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# The Production of Space and Governmentality in the Urban Poor's Claim over Land and Housing

Swetha Rao Dhananka

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- 1 This article explores the politicized process of claiming urban land for housing the urban poor in the metropolitan city of Bengaluru (Bangalore). Urban land and housing not only considerably shape the materiality of the urban environment, but also the political relations and social fabric of urban localities. This article is premised on the recognition that space and community mutually constitute each other. The politics of accessing land and adequate housing in the city result in specific forms of habitation and contribute to the emergence of particular notions of urban citizenship. The entry point of this article, contributing to the special issue on Environmental Politics in Urban India, is the spatialization of the concept of governmentality leaning on Lefebvre's concept of the production of space. This intertwined conceptual lens allows me to look at the processes of spatial politics affecting the poor and their insurgent performances by tracing the possibilities and limitations for mobilization. The processes that shape the forms of habitation of the poor in the city and their citizenship status are illustrated through case studies of two communities.
- 2 The aim of this article is to highlight a particular tension at the heart of current Indian housing policies. On the one hand space is produced (Lefebvre) as the policy allocates resources for in-situ slum redevelopment, affecting a community constituted by the space its members inhabit. On the other hand, the policy targets individual slum inhabitants as

beneficiaries of public housing if they meet the eligibility criteria defined by the policy. Of course a slum community is heterogeneous and such mechanisms of governmentality (Chatterjee 2004) divide the community constituted by space. I argue that the disruption that this tension between communities (constituted through space) and policy (that targets individuals), triggers insurgent performances that can only be successfully addressed through the development of strong communities invested in fostering social skill (Fligstein and McAdam 2011). As the cases of two slum communities will show, the housing outcome is heavily shaped by relations within the community and the inhabitants' capacity to navigate through networks of power and stealth.

- 3 This article begins by introducing the relevant theoretical concepts in order to characterize the relationship between the state and communities as constituted by space through their claims to access land and housing in the city. It then applies the conceptual triad of production of space to the implementation of the housing policy called "Basic Services to the Urban Poor" (BSUP) that was underway in Bengaluru as a subcomponent of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) between 2005–2012. The following section presents two episodes of contention that are discussed in view of their similarities and differences to identify the factors that contributed to the particular housing outcomes. Finally, the conclusion offers a summary of the main arguments and some reflections on urban citizenship in India.

## Production of space and governmentality

- 4 When the object of the claim is land (for housing) then the target of the claim ultimately is the State, as in the Indian context land is regulated by the State. It is hence essential to understand how claims by the urban poor on the state, in their pursuit of land and housing are co-constitutive of space and community. As will be demonstrated later in this paper, this relationship at times and under particular conditions invites insurgent performances. In order to characterize this relationship, I argue that an articulation of the concepts of governmentality (Chatterjee 2004) and Lefebvre's ([1974] 1991) notion of production of space is useful.
- 5 Governmentality, a key notion in Foucault's work, can be "understood in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behavior" (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006). More specifically governmentality describes mechanisms of linking forms of power to processes of subjectification through techniques of domination anchored in a certain regime of rationality (Lemke 2000:2, 7). In this sense governmentality helps to articulate the strategic character of government. Foucault paid little attention to Empire (Prakash 2010) and hence did not explicitly articulate governmentality with the imperatives of colonialism. Building on Foucault's work, Chatterjee embraced the concept in his seminal book *The Politics of the Governed* (2004) to describe state-society dynamics in the post-colonial world. He argues that the particularity of the post-colonial context is that techniques of governmentality predate the nation-state. Rather than securing state legitimacy by citizen participation, the state apparatus claims to provide entitlements to certain populations (Chatterjee 2004:34).
- 6 Central to the workings of governmentality (under these conditions) is the notion of "population." Populations have the status of subjects, rather than citizens. This framing makes available to governments "a set of rationally manipulable instruments for reaching populations of a country as the target of their policies" (Chatterjee 2004:34). Roninger

and Günes-Ayata (1994:14) argue that the production of such populations goes hand in hand with social change lagging behind political modernization, leading to the co-existence of two different logics. One that connects citizens to the nation-state founded on popular sovereignty and granting equal rights to citizens, the other connecting populations to governmental agencies pursuing multiple policies (Chatterjee 2004:37) based on predefined conditions to access the benefits of these policies.

- 7 In its contemporary form, in India the techniques of governmentality function on the basis of the administration of welfare policies. These policies are mentioned under the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution and feature in the concurrent list, which specifies the Union and States that are responsible for formulating, legislating and implementing welfare policies. At Independence, the priority of the young State was the dissolution of the caste system, through the outlawing of discriminatory practices (Baxi 2005:545) and remedying historical injustice through reservation policies using the attribute of caste to identify beneficiaries of State policy. During the colonial period the British had attempted to neatly list eligible groups into schedules and this continued after Independence, officially classifying citizens as “backward,” that is members of the “Scheduled Castes” (SC), “Scheduled Tribes” (ST) and “Other Backward Classes” (OBCs) (Dudley Jenkins 2003:2). When the State identifies certain groups of citizens as the targets of a policy, state identification and social identity become intertwined (van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears 2008). This understanding relies on a notion that identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, or by misrecognition of others (Taylor 1994 in Dudley Jenkins 2003). It follows that reservation policies targeting members by a particular attribute, reinforce that particular identity to be actualized or mobilized and that in turn enables agency.
- 8 In a populous country such as India, where the availability of policy benefits is largely exceeded by the potential number of beneficiaries (the poor), claiming governmental benefits becomes an issue of political negotiation and contestation. The relationship between the poor and the state is hence a political one. Such “subjects” are members of what Chatterjee (2004) calls political society, in contrast to the right-bearing citizens, which he calls civil society.
- 9 Chatterjee has in a way spatialized the notion of governmentality, by making the term relevant in post-colonial geographies, yet it has been divorced from the material realm, as the “messy aliveness of place” has been underplayed (Legg 2007:15). Calls for “spatial governmentality” (Merry 2001 in Legg 2007) have been expressed, seeking to unite the local and the national by paying attention to both micro and macro political scales (Merry 2001 in Legg 2007; Lemke 2000:13). Legg (2007:16) does point out that an explicit relation to spatiality in Foucault’s work can be found in what he has termed “milieu,” defined as “a space that supports action through mass effects on the population who inhabit it.” This linear relation of space affecting the population inhabiting it does not however reflect the complexity of the co-constitutiveness of space and community and also does not allow any scope for social change.
- 10 Lefebvre’s comprehensive theory of “production of space” lends itself to understanding relations between space and social change (Buser 2012:2). He presents a conceptual triad which expresses the interaction between *spatial practices*, *representations of space* and *spaces of representation* to trace the production of space (Buser 2012:6). Articulating these three aspects of the “production of space” along with techniques of governmentality not only allows us to understand the spatial effects of governmentality, but also expands the

scope of the conceptual lens that Lefebvre's "production of space" offers, as he has little to say on the question of discrimination and inequality (Shields 2011:283).

- *Representations of space* relates to rationally abstracted space, defined or *planned* by technocratic agents who hold power and knowledge. *Representations of space* are a frame of references, which permit spatial orientation and thus co-determine activity. They are held in verbal descriptions and the written word (Buser 2012:6). Within techniques of governmentality, *representations of space* are defined within the geographical purview in which policy targets are situated and to which the benefits pertain. For example, housing policy for the urban poor implemented in Bengaluru will be planned for certain localities. These urban localities evolve over time and house a community co-constituted by space.
  - *Spaces of representation* on the other hand engage with spaces that are *lived* and formed by human experiences, memories and feelings (Buser 2012). To articulate the effects of governmentality with *spaces of representation* is to decipher the changes in the lives of the individuals targeted by policy. For example, to ask: Once a locality is targeted for slum-redevelopment what chain of events does it trigger and how does it change the urban experience for the inhabitants?
  - *Spatial practices* relate to people's *perceptions* on the basis of their experiences of daily life. Perception not only relates to materiality, but also the processes by which materiality is produced. Hence, also the networks of social relations that mediate these processes and make up daily life (Buser 2012). Effects of governmentality and the changes it brings in the target's lives shape perceptions of community, the state, networks and relations. Interventions by the state, for example the in-situ redevelopment of an urban poor locality, may trigger tensions between the production of space (Lefebvre) affecting the *community* constituted geographically, and techniques of governmentality, through the disruptive policy requisites that define access to the benefits on an *individual level* (Chatterjee 2004).
- 11 These three spaces are not separate realities, but rather co-constitutive of a single and ever-changing one (Lehtouvuri 2010:55 in Buser 2012). The puzzle remains to understand how the tension between effects of governmentality, affecting community within a geographical locality, and policy targets, defined on an individual level, are played out. Dissonance between the *planned*, *lived* and *perceived* makes social action possible.
- 12 Regarding *planned* welfare allocation in India, Gupta (2012:23) states that India excels at designing benevolent interventions in the form of policy to alleviate poverty. He further argues that no matter how sincere the officials in charge of them are, the overt goal of welfare is subverted by the very procedures of bureaucracy—in other words by the modalities of governmentality. This leads to the *lived* experience not being in accordance to the *planned* State intervention and hence to a perception of not being treated as a citizen, worthy of the Indian Constitution. When sites of insurgency emerge in the city, new identities and practices disturb established histories (Sandercock in Friedman and Douglass 1998:165, in Sanvig Knudsen 2007:5). In India the shift from histories of caste, administered by systems of governmentality to the rights of the citizens, provides the foundation for the perception of injustice that feeds into evolving discourses of urban citizenship.
- 13 The notion of urban citizenship is derived from the "right to the city" and is inspired by Henri Lefebvre. Citizenship represents a boundary between citizens and others, between those who are inside and those outside a particular community. The "urban" refers to Lefebvre's insistence that inhabitation in a city is the basis for citizenship (Purcell 2003). Merging the urban dweller and the citizen, means that an urban dweller has earned his

“right to the city” by living in the city and having a daily routine there in which (s)he shall have the: 1) right to appropriate urban space and 2) to participate in the production of urban space (Purcelle 2003:577). When techniques of governmentality target a population in a given space, they impact their routine in this city.

- 14 Holston (2008:4) relates the routine of the urban poor to urban citizenship, as their routine in the city is marked by the hardships of illegal residence, housing struggles, and land conflicts, which become the context and substance of urban citizenship. This routine involves everyday, insurgent negotiations for a rightful place in the city. These insurgent acts are ultimately expressions of what it means to be a member of the modern state, claiming accountability for the *planned* State intervention, the *lived* experience and the *perceived* injustice to come together. These practices are found where claims for inclusive and substantial citizenship are made and fought for.
- 15 According to social movement theory the form of these fights and struggles depends on understandings of identified sets of prescribed, tolerated, and forbidden claim-making performances with the likely consequences of making such claims. The performances on the other hand are chosen from important routines, of emotionally and morally salient tactics (Jasper 1997:237 in Della Porta and Diani 2006) that clump into repertoires. The ability to choose particular tactics and engage in insurgent performances requires social skill. Social skill is a resource that can mobilize the ability to make sense of the environment along with the knowledge to mobilize most efficiently (Fligstein and McAdam 2011).
- 16 If the performance falls into the type that is tolerated by the political regime, it will be considered moderate. On the other hand, if the performance goes beyond the prescribed tolerance level, it will be considered radical, which may trigger repressive responses legitimized by official authorities. Tolerance or repression of insurgent performance also depends on the cause for insurgency, which may call for informal repression (not officially legitimized by the authorities), if the prescriptions to respond to the insurgency don't sufficiently serve the interests of the power holders. In other words, informal repression arises when power holders need to push through their vested interests at all costs in a clandestine way.
- 17 Auyero (2011) explores zones where networks of violent entrepreneurs (such as thugs), political actors, and law enforcement officials secretly meet and mesh. He calls it the gray zone of semi-secret political interactions between state actors and perpetrators of violence. Within this zone “violent specialists” (actors who specialize in inflicting physical damage) play a key role, though sometimes not exactly a discernible one, in the origins and the course of violence. Some of these specialists are part of the state apparatus, others (thugs and gangs) enjoy important but often clandestine connections with established power-holders. He calls attention to the existing continuities between state actions, routine politics, and extraordinary violence. Inattention to this zone risks missing much of what drives political action and non-action.
- 18 This section aimed at presenting a canvas of concepts that specify the relationship between the urban poor in their quest for land and housing and the state. The conceptual framework related techniques of governmentality and production of space to one another and outlined the triggers to insurgent performances arising from the dissonance between the *planned*, *lived* and *perceived*. I argued that the dissonance is created by the tension of community being co-constituted through space, and policy targets being identified on an individual level.

- 19 The paper now presents a housing policy and deciphers the planned intervention through techniques of governmentality and discusses two communities that were targeted by a slum redevelopment program under the policy scheme called Basic Services to the Urban Poor and describes the lived and perceived experience. The following section hence divides into the three parts following the three aspects of production of space as suggested by Lefebvre. I describe the respective intertwined effects of governmentality and production of space with particular attention to the possibilities and limitations for insurgent performances and possible consequences of informal repression.
- 20 The research this article is based on uses an organizational perspective to shed light on the conditions for claiming access to land and adequate housing from the State. Four months of fieldwork between 2009 and 2010 involved multiple rounds of interviews with civil-society organizations engaging in such claims. The data gathered was triangulated with interviews conducted with government officials and the affected communities. The data-gathering method was anchored in a synchronic research design. Analytical categories were derived in a deductive manner and further refined through field results. The study of legal and policy documents informed the formal conditions for claim-making to contrast the lived and perceived on the ground. Furthermore, experts (activists, academics, members of the legal profession, ex-government workers and ex-political representatives) were interviewed to illuminate the socio-political climate in which these claims took place. The empirical investigation came short of tracing the histories of the affected communities due to the particular research design and the restricted resources of the researcher, which didn't allow for more extensive ethnographic work.

## The planned: representation of spaces within housing policy

- 21 Nair (2005:168) points out that the process of producing space in Bengaluru largely inscribes itself within the extended ideology of the private property of land and a market for housing. She asserts that there is a desire for a more complete economic domination of the production of space. The clearest expression of this is seen in judicial and administrative discourse since the 1980s with the persistent demand for a reduction in the multiplicity of laws that breed illegality (Nair 2005) and practices of forced illegality. In Bengaluru the state is positioned between the growing demand of a developer-dominated market in land and pressures from below, but those who use a mixture of illegal or informal tenures still remain outside the domain of the market.
- 22 Availability of land is a major determinant for housing the urban poor. The 1970s was the defining decade in which the planning authorities recognized that the city of Bengaluru may be growing in ways far beyond their ability to control, calling for political intervention from above (Nair 2005:170). Hence a series of decisions were taken to secure the production of space within a legal framework of a regulated market in land and private property. "Clearance, rehabilitation and conservation" (Nair 2005:171) remained the key concepts incorporated into the evolving schemes of targeting urban poor clusters.
- 23 The meteoric rise to a globally-integrated location for software development and other modern service industries following India's economic liberalization of the 1990's

produced profound changes in the metropolitan social fabric of Bengaluru. This created and worsened disparities, and fragmented and polarized urban society (Dittrich 2007). According to Dittrich (2007) it is becoming a multiply-divided city where both social and geographical barriers are reinforced.

- 24 The drive to clear the illegal occupations of the poor, but to regularize the structures of wealthier violators, left the poor at the weakest vantage point. In the face of the acute global demand in the 2000's for land, the poor were left on their own to survive in the city. As a result, many were trapped in a vicious circle of illegal occupation and the constant threat of eviction. Real estate value shot up, making land investments a highly sought after asset. This market reaction skewed housing delivery, as sites were kept vacant for maximum profit, despite an acute housing shortage for certain economic sections of society. According to the Kundu report (2012) on housing shortage, Karnataka was short by 1.02 million dwelling units. With 15% of Karnataka's population living in Bengaluru, this resulted in Bengaluru being officially short of 153,000 units. But when considering that a minimum of 20% of Bengaluru's 9.6 million-strong population lives in slums, this would mean that around 1.9 million people lack adequate housing. Even with a modest assumption that four dwellers would occupy one dwelling unit, 480,000 would still be without—a number far higher than the official estimate on housing shortage.
- 25 At the time of fieldwork, the only public intervention in housing for the urban poor in the city of Bengaluru was the BSUP. It formed one of the major subcomponents of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) that ran from 2005–2012. JNNURM funding was conditional on the mandatory and optional reforms. Within this mission, techniques of governmentality functioned at different scales to target geographically-nested entities: First, on a national scale 63 cities were targeted for renewal. Second, within the target cities, certain localities were selected for slum redevelopment. Third, within the communities inhabiting these selected localities, those individuals who could prove eligibility were targeted to be beneficiaries of a dwelling unit.
- 26 The budget at the commencement of the mission was projected as 1,205,360 million INR (263 billion \$) over the 7 years of the mission duration or 172,195 million INR (3,7 billion \$) annually for the 63 targeted cities (JNNURM, Overview document, Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD)). These financial incentives were targeted at the sub-missions for urban infrastructure and governance, and for the BSUP. As of September 2010, 111,7 million \$ was approved for the BSUP.
- 27 The core compulsory reforms were measures of decentralization (in line with the 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment), adopting an accrual-based double-entry system of accounting, to make available quarterly performance information for all stakeholders, implement community participation, and a disclosure law. The BSUP policy guidelines included earmarking within local body budgets for basic services to the urban poor and the provision for urban services, education, health and social security (BSUP revised guidelines 2009:16). Interestingly, at the same time, inadmissible interventions for BSUP funding included infrastructures such as power and telecom, but also wage employment and the creation of employment (BSUP 2009:4).
- 28 The reforms relating to land were categorized under “optional reforms” and required the earmarking of at least 20–25% of developed land in all housing projects for economically weak sections/low-income groups, the digitalization of land records, the property title certification system in urban local bodies, simplification of legal and procedural

frameworks for the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes, the repeal of the urban land ceiling and regulation act, and the streamlining of the approval process for building construction and site development. It is clear that the tools for urban renewal were largely based on land governance and these were left to the states to manage,<sup>1</sup> but the further devolution of powers to urban local bodies did not occur, even though prescribed by the mandatory decentralization agenda incorporated in the mission. In the absence of empowered local governments, the state government increasingly vested decision-making powers in non-elected parastatals, the latter being more or less a network of individuals patronized by ruling parties (Mohan and Mercier 2012). Mahadevia and Datey (2012) demonstrate that in Karnataka, the optional reforms were hardly implemented.

- 29 In Bengaluru, 54 slums were targeted under the BSUP (KSDB 2010), while the city housed about 20% of its population in 542 slums (out of which 246 are declared under KSDB) according to the 2009–10 annual report (KSDB:3). The criteria for targeting certain localities and the decision about what kind of approach to slum improvement (in situ or relocation) was taken, remained vague as none of these issues found mention in the guidelines and toolkits. According to KSDB officials the selection was based on “need,” but they did not refer to any need assessment survey, and data on slum population in the city remained very scattered and inaccurate (Civic 2008).
- 30 It was projected that in Bengaluru, 11,603 dwelling units at the unit cost of 2,735 \$ were to be constructed during the mission period. They were to be funded as follows: 50% Central Funds and 50% from the State of Karnataka—however the States portion was subsidized in part (12% total cost, 10% from Scheduled Castes/Tribes and Other Backward Classes). The criteria for eligibility was a proven minimum of five years of residence, possession of ration card and voter id, and a caste certificate to avail a 2% decrease in beneficiary contribution (Civic 2008). Beneficiaries were given “only” possession certificates, which permitted lifelong possession without ceding ownership (Kamath 2012). So the unit did not represent a generational asset and defeated the principle argument that security of tenure accelerated the process of housing improvement and capital accumulation. Furthermore, the full costs of maintenance, services, and amenities had not been included in the Detailed Project Reports, the dwellers hence doubted if the units were really affordable (Gilbert 2007).
- 31 Besides material provisions, the guidelines expressed intentions of inclusive planning, by promoting a decentralization agenda, creating areas of participation in the form of technical advisory groups, and by provisioning community participation funds and social audits. These efforts were an important departure from the previous more conservative view that participation of the people at the local level should be informal, and need not be provided for (Sivaramkrishnan 2011:140). But for the urban poor these arenas would remain only rhetoric, as the conditions for participation were hardly published in the local language, and the procedures were highly technical requiring high literacy and educational credentials.
- 32 This doesn't come as surprise, considering that the policy guidelines did specifically target (civil society) NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to be brokering the interaction between the government and communities. The official language of the mission distinguished between CBO's (community-based organizations) and NGOs, which possess enough technical capacities to interact with the authorities. This novel form of representation involved on the one hand NGOs taking on a representative function for

the urban poor communities and on the other hand the same NGOs could also be co-opted into the activities and supposed responsibilities of state authorities. The basic prerequisite to interact formally with the state is information about how to go about it, which was hardly available to urban poor communities. The report on “NGO engagement with JNNURM” issued by the TAG Coordination Cell in New Delhi (2007) did appreciate the beginnings of “miniscule” openings on the part of state governments in engaging with civil society organizations in the process” (TAG Coordination Cell 2007:8) even though guidelines were ambiguous. Despite the role given to NGOs in the policy, the report expressed the rigid mind-set and attitude of officials towards collaborating with civil society organizations. It stated that officials lacked understanding of the importance of public consultation, that they had an oblivious attitude towards planning, reporting, monitoring and disclosure practices and that furthermore bureaucratic costs were high.

- 33 The representation of space emerging from the policy design of the BSUP is one of a geographically nested space relating through spatial scales (City, locality, individual dwelling unit) to targets of different levels of social aggregations (urban citizens, community and individual) through particular brokers.
- 34 I argue that BSUP policy and its implementation incorporated various disruptive practices, breaking the co-constitutive nature of community and space and making the tension between community in space and individual policy target more salient.
- The policy in its material manifestations clearly influenced the built environment, by disrupting logics of auto-construction in slums that mainly emerge as ground-floor housing. Single floor housing is a mode of construction and spatial organization that is accommodating and flexible to the movements of the urban poor and to changing family composition. BSUP policy encouraged multi-storied buildings without scope for incremental material and family growth; in doing so it froze the number of inhabitants in a targeted locality. This planning rationale disrupted the constitution of community through space.
  - Policy guidelines did not include transit housing for those communities targeted for in-situ redevelopment, requiring the inhabitants to vacate the land and hence get scattered, losing out on the spatial constitution of community.
  - Furthermore, there was gross negligence in the performance of social exercises that were specified in the policy guidelines that would have recognized the targeted community. No social audits were carried out, as the toolkit for doing so was published six years after the launch of the JNNUR mission. The community participation fund was hardly utilized, as the eligibility criteria required high literacy and project management jargon, for which the urban poor were not qualified (Sivaramkrishnan 2011).
- 35 The practices of land allocation and governance in Bengaluru and the BSUP housing scheme represented a mixed bag for the urban poor. While the BSUP represented a departure from previous schemes through written expressions of inclusive planning, the representation of space coupled with modalities of governmentality incorporated disruptive processes. These will come to light in the next section of the lived experience of two communities.

## The lived: spaces of representation in two communities

- 36 This section presents two contentious episodes from slum localities that were targeted for benefits under the BSUP. McAdam (Fligstein and McAdam 2011:1) defines an episode of contention “as a period of emergent, sustained contentious interaction between actors utilizing new and innovative forms of action vis-a-vis one another.” Another significant characteristic of such episodes is a shared sense of uncertainty or crisis regarding the rules and power relations that reinforces the perceptions of threat and opportunity that lead parties to engage in sustained mobilization by incumbents and challengers (Fligstein and McAdam 2011:1).
- 37 The first episode describes the possibilities for committed insurgent performances enabling access to land and housing while the second depicts how an urban poor community living in a locality saturated with patronage networks limits insurgent performances. The episodes presented serve as illustrative examples to depict insurgent performances in relation to dissonance between the *planned* BSUP intervention, the *lived* experience and the *perceptions* of the community about themselves and the State.
- 38 The episodes presented here involve two different slum-dweller organizations. The first is *Slum Janaara Kriya Vedike* (SJKV), which translates as “slum people’s association,” and the second is *Stree Jagruthi Samithi* (SJS), a women’s rights organization. The description of the episodes is followed by a discussion in which the similarities and differences between both organizations are identified and explained.

### Episode faced by SJKV: “The value of our lives”

- 39 At the time of fieldwork, SJKV was a young organization founded by a local youth group of slum residents who took on the mission of “transforming lower caste slum-inhabitants into knowledgeable, rightful and deserving citizens of India by building their self-esteem” (SJKV leader 2010). Their area of work encompassed any issue relating to the slum, such as clean water, tenure or identity cards. Their strategy was to mobilize the inhabitants by raising their low self-esteem, giving them information about their rights and motivating them to “further their own development” (SJKV leader 2010).
- 40 At the time of fieldwork, the association counted 4,000 members across many slum localities in Bengaluru. According to one of the founders there were 100 active members working in committees driving the activities of the association based on people’s grievances that would be then communicated to the committees. Only three members worked full-time for the organization and received fellowships from the NGO Action Aid Karnataka. For the rest of the financial requirements the communities contributed collectively for their struggles. For this slum-resident organization, mobilizing the community meant standing for the cause regardless of physical threats and escalating the issue first through moderate means and then through radical ones if required, as will be shown. SJKV’s episode substantiates the idea that urban citizenship involving claims to land can require insurgent performances, such as those staged by this slum-dweller organization.

- 41 The founding members of SJKV were introduced to a community of load carriers living near the wholesale agricultural market in Buddhanagar in the southwestern periphery of the city. They were living near a drain that would flood their huts during the rainy season. Despite having identity documentation, they did not qualify for any of the described housing schemes as they were living on the streets and had no proof of having lived there for more than 5 years, which was the criterion at that time to seek public housing. One day, the transformer situated above the drain crashed down, killing a woman and burning down her dwelling. Outraged with grief, the community and SKJV blocked the road, displaying the burnt corpse. Local politicians showed up almost immediately and provided a compensation of 12,000 rupees on the spot. They also advised the community to file a case in the court against the electricity company to seek proper compensation. Instead of viewing themselves as victims demanding compensation from a company, SJKV induced the narrative that the government was responsible for not having provided better living conditions for its citizens. Hence, it was the state that was the target of their claims. Finally, they were invited to the office of the deputy commissioner where they faced discrimination based on their caste. There they had a heated argument about the value of their lives and their fundamental rights as citizens. In reaction to this exchange, they threatened to file a case against the official on the grounds of the prevention of atrocities act.<sup>2</sup> After repeated letters, protests and visits to various governmental offices—in which they defended their cause in terms of citizenship rights—they were allotted some land in the periphery of Bengaluru. The community agreed with this solution.
- 42 As they were about to relocate, villagers, panchayat (village council) members, and real estate magnates from the allotted peripheral location began to threaten them with weapons. In their view, the relocation of slum-dwellers would decrease the land's value. There were rumors that these villagers were defending land that ministers had appropriated at lower than market prices. Faced with violence, the SJKV community was intimidated and the deputy commissioner cancelled the allotment, fearing a law-and-order problem. Even the re-allotment of an underutilized site further away from the city led to calls for similar reactions by locals. After this second rejection, SJKV, with the help of other communities, pulled together 400 people and blocked the national highway. Government officials hurried to the site and tried to mediate between the villagers and the urban dwellers, but the villagers held the highest-ranking commissioner hostage. SJKV members rescued him and finally obtained land near the wholesale agricultural market. It took them one-and-a-half years of struggle to be allotted the final site and four more years to get the site formally earmarked for slum clearance, meaning that the government would take responsibility for providing them with urban services and adequate housing. It is noteworthy that this was the only community under the BSUP scheme in Bengaluru that was able to get ground-floor housing, making incremental extensions to the house possible as the family grows.

### Episode faced by SJS: “Blackmailing through housing”

- 43 The second group was the women's rights organization *Stree Jagruthi Samithi* (SJS), founded in 1988. This organization emerged from the Indian women's movement. At the time of fieldwork the organization was led by a middle-class woman along with five staff and had 200 members. SJS engaged with women working in the informal sector,

particularly domestic workers, and tried to formalize the work relationships of domestic maids. They also raised awareness about domestic workers rights and duties, and the rights of the girls who enter domestic work at a young age. They organized public meetings and led advocacy efforts on the right to livelihood, recognition of domestic work, need for fair wages and regulation of overtime and holidays. As many of their members lived in the city's slums, SJS became involved in the Ragigudda slum (South of Bengaluru), where one of the largest and most political BSUP housing projects was underway.

- 44 This episode involves a central locality situated on a hill, on rocky ground. Before it was formally earmarked for improvement, this slum suffered a long history of eviction threat due to a long-standing case filed by a middle-class man. The land belonged to the State Corporation staff quarters, the Bengaluru Development Authority and some private owners. The community had fought the threat of eviction through protest and legal efforts. The slum community obtained a ruling in its favor and the plot was finally officially declared, giving the community the right to reside there. However, the lack of urban services was a prevailing issue for residents. Water from the corporation was not regular and there was no drainage system, though the residents themselves built a few toilets. In 2009, the community was informed that BSUP housing would be delivered in-situ in their slum. The notification came in a letter to the slum leaders.
- 45 The dynamics in this slum give indications on how mobilization efforts to seek adequate housing can be repressed. SJS had a strong presence in this locality, but gradually pulled out due to threats from the leaders. Ordinarily the leaders operated separately within their respective loyalty networks to provide crucial services, such as producing eligibility documents for their clients. But when BSUP implementation was announced, four influential leaders in the slum who normally competed with each other came together "for the greater good of lots of money" (SJS leader 2010), as there were opportunities for making profits from BSUP funds. My SJS interviewees said that the leaders were close to the political parties and swaying their support of the party ruling at the time of fieldwork (Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]). These "dogs of the political parties made sure that people didn't revolt, people voted for them during elections and that there was certain control over the community" (SJS leader 2010).
- 46 The implementing government agency, the Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB), only consulted the slum leaders at the outset of implementing the scheme as part of their so-called "public consultation." In 2009 the leaders, along with NGOs such as Worldvision (international) and CIVIC (local) that were active in the slum, held a meeting to inform the residents about the BSUP scheme. The speakers had no microphone, so the majority could not hear and they basically read out the notification letter, giving few details about the scheme or its implication. These leaders managed the list of beneficiaries, keeping the entire process opaque to the community. Further, the information concerning all construction work was kept secret and none of the work was given to the residents, some of whom were construction workers themselves.
- 47 SJS tried to obtain information on behalf of local women, going to the slum board and encouraging the women to form an independent committee to engage in the process more actively. But the women's husbands discouraged them from coming forward, out of fear of losing out on a house if they opposed the leaders. Leaders of the slum community held a meeting and asked people to pay 32 rupees to enter their names onto the list. When women questioned why the money could not be paid directly to the board, the

leaders warned that they could either “leave or ride with them, but they shall not cry” (SJS leader 2010), insinuating serious consequences. As the result of such tactics, many international NGOs and local organizations shied away from getting involved in the process.

- 48 The head of SJS estimated that there were about 2,000 families living in the slum, while the housing scheme was planned only for 1,500. Among the beneficiaries two thirds were Scheduled Caste families. The remaining one third of the families stemmed from the categories of Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Tribes, Muslims and “Other” communities. A transit site was planned for only 500 families on an open ground opposite the slum. They were merely given tin sheets to construct their own huts on a plot squeezed behind a maintained park and a private, fenced site with no services whatsoever. Other families scattered across the city in search of rental housing. The rationale for scattering the community geographically was to break up any unity that may exist within the community that may have been capable of confronting the leadership (SJS leader 2010).
- 49 Those residents who were supposed to obtain a dwelling unit in the upgraded slum did not even get a biometric card as in other projects where BSUP housing occurred. They only received a paper with their photo and a number on it. Even beyond the time of my fieldwork, this particular locality was making headlines in the press. On November 21, 2012, one could read in the *Deccan Herald* that the housing complex had been inaugurated. But out of the 1,500 units only 850 were standing and the interiors were not yet completed. The article also said that residents alleged that 179 names were missing from the list of beneficiaries and that outsiders had been included.
- 50 Both episodes show what public housing represents to the urban poor and the powerful agents wanting to profit from it. The greatest limitation for insurgent performances was the emergence of informal repression against members of the community due to the value of land and housing. When strong unity within the community coupled with social skill is available it unleashes incredible powers to resist informal repression in the hope of claiming land to get a house (as was the case with SJKV). It also unleashes readiness to inflict violence on the most marginalized in the city through networks within what Auyero calls the gray zone (2011). Further, this gray zone also mediates the tolerance of forms of performances (Jasper 1997 in Della Porta and Diani 2006), which is then no more exclusive to the state. In SJS's case the slum leaders communicated repressively the levels of tolerance of insurgent performances rather than government bureaucrats. Considering the chain of claimant and target interactions (SJS-slum leaders-state) within systems of governmentality, backs Haritas' (2013) argument for the need to bring to light the different natures of political society organizations, especially of women within specific dynamics at the neighborhood level.
- 51 The lived experience of these two communities to claim BSUP benefits depicts the dissonance of the planned and the lived. The exclusionary and repressive mechanisms deployed by state agents and their networks, along with the cost of engaging in insurgent performances shape the perception of self, of the community, the State and mediates the sense of belonging to a certain space.

## The perceived: spatial practice and possibilities to assert urban citizenship

- 52 Both episodes depict events narrated until 2010. They involve situations that occurred in the process of allocating land, construction and delivery of public housing within the BSUP scheme in Bengaluru. One major difference between the two communities is that SKJV managed to bring the BSUP to the community through sustained claim-making and insurgent performances, whereas in SJS's case the locality was targeted by the Karnataka Slum Development Board for BSUP in-situ redevelopment. The latter was targeted because of the size of the slum and the political relays that preceded any mobilization. This discrepancy in the means of getting BSUP into a locality is an expression of the difference in perception of themselves as a community and of the local state that each community faced respectively. Perception of the state in turn shaped their engagement in spatial practices to assert their place in the city that further had a repressive spillover effect. In both localities there were clear inconsistencies between what was planned within BSUP policy and the lived experience of claiming its benefit and in the implementation process. While SJS mobilized to claim accountability regarding their interaction with the KSDB and their potential status as a beneficiary, members of SKJV made claims to bring the BSUP into their community as a matter of right to urban citizenship.
- 53 By the time I interviewed SKJV, the leaders of the organization stated that "all resistance we do is from the location of caste." The meaning of this statement articulates itself at multiple levels. First, the way Indian society functions in their view. Second, the discrimination they experience when they resist. Third, the type of discourses they have to deploy with the aggrieved communities to mobilize them and fourth, how caste discrimination is reproduced in the cityscape.
- 54 The resistance from the location of caste was displayed and experienced during the deployment of their action repertoire. One such instance was when they publicly questioned the value of their lives while protesting against the living conditions with the corpse of a woman who had died because of the physical location of her habitation. They repeatedly said, during their struggles in face of repression, that they were ready to fight to the death. Other occasions were when they threatened to use the Atrocity Act. They stated that they experienced caste discrimination when government officials expressed a sense of disgust through their body language or when they claimed that god was responsible for their plight.
- 55 For the members of SKJV, caste-based resistance meant to attempt to change the consciousness of the slum dwellers, while also altering their self-esteem vis-à-vis their position in a caste-based society. SKJV relied on different lines of reasoning to challenge the slum-dwellers' own feelings of caste marginalization. This includes making them understand the universality of being human against the notion of sub-caste even within their own communities in an attempt to unite the Dalits. Such unity was seen as the only means to real politics. The last level of caste-based resistance was mirrored in their understanding of the city-scape and the distribution of space. In rural India, lower-caste people lived on the outskirts of the village; they observed the same geographies unfolding in the cities as well.

- 56 Over the years SJS had seen the struggle it took to get the slum recognized by the state. They recalled how the community had come together to get the slum declared, but during the implementation of BSUP, the leaders split for the “larger benefit of money.”
- 57 In the case of SJS, the organizational frames they had developed regarding domestic work mainly involved labor rights, which were not helpful for addressing the housing issue. Their target from the outset was the group of slum-leaders who were brokering access to housing in their own interest and not as a matter of urban citizenship. It was not possible to engage with the ring of leaders, as informal threats were powerful enough to silence critical voices within the community and no collective agency was available to resist. When women attempted to demand accountability by questioning why they had to pay a registration fee to the slum leaders and not to the board itself, they were silenced on the spot with a threat of getting “evicted” from the beneficiary list managed by those same leaders, which further divided the community.
- 58 The women felt they could not count on any one. On the one hand, the women viewed the state as incompetent to understand their problems. The BSUP in-situ redevelopment stripped the families of their shelter and, by giving them tin sheets for transit housing, the KSDB portrayed itself as doing them a favor, even though not planning and budgeting for transit was a major failure of the scheme. On the other hand the slum leaders monopolized the channel of information between the delivering technocratic agency—the Karnataka Slum Development Board—and the beneficiaries, and oversaw the entire process right down to the construction of the houses. The fact is that in this largest BSUP in-situ redevelopment site, where demand for entitlement was higher than the supply, no biometric card was given and this probably made it easier to manipulate the beneficiary list. The slum-leaders, as an additional obstacle within the interaction between the claimants and the ultimate target (the state), substantially changed the equation and the probability of positive outcomes of insurgent performances.
- 59 For slum communities in cities such as Bengaluru, the possibility of seeking public housing on legal land, even just with the right to reside, constitutes a rare opportunity. In the case of SKJV, eligibility criteria to the BSUP were never part of the narrative. They had infused the community with the perception of being urban citizens and claimed ground-floor housing for all the members. For other communities, governmentality mechanisms worked in an exclusionary manner, as housing was only given to those who had the right documents to prove their eligibility or to those who could leverage their relationship with the slum leaders.
- 60 In contrast, narratives among SJS members often mentioned who was eligible, who was not and how they bought access through procuring false documentation. The perception of oneself here was as a beneficiary, which positioned them on unequal terms with the State, reinforcing the aspect of their identity that makes them eligible (Chatterjee 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears 2008). Citizenship on the other hand (as claimed by SKJV) stresses the duty of citizens in contributing to the larger society. In the SJS locality, issues of eligibility were particularly relevant in determining the lived experience of the BSUP. 500 residents of the slum were not included in the beneficiary list and only one third of the beneficiaries were given a minimal transit arrangement. The spatial exclusion and dispersion of the community, with the strong presence of slum leaders, were unfavorable to insurgent performances.

- 61 Further, gendered aspects of mobilization were relevant as women were discouraged by their husbands against collective mobilization against the male slum leaders and their (male) thugs. Slum leaders, who are internal to the community, threatened with informal repression, such that any action from the women was inhibited. Patronage networks require strong exclusive patron-client linkages that demand loyalty and inhibit weak ties that include more numerous and more diverse members of the community. The latter types of ties are instrumental for collective action (Maiz and Requejo 2004:9; Klandermans and Oegama 1987). Hence, the presence of clientelism cancelled out the possibility of the generation of collective identity, the other necessary condition for mobilization. Along with the prevalence of informal repression, this explains the lack of strong collective agency to resist the slum leaders in the SJS locality.
- 62 Spatial practices, as one of the elements of the triad in the production of spaces, spelled out the reasons for engaging in performances of insurgency in the first place and also made it possible to understand the degree of radicalness these performances incorporated. Claims to belong to a certain space fueled the commitment of members in the case of SJKV or at least enticed attempts at insurgency in the case of SJS. Techniques of governmentality strongly influence spatial practices. These techniques identify eligible individuals based on certain criteria and hence reinforce politicized identities, which in turn shape perceptions and potentially disrupt communities co-constituted by space.

## Conclusion

- 63 The aim of this article was to explore the production of space, coupled with techniques of governmentality that shape possibilities and limitations for insurgent performances to assert the right to land for housing the urban poor. Within the perspectives of systems of governmentality and production of space, I argued that the dissonance between the planned, lived and perceived shaped the need and commitments for insurgent performances, these being the best bet to claim land for housing in the city. Informal repression stemming from a political-bureaucratic nexus represented the strongest limitation for insurgent performances, whereas the community's capacity to resist informal repression through high degrees of social skill to read the socio-political environment and adequately mobilize, opened possibilities for insurgent performances.
- 64 Lefebvre's theory of the production of space applied along with the concept of governmentality was used to examine the co-constitutiveness of space and community targeted by policy. The BSUP policy markedly influenced the built form and experience of it and the social relations in the slum. This conceptual approach pinpointed the tension between the scale of public policy intervention that targets a spatially constituted community, but implements it through individual eligibility criteria. A closer reading of this tension within the presented episodes leads me to identify three types of outcomes affecting the community targeted by policy. These form hypotheses that could be tested through further empirical investigations.
- 65 First, when dissonance between the planned and lived is perceived as a matter of right to urban citizenship (as in the case of SJKV), then the community probably has high levels of social skill (Fligstein and McAdam 2011) and can engage in committed insurgent performances. Second, when the dissonance is perceived as a matter of eligibility to a policy benefit, then the community might hold lower levels of social skill, but could fall

back on some kind of network to engage in politics of proof gathering to meet the eligibility criteria. Such instances occurred in the SJS locality, where slum leaders were catering to their respective clients in the slums. Lastly, the (logical) consequence from perceiving the dissonance between planned and lived as a denizen, having very low social skills and no social network, could lead to total exclusion from the community and the geographical space. New migrants into the city would be particularly vulnerable to the third situation.

- 66 Within the discussion of production of space, it is also important to note the perceptions held by government agencies about the capacity of the poor to endure hardships. In none of the localities where BSUP housing projects were realized in-situ were adequate arrangements for transit housing made. It was assumed that community members could put up their tents and tin-sheets, as they were accustomed to living in abysmal conditions. Moreover, this worsening condition did not trigger speedier construction or a change in implementation guidelines. In regard to those communities rehabilitated to the periphery under the BSUP, it was taken for granted that they could and would start from scratch building a livelihood, enrolling their kids into new schools, and organizing for other lacking amenities, leaving the urban poor to “their own devices” (Berner and Phillips 2005).
- 67 These two episodes show how the allotment of land for public housing is conflictual and to what means the communities can resort in order to assert a claim for housing. Even though the BSUP policy recognized to a limited extent the right to the city’s materiality in the form of the provision for adequate housing and urban services, the quality of these were still markers of the inhabitants’ citizenship status. Both slum localities were officially recognized (declared) slums, which makes the State “see” (Scott 1998) these communities. But as the State “sees” them it also has the power to control and manipulate them. In this sense, insurgent performances become the means to assert urban citizenship and to be “seen” by the state, and thus to have the ability to shape the city.
- 68 On the basis of two case studies, this article attempted to shed light on the politicized processes of claiming urban land for housing. By spatializing the concept of governmentality, I argued that the gross dissonance between the planned, the lived and the perceived triggered insurgent citizenship practices that involve what Sassen (2003:58) calls the “production of presence.” Unfortunately, as these episodes confirm, producing presence in regard to asserting claims to land occurs in the face of threats of violence. It is finally the community’s capacity to unleash strength to face potential violence in unity that qualifies urban citizenship. In this sense, urban citizenship defies governmentality mechanisms that identify beneficiaries on an individual level and calls for more attention to the co-constitutiveness of space and community.

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## NOTES

1. According to the Seventh Schedule in the Constitution, which set out the Union, State and Concurrent Lists.
2. The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Tribes (STs) (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 relates to Article 17 of the Indian Constitution, which seeks to abolish "untouchability" and to forbid all such practices. The objectives of the Act clearly emphasize the intention of the Government to deliver justice to these communities through proactive efforts, as SCs and STs remain vulnerable.

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## INDEX

**Keywords:** production of space, governmentality, urban citizenship, slum, land, informal repression, housing policy, Bengaluru, insurgent performance

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