongings, and attack and demolish the residents' makeshift houses and possessions. This is all done with the goal of forcing the VC residents to leave—though they have nowhere else to go.

In response, the residents invoke their roots in the original colony from which the government first evicted them and then unjustly deprived them of resettlement. They show city employees their government identification cards, listing their former addresses on the demolished site. (Surprisingly, they can still use these cards to obtain subsidised food provisions and access voting rights—even though the place listed on the cards no longer exists.) The VC residents regularly approach various governmental agencies and political parties to beg them to stop the city from demolishing their present houses, but they have no success. Some of the authorities are indifferent to their trauma and tragedies, while others would like to assist them but are helpless.

One major complicating factor is the fractured and multi-layered nature of Delhi's governance system. As the capital city of India, Delhi comes under federal jurisdiction. It has a provincial state government and an elected chief minister. However, the police, the bureaucracy, and the control of land are all vested with the central government. The MCD, which provides civic services in the city, is an autonomous body. Political differences and frictions across these diverse structures often contribute to the troubles of the poor. As one VC resident, Sanjana,[5] puts it:

> The Chief Minister's Office has been cooperative. They genuinely want to help us. Their team has already visited our place and photographed it. They have also issued a letter in this regard. But they are helpless.… The police also sympathise with us, but there is little they can do.… The MCD people do not listen to anybody.

However, VC residents are not resigned to their fate. They understand that hostile tactics will not work for them, since they lack the numbers for aggressive protests or to force a showdown. Rather, they resist the hostile practices of the MCD through democratic means, attempting to lobby sympathetic authorities to take action in their cause. They visit government offices

on a daily basis, trying to negotiate a deal. They meet with political leaders and elected representatives to lobby for a permanent settlement. They have also approached the media, and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to request that they publicise the plight of VC residents. All these activities are largely performed by the women of the community, while men are at work earning an income to support their families.

In their efforts to bring about change, VC residents seem to oscillate between hope and hopelessness—a situation mirrored by their impatience and perpetual waiting. They struggle for their future without any clarity about it, and their strategies regarding their interests and objectives appear to be at once coherent and incoherent. When they discuss their issues with the media and other organisations, they often appear ambivalent: they sometimes radically criticise the state, but at other times they seek to become intimate with it. This ambivalence seems to depend on what level of government is at issue. The residents mostly attack the MCD, their most direct enemy. They do not entirely blame the provincial government and police, some of whom sympathise with their plight and would help them if they could. Additionally, they actively try to befriend officials and people in positions of power to ask for specific favours and changes.[6]

In brief, VC residents live with both perpetual tension and courage. The experiences of their mundane daily lives are built around a variety of factors:

- their struggles and resistance
- their negotiations with government
- their suffering and needs
- their lobbying activities
- their critiquing of the state
- their befriending of influential persons
- their battle to create homes, and a sense of belonging, in a hostile space.

These activities and experiences bring them into more intimate contact with the state, and help them to come to terms with the violence it inflicts on them.

Street vendors

Sarojini Nagar market (known to locals simply as SN)[7] is one of Delhi's most popular markets, mainly because of its relatively cheap prices. Over the last two or three decades, it has become a hub for street vendors of all types, who fill the vacant spaces in and around the market's main shops and pedestrian pathways; they even try to find space for their stalls in the parking spaces. Some of these vendors (both male and female) were formerly employed at shops in the market, and, having learned the tricks of the trade, began to set up their own businesses. Some women, after they have sent their children to school and completed the housework, join their male family members in the morning to help with the vending.

As in so many aspects of Delhi society, there are layers of social influence at the market. *Dalals* are older vendors with more experience, who are allowed to occupy more space than is normally allotted. Due to their seniority, they act as middlemen between the regular vendors and the authorities. This go-between role is particularly important in the frequent situations when bribes must be given—since bribery is a constant aspect of business at SN market. To ensure the smooth functioning of their activity, vendors must pay the *dalals*, the police, the MCD officials, and the shopkeepers who allocate them space for their stalls. Despite the payment of bribes, though, the police and MCD routinely harass vendors over any number of petty issues. Sometimes money is extorted via the *dalals*, and it is a common occurrence for them to confiscate the vendors' goods and steal their day's earnings. These functionaries or their proxies take goods without paying, and often go so far as to reach into the vendors' pockets and snatch away their money. Occasionally, the vendors are even beaten up and physically abused, or dragged from the market into police or MCD vans. As one vendor, Raju, put it:

> They know everything. They know our secret places where we hide money. So it is difficult to escape them… They take our products, they never pay when they eat from us. Sometimes they come to us directly, sometimes they send their local proxies for extortion.… They are brutal. They beat us.

When their goods are "confiscated", vendors say, they must go and collect their seized materials from the police station. This takes them at least eight days, mostly to get together the sum they have to pay to release their property—which is at least 1,000 rupees, even for goods worth less than 100 rupees. Once the payment is made, police also routinely return only part of the goods—in order to force vendors to come back again and pay them more money. For example, one vendor who was selling fashionable eyewear had his wares confiscated. He paid the police to get the goods back, but only the cases for the eyeglasses were returned to him. For such vendors, confiscation is their biggest problem. Not only are they forced to pay the bribe, but often they lose their original investment in the goods as well.

State functionaries harass street vendors in many other ways, such as through arbitrary bureaucratic decisions. For instance, they might abruptly change the closing time for the vendors without giving them any notice or showing them a written order. Another case in point is the changing content of the *challan*, the official payment receipt issued to vendors who pay a fine after being accused of violating some government law or regulation. In the past, a *challan* contained details about the amount of the fine and the location of the alleged transgression; it also included a photo of the vendor. These former *challans* constituted an official proof of their vending activities and, therefore, could help vendors in their ongoing quest to attain a permanent market licence. Now, however, the *challan* is merely a receipt for the

amount of money taken by the police without details of any kind. Vendors complain that this change is a deliberate ploy by government employees to maintain their vulnerable status as temporary and illegal merchants to ensure a perpetual source of extortion revenue.

Even the *dalals*, their fellow vendors, harass them by demanding money on a weekly basis. If vendors refuse to pay, the *dalals* complain to the authorities, who are always happy to confiscate the vendors' goods. As well as extorting money, they often also dupe vendors by pretending to help them. Sometimes, for instance, a *dalal* might take money from a vendor to bribe the police and MCD for a better spot in the market. But often the *dalal* neither helps, nor returns the money. Other enemies of the vendors include members of the market association and the major shopkeepers—either one of whom can call the police and have them removed from the streets. Despite taking rent from the vendors on a daily basis, some big shopkeepers make a point of occupying the adjacent parking spaces where vendors are allowed to set up their stalls. To eliminate vending opportunities they deliberately block the spaces by parking cars there that are old, unused, or in poor repair. Such shopkeepers also withhold the vendors' documentation when inspectors ask them for it. Yet, despite these daily hassles, vendors do not dare to complain: they know that the shopkeepers pay much larger bribes to the police than they can afford to do.

Occasionally, the street vendors come together to protest the challenges they encounter and to seek outside intervention by reaching out to the courts or some of the NGOs. However, such mobilisation is extremely rare. Collective initiatives happen only when the issue is really big, and their livelihood is at stake—since vendors know that they are always at the mercy of corrupt and vengeful authorities. Another issue that prevents vendors uniting and protesting in an organised manner is the acute state of competition between them—both for physical spaces in the market and for their share of customers (since many of the goods they sell are very similar). Despite their many problems, there is no vendors' association in the market and, in the absence of any collective activities, vendors can only search for personal solutions. Many try to build rapport with the people who matter, often using bribes and flattery as a form of "relationship management".

Infrastructure inequalities

As we indicated earlier, slum dwellers in Delhi face daily disadvantages with respect to basic requirements such as water, sanitation, drainage, and garbage disposal. While unequal access to urban infrastructure is itself a form of indirect violence, poor households are also vulnerable to specific forms of direct violence—ones that involve psychological threats or coercion, fear, and physical harm. One way such violence manifests itself is in the constant competition and disputes between residents over access to these scarce common resources. For instance, neighbours might come to blows over who

gets the last gallon of water in the communal tank. Another is the highhandedness of government, with its obvious prejudice against the "culture of poverty"—which it clearly equates with criminal deviance.

Our study surveyed some 2000 Delhi households to measure their

- housing conditions
- income and expenditure
- employment opportunities
- levels of access to basic civic amenities.[8]

We also analysed the patterns of urban inequality and deprivation across social categories and localities. This analysis shows overlapping deprivations marked by the households' social status and geographic location. Using this survey and our qualitative fieldwork, we attempted to link levels of access and material conditions with reported incidences and forms of direct violence. We found that a substantial number of households suffer from lack of public water supply, toilets, drainage facilities, and subsidised cooking fuel, as well as higher-level amenities such as educational opportunities and health facilities. Such deprivation exhibits clear spatial patterns: most of the slum households we surveyed experience these disadvantages.

Conflict around these issues in poor localities manifests itself mostly in petty quarrels, verbal abuse, and, at times, physical fights. For instance, about 70 per cent of the slum households do not have running water in their homes. They must get their water either at the few communal supply points—public water taps meant for many households—or through mobile tankers, provided by the federal government, that visit the neighbourhoods to bring water. At these taps, water is often only available for short periods of time (until it runs out) and the waits can be long for the water tanker to finally arrive. With many people crowding around, jostling, arguing, jumping queues, and squabbling about how much water others are allowed to take, and who should get to it first, all the elements seem to be in place to create community stress.

Similarly, more than 60 per cent of slum households do not have private toilets. Most residents must use public toilets, and there is an insufficient number to meet demand. Quarrels often break out, especially in the morning when everyone is queuing up to use the facilities. As well, the public latrines are closed at night. A small number of residents (about 4 per cent of adults, and some children) cope with the problem by resorting to open defecation in public areas, often in empty plots of land and near rail tracks. There is also a lack of proper drainage and garbage disposal systems: the surrounding filth shows the shortage of city staff tasked to clear drains and collect garbage. Maintenance employees are infrequently found in these areas.

Between 35 per cent and 45 per cent of slum households say that the inadequacy of these basic facilities and amenities often becomes the major source of daily friction for them and in other poor localities, such as "resettlement

colonies" and "unauthorised colonies". When asked if any of their household members were involved in such disputes in the previous year, a remarkably high number answered yes, in the following proportions:

- drainage: 20 per cent
- water: 17 per cent
- sanitation (toilets): 15 per cent
- garbage and solid waste removal: 11 per cent

In unauthorised colonies, which house diverse social classes with varying levels of social infrastructure, the figures were almost the same for water (18 per cent) and for garbage-related issues (12 per cent). But in authorised colonies, where populations are slightly more affluent, such disputes over basic civic services were negligible.

Other issues that cause everyday quarrels in crowded slums include

- individuals washing clothes or dishes outside their houses, or taking public baths
- residents causing the public drains to clog and overflow
- people dumping their waste into the lanes and drainage channels
- children openly defecating
- neighbours' dogs carrying garbage onto other people's premises.

These situations may appear trivial, but they constitute an ongoing frustration for the poor, especially for women and girls who are responsible for most domestic duties like fetching water, washing, and cleaning. Women and girls are also at greater risk of sexual violence when they use secluded places to defecate.

What is more, conflicts often take a collective form in slums: when quarrels break out, residents gather around and participate—some passively watching the events, others actively taking sides and joining in. In fact, this strong sense of community contributes to the larger trend of collectivisation in slums—meaning that disputes may appear to be more frequent and intense than they actually are. This can lead people from more affluent neighbourhoods, and even the police, to stigmatise these poor localities and regard them as trouble-mongering and crime-prone. Moreover, this collective participation can produce long-standing tensions and deep cleavages along lines of caste, region, and religion.[9] At times, too, politics and ideologies can also play a part in the disputes.

Our research covered nine slum locations and one resettlement colony, as well as the Viklang settlement. All these communities—long-standing settlements, established decades ago—exhibit these features to varying degrees. Such persistence of pitiable conditions, and lack of access to basic civic amenities, can only reflect apathy (or a strong class bias) on the part of the state. In addition, police presence in the slums contrasts remarkably with their practices in higher-income neighbourhoods. In more affluent

areas, police patrols offer protection and security, but, in the slums, policing represents a negative factor due to their surveillance and harassment of residents. Slum dwellers are often indiscriminately picked up by the police on any pretext, and questioned and threatened. Admittedly, some slums do have a history of their youth being involved in petty crimes like pickpocketing or snatching small items like purses, mobile phones, and jewellery. Although residents claim that this is declining, the police continuously harass their youth. Meanwhile, residents' calls to the police regarding genuine criminal activities—such as gambling or illicit sales of liquor—are ignored.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we discussed a variety of issues that affect poor people's lives in various locales in Delhi: state apathy, hostility, arbitrariness, and corruption. We also examined the diverse experiences of the poor, including their concerns, vulnerabilities, and resistance strategies in the context of everyday lived violence.

In describing the experiences of the VC dwellers and the vendors of SN market, we can see a distinct difference in the strategies of the two groups as they attempt to overcome their problems. In the colony, the hostility of the lower state functionaries (police and MCD) seems immense—expressed as it is by repeated harassment and demolitions. For the residents, managing to make a living while fighting for their land and housing is a daily challenge. As we indicated earlier, VC residents work collectively, organising and strategising to tackle their problems. By contrast, SN market vendors largely tend to seek individual solutions to their common issues of harassment and subjugation. Fear of the authorities, and acute competition among themselves, prevents them from forming a union and engaging in collective action. This absence of mobilisation leaves each individual to find their own personal solutions, such as befriending and bribing influential people.

However, colony residents and market vendors—both groups that suffer daily harassment, yet fall on the extreme margins of state priorities—are becoming increasingly dependent on the government for their survival. In a corrupt system, they see their only hope as appealing to those in higher positions of authority and trying to build some rapport with them. This illustrates a larger governmentalisation of poor peoples' needs in both these situations.

The infrastructural inadequacy in Delhi slums also brings state apathy to the fore. Consequently, residents are routinely forced to fight among themselves for access to basic needs like water, drainage, toilets, and waste disposal. The state also appears apathetic about their safety and security: police rarely patrol these areas at night, unlike in affluent or middle-class parts of the city. At another level, however, these poor localities experience excessive state interference. Police generally treat slums as hotbeds of crime and frequently "round up" poor people based on nothing more than suspicion. This

illustrates the contradictory view of the poor by the state: its attitudes and actions combine indifference with intrusiveness.

Moreover, like the market vendors, slum dwellers mostly seek individual solutions to their collective infrastructural problems—usually by micro-managing their lives, by way of small quarrels and fights. Sometimes residents are able to come together to fight for better infrastructure, but such instances are infrequent (and happen mainly during elections).

Finally, extreme disputes or aggression are normally rare in these contested spaces. While tensions may simmer among slum dwellers, between slum dwellers and the state, or between state and non-state actors, and although the volatile conditions appear to be fertile ground for breeding large-scale violence, a full-blown crisis rarely appears. The "tipping points" are always averted. No matter what the issue—demolition of housing, harassment of vendors, lack of basic infrastructure—big fights or riots seldom happen at these sites. Instead, more reasonable strategies and practices seem to act as safety valves. Small quarrels and everyday disputes, personal interactions between individuals, informal negotiations, and local peace-keeping practices prevent major conflicts from erupting. Other "safety valve" factors are the welfare provisions, however limited, from the government, and the positive interventions of political parties and NGOs. These allow vulnerable people to experience hope, even while hopelessness seems to surround them.

Notes

1 According to official sources, residents of 217 slums were evicted between 1990 and 2007 (Dupont 2011). Additionally, during the run-up to the 2010 Commonwealth Games, Delhi witnessed a major slum clearance. Based on reports, these operations have resulted in about 200,000 people being forcibly evicted since 2004 (Housing and Land Rights Network 2011).
2 Following lengthy campaigns and mobilisation for the rights of street vendors in the country, India's Parliament enacted a law to secure and protect their rights through *The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014*. Provincial and local governments were asked to draft rules to implement the provisions of the law. Delhi's provincial and municipal governments still have not designed a policy to put this legislation into practice. Also yet to take place is a survey of the number of designated sites for vending, and their allocation.
3 Recent definitional changes (exclusions of slum-like settlements), and the restructuring of cities, seem to produce "new spatialisations of poverty". Given such changes, official slums alone are not a "proxy for poverty" (Bhan and Jana 2013, 2015).
4 Based on National Crime Research Bureau (NCRB 2014) data, 2010–2014.
5 All names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.
6 Another negotiating strategy the VC dwellers employ is weeping, especially before people who they think can change their present status. They use tears as a political tool to try to convince others of the severity of their plight, and the justice of their

cause of rights and citizenship. However, this is not to say that their tears are not sincere: their personal sufferings and their political narratives are enmeshed. When they cry, they reveal both.

7 The market is named after the famous woman freedom fighter Sarojini Naidu, a poet and politician known as the Nightingale of India.

8 The survey used a stratified random sampling method that included all geographic categories and locations in the city; that is, it was not restricted only to the slums.

9 Such tensions are reported, in various slums in different localities, between Bangladeshi Muslims and Indians; between a group of *paswan* (lower caste) residents and others of higher caste; between Tamils and north Indian Dalits (lower caste groups); and between Muslims and Hindus (mostly Dalits).

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ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN CITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

While cities often act as the engines of economic growth for developing countries, they are also frequently the site of growing violence, poverty, and inequality. Yet, social theory, largely developed and tested in the Global North, is often inadequate in tackling the realities of life in the dangerous parts of cities in the Global South. Drawing on the findings of an ambitious five-year, 15-project research programme, *Social Theories of Urban Violence in the Global South* offers a uniquely Southern perspective on the violence–poverty–inequalities dynamics in cities of the Global South.

Through their research, urban violence experts based in low- and middle-income countries demonstrate how "urban violence" means different things to different people in different places. While some researchers adopt or adapt existing theoretical and conceptual frameworks, others develop and test new theories, each interpreting and operationalizing the concept of urban violence in the particular context in which they work. In particular, the book highlights the links between urban violence, poverty, and inequalities based on income, class, gender, and other social cleavages.

Providing important new perspectives from the Global South, this book will be of interest to policymakers, academics, and students with an interest in violence and exclusion in the cities of developing countries.

Jennifer Erin Salahub managed the Safe and Inclusive Cities initiative, a global research programme jointly funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

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