City on the Move: Migration, Public Culture, and Urban Identity in Delhi, c. 1911-present

Dissertation

for Conferral of a Doctoral Title

by the Faculty of Social Sciences

at Georg-August Universität Göttingen

Submitted by

Saeed Ahmad

born in New Delhi, India

Göttingen, 2023

First assessor: Prof. Dr. Srirupa Roy

Additional supervisors: Dr. Ravinder Kaur

                          Prof. Dr. Rupa Viswanath

Date of the oral examination: 22.05.2023

Abstract

This dissertation examines the formations and political implications of neighbourhood histories, and the central role of public historical narratives and memories in producing a normative "local community" that structures experiences of urban belonging and citizenship. The focus is on the Jangpura-Bhogal locality of Delhi, a proclaimed "diverse space". Through a historical ethnography from c. 1911-present, I track and interrogate the origins, evolution, mutations, and constitutive slippages and exclusions that produce neighbourhood diversity.

Asserting the existence of a historical and contemporary brotherhood (*bhaichara*), residents define Jangpura-Bhogal as a convivial space, citing the diverse presences, rich histories of varied population arrivals, and the colourful material landscape of different religious sites in the neighbourhood. Taking this narrative as its point of departure, this dissertation investigates the relationship between migration and urban belonging in India's capital city, Delhi. It makes three arguments. First, it highlights the role of displacement in the formation of neighbourhoods and cities by documenting a century of Jangpura-Bhogal's transformations from a 'model' village in 1922 to a contemporary diverse middle-class locality in South-East Delhi. Jangpura-Bhogal's history illustrates a variety of material and symbolic displacements. These include the arrival of displaced populations (relocated villages, Partition and Afghan refugees), the erasure of spaces and histories, the displacement of populations, and narrative strategies to disavow contemporary migrant groups.

Second, aside from the more visible or outright forms, it also documents the accretive/gradual/non-visible and at-times unintended forms of Muslim erasure outside of Muslim majority neighbourhoods. By documenting majority-minority relations across the twentieth century, I demonstrate how Muslims remain a weakened minority as their departure in 1947 commences a complicated process of the occupation, replacement, and erasure of Muslim property, spaces, and histories. Finally, the thesis illustrates the normative limits and exclusions of diversity. The narrative defining Jangpura-Bhogal as an inclusive and enduring, harmonious space obscures contentious histories of communal conflict, spatial othering, and narrative erasures that exclude histories, spaces, and populations to craft diversity. In other words, the thesis documents how this diversity is enabled by the very departures, displacements, and erasures in Jangpura-Bhogal's past and present.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation untersucht die politischen Bedeutungen und Formationen von Historiographien städtischer Nachbarschaften, insbesondere die zentrale Rolle öffentlicher historischer Narrative und Erinnerungen bei der Schaffung einer normativen „lokalen Gemeinschaft", welche Erfahrungen von städtischer Zugehörigkeit und Staatsbürgerschaft strukturiert. Der Schwerpunkt liegt hierbei auf der Untersuchung des Jangpura-Bhogal Viertels in Delhi, einem erklärten „vielfältigen Raum". Basierend auf historisch-ethnographischen Forschungsergebnisse von ca. 1911 bis heute verfolgt die Arbeit die Ursprünge, Entwicklungen, Mutationen sowie direkte und indirekte Exklusionsprozessee, welche die Bedeutung von „Vielfalt" des Viertels konstituieren, um sie gleichzeitig kritisch zu hinterfragen.

Unter Berufung auf die Existenz einer historischen und gegenwärtigen Bruderschaft (bhaichara) definieren die Bewohner Jangpura-Bhogal selbst oft als einen geselligen Raum und verweisen dabei auf die Vielfältigkeit des Ortes, die reiche Geschichte der verschiedenen Bevölkerungsgruppen und die Diversität religiöser Stätten innerhalb der Nachbarschaft. Ausgehend von dieser Erzählung untersucht die Dissertation die Zusammenhänge zwischen Migration und urbaner Zugehörigkeit in Indiens Hauptstadt Delhi. Dabei werden drei Argumente angeführt. Erstens wird die Rolle der Verdrängung bei der Gestaltung von Nachbarschaftsviertel und Stadtraum hervorgehoben, indem ein Jahrhundert lang der Wandel von Jangpura-Bhogal als einem „Musterviertel" im Jahr 1922 bis hin zu einem modernen, vielfältigen Ort der Mittelschicht im Südosten Delhis dokumentiert wird. Die Geschichte von Jangpura-Bhogal veranschaulicht eine Vielzahl von materiellen und symbolischen Verlagerungen. Dazu trugen insbesondere die Ankunft vertriebener Bevölkerungsgruppen (etwa aus umgesiedelten Dörfern, Geflüchtete nach der Teilung des ehemaligen Kolonialgebiets und afghanische Geflüchtete) bei. Gleichzeitig ist das Miteinander aber auch durch die Auslöschung von Räumen und Geschichten, die Verdrängung von Bevölkerungsgruppen sowie die Entstehung von Narrativen gekennzeichnet, die zeitgenössischer Migrantengruppen bewusst als Außenseiter*innen markieren.

Zweitens werden neben den sichtbaren oder offenen Formen auch die zunehmenden, allmählichen, nicht sichtbaren und bisweilen unbeabsichtigten Formen der Ausblenden von muslimischer Existenz und Narrative außerhalb der muslimischen Mehrheitsviertel

dokumentiert. Durch die Dokumentation der Beziehungen zwischen Mehrheit und Minderheit im Laufe der Zeit werden Kontinuitäten aufgezeigt, denen komplexe Prozesse der Besetzung, Ersetzung und Vernichtung muslimischem Eigentums, Räumen und Geschichten zugrunde liegen und welche somit zu einem Fortbestehen des Minderheitenstatus von muslimischen Bewohnern führen. Schließlich veranschaulicht die Arbeit die normativen Grenzen der Vielfalt. Das dominante Narrativ, das Jangpura-Bhogal als einen inklusiven und stetig harmonischen Raum definiert, verdeckt die umstrittene Geschichte kommunaler Konflikte, räumlicher Fremdbestimmung und narrativer Auslöschungen, die Geschichten, Räume und Bevölkerungsgruppen ausschließen, um eine homogene Idee der Vielfalt überhaupt erst entstehen lassen zu können. Mit anderen Worten: Die Arbeit dokumentiert, wie diese Vielfalt gerade durch die Abweichungen, Verschiebungen und Auslöschungen in der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart von Jangpura-Bhogal ermöglicht wird.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Glossary

Aatishbaazi	Fireworks or explosions
Abadi, Basti	Settlement
Adda	A site of sociality
Arthi	Bier
Baahri log	Outsiders
Bade ka ghosht	Buffalo (buff) or Cow meat (beef)
Badtameezi	Rudeness
Basapa	The act of populating
Bedha Garg	Drastic decline
Bhaichara	Brotherhood or Camaraderie
Bhagidari	Lit. Partnership. Also refers to a Delhi government broad based civic-participation scheme
Bhandara	Hindu community kitchen
Bhikku	Buddhist male monk
Bhumi Mata or *Bhumi Devi*	Earth Goddess
Chapati, Phulki, Roti	Terms for stovetop flatbreads
Charak	Starched
Chawl	Working-class settlements prominent in Gujarat and Bombay
Chindipana	Frugality
Dalda	Vegetable oil
Darpok	Coward
Darr	Fear
Dehshat	Terror

Dhanda	Nefarious activities. Often used to suggest drug-peddling and prostitution
Dharamshaala	Rest house
Dilliwallahs	From Delhi or a person belonging to Delhi
Function	Colloquialism for social or cultural events
Gadhe murde kyun ukhaadna	Why dig up the past?
Gali	Street or Lane
Gandagi	Dirt
Ghee	Clarified butter
Granthi	Custodian and ceremonial reader of the Guru Granth Sahib
Gufa	Cave
Gundagardi	Rowdiness
Gunde	Goons
Hakim	Muslim healer following the Unani medical tradition
Handi	Wok type vessel
Hartal	Strike
Haveli	Townhouse or manor house
Jamuna paar	Lit. Beyond the Yamuna. Refers to East Delhi
Jatha	Sikh volunteer corps associated with the Akali Dal
Jhatka	Sikh tradition of butchering animals by quick clean strikes
Jhula	Swing
Jhuggi-Jhopdi	Slums shanties
Jugaad	Connections or resourcefulness
Jummah	Friday prayers
Kabuli Sardars	Cover term for Afghan Sikhs

Kabza	Forceful occupation
Kadimi	Old
Kahwa or Kehwa	Kashmiri Green Tea with Saffron
Kameez	Shirt or tunic with a neck and shirt sleeves
Kankar	A kind of rock. Can also indicate small rocks
Khanqah	A meeting place of Sufi orders (Silsilas).
Khao Pansa	Thai Theravada Buddhist Lent
Khatas	Records or entries in a register
Kirtan	Religious recital
Kirtaniya	Gurdwara *Kirtan* singer
Kolhu	Friday prayers
Langars	Sikh and Sufi community kitchens
Madrassi	Colloquialism for South Indians
Mil baat ke rehna	Peaceful co-existence or living 'together'
Mohalla	Neighbourhood
Nala	Drain
Naanwai	Aghan bread maker
Nagar Kirtan	Neighbourhood religious processional singing
Paath	Recitation of hymns or *Gurbani* from the Guru Granth Sahib
Patta	Allotment papers
Pyaar Mohabbat	Love And Affection
Pul	Bridge
Ragi	Gurdwara musician
Raj Mistri	Master craftsman
Samikaran	Social equation

Sanjha Chulha	Community tandoor
Scooty	Colloquialism for gearless scooters
Shakha	Organisational branch of the RSS
Shantipriya log	Peaceful people
Shuddikaran	Hindu purification ritual
Takht	Lit. Seat. Refers to the place of the Guru Granth Sahib in a gurdwara
Tandoori Roti	Baked oven flatbread
Tarakki	Progress or prosperity
Theka	A colloquialism for liquor stores
Tehzeeb	Culture
Vyapaari	Trader

List of Abbreviations

AAP	Aam Aadmi Party
BJP	Bhartiya Janata Party
BJS	Bhartiya Jana Sangh
BOSCO	Bosco Organisation for Social Concern and Operation
BVMC	Budh Vihar Managing Committee
BVMCA	Budh Vihar Managing Committee Archives
O-BVMC	Old Budh Vihar Managing Committee
CAA	Citizenship Amendment Act
CC	Chief Commissioner
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
DA	Delhi Administration
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DDA	Delhi Development Authority
DIT	Delhi Improvement Trust
DLF	Delhi Land and Finance
DM	District Magistrate
DMC	Delhi Municipal Committee
DSA	Delhi State Archives
GNCT	Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi
INC	Indian National Congress
JERA	Jangpura Extension Residents' Association
JERWA	Jangpura Extension Residents' Welfare Association
JRA	Jangpura Residents' Association
JRWA	Jangpura Residents' Welfare Association

MCD	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
MTA	Market Trader Associations
NAI	National Archives of India
NDMC	New Delhi Municipal Committee
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NPR	National Population Register
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
PIL	Public Interest Litigations
R&A	Revenue and Agriculture
R&R	Ministry of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
RWA	Resident Welfare Associations
SDMC	South Delhi Municipal Corporation
SP	Sub-Inspector of Police
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SSP	Superintendent of Police
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHS	Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply

Acknowledgements

INTRODUCTION

Bhogal ka jeevan bhi kya hai	*So, what is the life of Bhogal,*
Iss Bhogal kya jeevan bhi kya hai.	*The life of Bhogal, what is it?*
Thode mein nirbha yahaan, thode mein,	*So little is needed to live here, so little*
Thode mein nirbha yahaan, aisa afsar aur kahaan hai?	*So little is needed to live here, an opportunity beyond compare*
Izzat nahin kisi ki jaati	*Everyone is guaranteed their honour*
Seedhe saadhe bhole bhaale	*Honest and straightforward are the minds of*
hain bhogal ke mann sangrahalaya	*those who are collected here*
Seedhe saadhe, bhole bhaale	*Honest and straightforward are the minds of*
Hain iss bhogal ke mann sangrahalaya.	*those who are collected here*
Chhoti badhi bulidingon ki shrankhala	*A chain of buildings, big and small,*
Chhoti badhi buildingon ki shrankhala	*A chain of buildings, big and small,*
Guest house bahut yahaan hain.	*With many guesthouses among them.*
Khaane peene ki dukaan kadimi	*And the eatery named Kadimi,*
Khaane peene ki dukaan kadimi aur kahaan hai?	*And the eatery named Kadimi, where else would you find it?*
Itne mandir, masjid, gurudware	*So many temples, mosques, and gurudwaras*
Itne mandir, masjid, gurudware	*So many temples, mosques and gurudwaras*
Iss chhoti si jaga mein samaye	*Populate this tiny little area.*
Asia ka sabse bada baudhh vihar, ravidas mandir, woh yahin hai!	*Asia's largest Buddhist centre, Ravidas temple, all here!*
Aisa afsar aur kahaan hai?	*Where else could you get such an opportunity?*
Thode mein nirbha yahaan hai	*So little is needed to live here.*

Central Market in Bhogal, a neighbourhood in New Delhi, India: It is August of 2017, and the shop is densely packed with freshly made sweets and the aroma of *ghee* (clarified butter) and sugar in the air. Outside, on a long table lies a makeshift structure with a large *handi* (wok) where fresh *samosas* are being fried. *Kadimi Daadu* (Grandfather Kadimi, henceforth KD) is behind the counter, sitting on a chair, and a small table fan, mounted on the wall on his left, cools his face. Scrunched into a narrow corner of the shop, I am talking to him amidst the frenetic business activity of production and sale. I am in Kadimi Sweets, established in Bhogal in 1925 by Sultan Singh Ramesh Jain. His son, Piyush Jain aka *Kadimi Daadu*, along with his grandson, runs the establishment. I am granted this meeting because Anil Goswami a well-known local political figure, has sent me here. In response to my question about the history of the neighbourhood, KD recites the poem I have cited in the epigraph to this chapter. It describes Bhogal as a place of simple living and straightforward/upright thinking, as a welcoming

together to fund weddings when a family has insufficient funds; how they successfully mediate arguments between brothers; how they share, co-exist, and tolerate each other.

Although its poetic form is distinctive, KD's celebration of his diverse neighbourhood does not stand alone. In many first meetings, residents of the area assert the existence of a historical and contemporary brotherhood (bhaichara). Describing Jangpura-Bhogal as an intrinsically convivial space, they cite the diverse presences, rich histories of varied population arrivals, and the colourful material landscape of different religious sites in the neighbourhood. At the beginning of 2019, for instance, I was walking down Central Road towards Kashmiri Park, the liminal zone between Bhogal and Jangpura Extension Double Storey quarters.[1] During fieldwork, one of my usual routines was to observe the streets and public spaces after scheduled conversations and interviews. As I reached the intersection of Masjid Road and Central Road, I noticed a familiar face smiling at me from a distance. Yogesh, a recent migrant from Haryana living in Bhogal, beckoned me to join him and a Sikh shopkeeper, who was introduced as a fount of relevant knowledge. 'Saeed meet Harpal. He will tell you the entire history of Bhogal'. Yogesh soon left after their conversation finished, leaving Harpal and me to discuss the neighbourhood. Harpal informs me of his desire to make a film on the histories of all the religious sites. Indulging this statement, I respond by telling him that this was a reason I chose the site, because of its diverse populations and religious spaces. I go on to say that through the story of Jangpura-Bhogal, one could write the history of Delhi. He emphatically responds, 'Delhi'?! You can write a history of India!' As I enquire about the continued presence of diverse arrivals, he uses a common turn of phrase in Hindi, "Maybe it has something to do with the water, but whoever comes here settles in." (*pata nahin ki paani ka kamaal hai ya kya hai, jo bhi yahan aata hai rach jaata hai*). These varied migration histories are supplemented by invoking the presence of diverse religious sites: a mosque, church, variety of temples, and gurdwaras—material evidence of the heterogenous space.

Drawing attention to the distinctive communities of Brahmans, Jains, Balmikis, Jatavs,[2] Kumhars, Dhobis, Sainis, and Sikhs who populate the neighbourhood, I am repeatedly told that

---

[1] Technically, the side of Masjid Road opposite the Bhogal Mosque (Shahi Masjid) signals the end of Bhogal. The settlements surrounding the mosque are post-Partition constructions. In local parlance, however, this area until Kashmiri Park is called Bhogal.

[2] Residents self-identity through the early twentieth century political categories of *Balmikis* and *Jatavs* (also a sub-caste of *Chamars*) in contrast to the colonial enumerative categories of *Chuhras* and *Chamars*. In the thesis, I use both formulations depending on the historical context. For a discussion, see Vijay Prashad, *Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of a Dalit Community* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

"every community is settled here". When prompted with leading statements and queries, many acknowledge the presence of Kashmiri and Afghan Muslims, and Tamils in Jangpura-Bhogal as well. The conversations point to a narrative of an enduring convivial diverse space marked by ideas of brotherhood and comradery. Residents define neighbourhood relations by invoking terms like *bhaichara* (brotherhood) *mil baat ke rehna* (shared co-existence), *shantipriya log* (peaceful people), and *pyaar mohabbat* (love and affection). According to this narrative, the co-existence of different castes and communities for a century translates into a social equation (*samikaran*) characterised by an absence of caste and communal discord. "You see till today there have been no fights between people". When acknowledging rare instances of internal local strife, residents like Rakesh assert that "even if something happens, everyone sits together to solve the matter. Like the Budh Vihar fight happened, but now again there is bhaichara". Instances of large-scale communal violence that are known to have affected the neighbourhood like the 1947 violence associated with the partition of India, or the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom, are attributed to outsiders (*baahar ke log*) or deflected to elswheres (*yahan nahin hua*). Residents also invoke the area's political history as the stronghold for proclaimed secular parties like the Indian National Congress (INC) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). While acknowledging the presence of the Hindu paramilitary Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) *shakhas* (branches) in the Hindu majority micro-neighbourhood of Pant Nagar, the mixed composition of the other parts of Jangpura-Bhogal is seen to secure the 'secular ethos' of the locality. The extensive Dalit and specifically Jatav presence is also cited by residents as proof of the neighbourhood's immunity to Hindu majoritarianism.[3]

The narrative of Jangpura-Bhogal as a contemporary heterogenous space thus draws upon elements of its history to make its point. We can outline the key features: different castes and communities were settled here, and they eventually established their own religious spaces. The ensuing visible religious diversity, and the everyday interactions of these diverse residents, have produced a convivial neighbourhood that cuts across and transcends caste/communal/class divides. In the face of disagreements or conflicts, people come together to find amicable solutions, and keep each other accountable to the community. The diversity code keeps local political representatives accountable as well. Any disruptions to this conviviality are caused by 'outsiders', those who do not belong to the neighbourhood.

---

[3] As the Bhogal nonagenarian Mange Lal proudly declares "We are Babasaheb's soldiers, we won't let them come here!"

Taking this narrative as its point of departure, this dissertation investigates the relationship between migration and urban belonging in India's capital city, Delhi. Migrants build, transform, and shape the material and symbolic landscape of cities around the world. The narrative, experience, and idea of migration are reproduced in everyday urban life through discourses, institutions, public memory, and cultural representations. Addressing these constitutive entanglements of migration and the city, I examine the formations and political implications of neighbourhood histories, and the central role of public historical narratives and memories in producing a normative 'local diversity' that structures experiences of urban belonging and citizenship. The specific focus is on the Jangpura-Bhogal locality of Delhi, a proclaimed 'diverse space' as we have seen above. Through a historical ethnography from c. 1911-present, I track and interrogate the processes, place-making practices and constitutive slippages and exclusions that produce neighbourhood diversity.

This dissertation makes three arguments. First, it highlights the role of displacement in neighbourhood and city-making by documenting a century of Jangpura-Bhogal's transformations from a 'model' village in 1922 to a contemporary diverse middle-class locality in South-East Delhi. Jangpura-Bhogal's history illustrates a variety of material and symbolic displacements. These include the arrival of displaced populations (relocated villages, Partition and Afghan refugees), the erasure of spaces and histories, the displacement of populations, and narrative strategies to disavow contemporary migrant groups. Second, aside from the more visible or outright forms, it also documents the accretive/gradual/non-visible, and at times unintended forms of Muslim erasure outside of Muslim majority neighbourhoods. By documenting majority-minority relations across time, I demonstrate how Muslims remain a weakened minority, as their departure in 1947 initiates a complicated process of the occupation, replacement, and erasure of Muslim property, spaces, histories. Finally, the thesis illustrates the normative limits and exclusions of diversity. The narrative defining Jangpura-Bhogal as an inclusive and enduring, harmonious space obscures contentious histories of communal conflict, spatial othering, and narrative erasures that exclude histories, spaces, and populations to craft diversity. In other words, the thesis documents how this diversity is enabled by the very departures, displacements, and erasures in Jangpura-Bhogal's pasts and presents.

After locating the study through a discussion of Delhi's long twentieth century and introducing Jangpura-Bhogal in Section 1, sections 2-4 outline the critical concepts of Neighbourhood, Displacements, Accretive erasure, and Bhaichara. I conclude with a discussion of methods and chapter outlines in section 5 and 6.

1. Locating the Study

Drawing from her work on Punjabi Partition migrants in Delhi, Ravinder Kaur critiqued the nostalgic imaginations of Delhi's social and cultural elite around a 'lost city' and culture (*tehzeeb*) following the Partition of 1947. We will revisit this at the end of the thesis. For now, I want to focus on her argument that Delhi's contemporary urban sprawl and its populations cannot offer much 'culture' through monuments or architecture and constitute an undocumented 'Invisible Delhi'. She raises an important question: "The question that writers and historians of Delhi have so far avoided is--might there be a history of Delhi outside the imperial and colonial time frame? Is it possible to talk about Delhi that is not Lutyen's Delhi or Shajahan's Delhi? Or are there histories waiting to be written in aesthetically unappetising back lanes of Lajpat Nagar and shanty towns of Trilokpuri?" In the spirit of a growing scholarship on postcolonial and contemporary Delhi, this thesis presents a contemporary history of a 'mainstream' Delhi neighbourhood lying outside Lutyens' Delhi and Shahjanabad.

1.1. Delhi and its Neighbourhoods

As the history of urban India tells us, Neighbourhoods were organised around a common attribute like profession, caste, community, region, class, industry, or markets. Pre-colonial mohallas, pols, wadis, paras, or colonial middle-class neighbourhoods reflected inherent social cleavages, ties, and colonial processes of urban planning. This was the case for pre-colonial walled city localities in Delhi and Ahmedabad,[4] settlements in Presidency towns,[5] the colonial clerk colonies in Delhi, Calcutta, or Lucknow,[6] the *chawls* of textile workers in Ahmedabad

---

[4] Often named after commodities or prominent men, Delhi's precolonial *mohallas* were characteristic of mixed residential and economic land use. Housing traders, workers, and nobles, these 'mixed' neighbourhoods were based on class, caste, and religion spatially proximate segregation. Narayani Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires, 1803-1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981).
Mohallas were often centred around *havelis* of prominent families which transformed, declined, and lost importance due to the the increasing urban interventions after 1857. For a greater discussion, see Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012).
For discussion on Ahmedabad, see Rukmini Barua, *In the Shadow of the Mill: Transformation of Workers' Neighbourhood in Ahmedabad, 1920s to 2000s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
[5] Jim Masselos, "Power in the Bombay "Moholla", 1904–15: An initial exploration into the world of the Indian Urban Muslim", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 6, no. 1 (1976), https://doi.org/10.1080/00856407608730711.
[6] Lodi colony or Daryaganj were examples in Delhi.

and Bombay,[7] or the slums emerging from Dalit labour squatting on public land.[8] The twentieth century changed Delhi's fortunes as it transformed from an established trading centre into the new capital of the British Raj: a massive project that took twenty years to complete (1911-1931). With a history of urban interventions since 1857,[9] Delhi's capital status turned it into a critical arena for techniques of governmentality and urban reform. The activities of Delhi Municipal Committee (DMC), the New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC), and a vast surveillance and policing apparatus were crucial for maintaining the symbolic, spatial, and social distinctions between Imperial and Old Delhi.

From the 1920s-40s, communal outbreaks, a growing practice of gating in the event of violence, the bureaucratic labelling of sensitive spaces of policing as 'Hindu', 'Muslim', and 'mixed', marked the inside and outside of Delhi's neighbourhoods, concretizing Delhi's communal geography.[10] As sites of nationalist agitations, Delhi's *mohallas* were key sites of political mobilisation for the Indian National Congress, Muslim National Guard, the RSS, and debates on future Homelands.[11] On the eve of Independence, Delhi was a major Western Allies coordination and supply centre during the Second World War, and a divided city. The Independence and Partition in 1947 were catalysts in an already ruptured urban fabric, causing a massive influx of Hindu and Sikh refugees and large-scale departure of Muslims. Mobs

---

Colonies emerged as a particular urban typology in the colonial period as European and government officer accommodations established along occupational lines. They were usually self-contained low-density neighbourhoods with markets, other ancillary services, and ample greenery. See Sonal Mithal, "Government Officer Housing Precincts in Urban Lucknow: A Construction of Urban Exclusivity through Occupation-defined Neighbourhoods", in *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*, ed. Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021); Pilar Maria Guerrieri, *Negotiating Cultures: Delhi's Architecture and Planning from 1912-1962* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018); Kaustubh Mani Sengupta, "Community and Neighbourhood in a Colonial City: Calcutta's *para*", *South Asia Research* 38, no. 1 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1177/0262728017725633.

[7] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *History, Culture And The Indian City* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Barua, *In the Shadow of the Mill*.

[8] Vijay Kumar, "Locating Dalit Bastis: The Sites of Everyday Silent Resistance and Works from the Late 19th-Century to the Mid-20th-Century United Provinces", in *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In Between Home and the City*, ed. Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021).

[9] Old Delhi had already been transformed through post-1857 urban restructuring that rewarded loyalists, transformed major thoroughfares like Chandni Chowk, and displaced rebels through property confiscations and auctions. Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires*.

[10] Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); Nazima Parveen, *Contested Homelands: Politics of Space and Identity* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India 2021).

[11] Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Stephen Legg, "A Pre-Partitioned City? Anti-Colonial and Communal *Mohallas* in Inter-War Delhi", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1554472.

utilised this emergent geography in 1947 when Delhi, along with other cities, witnessed concentrated episodes of violence against minorities that transformed spatial residence patterns and local social relations.[12]

Demographic explosion, violence, displacement, and quick-fix refugee colonies exposed the urban chaos that the Delhi Improvement Trust (DIT) had failed to control. As a site of a postcolonial nationalist imaginary, Delhi also motivated the formation of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to replace the DIT with a technocratic planning regime to ensure Delhi's controlled urban growth. The Master Plan (1962), and its Community Development Program, conceived in assistance with the Ford Foundation, elevated the neighbourhood as a critical site of urban transformation to craft a new modern urban citizenry disconnected from its village roots and cleavages of caste, class, and religion.[13] Such neighbourhoods were the focus of urban municipal interventions guided by the master plan. They were also sites of significant political transformation in the 1960s that witnessed the arrival of municipal politics and a nominal but important Delhi Metropolitan Council. Delhi of the 1960s and 70s was a sleepy bureaucratic city, slowly expanding as the DDA swallowed up Delhi's rural lands. Migration was steady, and economic life was characterised by small-scale

---

[12] Rotem Geva, *Delhi Reborn: Partition and Nation Building in India's Capital* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022).
For a broad overview of the effects of Partition violence on major urban centres, see Gyanesh Kudaisya and Tan Tai Yong, "'Capitol landscapes': The imprint of partition on South Asian capital cities", in *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (Taylor and Francis e-Library: Routledge, 2005).
For Calcutta, see Joya Chatterji, "Of graveyards and ghettos, Muslims in West Bengal, 1947-67", in *Living Together Separately: Cultural India in History and Politics*, ed. Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).
See also Ian Talbot, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Aftermath of Partition for Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957", *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X05002337.
[13] Ravi Sundaram, *Pirate modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010). Matthew S. Hull, "Communities of Place, Not Kind: American Technologies of Neighborhood in Postcolonial Delhi", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 4 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417511000405.
The Master Plan was an ambitious attempt to represent a new national and urban future. Apart from the master plan, postcolonial India also saw different iterations of urban utopias, which, unlike efforts to transform pre-existing urban centres, played out on unknown sites and lands. These elsewheres of a new national time-space included state capitals, steel, and refugee model towns. For example, Chandigarh was established as a new capital for the Punjab province to reflect the new direction for well-planned postcolonial Indian cities. The Steel Towns embodied notions of ideal urban productive citizens. See Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
For a discussion on urban utopias outside India, see Alev Çınar, "The Imagined Community as Urban Reality: The Making of Ankara " in *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City*, ed. Alev Çınar and Thomas Bender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Markus Daechsel, "Misplaced Ekistics: Islamabad and the politics of urban development in Pakistan", *South Asian History and Culture* 4, no. 1 (2013), https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2012.750458.

but thriving markets, industrial zones like Okhla and NOIDA, and kinship-based networks of credit and circulation.

This lull of the 1970s was interrupted by the Indian Emergency (1975-77), which clamped down on civil and political liberties, displaced populations for urban renewal, and carried out forced sterilisations. Shahjahanabad's (Old Delhi) localities, like Turkman Gate, witnessed the onslaught of the Jagmohan-led Emergency-era 'beautification' schemes that targeted particularly 'backward' or 'unsightly' neighbourhoods to disrupt, reconfigure, and commence new neighbourhood socio-spatial relations.[14] This political upheaval was short-lived, however, as the 1980s witnessed the ascendance of non-Congress governments and the slow dilution of the Document Raj, leading to an explosion of commercial enterprises and markets. The 1982 Asian Games accompanied the construction of facilities like the Asian Games Village, markets, transport infrastructure (flyovers), and media infrastructures (Colour TVs, VCRs). Meanwhile, the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom, while transforming the geography of the city and its neighbourhoods, tested, disrupted, and reinforced notions of neighbourliness based on fictive kinship ties.[15]

By the 1990s, the city was in crisis marked by haphazard accommodations, weekly bazaars, a plethora of street vendors, speeding and murderous buses, and polluting industries. However, several developments would define the city as we see it today. The liberalisation reforms of 1991 signalled the explosion of private enterprise, a new master plan that drew mainly on the 1962 Master plan, the establishment of an independent Delhi government as a move towards decentralisation, and the rise of Public Interest Litigations (PILs) due to civic liberalism. Noxious industries were shifted outside residential enclaves, media frenzies produced a city of fear, middle-class settlements expanded, and slum settlements were

---

[14] Jagmohan Malhotra was an urban planner and politician responsible for numerous urban interventions in the city. Associated with the DDA since its early years, he oversaw the massive nationalization of Delhi's urban land, the violent Emergency era displacements, the production of Delhi's 'green belt', as well as the Hindutva turn in Delhi's urban heritage. See Sushmita Pati, "Jagmohan: The Master Planner and the 'Rebuilding' of Delhi", *Economic and Political Weekly* 49, no. 36 (2014). Emma Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi* (London: Hurst, 2003); Parveen, *Contested Homelands*.

[15] Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Yasmeen Arif, "Communitas and Recovered Life: Suffering and Recovery in the Sikh Carnage of 1984", in *Wording the World: Veena Das and Scenes of Inheritance*, ed. Roma Chatterji (Fordham University Press, 2015); Ayona Datta, ""Mongrel City": Cosmopolitan Neighbourliness in a Delhi Squatter Settlement", *Antipode* 44, no. 3 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00928.x.

demolished.[16] At the turn of the millennium, Delhi witnessed the aggressive promotion of a world class-city aesthetic, the proliferation of mediatised publics, and legislative manoeuvres like the Bhagidari scheme to increase citizen participation in governance. Since the 1990s, neighbourhoods have been the subject of regularisation schemes, demolitions, political mobilisations, Muslim urban marginalisation, and as sites nurturing contemporary India's consumer and 'post-nationalist' citizens.[17] Today, Delhi is a centre of a thriving service economy, small-scale manufacturing and trade, medical tourism, finance and IT companies in the NCR region, and a central cultural hub and political centre.

Delhi's century, from 1911 to 2011, has facilitated multiple and continuous migrations. This period includes white collar migrants transferring from Calcutta or arriving with the expansion of the colonial administration; American migrants during the Second World War; Partition refugees from former West Punjab, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and East Bengal; Tamil, and Malayali migrants for an expanding postcolonial administration; migrants to join Delhi's expanding service sector; the millions of Purvanchali, Tamil, Bengali, and other labour migrants that run the city; and refugee populations that have sought refuge since the 1960s like the Tibetans, Chins, Somalis, and Afghans. Delhi's massive urban growth is evident through an ever-increasing area of 1483 square kilometres and a population of over 16 million. Following the Partition, Delhi's population growth has been over 50% (1961-1991) and has witnessed a downward trend since 2001.

Table 0.1: Decadal growth of population in Delhi, c. 1901-2011. Source: Census of India 2011

Census Year	Persons	Variation
1901	405,819	
1911	413,851	+8,032 (+1.98%)
1921	488,452	+74,601 (+18.03)

---

[16] Sundaram, *Pirate Modernity*; Awadhendra Sharan, *In the City, Out of Place: Nuisance, Pollution, and Dwelling in Delhi, c. 1850-2000* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[17] Christiane Brosius, *India's Middle Class: New Forms of Urban Leisure, Consumption and Prosperity* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010); Sanjay Srivastava, *Entangled Urbanism: Slum, Gated Community, and Shopping Mall in Delhi and Gurgaon* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015); Ghazala Jamil, *Accumulation by Segregation: Muslim Localities in Delhi*, (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2017); D. Asher Ghertner, *Rule by Aesthetics: World-class City Making in Delhi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

1931	636,246	+1,47,794 (+44.27)
1941	917,939	+2,81,693 (+44.27)
1951	1,744,072	+8,26,133 (+90.0)
1961	26,58,612	+9,14,540 (+52.44)
1971	40,65,698	+14,07,086 (+52.93)
1981	62,20,406	+21,54,708 (+53.0)
1991	94,20,644	+32,00,238 (+51.45)
2001	1,38,50,507	+44,29,863 (+47.02)
2011	1,67,87,941	+29,37,434 (+21.21)

This study is situated within a rich and diverse field of studies on Delhi. It also takes the cue from recent examinations by Stephen Legg, Diya Mehra, and Rukmini Barua[18] in using the neighbourhood or the 'local' as an analytical category. At the same time, it diverges from them to explore the neighbourhood through its arrivals/presences and departures/absences.

Studies addressing Delhi's colonial, postcolonial and contemporary history have examined the post-Partition landscape of refugee rehabilitation,[19] Delhi's urban expansion and property regimes,[20] the Emergency's myriad processes and its afterlife,[21] monumental histories

---

[18] Legg, "A Pre-Partitioned City?"; Diya Mehra, "Jangpura Triptych: Striated Settlements, Neighbourhood Activism, and Delhi's Residential Modernity", *Economic and Political Weekly* 55, no. 51 (2020); Barua, *In the Shadow of the Mill*.

[19] Geva, *Delhi Reborn*; Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, "Genealogy of a Partition City: War, Migration and Urban Space in Delhi", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1557028.
Although Geva does examine Partition violence and displacement through the neighbourhood, the nature of the neighbourhood itself is not the focus.

[20] Sushmita Pati, *Properties of Rent: Community, Capital and Politics in Globalising Delhi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[21] Tarlo, *Unsettling memories*.

and heritage,[22] Muslim urban marginalisation,[23] and Delhi's urban exclusions.[24] While they provide critical insights into Delhi's urban transformations, the neighbourhood is not an object of study. Here, Nazima Parveen's rich and long-term history of the discursive production of 'Muslim space' highlights important linkages between conceptions of community and local space. Through this, she documents a rich terrain of negotiations, conflicts, and contestations around 'Homeland' in Muslim neighbourhoods. However, as she states, the abstract political idea of 'Muslim space' rather than the neighbourhood is the focus of attention.[25]

Moreover, few examine the contested role of memory in production of the city, its histories, and populations. Although utilising oral histories, Parveen's emphasis is on producing a more informed narrative rather than investigate the role of memory in shaping relations of community and space. Similarly, Akanksha Kumar's study of the Dalit Sikhs in Jhilmil colony, Delhi presents a narrative of their negotiations with exclusionary rehabilitation regimes, but does not investigate the oral histories themselves.[26] However, Ravinder Kaur's crucial investigation unpacks a 'community of narrative' in Delhi to show how an upper-caste and upper-class narrative presents an absence of 'untouchable' refugee experience.[27] Similarly, Mrinalini Rajagopalan deftly examines how the production of a material archive of the city through its monuments has always been fraught with popular imaginations and memories of Delhi's ruins. Finally, Anand Vivek Taneja reminded us how institutionalised forgetting marginalised Muslim urban memory and broke connections with Delhi's sacred geographies.[28]

---

[22] Mrinalini Rajagopalan, *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016); Anand Vivek Taneja, *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and Ecological Thought in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018); Deborah Sutton, "Masjids, monuments and refugees in the Partition city of Delhi, 1947–1959", *Urban History* (2022), https://doi.org/10.1017/s0963926821001036; Deborah Sutton, "Inhabited Pasts: Monuments, Authority, and People in Delhi, 1912–1970s", *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 4 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911818000906.

[23] Parveen, *Contested Homelands*.

[24] Gautam Bhan, *In the Public's Interest: Evictions, Citizenship, and Inequality in Contemporary Delhi* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016); Amita Baviskar, *Uncivil City: Ecology, Equity and the Commons in Delhi* (New Delhi: SAGE Yoda Press, 2020).

[25] Parveen, *Contested Homelands*.

[26] *Ibids*; Akanksha Kumar, "Making of the 'New City': The Overlapping Structures of Caste and Class in Post-Partition Delhi", in *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*, ed. Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021). Not to say that these accounts are problematic as their research questions do not focus on the very nature of the oral histories collected.

[27] Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives Among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 157-80.

[28] Rajagopalan, *Building Histories*; Taneja, *Jinnealogy*.

Emma Tarlo's fascinating examination of Emergency through neighbourhood memories is a relative outlier. The narratives show how the residents of Welcome resettlement colony forge belonging through a history of displacement and complex personal trajectories. "These were people who lived and worked in varied locations all over Delhi prior to experiencing demolition, and just as many of them built new shelters in Welcome using the bricks and corrugated iron from their demolished homes, so they construct their narratives out of their complex personal trajectories".[29] Thus, we are faced with an official memory of the Emergency that presents Welcome as a 'relocation' colony rather than a 'displacement and resettlement' colony. Welcome's narratives, while recognizing the excesses of forced sterilization, situate the 'forced deal' through their negotiated access to civic amenities.[30] This exposes the varied, contested, scattered, and fragmented nature of urban memory that produces neighbourhood identities. Neighbourhood memories can also exclude migrant groups, demonise populations, or selectively remember minority pasts to advocate notions of convivial space.[31]

1.2. Introducing Jangpura-Bhogal

Jangpura-Bhogal is the quintessential migrant neighbourhood area in south-east Delhi, India. A highly diverse settlement in terms of class, caste, and religion, most residents are Sikhs and Hindus, who live alongside smaller numbers of Christians, Buddhists, Ravidasias, Jains, Kashmiri, and Afghan Muslims. It is primarily a middle-class area with dispersed slum populations, comprising the contiguous localities of Bhogal, Jangpura-A, Jangpura Extension, and Pant Nagar, and Jangpura-B, with a main urban street, Mathura Road, bifurcating the settlement. The Barapullah Nala (Barapullah drain) separates it from the Muslim-majority neighbourhoods of Nizamuddin Basti and Nizamuddin West (See Figure 0.1). Forming a part of the South Delhi administrative and South-East Revenue Division, Jangpura-Bhogal is included in the Delhi Legislative Assembly constituencies of Jangpura and Kasturba Nagar, the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency, and Daryaganj, Kasturba Nagar, and Lajpat Nagar, and

---

[29] Tarlo, *Unsettling memories*, 15.
[30] Tarlo, *Unsettling memories*.
[31] Amy Mills, *Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Anna Wylegała, "The absent 'Others': A comparative study of memories of displacement in Poland and Ukraine", *Memory Studies* 8, no. 4 (2015), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698015575175; Talja Blokland, "Celebrating Local Histories and Defining Neighbourhood Communities: Place-making in a Gentrified Neighbourhood", *Urban Studies* 46, no. 8 (2009), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009105499.

Siddharth Nagar South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) Wards.[32] I use the hyphenated term 'Jangpura-Bhogal' to distinguish the specific locality of my research from the much larger spatial expanse of the electoral constituencies, which exist as political-administrative categories more than as 'lived neighbourhoods'.

The neighbourhood's origins lay in the displacement and relocation of villages to the new planned 'model' village of Jangpura following the transfer of the British imperial capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911. This included populations from a diverse mix of lower and upper caste populations (the majority were 'Harijan'), Muslims, Christians, and Jains, settled along caste and community lines in a distinct grid pattern. Following this originary act of relocation that founded the locality, the next big displacement event witnessed in Jangpura-Bhogal was in 1947 following the partition and Indian independence, when many Muslim inhabitants left for Muslim majority areas like nearby Nizamuddin or else to Pakistan. This was, once again, a moment of considerable urban transformation (there was a 90% increase in Delhi's population between 1941 and 1951), as with the departure of Muslims and the influx of Hindu and Sikh refugees into the city, the area around Jangpura was acquired to construct Jangpura-A, Jangpura-B, Jangpura Extension, and Pant Nagar. Allotments of over 1200 properties to Hindu and Sikh partition refugees in the area, as in other parts of the city, were based on region, caste, and class, with refugees coming in from West Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, and Sindh, including the regions of Balochistan, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Kashmir, Multan, and Lahore, among others.

Jangpura-Bhogal underwent another significant demographic and spatial transformation in the 1980s. As the Kashmir insurgency raged in northern India in the late 1980s, Kashmiri Muslims, who had a long presence in the neighbourhood as itinerant salespeople engaged in the Kashmiri shawl trade during the winter months, began settling down in the neighbourhood, not as itinerants but as residents. Around the same time, the neighbourhood witnessed the arrival of Afghan refugees in the aftermath of the Soviet-Afghan War of 1979, with their numbers drastically increasing following the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. While the refugee influx has slowed down, Afghan students and

---

[32] See *Delhi Statistical Handbook 2021,* Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (2022). For details of Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly Constituencies, see 'Map', Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi, https://ceodelhi.gov.in/MapPage.aspx, accessed 29 January 2023.
For details of SDMC wards, see 'Delimitation 2022 – Final', State Election Commission, National Capital Territory of Delhi, https://sec.delhi.gov.in/sec/delimitation-2022-final.

medical tourists have joined these populations in recent years. Finally, the area also has dispersed Tamil (present since the 1980s) and Bengali-speaking slum populations living in Jangpura-B and Pant Nagar. These continuous arrivals mean that between 1961 and 2016, Jangpura-Bhogal's population rose from 24,645 to 32,553. One of the lower-density areas in the city, it comprises almost half of Defence Colony Tehsil's (which encompasses Jangpura-Bhogal) population of 68,840.[33]

A Walk through Jangpura-Bhogal

For residents, visitors, and an urban researcher like me, Jangpura-Bhogal's streets and sites are also spaces of encounter with its layered histories and different arrival populations. We can enter the area through two main roads in Delhi. Mathura Road, one the eastern side, is the first entrance after crossing a bridge over the Barapullah Nala and turning right on Hospital Road. The second entry lies further south at the turn of Central Road, the bustling market street. The eastern entrance allows the visitor to enter Bhogal (established as Jangpura village). On the western side, we enter Jangpura-Bhogal by heading south on Lala Lajpat Rai Road just after the Jangpura foot-over bridge on the left. The road abutting it (Link Road), provides another entry to Jangpura-Bhogal from underneath the flyover, taking the visitor through the fringes of the settlement towards the east as they eventually reach Hotel Kabli at the end of Masjid Road.

These different entry points into the localities of Jangpura-Bhogal signify different periods of the city's history. Going from east to west, the visitor travels from the past to the present. From west to east, they travel from the present to the past. While the Bhogal side has a historical road and structures signifying the pre-Independence past, the Jangpura side shows independent India's architecture and development of the city.

---

[33] Baldev Raj and Kuldip Chander Sehgal, *District Census Handbook*, Census of India 1961: Delhi, Delhi Administration (1964); Gandotra, S.R., *District Census Handbook Part C: Delhi*, Census of India 1971 (1978); *Part XII A & B: Village & Town Directory*
Village & Townwise Primary Census Abstract, (1992); V. K. Bhalla, *District Census Handbook*, Government of India (New Delhi: Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 1986); *Delhi Statistical Handbook 2021*.
Owing to the limitations of the archive, continuously changing ward, enumeration, and administrative boundaries, it is difficult to be certain about the exact figures. Only details for enumeration boundaries from 1961-1991 and 2011 are available.

Figure 0.1: Map of Jangpura-Bhogal with constituent neighbourhoods and sites discussed.
(Note: The map is not an accurate representation and is for illustrative purposes only)

Serving as one of the main arterial roads for Jangpura-Bhogal, Hospital Road is lined with many commercial and non-commercial structures that convey the material traces of different populations inhabiting the space. On an average day, it sees incessant traffic, accompanied by what has become part of Delhi's soundscape— the continuous beeping of vehicle horns. It also contains the entrances to the post-partition settlements of Jangpura A, Pant Nagar, and Jangpura Extension. On the left, we find the locally famous Rama Tent House, run by a Partition refugee family. Bustling throughout the day, employees of Rama tent house can be seen repairing tent material, arranging the iron pillars for the tents, loading up trucks that will carry these tents to various parts of the city, and providing patronage to the nearby tea and food stalls that cater to the labour employed there.

Further down the road on the right we find the colonial-era dispensary, now the SDMC Polyclinic, serving as one of the area's corona vaccination and testing centres. It is next to a row of Partition-era motor workshops and mechanics catering to the needs of the city's motorists. The road is also lined with a religious site (a variety of temples and a church) roughly every 100 metres. Finally, at the turning of Masjid Road, the end of Bhogal and the beginning of Jangpura Extension, we encounter a regular labour chowk (daily wage labour market) that has been active for 30 years, generally people by residents of the nearby Sarai Kale Khan settlement.

The other entrance to Bhogal lies on Central Road, the location of the historic market and an apt place to observe the space as palimpsest. Heading west down Central Road, shops owned by colonial-era Banias and Jains give way to Sikh and Afghan-run shops, the postcolonial and contemporary arrivals. These establishments include grocery stores, jewellers, travel agencies, pharmacists, and small restaurants. Summan Bazar bisects it, containing a smaller number of Bania and Jain establishments. Further along, Temple Road houses many post-1970s hardware stores selling timber, ceramic, electrical, and steel items. Central Road is the meeting point among the diverse caste and religious micro-localities of Bhogal, eventually blending into Jangpura Extension Double Storey, which houses Sikh and Hindu refugees from the former NWFP. Double Storey extends till the beginning of Jangpura Extension's bungalow zone, housing upper middle-class and affluent former refugee families, lawyers, and journalists: The 'posh' area usually associated with Jangpura in urban public imaginary.

This posh area houses Birbal Park that sees the continuous presence of Kashmiri shawl traders selling their wares to Punjabi women, Afghan kids playing football or badminton, and local middle-aged men or 'colony uncles' taking their evening strolls and discussing the nation's politics. Further along, the road opens into a relatively larger square with the Inox Eros One cinema complex, the successor to Eros Cinema established in 1955, and opposite the rows of shops allotted to Partition refugees.

These envelopes of time-space, thus, reveal a rich tapestry of migrations, settlements, social and material infrastructures, and neighbourhoods. They comprise multiple religious sites, commercial establishments, public spaces, and local histories. These envelopes are sites of my inquiry for their internal socio-spatial relations, and how they are simultaneously arenas for events that occur elsewhere. I narrate the story of the city through this neighbourhood.

2. The Neighbourhood

As an administrative or residential unit, the neighbourhood is a form of spatial organisation where residence is determined by caste, class, religion, or occupation. For governance, it appears as a unit and space of enumeration, electoral politics, or infrastructure. It is the focus of political rallies and mobilisations, population registers, urban interventions, and planning. The built environment determines interactions among residents, the state, and a larger urban space. By this definition, the neighbourhood is a bounded space, an urban unit. As a lived space, it is produced through acts grounded in material space that affect belonging, conflicts, and contestations. Here, its spatiality is related not so much to its boundedness, but to a spatiality produced through the daily lives and interactions on streets, lanes, and intersections. Thus, the lived neighbourhood is more than a container of urban forms, processes, and identities.

Anthony King argues that urban planners, governments, or scholars attempt to make the city visible through well-defined maps, plans, and studies. Such attempts to make space legible produce particular visions or imaginaries of the city. However, despite attempts to represent the city as a totality, the everyday urban experience is socially and spatially relegated to fragments: neighbourhoods, dwellings, particular institutions, or spaces. While, as King states, these fragments "form the basis of one kind of urban identity", 'the city' only exists in our minds.[34] Recently, Alkan and Maksudyan similarly reasoned that cities are 'fragmented and fractured spatial entities'.[35] We can illustrate this through Jim Masselos's examinations of colonial Bombay, where the urban spatial order attempted to regulate and define 'usage, function, and habitation'.[36] The intersection of urban form with social practice, through the daily lives and rhythms of Bombay's inhabitants, established a series of urban templates. We can call them fragments. Key to this urban experience was the locality, i.e., a street, lane, apartment building, or neighbourhood. Here, neighbourhoods were elemental to urban life, intersecting with power relations, kinship structures and institutions, religious practices, economic life, emergent social cohesions, and contestations. Thus, an intended spatial order

---

[34] Anthony D. King, "Boundaries, Networks, and Cities: Playing and Replaying Diasporas and Histories", in *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City*, ed. Alev Cinar and Thomas Bender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

[35] Hilal Alkan and Nazan Maksudyan, eds., *Urban Neighbourhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020), 3.

[36] Jim Masselos, "Appropriating Urban Space: Social constructs of Bombay in the time of the Raj", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1991).

interacted with socio-spatial practices grounded in material space.[37] This is where we can begin exploring neighbourhood production, not only through the structural and policy dynamics of urban governments or political groups but also through the quotidian and dramatic practices of residents. As a result, the neighbourhood becomes a crucial node for understanding the urban experience. With globalisation, as Neve and Donner argue, "The 'local' and 'locality' have themselves acquired radically new meanings and contents, often counteracting the homogenising tendencies of cultural globalisation".[38]

For historians, neighbourhoods have often been the sites but not the objects of study, appearing as containers of more significant urban, national, and global processes. This is not an inherent problem but emerges from methodological and archival challenges confronting neighbourhood histories (discussed later). However, a few notable studies in the past and present engage with the importance of the neighbourhood in the urban experience.

Jim Masselos defined the mohalla as a field of forces containing both explicitly local and external phenomena that impacted the production of social space. As he argued, "Insight into this world is most clearly obtained not through tracing such linkages as existed downwards but rather, despite all the practical difficulties of methodology and sources, through first of all concentrating upon the field in its own rights and then of following such contacts as there were, not upwards so much as outwards".[39] These observations emerging from his study of Muslim religious practices in colonial Bombay were enriched by Raj Chandavarkar's examinations of labour politics in the city. His study of Girangaon showed that village socialities brought to the city were recalibrated through interactions in neighbourhoods, factories, and urban politics through networks of power and domination. Thus, the neighbourhood was a key site of mobilisation and framing of labour identities marked by caste, community, and space, where contestations, rather than aberrations, were crucial to the making of neighbourhoods and their spaces.[40] Most recently, Rukmini Barua's historical ethnography situates the neighbourhood as

---

[37] These urban templates included the stark ideological and spatial manifestations of difference between British and Indian towns; the functional nature of economic spaces, attendant labour processes, and movements; and the socio-spatial divisions within the Indian town. Masselos, "Appropriating Urban Space", 39-40.

[38] Henrike Donner and Geert De Neve, "Space, place and globalisation: revisiting the urban neighbourhood in India", in *The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India* (Abingdon: UCL Press, 2006), 2.

[39] Masselos, "Power in the Bombay "Moholla", 1904–15: An initial exploration into the world of the Indian Urban Muslim", 94.

[40] Chandavarkar, *History, Culture And The Indian City*; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "The Perils of Proximity: Rivalries and conflicts in the making of a neighbourhood in Bombay City in the twentieth century", *Modern Asian Studies* 52, no. 2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x17000348.

a scale of social practice to unravel "a historically contingent and fluid hierarchical order of socio-spatial processes".[41]

Scholars of contemporary urbanism approach the neighbourhood or the 'local' as both an arena of operation and a distinct socio-spatial entity. In the past two decades, three innovative volumes have focused on the neighbourhood and the local. The first was a collection of studies edited by Geert De Neve and Henrike Donner on the politics of the local brought about by globalisation. Next, Hilal Alkan and Nazan Maksudyan examined the boundaries and narrations that neighbourhoods produce. Last, Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak and Amiya Kumar Das brought forth the idea of the neighbourhood as a socio-spatial constellation. These studies invariably highlight Doreen Massey's exhortations of place, showing that neighbourhoods are produced through ever-shifting amalgamations of multiple subjectivities, conflicts, power relations, and negotiations.[42] I draw from these diverse studies to define the contours of the neighbourhood as, to borrow from AbdouMaliq Simone, a processual formation:

> Far from neighbourhoods being necessarily 'settled' somewhere or fixed to specific territories of operation…instead of being sedimented as a particular spatial scale or modality of affective or social belonging, it is a processual infrastructure through which critical and discrepant forces and exigencies are 'worked out' in provisional settlements whose spatial parameters, distinctions from and connections to multiple elsewheres are continuously revised, even when the boundaries of demarcation and the internal characteristics of space and inhabitants would appear to remain the same.[43]

Jha et al. provide a useful framework to define the neighbourhood through its historical, spatial, and social characteristics.[44] While borrowing the framing, I formulate the neighbourhood through insights from historical, geographical, and anthropological

---

[41] Barua, *In the Shadow of the Mill*, 11.

[42] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Doreen Massey, "Places and Their Pasts", *History Workshop Journal* 39, no. 1 (1995), https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/39.1.182.

[43] AbdouMaliq Simone, "Afterword: 'Neighbours' as Neighbourhoods", in *Neighbourhoods in Urban India In Between Home and the City*, ed. Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021), 301.

[44] Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das, "Introducing Neighbourhood: Reading the Urban Backward and Forward", in *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*, ed. Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021).

examinations discussed above. In outlining these features, I do not suggest that these are distinct components—the historical, spatial, and social are in fact entangled. It is through the intersection of these features that we can understand the production of neighbourhoods as 'places'. The historical, spatial, and social come together at different points of time in Jangpura-Bhogal's history and thus, appear in the thesis through an examination of the four constituent elements of neighbourhoods: Arrivals, Infrastructures, Conflict, and Memory.

2.1. The historical: Neighborhoods are produced through their histories and memories

The processual nature of neighborhoods is evident through the 'envelopes of space-time'.[45] Histories and memories of urban planning, economic life, communal violence, and their intersections with caste, class, gender, and religion frame the social composition, identity and belonging in neighborhoods.[46] However, these histories of settlement neither freeze the identities of neighbourhoods nor undermine their ability to negotiate with larger structural forces. Jangpura-Bhogal has been produced through its history of migrations, departures, social infrastructures, communal violence, spatial conflicts, resident collectives, market relations and property regimes. Enmeshed within more extensive histories of Delhi, India, and the global order, the neighbourhood has been affected and transformed when these distinct histories coalesce during particular temporal moments.

The afterlives of these histories through memory are equally vital to the neighbourhood's production. Histories of socio-spatial interiorities and their enmeshment in multi-scalar processes (urban, national, and global) affect memories and their politics in localities. Lived histories are remembered, forgotten, imagined, and narrated.[47] These memories are inherently contested and moulded by circuits of power, politics, and pragmatism. This holds true even for neighbourhoods with recent pasts of settlements where relocated or displaced populations carry memories of the immediate locality and elsewheres to forge belonging.[48] In Jangpura-Bhogal, such memories are mobilized or forgotten to disavow

---

[45] Massey, "Places and Their Pasts", 188.
[46] Sengupta, "Community and Neighbourhood in a Colonial City"; Sadan Jha, "Paros and Parosan: Spatial Affectivity and Gendered Neighbourhood in South Asia", in *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In Between Home and the City*, ed. Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021).
[47] Donner and De Neve, "Space, place and globalisation", 10; Alkan and Maksudyan, *Urban Neighbourhood Formations*.
[48] Penny Vera-Sanso, "Conformity and contestation: social heterogeneity in south Indian settlements", in *The Meaining of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India*, ed. Geert De Neve and Henrike Donner (Abingdon: UCL Press, 2006); Tarlo, *Unsettling memories*.

Muslim claims to religious practice and historical space, to produce a Hindu space through memories of relocated villages, a Hindu religious space by reviving forgotten pasts, to claim a Buddhist space through historical claims of Dalit political assertion, and to produce a 'diverse space' through commemorations, recollections, and commentary. Thus, if we see the city as inherently fragmented and consisting of diverse histories, neighbourhoods as ever-shifting coalescences of space-time are "articulations within the wider power-geometries of space".[49]

2.2. The spatial: Neighborhoods are grounded in material space(s)

As sub-municipal residential units, neighbourhoods do have a certain boundedness. In very material terms, they have an inside and outside. The five colonies in Jangpura-Bhogal have clear boundaries marked by main roads, gates, and the Barapullah nala. However, this delimited spatiality of the neighbourhood must contend with the mutable nature of space. Jha et. al argue that "The idea of the neighbourhood not merely mediates and connects the interiority of homes with the anonymous city, but because of this unique spatial function, it is also endowed with its own spatial agency and subjectivity".[50] Spatial proximity and the inherent 'throwntogetherness'[51] of place necessitate interactions and negotiations in space. These can be balconies, streets, crossings, blocks, spatial markers, or adjacent neighbourhoods: the sites of everyday interactions, negotiations, and practices that forge neighbourhood social space. For example, Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay shows how streets perform a key social function as vital arenas for urban life through the myriad boundary crossings that occur on them.[52]

However, other spaces and acts embedded in them continuously interact with the neighbourhood space. Here, Masselos's formulation of 'accustomed space', i.e., the interactions of the 'city as a totality' with the 'city as social space' through accustomed activity and time—repetitive and daily urban rhythms across localities and city spaces—is useful. For example, the fragments for a mill worker included the residence and its immediate surroundings, the workspace, and the route to it, as well as other spaces and routes of leisure, religion, or sociality. While the centre of accustomed space was the neighbourhood and its

---

[49] Doreen Massey, *For space* (London SAGE, 2005), 130.
[50] Jha, Pathak, and Das, "Introducing Neighbourhood", 3.
[51] Massey, *For Space.*
[52] "Even with the "specialization" of urban space, streets continue to function are facilitators of contact, mobility, surveillance, conflict. It plays a vital role in determining urban form and social life as it is often a shared intermediate space between buildings, dwellings, parks, and other 'public' and private sites" Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, *Streets in Motion: The Making of Infrastructure, Property, and Political Culture in Twentieth-century Calcutta* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 9.

immediate spatial environment, this formulation extends the spatial parameters of urban experience.[53] This familiar template was accompanied by an unfamiliar terrain of spaces that acted upon it. This dialectic of the familiar and unfamiliar thus helps examine social cohesions, conflicts, and the production of conceptual or physical boundaries in neighbourhood space.

In Jangpura-Bhogal, the spatial boundaries and spatial proximity influence a variety of connections, including patronage of the Pant Nagar temple by the residents of Pant Nagar and Jangpura A; the formation of inner-locality and pan-locality resident or market collectives; the formation of Punjabi or Hindi supporters of Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar, their attendant contestations, and the production of Sikh space; and laments of an unwelcome urban social transformation. These are formed through the materiality of infrastructure, the boundedness of neighbourhoods, 'events', everyday practices, and through the decay, renewal, and reconfiguration of social relations.[54] This production of the neighbourhood is the focus of the following section.

2.3. The social: Neighborhoods are produced through practices

Neighbourhoods are social formations produced through historical and spatial relations and practices. As scholars have argued, the social does not necessarily entail conviviality based on primordial notions of the 'village community'. Instead, the local is inherently political, produced through the intersection of dynamic social activities and relations.[55] The constitutive practices that produce the neighbourhood's social space involve a variety of acts and actors: surveillance, gossip, boundary work, and concerted political and economic events initiated by individuals, collectives, institutions, and structures. These practices and relations operate in and across space, i.e., they are influenced by specifically local dynamics and processes underway at different scales.

As Massey demonstrates, the 'throwntogetherness' of places, i.e., the interaction and meeting of diverse groups, identities, histories, and politics, involves negotiation with broader networks, circuits, spaces, and politics. Through myriad practices, the neighbourhood is produced through historically shifting configurations of power, gender, identity, and acts

---

[53] "Accustomed space, then, subsumed the physical layout of the city and depended upon the perception of those who moved about in the city. It was a perception that broke down ethnicity/territory templates of possession, colonization, and exclusion but conversely it also at times co-existed alongside such templates" Its production was influenced by gender, class, caste, religion, and power in space. Masselos, "Appropriating Urban Space", 42.

[54] Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 120.

[55] Donner and De Neve, "Space, place and globalisation"; Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*.

grounded in material space. Addressing neighbourhood intimacies in a slum settlement, Ayona Datta argues that the constant inter-mixing despite caste, class, religious, or regional differences in slums, leads to the discursive production of the 'mongrel city'. This does not mean a complete breakdown of social hierarchies but their recalibration in the everyday spaces of the slum.[56]

Jangpura-Bhogal's history and contemporary life are marked by varied practices and assertions. These include political and religious processions around Bakr Eid and the Punjabi Suba movement, and their accompanying violent Hindu-Muslim and Hindu-Sikh skirmishes; sedimented practices of appropriating land through occupation and replacements for Dalit or Hindu religious spaces; the production of sanitised and ordered neighbourhoods by invoking appropriate land use, the judiciary, spatial demography and historical settlements; and drawing upon socio-spatial histories of everyday life to define neighbourhood diversity. Entangled with the history in and of space, these relations and practices produce conviviality, contestations, and displacements. The historical and the spatial combine at different moments to affect the social and are influenced by it. This triadic relationship engenders a crucial process of neighbourhood formation and city-making: displacement.

3. Displacements and Accretive Erasure

3.1. Displacement and City-making

Jha et al. acknowledge that conflicts and exclusions are endemic to neighbourhoods. However, the focus on modalities of present/arrival populations limits the understanding of how departures/absences contribute to the making of the neighbourhoods. Not only do residents, states, or regimes other individuals and groups: the act(s) of displacement produce the neighbourhood, its histories, and populations. The thesis examines the constitutive role of displacements in city-making and the accretive erasures that have produced Delhi. In other words, the thesis draws attention not only to dramatic and episodic instances, but also to the gradual processes of displacement. Used both in its literal and figurative sense, displacement includes a variety of departures, exclusions, dispossessions, otherings, and erasures. These include, for example, the immediate or protracted effects of differentiated citizenship regimes, urban policies, and property markets; events like communal violence or slum evictions; or everyday practices like memory work, gossip, and drawing social boundaries. While these

---

[56] Ayona Datta, ""Mongrel City": Cosmopolitan Neighbourliness in a Delhi Squatter Settlement", *Antipode* 44, no. 3 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00928.x.

modes of displacement (material and symbolic) often coincide, they also operate separately. As we will see, Delhi, like other cities, is borne out of material and symbolic displacements.

Fine-grained empirical accounts of place-making, migration, and displacement in urban space while drawing implicit connections between displacement and city-making primarily focus on deliberate event-driven procedures through the lens of urban planning and politics, gentrification, or refugee settlement. Scholars have richly documented the exclusionary visions of urban space that play out through technocratic planning processes, capital accumulation, state disinvestment from civic amenities, and bureaucratic feats to turn inhabitations of urban poor into 'slums'.[57] Gentrification,[58] urban restructuring for 'redevelopment',[59] or 'world-class' city ideals[60] produce divided cities through evictions, relocations and demolitions, causing physical, cultural, and political displacement.[61] In this literature, the urban poor or middle-class residents are displaced if their habitations are situated within planned beautification programs of urban and national events; the opening of lands and neighbourhoods to productive economic zones:[62] or if they lie within the ambit of Master Plans.[63] They also show how these populations mobilise local collectives, political representatives,[64] forge

---

[57] Lisa Björkman, "Becoming a Slum: From Municipal Colony to Illegal Settlement in Liberalization Era Mumbai", in *Contesting the Indian City: Global Visions and the Politics of the Local*, ed. Gavin Shatkin (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2014); Liza Weinstein, "State Interventions and Fragmented Sovereignties", in *The Durable Slum: Dharavi and the Right to Stay Put in Globalizing Mumbai* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

[58] Rowland Atkinson, "Losing One's Place: Narratives of Neighbourhood Change, Market Injustice and Symbolic Displacement", *Housing, Theory and Society* 32, no. 4 (2015), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2015.1053980; Derek Hyra, "The back-to-the-city movement: Neighbourhood redevelopment and processes of political and cultural displacement", *Urban Studies* 52, no. 10 (2015), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098014539403.

[59] Carol Upadhya and Deeksha M Rao, "Dispossession without displacement: Producing property through slum redevelopment in Bengaluru, India", *Economy and Space* (2022), https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518x221073988.

[60] Fang Xu, ""Pudong Is Not My Shanghai": Displacement, Place-Identity, and Right to the "City" in Urban China"", *City and Community* 19, no. 2 (2020), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12491; Ghertner, *Rule by Aesthetics*.

[61] Hyra, "back-to-the-city"; Atkinson, "Losing One's Place".

[62] In the case of Bangalore, this plays out through the redefinition and denial of tenurial rights. Upadhya and Rao, "Dispossession without displacement".

[63] Gautam Bhan, "Planned Illegalities: The Production of Housing in Delhi, 1947-2010 " in *In the Public's Interest: Evictions, Citizenship, and Inequality in Contemporary Delhi* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016).

[64] In Mumbai as compared to Shanghai, urban renewal and its attendant displacements have also been conditioned by the desires and benefits accrued from protecting constituencies and vote banks. See Liza Weinstein and Xuefei Ren, "The Changing Right to the City: Urban Renewal and Housing Rights in Globalizing Shanghai and Mumbai", *City & Community* 8, no. 4 (2009), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01300.x.

alternative practices and imaginaries,[65] and procure 'legal' documents to resist such attempts at displacement: i.e., to borrow from Chatterjee's formulation, the combined practices of civil and political society.[66]

Beyond exclusionary urban regimes, displacement is also seen through the lens of migrant and refugee lives, highlighting its essential aspects. First, displacements are a protracted process sedimenting over decades, if not years. We can take the case of Dalit refugees who are first excluded from normative definitions of the 'citizen-refugee' and then displaced to urban outskirts or relegated to Dalit neighbourhoods. In Calcutta, Aditi Mukherjee argues that erasure is inherent to resettlement plans that engender protracted displacements. The postcolonial state's discursive and opaque resettlement practices have 'de-refugeeised' Namasudra refugees who are mixed with Bangladeshi migrants, and side-lined through criminalization, pauperization, and segregation. Romola Sanyal draws our attention to the spaces of displacement that simultaneously relegate refugees to othered urban spaces and are sites of new and dynamic urban citizenship claims. Second, 'settling down' following displacement requires different place-making strategies that never really 'break' the connection with former places or regions of displacement. Ravinder Kaur's analysis of refugee settlement shows how displacement initiates new sets of processes, strategies, and practices to forge a home in Delhi: successful rehabilitation through the production of economic life and property establishes claims to locality. However, the narrative of displacement and its elements remain a part of everyday forms of the past.[67] In Melbourne, Annika Lems tracks the entangled nature of emplacement and displacement to show the persistence of places that shape migrant and refugee lives in the face of violent disruptions or displacements.[68]

While providing critical insights into the myriad forms of displacement and responses that produce neighbourhoods and cities, the focus remains on 'arrival populations' or displaced

---

[65] Xu, "Pudong Is Not My Shanghai".

[66] Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics In Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[67] Aditi Mukherjee, "Re-thinking protracted displacements: insights from a *namasudra* refugee camp-site in suburban Calcutta", *Contemporary South Asia* 28, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2019.1666089; Romola Sanyal, "Urbanizing Refuge: Interrogating Spaces of Displacement: Urbanizing refugee spaces", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 2 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12020; Kaur, *Since 1947*.

[68] Kristen Sarah Biehl, "A dwelling lens: migration, diversity and boundary-making in an Istanbul neighbourhood", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43, no. 12 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1668035; Annika Lems, "Placing Displacement: Place-making in a World of Movement", *Ethnos* 81, no. 2 (2014), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2014.931328.

yet present populations. But what of absent populations or histories that are no longer present? How is this displacement remembered or forgotten? For example, the urban redevelopment of Detroit to produce Central Station and Roosevelt Park erased the histories of replaced populations and settlements. Archaeological evidence then provides traces of a now absent and lost neighbourhood.[69] In Zhovka and Krzyz, Istanbul, and Jerusalem, we see memories of absent and displaced populations play out within nationalist imaginations and local history. Germans, Ukrainians, Poles, Turkey's minorities, and Palestinians are remembered and forgotten in diverse ways by their neighbours, fellow minorities, and populations that replaced them. Thus, in former Soviet Zhovka's larger public imaginary, the Polish 'voluntary' departure is irrelevant to recount since they were always a minority among Ukrainians. By contrast, German displacement from Krzyz after the Second World War is remembered as comparatively less tragic than the greater suffering of Poles.[70]

Unlike absent minorities in Zhovka and Krzyz, Turkey's minorities and Palestinians are still present in Istanbul and Jerusalem. The Islamisation of Turkish national identity and its homogenising effects on the Kuzguncuk neighbourhood initiate the preservation of minority structures and assertive claims of a past diverse *mahalle* (neighbourhood) life.[71] State-facilitated enlargement of Jewish quarters in Jerusalem city was possible through the eviction and erasure of Palestinian neighbourhoods. This spatial displacement has accompanied what Becker calls 'temporal marginalisation', wherein these once-present Palestinian neighbourhoods are vanishing from Palestinian collective memory due to their long-term absence and erasure as past Palestinian neighbourhoods.[72] Thus, a presence-absence dynamic at the intersection of national and local histories produces diverse urban memories and imaginaries.

Drawing on the rich studies discussed, I track the immediate disruptive and protracted displacements in Jangpura-Bhogal's history by examining both arrivals/presence and

---

[69] Krysta Ryzewski, "No home for the "ordinary gamut": A historical archaeology of community displacement and the creation of Detroit, City Beautiful", *Journal of Social Archaeology* 15, no. 3 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605315601907.

[70] Wylegała, "The absent 'Others'".

[71] This is also linked to the commodification of Kuzguncuk as a historically diverse neighbourhood. Mills, *Streets of Memory*.

[72] Becker situates this process within the Israeli state's spatial politics and intra-Palestinian power dynamics between migrants and established families. Johannes Becker, "Past neighbourhoods: Palestinians and Jerusalem's 'enlarged Jewish Quarter'", in *Urban Neighbourhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies*, ed. Hilal Alkan and Nazan Maksudyan (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020).

departures/absence. Neighbourhoods and cities are neither only exclusionary nor do they simply forget populations and space, but these exclusions and erasures are crucial to the production of the neighbourhood and the city. In other words, I argue that the processes and strategies related to present and arrival populations are accompanied by past material displacements, dispossessions, and present everyday narrative, symbolic exclusions, and erasures that produce the neighbourhood and the city's histories and populations.

3.2. Muslim Urban Marginalization and 'Accretive Erasure'

While cities are not the only arenas for practices and contestations of citizenship, their densities, complexities, spatial legibility, diverse populations and modes of life and violence make them "the strategic arena for the development of citizenship".[73] The study highlights the often 'benign', accretive, and at times unintended Muslim displacements that have produced the neighbourhood and the city. Scholars address Muslim urban marginalisation through the study of ghettoization linked to the Partition; the post-1980s rise of Hindu nationalism; neoliberal economic transformation; the long-term practices and processes of marginalisation linked to 'Muslim space'; and the postcolonial state's deliberate amnesia around Muslim urban histories and memories.[74] These studies have shown how the events and processes related to the Partition sparked off major socio-spatial reconfigurations of city spaces through violence, evictions, and appropriation. Muslim neighbourhoods, properties, and religious spaces were vandalised and occupied by non-Muslim locals and refugees entering the cities. This process of 'territorialisation' played out through the concerted occupation of Muslim households and forced evictions by non-Muslim mobs, driving Muslims towards ghettoes or 'Muslim zones'.[75]

Cities like Ahmedabad, which had avoided riots in 1947, became polarised cities in the 1960s through the entrenchment of anti-Muslim sentiment playing out in different forms. A

---

[73] James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, "Cities and Citizenship", *Public Culture* 8 (1996).

[74] Chatterji, "Of graveyards and ghettos"; Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Geva, *Delhi Reborn*; Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Bandyopadhyay, *Streets in Motion*; Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi, *Pogrom in Gujarat: Hindu Nationalism and Anti-Muslim Violence in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Laurent Gayer and Christophe Jaffrelot, eds., *Muslims of Indian Cities: Trajectories of Marginalisation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Nida Kirmani, *Questioning the Muslim Woman: Identity and Insecurity in an Urban Indian Locality*, Religion and Citizenship, (New Delhi Routledge, 2013); Jamil, *Accumulation by Segregation*; Ipsita Chatterjee, "Social Conflict and the Neoliberal City: A Case of Hindu-Muslim Violence in India", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34, no. 2 (2009), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2009.00341.x; Taneja, *Jinnealogy*.

[75] Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Bandyopadhyay, *Streets in Motion*, 119-57.

key factor was symbols, idioms, and logics around the homogenous 'Muslim's' socio-cultural incompatibility with Hindus. Meat politics in Ahmedabad and Delhi demonised meat consumption, its effects on the mind and the body, and associated spaces or establishments as antithetical to ideal urban practice. As Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi and Parveen illustrate, this discourse materialised through the marking of socio-spatial boundaries, riots, and restrictive norms. While Ahmedabad saw the persistence of vegetarian practices, Delhi witnessed the elevation of Chicken, Mutton and Fish compared to Buffalo meat.[76] Once these segregated Muslim spaces emerged as 'mini-Pakistans' in urban public imaginaries, the 1980s witnessed the aggressive ascendance of Hindutva politics that began making its mark on cities across the Indian mainland.

Several practices and events accompanied the transition. First, riots around varied issues reinforced concrete notions of 'Muslim' and 'Hindu' identities, echoing early moments of tense Hindu-Muslim relations in the twentieth century.[77] Second, through an emerging housing apartheid and fear of violence, Muslims began moving to Muslim-majority spaces, and neighbourhoods were renamed to reflect the dominant religious demography. Third, political mobilisations, objects, monuments, and temples at specific sites, usually in prominent public spaces and in proximity to Muslim neighbourhoods, were normalised. For example, the Shiv Sena installed Shivaji's statues across Bombay, while in Ahmedabad, temples began mushrooming all over urban space.[78] Within this context, 2002 was a decisive moment that witnessed the mobilisation of such idioms and symbols in a concentrated and organised pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat. Ghassem-Fachandi's path-breaking study shows that the combined forces of the media, official ignorance, apathy, spatial markers, and the activation of entrenched aggressive vegetarianism worked towards the indiscriminate and large-scale Muslim massacre.[79]

---

[76] Ghassem-Fachandi, *Pogrom in Gujarat*; Parveen, *Contested Homelands*.

[77] A major example is the riots that followed the Babri Masjid demolition of 1992. In the cities and towns affected, residence patterns changed, and Muslims were pushed to 'ghettos' that became urban elsewheres. Some of the places affected were Delhi, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Dhubri, and Bombay. Gayer and Jaffrelot, *Muslims of Indian Cities*; Joyashree Sharma, "Living Like Friends and Neighbours: Everyday Narratives of the Neighbourhood", in *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In Between Home and the City*, ed. Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021).

[78] Qudsiya Contractor, "'Unwanted in my City': The Making of a 'Muslim slum' in Mumbai", in *Muslims of Indian Cities: Trajectories of Marginalisation*, ed. Laurent Gayer and Christophe Jaffrelot (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Ghassem-Fachandi, *Pogrom in Gujarat*.

[79] Ghassem-Fachandi, *Pogrom in Gujarat*.

In the aftermath of violence, anti-minority rhetoric and increasing spatial segregation, visible spatial and symbolic markers signifying Muslim neighbourhoods as spaces of suspicion and safety are visible. These can be rivers, police check posts, abject infrastructures, and everyday public speech that frame Muslim neighbourhoods as 'dangerous ghettos' and hostile spaces for outsiders. For Muslims themselves, the neighbourhoods have emerged as sites where they can be visibly 'Muslim' and escape the demonising gaze of the larger urban public imaginary. Chatterjee and Kirmani have noted another aspect to the proliferation of 'Muslim' localities as spaces of safety—memory. Histories of urban communal violence, not only against Muslims but also against other minorities (for example, the Delhi 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom), impact Muslim decisions to stay within the confines of these neighbourhoods.[80] In late 2019, these sites emerged as spaces of protest against the recent CAA and NRC, bringing in cross-religious solidarities from civil society groups and citizens, interrupted by the outbreak of the COVID pandemic.

These studies also allude to the importance of how post-1980s processes activate and mobilise histories and memories of Muslim presence, acts, and spaces to 'other' Muslims through dramatic moments of riots or everyday urban practice. Most recently, Parveen's exhaustive study on Delhi has drawn our attention to the long-term accretive processes that enable and provide social sanction to contemporary moments of Muslim marginalisation. As she highlights, 'Muslim' space as a discursively produced and contested category has undergone multiple shifts and configurations throughout the twentieth century.[81] Questioning studies that elevate post-1980s processes associated with Hindutva politics and attendant Muslim ghettoization, the examination urges us to rethink the long-term production of 'Muslim space' through administrative labelling, communal violence, political mobilisation, and urban planning.

Drawing from Ravi Sundaram, Taneja argues that "the erasure of this Muslim city of memory, is the very condition for the possibility of contemporary Delhi".[82] The complicated nature of this exercise is evident through Hindutva's attempts at erasing Muslim presence in Delhi, which dates to the twelfth century and manifests in the rich material landscape of the city. The elevation of the myth of Indraprastha and links to the Mahabharata, the preservation of Lal Kot (the Chauhan Rajput citadel before Mahmud Ghori's conquest of Delhi), and the

---

[80] Kirmani, *Questioning the Muslim Woman*; Anasua Chatterjee, "Narratives of Exclusion: Space, Insecurity and Identity in a Muslim Neighbourhood", *Economic and Political Weekly* 50, no. 52 (2015).
[81] Parveen, *Contested Homelands*.
[82] Taneja, *Jinnealogy*.

construction of a museum in honour of Prithviraj Chauhan are attempts to elevate the city's Hindu past, and hopefully eclipse its Muslim imprint.[83] Through these diverse processes, we see a concerted project to craft, relegate, or erase Muslim pasts and presents.

While drawing attention to longer and more subtle everyday histories of marginalisation, the focus of these studies remains on planned political, social and economic projects, Muslim majority neighbourhoods, and known historical spaces and monuments associated with Muslim presence in the city (e.g., mosques and monuments built by various Muslim elites and rulers in Delhi). Processes outside these neighbourhoods are addressed, yet those discussions are mainly cursory to the main task of discussing Muslim marginalisation. While acknowledging the role of such ideological events and procedures, I shift the focus to the understudied, hidden, accretive, and benign processes of othering that take place outside Muslim neighbourhoods and 'big' historical monuments. As we will see, minoritisation is a multiplex process mediated by different socio-spatial configurations that crystallise during specific moments to produce 'majority' and 'minority'. Caught up in the normal rhythms of the urban everyday, these processes of ongoing, unapparent, 'below the radar'—at times invisible—displacements, more than sudden eruptions of violence or overt ideological projects aimed at deliberate Muslim erasure have reconstituted the urban fabric of Jangpura-Bhogal. This accretive erasure of Muslim pasts and presents plays out over years and decades, with material displacements of the past providing the foundation for symbolic erasures currently underway. Aside from the more sudden interruptions and dislocations engendered by communal violence, I will show the decadal, sedimented, and sometimes unintended processes that lead to the displacement of Muslim memories, histories, and spaces.

4. Interrogating Bhaichara

Through an examination of displacements and Muslim urban marginalisation, the thesis also interrogates the limits of *bhaichara* or diversity. The methodology and documented instances of historical social relations between Hindus and Jangpura-Bhogal's other minorities, highlight differentiated belonging in urban space, mediated by shifting power relations, property, notions of 'community', religious practices, and market relations. However, this examination of Muslim urban marginalisation must be contextualised within the shifting contours of Indian citizenship, secularism, and diversity.

---

[83] Rajagopalan, *Building Histories*.

Scholars have addressed the inherent tensions between the principles of jus soli and jus sanguinis; the four co-existing conceptions of citizenship; the 'Muslim question'; the production of national diversity; redefinitions, and longer histories of the 'citizen'. These studies highlight the echoes of colonial continuities or a discursive mirroring of essentialised identities. Decolonisation, Partition, and popular sovereignty mediated contested notions of the postcolonial citizen. Colonial enumeration processes defining religion and difference as a primordial Indian identity[84] were reworked to define the constitutive elements of secular India. A nationalist legacy of utilising Hindu symbols for mobilisation produced a secularism inflected with majoritarianism. The production of Hindus as the assumed and essential Indian 'majority' created 'minorities' out of Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, and Anglo-Indians. These categories obfuscated intra-religious cleavages of caste, class, gender, and sectarian identities to present homogenous artefacts of Nehruvian India's diversity.[85] As the 'manager' of diversity, the postcolonial state utilised various modes and forms to produce its 'religious diversity' while undermining the contentious inter-community pasts. In contrast, linguistic diversity was a relative outlier. Unlike religious groups, major linguistic groups could negotiate power sharing through the linguistic reorganisation of states. This diversity management reduced internal non-Hindu or distinct regional identities to "anodyne expressions of cultural and linguistic diversity within a highly centralised federal system".[86] In other words, the granting of such nominal political rights translated to mere cultural protections.

Unlike the others, Muslims would become the minority and permanent suspect citizens, constantly recalibrating their citizenship claims.[87] The Nehruvian project of a distinctive Indian

---

[84] Colonial rule marked the interplay between abstract *Imperial* (Indians as members of the British empire), and the more concrete *Colonial* Citizenship (the direct Indian colonial-subject relationship). See Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Citizenship and its Discontents: An Indian History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[85] Srirupa Roy, "Temple and dam, fez and hat: the secular roots of religious politics in India and Turkey", *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 48, no. 2 (2010), https://doi.org/10.1080/14662041003672486; Prakash Chandra Upadhyaya, "The Politics of Indian Secularism", *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 4 (1992), https://www.jstor.org/stable/312941. This Indian diversity was institutionalised through a variety of modes and forms. Calendar art, content produced by the Films Division of India, Republic Day parades and state floaties, or through the imaginaries of the Steel Town. See Patricia Uberoi, "'Unity in diversity?': Dilemmas of nationhood in Indian calendar art", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 36, no. 1-2 (2002), https://doi.org/10.1177/006996670203600107; Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

[86] Rupa Viswanath, "Silent minority: celebrated difference, caste difference, and the Hinduization of independent India " in *Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies*, ed. Steven Vertovec (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 142.

[87] Gyanendra Pandey, "Can a Muslim be an Indian?", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 4 (1999), https://doi.org/10.1017/s0010417599003072.

paternalistic modern nation-state, guiding an infantile citizenry, was, thus, inflected with these underlying tensions and contradictory definitions. Srirupa Roy's 'de-politicised' producer-patriots were also accompanied by the self-rehabilitating non-Muslim (Hindu) citizen-refugees who utilised class, caste, and social capital to become the privileged citizenry.[88]

The inherent limits of 'diversity talk' and politics of secularism were exposed through several developments since the 1980s, reframing citizenship claims and exclusions. These include the recalibrations of Indian Federalism through the ethnic and linguistic reorganisation of states in the 1950s and 60s; B.R. Ambedkar's public conversion and the spread of Navanayana Buddhism; the collapse of the Nehruvian consensus; the excesses of the Emergency and emergence of an interventionist citizenry through media and civil society groups; the slow dilution of document raj and proliferation of private enterprise; the simultaneous ascendance of regional, backward-caste politics, and the mainstreaming of Hindutva; the transnational geopolitical machinations engendering an ongoing refugee crisis; neoliberal urban transformations influenced by a world-class city aesthetic; and the entrenchment of mediatised publics and political practice. Moreover, since 9/11, global discourses have produced categories of 'Good' Muslims and 'Bad' Muslims by citing an inherent problem with the nature of Islam.[89] By inheriting and negotiating with this history and ongoing processes, the Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) regime has re-centred the unresolved Muslim question through the recent Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 and the related proposal to institute a National Population Register (the CAA-NPR combination).[90]

As we can see, Indian diversity has neither been devoid of conflicts nor exclusions. Rather, these features have been endemic to the practice of Indian secularism. Arlene Davila has pointed to the complicated terrain of multiculturalism and neighbourhood identities by exposing the formation of hierarchies and the selective utilisation of 'diversity' and 'ethnicity'

Muslims had to negotiate with the liberal, republican, ethno-nationalist, and non-statist conceptions of citizenship. Ornit Shani, "Conceptions of Citizenship in India and the 'Muslim Question'", *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (2010), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X09990102.

[88] Roy, *Beyond Belief*; Ravinder Kaur, "Distinctive Citizenship: Refugees, Subjects and Post-Colonial State in India's Partition", *Cultural and Social History* 6, no. 4 (2009), https://doi.org/10.2752/147800409X466272; Uditi Sen, *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation after Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[89] Mahmood Mamdani, "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism", *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3567254.

[90] Niraja Gopal Jayal, "Reconfiguring Citizenship in Contemporary India", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1555874.

to stake claims against gentrification or the marketing of 'culture'.[91] Compared to El Barrio, Jangpura-Bhogal has no monuments or 'cultural experiences' to offer. However, the production of *bhaichara* involves the presentation of 'primordial' caste, religious, and ethnic identities that have evolved through the neighbourhood's history and its afterlives. Bhaichara must overlook lived diversity and present a nostalgic and abstract imagination of composite culture. As we will see, this vision of diversity-as-bhaichara is produced through inequalities, exclusions, erasures, and contestations. My focus, however, is not on an evident dissonance between resident proclamations and the neighbourhood's lived realities. Instead, I document the constitutive exclusions and erasures that enable diversity.

5. Methods and Positionality

5.1. Methods

Archival and Ethnographic fieldwork in Jangpura-Bhogal from 2017 to 2021 utilised official state, newspaper, court, and private archives, oral histories, fieldwork interviews, and observations. Archival research was conducted in the National Archives of India (NAI), Delhi State Archives (DSA), and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML). I consulted files of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Chief Commissioner (CC), Delhi Administration (DA), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation (R&R), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the Delhi Wakf Board, *The Times of India, Hindustan Times, Indian Express,* and Published Reports on Delhi's Administration, Delhi Municipal Corporation, Revenue Reports, Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCT) website, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Bosco Organisation for Social Concern and Operation (BOSCO) website.

In a recent study, Diya Mehra aptly draws attention to the challenges of writing neighbourhood histories. A scarce and fragmentary archive, the dense social complexity of spaces like Jangpura-Bhogal, dominant and exclusionary narratives, and the relatively more straightforward recall of critical events and transformations limit attempts at 'whole' and everyday histories. Its very nature compounds the problems of a scarce archive. As Stephen Legg argues, neighbourhood social relations often appear in the archive during moments of

---

[91] Arlene Dávila, *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).

friction or fraught identity politics.[92] Furthermore, compared to the colonial archive, many postcolonial documents are either in the process of being catalogued or spread out across various governmental institutions that aggressively guard their record rooms from the prying eyes of young researchers without *jugaad* (connections).

For example, despite my best efforts, Jangpura-Bhogal's foundation file was untraceable. Interestingly, colonial, and post-colonial officials encountered a similar barrier when deliberating on the rent to be charged in the neighbourhood and during land acquisitions for rehabilitation. The traces available included the award statements following land acquisitions for the new capital and the *pattas* (allotment papers) of residents who agreed to share their private archives. Similarly, everyday relations between Hindus and Muslims or Hindus and Sikhs are unavailable. However, insight could be gained through the massive dossiers produced during Bakr-Eid celebrations or the CID daily situation and special reports.

Thus, the archives of Jangpura-Bhogal or any neighbourhood cannot shed light on the everyday life of the neighbourhood. States archives, after all, are produced by motivations of urban administrative legibility, municipal practice, the maintenance of public order, or urban planning—it is the autobiography of the state. The traces across the archive simultaneously reveal and obfuscate the life of the neighbourhood within the larger urban context. However, Koselleck reminds us that the very transformation of sources into 'history' reveals narratives that are never identical to the sources themselves. The historian is always critically engaging with traces, residues, threads, and their silences, erasures, or omissions to produce historical knowledge based on 'facts' and possible histories.[93]

I was particularly interested in how the past and present continuously interact to produce urban spaces and identities. Thus, I utilised oral histories to not only 'fill the gap' in the archives—for example, for the names of villages settled in Jangpura—but also how Jangpura-Bhogal's history impacted and affected local neighbourhood identities. The dissonance between the archive and popular memory, between a 'factual' history and its retellings, is self-evident. There is a constant tension because of the inherent element of forgetting in memory's attempts to be faithful to the past. Individual or collective memories constantly negotiate, disintegrate, and recalibrate in line with 'master narratives', local or national histories, and through 'abuses of memory'. Invariably, memories exclude, forget, and

---

[92] Mehra, "Jangpura Triptych"; Legg, "A Pre-Partitioned City?"
[93] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 149-50.

reframe the past for imagined futures.[94] Notwithstanding the problems of memory, it was compelling to excavate the archival history of the city through the 'local', its afterlife and its role in the neighbourhood's production.

Owing to the research questions, methodological limits, and long time-frame of the study, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork through daily multi-hour visits to private homes and public, religious, and organisational spaces. I approached informants in public spaces and through snowball sampling with prominent local individuals and organisations. Of note were members of the Aam Aadmi Party Jangpura unit introduced to me by public historian Sohail Hashmi. Regular visits and discussions with them outlined the contours of the project and the people to be contacted. This was further refined through discussions of the archives discovered and the potentiality of access to private family archives. Depending on the informants, I was either sent on my own or introduced via phone calls or combined meetings. Additionally, I attended regular group meetings with residents, refugees, and officials in religious spaces, public parks, shops and establishments, and the BOSCO Centre.

Access to the UNHCR and BOSCO was more complicated. In response to my repeatedly unanswered emails, a friend at the UNDP facilitated my initial contact with the relevant UNHCR representative. This was the beginning of a bureaucratic game that involved a letter from my supervisor, a brief synopsis of the project, and a list of possible questions I would ask before being granted a meeting with UNHCR's media representative. Citing privacy issues, the UNHCR denied my requests to be connected with Afghans or their groups. Following this, Repeated requests and with the proper chain of transmission—the UNHCR had to instruct BOSCO to give me access—I was finally granted permission to visit BOSCO. Through all these official channels, I again had to negotiate access to the refugees by submitting a list of questions and a letter from my supervisor describing my project and ensuring anonymity. A BOSCO teacher translated the letter to Dari read it to adult Afghans, after which some agreed to have restricted conversations. Afghans were also approached in Afghan restaurants, grocery stores, and public parks.

I utilised semi-structured or unstructured interviews comprising around 50 individuals, some of whom I interviewed multiple times. I also conducted participant and non-participant observation in public parks, religious sites, and official spaces. UNHCR, BOSCO officials, and

---

[94] Paul Ricœur, *Memory, history, forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Shahid Amin, *Event, metaphor, memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Koselleck, *Futures Past*; Kaur, *Since 1947*.

Afghans did not consent to be recorded, and their names are pseudonymised. Locals gave verbal consent to the recordings and the use of names. They dismissed the options of confidentiality or written guarantees of ethical use of the material. Due to the sensitive nature of some conversations, the names of individuals in certain sections have been withheld or anonymised. Interviews and conversations were conducted in person and via telephone in Hindi, Urdu, English, Punjabi, and Dari (with a translator present).

This methodological approach revealed subtle processes and histories advocating a return to the archive through its presents. It not only provided me with names, events, or processes to streamline my archival research but also revealed a dense material archive of the neighbourhood through its buildings, spatial layouts, and other material traces. More importantly, it revealed various hidden, and at-times unintended erasures underway in Jangpura-Bhogal and the city.

My attempts at fieldwork completion in 2020 and 2021 coincided with the Covid waves in India, thereby disrupting further on-site archival research and fieldwork. Therefore, I shifted to consulting digitised archives of the DSA and NAI. Fieldwork disruptions led to the utilisation of social media, i.e., WhatsApp and Facebook groups and pages, for research material. While enriching my ongoing examinations, this methodological shift towards a greater emphasis on digital ethnography also added a new element to my explorations of neighbourhood formation: combined resident efforts to help neighbours and groups during this crisis. I follow Pink et al.'s understanding of the entangled nature of online and offline worlds. "Localities can be constituted through the technologies themselves and the online-offline are part of the same processes through which localities are produced, experienced, and defined. In this sense, certain actual physical-digital related sites can be explored as forms of digital-material locality".[95] Chapter 3 highlights the importance of digital media publics in producing the Buddha Vihar as a Thai monastery or Neo-Buddhist temple. Even in the neighbourhood, Chapters 2 and 4 point to the utilisation of Facebook and WhatsApp groups for local political activism and Afghan othering.

5.2. Negotiating Identity

I belong to a North Indian Ashraf Muslim family with ancestral roots in Uttar Pradesh. Unlike my grandparents who migrated to Delhi, my parents primarily grew up in the city, following

---

[95] Sarah Pink et al., eds., *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2016).

the usual trajectory of the 'acceptable' secular Nehruvian Muslims: Barring Eid celebrations, there was no visible performance of Muslim-ness. This adherence to 'nationalist' Muslim ideals also reflected in my family's decision not to live, as they would put it, 'in the ghetto'. I grew up in majoritarian neighbourhoods like Vikas Puri, around an equal Hindu and Sikh presence. My move to Alaknanda in South Delhi in my teenage years changed little the environment. Except now, there were fewer Sikhs around me. An upper-middle class education and exposure to the family's history of involvement in nationalist politics conditioned my upbringing. At home, I belonged to chaste Urdu and English-speaking Awadhi Muslims. For our neighbours, I was the child of a 'secular' Muslim family that invited neighbours for yearly Eid celebrations. For the public of Delhi, I was a Delhi male with no hint of Muslim-ness: a beard, typical 'Muslim' features, and spatial location. Jamia and Nizamuddin Basti were the ghettos, antagonistic spaces where Muslims had 'self-segregated', urban elsewheres in Delhi's public imagination. A privileged existence allowed me to reject my religious identity and largely (but not entirely) escape discrimination and ridicule while growing up in an increasingly polarised city, paradoxically with a historic Muslim presence. Moreover, I did not sound Muslim as I unsurprisingly and unconsciously practised code-switching in my private and public life. The chaste Awadhi Hindustani or Urdu I spoke at home would give way to mainstream Delhi Hindi, the *tu tadaak*[96] way of communication amongst my friends.

Having been trained as a historian, I was used to interacting with dead, life-less dusty, brittle, or digitised documents. Although varying constellations of identity hardly influenced my personal and academic life, I was forced to contend with them during fieldwork. Working in close coordination with their Nizamuddin Muslim colleagues, the AAP's non-Muslim members would often partake in 'secular' speech and were curious about specific Muslim practices. My responses indicating unawareness or confusion about some ideas or rituals would often flummox them: it surprised them that someone with my name could not provide the answers they were seeking. For them, I was an enigma. I had a Muslim name but was unconventionally Muslim. I was researching on India but had left it to live and study in Germany. As time passed, the performative nature of their secularism reduced, and my constant presence in their spaces was normalised and devoid of curiosities.

My interlocutors also varied. These were primarily male upper-caste Hindus and Sikhs, Dalit Hindus, Buddhists, Ravidassias, Christians, Afghan and Kashmiri Muslims. So naturally,

---

[96] Among Urdu and Bhojpuri speaking populations, the use of the words *tu* (you) or *main* (me)—characteristic of Delhi speech—instead of *tum* or *hum* is considered uncouth.

my access to interlocutors was gendered. 'Local' women, while willing to engage in conversations in public spaces or groups, largely refrained from private conversations. Moreover, in the presence of men, women hardly discussed the histories or politics of Jangpura-Bhogal. This was unsurprising as politics is often considered the domain of men.[97] Similarly, Afghan women only agreed to speak to me at the BOSCO centre and refused suggestions to continue discussions in public spaces. However, in one rare instance, an Afghan grocery store proprietor agreed to have multiple conversations with me at her shop. Thus, to a large extent, I present predominantly male narratives from Jangpura-Bhogal.

My Muslim name would invite warmth (Chapter 1), or suspicion among the Afghans and Kashmiris. Let us take the example of Saqib, a young teenage refugee whom I often encountered in public spaces and shops. During one of these encounters, he asked me, 'What is your real job?'. Naturally, I was surprised and probed for the exact meaning of his question. He stated that he often sees me roaming around Jangpura-Bhogal. Amused at what he was suggesting and to confirm my suspicions, I asked him, 'You think I am from intelligence?' (That I was probably monitoring Afghans for the Indian government). He nods in acknowledgement and looks sceptical when I show him my university ID, arguing that this could very well be a cover for my real job. Suspicion or hesitation was also visible in my attempts to speak to Afghans at BOSCO or Afghan waiters at a restaurant who, though comfortable having casual conversations, retreated upon hearing the words 'interview'. Naturally, we can also attribute this reservation to the grey area of their legal presence in India (Chapter 2). Thus, fieldwork constituted varying constellations of my identity with the diverse groups I addressed. These negotiations and at-times failed attempts equally guided my research and framed questions and themes that emerge in the thesis.

6. Thesis Outline

Chapter 1, Arrivals, maps the diverse movements of populations to and from Jangpura-Bhogal over the course of the long twentieth century and the varied housing practices of the colonial, postcolonial, and contemporary states. The displacement and relocation of villages from the planned Imperial Delhi area in 1922 was followed by the departure of Muslims and the influx of Hindu and Sikh refugees in 1947. Forming the core of Jangpura-Bhogal, these populations confronted fresh migrant flows in the 1980s and 1990s with the arrival of Afghan refugees,

---

[97] Kaur, *Since 1947*.

Tamil, and Kashmiri migrants. This first element of neighbourhood formation and city-making serves as the history of the heterogenous space comprising various resettled or displaced populations and provides the foundation for processes mapped throughout the thesis. It highlights two points: First, the neighbourhood's history of arrivals is also a story of departures and absences. Second, it compares the differential housing property regimes and negotiation strategies of residents variously determined as subjects, citizens, intending evacuees, suspected militants, refugees, customers, and uncivil citizens.

Chapter 2, Infrastructures, addresses the second constitutive element of neighbourhoods, i.e., social and material infrastructures that produce the neighbourhood. In this process, residents negotiate with the state and built environment to shape space and settle in through the production of religious spaces, economic life, and educational institutions. Key to these acts are diverse collectives that emerge through residential or spatial proximity, market relations, religious community, and their combinations. Contrasting these arrangements with the institutional and informal infrastructures created for Afghan refugees highlights the varied networks and power matrices that have produced neighbourhood space and sociality. Revisiting the history of middle-class resident and trader collectives and associations, the chapter questions arguments about the neoliberal disjuncture of the new millennium that has brought Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and Market Trader Associations (MTAs) into prominence through legislative feat. I argue that contemporary/millennial urban politics builds upon a longer history and accentuates the entanglements of propertied citizens, commerce, political representatives, and the judiciary.

Chapter 3, Conflict, discusses these collectives further along one line of inquiry, i.e., that of religious conflict in Jangpura-Bhogal's history. It maps colonial and postcolonial communal conflagrations that produce spaces and practices in Jangpura-Bhogal through different sets of majority-minority relations. First, it examines instances of communal violence in colonial and postcolonial Jangpura-Bhogal to highlight the different strategies, practices, and exclusions that craft discrete 'Hindu' and 'Sikh' spaces within the neighbourhood. It then addresses a decades-long religious-spatial conflict between Ravidassias, Navayana and Thai Buddhists to define the histories and practices of a Buddhist temple and monastery. These instances highlight how violence is foundational to Jangpura-Bhogal's religious diversity, majority-minority conflicts are conditioned by different access to historical presence, and that Muslims emerge as the weakened minority. Religious conflicts around practices, processions, and space through varying constellations of 'community' lead to the displacement or attempts

to displace other histories, memories, and practices. As I show, these conflicts emphasise memories and histories documented in Chapters 1 and 2 to produce a normative 'community' and disavow alternative claims to space.

Chapter 4, Memory, unpacks the realms of memory that produce the 'diverse' neighbourhood. As the discussion highlights, the diverse histories explored in the previous chapters influence the concerted production of the narrative of the heterogenous space through narrative displacements, replacements, and erasures. Public commemorations selectively recite histories of violence and remember certain kinds of settled populations. Recollections displace conflicts onto outsiders and elsewheres and un-remember minority pasts of a departed Muslim population. Then, residents rework an abstract narrative of brotherhood and community through dominant public imaginaries of Afghans' transience and essential difference to exclude them from the normative matrix of neighbourhood diversity. The chapter concludes by emphasising that this processual narrative is subject to change as the most recent set of migrant groups forge place in the neighbourhood.

This dynamic and capacious temporal canvas allows me to map not only neighbourhood-level transformations but also assess the societal and political significance of key turning points and critical junctures, e.g., the transition from colonial to postcolonial sovereignty; the recalibrations of Indian federalism; the advent of economic liberalisation; and the geopolitical shifts during and after the Cold War.[98] Through this history, the chapters illustrate the constitutive and entangled nature of displacement and city-making. As we will see, these processes are marked by the constant interplay of a presence-absence dynamic undergirding neighbourhood production. We also witness the different power matrices constituting majority-minority relations. In other words, the processual and ever-shifting nature

---

[98] Like any research project, this thesis involves a process of selection and exclusion. Due to time and pandemic-related limitations, specific populations, events, and processes have been excluded. First, although it examines Jangpura-Bhogal's entanglements with various developments in urban, national, and global history, it does not claim to be an exhaustive and comprehensive study of Delhi or Jangpura-Bhogal. For example, the Emergency rarely figures in the thesis. Despite my best efforts to address this period, there is a paucity of sources and events related to it hardly figure in resident recollections. Second, the thesis does not engage with scholarship on migration studies. While migration is a crucial element of Jangpura-Bhogal's history, the driving questions on neighbourhood and city-making do not approach the problems within migration studies. Third, certain groups and populations like ex-pats or relocated populations of the Ajmeri Gate scheme (who may have been relocated to Jangpura-Bhogal) are omitted. Instead, I focus on the influential resident groups wherein Tamils cannot receive a richer analysis.

of minoritisation through different social configurations and power shows the accretive displacement of Muslim bodies, spaces, and histories.

Chapter 1

ARRIVALS: Population movements to and from Jangpura-Bhogal

The area now occupied by Jangpura-Bhogal has not witnessed any significant historical settlements but is surrounded by a palimpsest dating back to the fourteenth century.[1] Unsurprisingly, colonial-era narratives and guides only mention the vast expanse of land South of Delhi city (Shahjahanabad) littered with ruins and 'notable' historic sites of Delhi's past empires.[2] Cartographic representations from the early twentieth century show a nondescript tomb and mosque, with the latter, according to residents, attached to a graveyard catering to the burial and ritual needs of Delhi's Muslim population. The surrounding area seems devoid of any settlements. By the 1920s, this *banjar zameen* (barren land) emerged as the site of colonial articulations of a 'model' space. Pastoral Gujjars frequented the Southern Ridge, more

---

[1] Nearby Nizamuddin's origins lie in the efforts of Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya who established his *Khanqah* (Sufi meeting place) on the banks of the Yamuna river at Ghiyaspur, close to the second city of Delhi, Kilokhri. While the city now only survives in the village that took its name, Nizamuddin Auliya's Khanqah continued to flourish, eventually turning into his shrine that draws pilgrims from all over South Asia, especially during the yearly *Urs* (death anniversary) celebrations. Opposite Nizamuddin Basti is the grand mausoleum of Humayun, the sixteenth-century Mughal emperor, built in the *Char Bagh* (four garden) architectural tradition that would later inspire the Taj Mahal. Today, it continues to provide visual stimulation to the residents and tourists in the city and serves as a critical point of Delhi's heritage. Abutting it is the historic 'dead' village of Arab ki Serai, housing Arab scholars and later, Persian artisans who worked on Humayun's tomb and later housed a mixed village of traders, bankers, and agriculturalists. Today, empty of past settlements, it forms a part of the heritage complex and is home to the Industrial Training Institute.

Further along Humayun's tomb is the Damdama Sahib gurdwara, where some weapons of the Sikh Guru Govind Singh are preserved. As we move along Mathura Road and turn left before the Ashram red light, we reach the Barapullah, the nala's namesake and historic eleven-arched bridge built by Minar Banu Agha. Today, however, its small eleven pillars are masked by the incessant human traffic and overshadowed by the large *Madrassi basti* (Tamil settlement) of Jangpura B. The *pul* caters to a vegetable market for nearby residents seeking discounted vegetable deals.

There is, however, an obscure tale from the seventeenth century when Guru the Sikh Guru Har Kishan was visiting Delhi at the invitation of Raja Jai Singh, a general of the Mughal Empire. During this visit, he contracted smallpox and was shifted to a house in the village Bhogal, where he soon died. The site where he was cremated on the banks of the Yamuna river, became the Balasaheb Gurdwara, located in Ashram, close to present-day Bhogal. Maheshwar Dayal, *Rediscovering Delhi: The Story of Shahjahanabad* (Delhi: S. Chand, 1975); Harbhajan Singh, *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism: Over 1000 Entries* (New Delhi: Hemkunt Publishers, 2000).

[2] H.G. Keene, *A Handbook for Visitors to Dehli and its Neighbourhood* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1882); A. Harcourt, *The New Guide to Delhi* (Allahabad: Pioneer Press 1866); Colin Mackenzie, *Delhi: The City of the Great Mogul, With an account of the Various Tribes in Hindostan; Hindus, Sikhs, Afghans, Etc.* (London: Savill and Edwards, 1857); H.C. Fanshawe, *Delhi: Past and Present* (London: John Murray, 1902); Lovat Fraser, *At Delhi* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1903); Government of India, *A Brief Historical Memoir of Delhi and Guide to the Points of Interest Together with the Official Programme in Detail of the Imperial Coronation Durbar of 1911* (Delhi: Government of India, 1911).

specifically the Aravalli Hills that began here, for the grazing options provided for their cattle. As I am informed, they would systematically return to rob people's houses.[3] The region's assessment name, the *Khandrat* (ruinous landscape) revenue circle, aptly captured the environment of this region—sparsely populated rural lands amidst the material remnants of Delhi's medieval settlements.[4]

In early 2019, I went to meet the proprietors of Temple properties on Masjid Road in Bhogal. Run by a resident Hindu and Sikh, the establishment is one of many catering to diverse arrivals in Jangpura-Bhogal since the 1990s. During the approximately one hour I spent there, potential Afghan tenants came to inquire and visit a space available for rent, clueless Afghan visitors seeking an Afghan establishment, and a resident arriving to sell his property. Soon after the deal was complete, Charanjeet, one of the proprietors, introduced me to the seller, a long-time Bhogal resident. After the usual introductions, Mr Vashisht narrates a tale I had never encountered while collecting the oral histories of the space.

Since 1907, Bhogal only had one Bania and one Brahmin family, and one fresh water source, a *kuan* (well). Mr Vashist's family were displaced residents from the Bhairon (Shiv) mandir in present-day Nehru Park in Central Delhi. *Wo saara humaari zameen pe bana hua hai* (All that is built on our land). They and the Bania family lived in a largely open space until it expanded in the 1920s and newer populations were settled. Perhaps he was referring to the scattered structures amidst unmarked graves and a dilapidated mosque in Bhogal Pahari and Ghiaspur at the time, owned by Sirkars, Sainis and Banias.[5] These were cultivable or barren fields but did not constitute any significant settlement. However, by the 1920s, the colonial state's efforts to reinvent the Raj transformed the fortunes of this land.

---

[3] Ashok, Interview, 4 July 2017. These statements echo a general stereotype about the Gujjars in colonial Delhi. Once the colonial state acquired their lands, Gujjars began demanding employment as security guards in the settlements coming up. Failure to accept this demand would lead to frequent robberies. See for example, Oswald Wood and R. Maconachie, *Final Report on the Settlement of Land Revenue in the Delhi District, 1872-77* (Lahore: Victoria Press, 1882).
For a greater discussion on the Ridge and Aravallis, see Thomas Crowley, *Fractured Forest, Quartzite City: A History of Delhi and Its Ridge* (New Delhi: Sage Yoda Press, 2020).
[4] The revenue assessment circles were based on soil quality and irrigation techniques required. Khandrat was especially formulated as a sub-division of low-lying *Bangar* land to accommodate the mass of ruins. For a greater discussion see Wood and Maconachie, *Final Settlement Report*; H.C. Beadon, *Final Report of the Third Regular Settlement of the Delhi District, 1906-1910* Punjab Government (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1910); Narayani Gupta, "Delhi and its Hinterland: The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", in *Delhi Through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban HIstory, Culture and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[5] DSA/DC/1/1907.

In December 1911, Delhi hosted the Coronation Durbar in honour of King George's ascendance to the throne. As the proceedings ended, King George issued a surprising announcement: the capital of colonial India would be shifted from Calcutta to Delhi, the Bengal province would be reunited, and its territory reconfigured.[6] This decision stemmed from public discontent and militant nationalism following the Partition of Bengal province in 1905 when Bengal's Hindu and Muslim majority provinces were separated. Accordingly, it was considered feasible to retract the decision and restore Bengal as a separate administrative unit. Additionally, a colonial capital removed from the tense political climate in the East and located in Delhi would ensure a shorter yearly travel time to the Summer Capital in Simla.

The announcement was accompanied by the decision to construct a 'new' Delhi to mark King George's ascendance and the start of a new era in the story of the 'benevolent' British empire. This new imperial capital would express the grandeur and the might of the British Raj, considering its recent failures in negotiating with Indian nationalists.[7] One important reason for the choice of Delhi was, as was claimed, its historic nature as a capital for various past empires: Tomars, Rajputs, Sultans and Mughals. Thus, the construction of a British city could be seen as just another addition to the history of Delhi's multiple cities built by rulers. Architects Edward Lutyens and Herbert Baker, several Indian contractors and thousands of labourers were recruited to plan and construct a comprehensive and intricate system of roads, avenues, government offices, and residences. The final site, selected at Raisina village (now Raisina Hill) on the Southern side of the city, the elevated nature of the main complex, and the visible ruins of past empires would present the symbolic image of the British Raj's superiority over the material and historic landscape of the city.[8] Additionally, it would define itself through its contrast with Shahjahanabad, i.e., a symbolic and material articulation between modernity and tradition. The construction of this new grand city would require a large-scale land

---

[6] The Bengal Presidency would have a new Governor; Behar, Chhota Nagpur, and Orissa would be administered by Lieutenant Governor; and Assam would become a Chief Commissioner's province. See R.E. Frykenberg, "The Coronation Durbar of 1911: Some Implications", in *Delhi Through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, ed. R.E. Frykenberg (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[7] Thomas R. Metcalf, "New Delhi: The Beginning of the End", in *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 211-12.

[8] For discussions about the architectural intentions, debates and discussions around the idea and structure of the new capital see Robert Grant Irving, *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism*; David A. Johnson, *New Delhi: The Last Imperial City* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016).

acquisition (about 40,000 acres) and the attendant displacement of thousands of settlements across Delhi.

This chapter tracks the history of arrivals to Jangpura-Bhogal, which has witnessed diverse and continuous flows of populations from its founding in the 1920s till the contemporary post-reform period. They have been influenced by national-level political, economic, and social moments displacing populations or facilitating movement in and out of Jangpura-Bhogal. This century of migration illustrates the continuities of caste and class-based residential segregations, varying property and tenancy regimes, and the accompanying displacements of histories, populations, and properties. The first element of neighbourhood and city-making provides the foundation for the processes explored in the remaining thesis, i.e., the diverse practices of place-making in the neighbourhood. In the narrative of *bhaichara*, arrivals are a crucial element of spatial diversity.

1. Origins: Populating the South

1.1. Redefined Boundaries, Land Acquisitions, and 'Model' Settlements

King George's announcement led to the separation of Delhi from the Punjab Province to form a distinct administrative unit comprising the Delhi Tehsil and a small part of the Ballabhgarh Tehsil. While prior to 1911, the Delhi Province comprised the Ballabgarh, Sonepat, and Delhi tehsils, now, Sonepat (448 square miles) was joined with the Rohtak District and the majority of Ballabgarh (280 square miles) with the Gurgaon district. Later, about 46 square miles from the Meerut District of the United Provinces were transferred to enlarge the Delhi Province. The result was an area of 593 square miles containing the two cities of Delhi (Municipality, Civil Station Notified Area, and the Fort or Lal Qila) and New Delhi (New Delhi Municipality and the Cantonment), the small town of Shahdara, and a rural area of 310 villages.[9]

The proposed layout plan prepared by the Delhi Town Planning Committee divided the Imperial Capital area into 5 Blocks (A-E), highlighting the locations of buildings, avenues, and the lands to be acquired. Blocks A and B constituted the area of the Cantonment and Capitol Complex. Blocks C and D were for future city expansions towards the West and South, while Block E would serve as the protective barrier and environs of the new capital. In the context of

---

[9] Khan Ahmad Hasan Khan, *Census of India 1931 Volume XVI, Delhi: Report and Tables*, Government of India (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933), 6; L. Middleton and S.M. Jacob, *Census of India, 1921: Punjab and Delhi Part I: Report*, Government of India (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1923), 2.

this discussion, the fortunes of the areas lying under Blocks B and E were intimately connected.[10]

> When the British settled New Delhi they gave orders for the evacuation of many villages in that area…There were many villages. Meaning five villages were from there (Lodhi road, Safdarjung tomb, and the surrounding area), some from near Rashtrapati Bhawan…So all these small 10-10 15-15 house villages were resettled here.[11]

In Block B, Alipur Pilanji, Aliganj, Jor Bagh, Kushak, and the entire complex of Safdarjung's tomb were acquired. Block E saw the acquisition of Nizampur, constituting the villages of Ghiaspur, Nizamuddin, and Arab ki Sarai.[12] Although minute remnants of some villages continued to exist, their populations were primarily split up between Kotla Mubarakpur and the newly planned 'model' village of Jangpura.

A brief discussion about the nature of the settlement is important here as settlements like Jangpura were neither unique in Delhi nor North India. For example, its twin, the Karol Bagh settlement in the western part of the city, was established on similar terms.[13] The Punjab Province was one of the earliest sites for experimentation with the idea of planned 'model' villages and towns, to implement what William Glover calls a 'colonial spatial imaginary'. This spatial imaginary emerged from nineteenth-century urban planning ideas of spatial order, public health, and the surveillance of native urban spaces and their populations.[14] Here, the Mughal urban remnants in cities like Lahore and Delhi, characterised by crowded settlements and circular winding roads, were considered hotbeds of insanitary conditions. Glover highlights that "the material environments of everyday life were considered to be among the most important 'conditions' enabling those "old forms of life", and their systematic rebuilding was the focus of a wide range of colonial efforts.[15] Due to the very nature of pre-colonial

---

[10] *First, Second and Final Reports of the Delhi Town Planning Committee*, Government of India (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1913).
[11] Ashok, Interview.
[12] DSA/CC/Home/2/1914; DSA/CC/Home/18/1914.
[13] It housed the villages of Jaisinghpura, Madhoganj, and Raja ka Bazaar that made way for the Connaught Place shopping complex. See Swapna Liddle, *Connaught Place and the Making of New Delhi* (New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Books, 2018).
[14] For an exhaustive study on ideas of public health and the city, see Sharan, *In the City*.
[15] William J. Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxii.

settlements, achieving a particular 'modern' urban sensibility was only possible through a complete overhaul of socio-spatial relations.

In this context, the suburbs and rural hinterland became a blank canvas for implementing and enforcing innovative and distinct forms of spatial organisation, exemplified by the planned 'model' settlements of Punjab's canal colonies and settlements near the Lahore cantonment. The village and its populations, alleged containers and agents of rigid social norms and tradition, could be reformed by implementing a new moral-spatial order marked by planned orthogonal grid settlements to reorder village spatiality. In contrast to the winding and circular nature of native settlements, the uniform geometrical, predictable landscape of the criminal tribe settlements, model villages, and canal colonies gave the image of more order and control. This new spatial form, with straight roads cutting at right angles and houses opening on streets, allowed different vantage points for surveillance and prevention of criminal activities through a quick and efficient deployment of troops. However, these Anglo-European ideals produced 'rough translations' of settlement patterns in rural and urban space: While adopting a new spatial form, these settlements maintained existing social hierarchies of caste, religion, and race.[16] The grid layouts meant to reconfigure socio-spatial relations ended up reaffirming social differences.

Following the suppression of the revolt of 1857, Delhi underwent a dramatic urban restructuring through occupations, destructions, and dislocations. The large-scale violence against 'traitors' accompanied the displacements of the city's population, the restructuring of Chandni Chowk for better surveillance, the honouring of loyal Hindus, and the occupation of key Muslim spaces. When the dust settled, and its residents were allowed to return, Shahjahanabad had been materially, socially, and economically transformed.[17] Delhi's recovery through the expansion of the railways, its rise as an important trade centre by the twentieth century, and the transfer of the new capital provided a different urban context for colonial implementations of planned settlements.

Through the arbitrary and coercive Land Acquisition Act of 1894, the colonial state quickly acquired private lands for public purposes—in this case, for the proposed New Capital.

---

[16] Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*, 27-58.

[17] This gave impetus to the development of what Narayani Gupta calls Delhi's 'Lalacracy': Hindu and Jain merchants and traders became the largest property owners in the city through the auctioning of Muslim properties and the ticket system. Caste and craft based mohallas now started becoming religiously homogenous. See Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires*; Anish Vanaik, *Possessing the City: Property and Politics in Delhi, 1911-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 21-37; Parveen, *Contested Homelands*, 25-75.

By imposing static notions of private property that placed the zamindar at the centre of the village ownership regime, the colonial state reconfigured property relations and side-lined systems of community ownership like *bhaichara*.[18] Due to the myopic and restrictive understandings of land ownership, wealthy landlords could negotiate favourable compensations and relocation at the cost of small-scale landlords and landless peasants who had to comply with the new rigid property regime.

Agriculturalists and landowners were given full cash payments as compensation and offered lands for purchase or rent in some parts of Delhi, the Sonepat or Rohtak districts, and Punjab's canal colonies. The successes or failures of these relocation efforts were contingent on the proximity of the land to the New Delhi project, the land tenure system, and the socio-economic status of the dispossessed.[19] Within this complicated system of acquisition, dispossession, and compensation, some villages were allotted land in new enclaves established for relocation according to urban planning ideals, exemplified by the resettlement neighbourhoods set up for 'natives' in Karol Bagh (in the western part of the city) and Jangpura (in the southern part).[20]

1.2. Youngpura to Jangpura: The Village is Settled

Although the transfer of the capital drastically redrew the boundaries of the Delhi Province, the revenue-hungry colonial state had already made minor adjustments since 1908. Revenue settlement operations created a new assessment area of Nizampur under the Delhi tehsil. It comprised the Pattidari (tenure) villages of Nizampur, Ghiaspur and Bhogal Pahari under the ownership of caste Hindu and Muslim zamindars living in Ghiaspur (Nizamuddin village) and Arab Serai.[21] 1914 saw the acquisition of land from the Bhogal side of Nizampur from a certain Samman Lal and his family—known for their banking and philanthropic activities—and other

---

[18] Broadly there were three occupancy categories i.e., owners, tenants, and tenants-at-will. Bhaichara was a common system of land ownership, in most cases male relatives owning a single unit of land. For a greater discussion on the land tenure system see Johnson, *New Delhi*, 160-68.
[19] For the varied outcomes of this compensation policy see Johnson, *New Delhi*.
[20] Liddle, *Connaught Place and the Making of New Delhi*, 33-35; Guerrieri, *Negotiating Cultures*. Later, attempts were also made to set up a model village in Nangli. DSA/CC/Revenue & Agriculture (R&A)/B (28)/1925.
[21] 'Amalgamation of Bhogal Pahari, Ghiaspur, and Nizampur'*,* DSA/DC/1/1907. DSA/DC/28/1908. Bhogal Pahari and Nizampur were transferred from the Ballabhgarh to the Delhi tehsil.

smaller zamindars.[22] This land now became Nazul Land (Crown Lands) or *Sarkar Daulatmadar* under the Deputy Commissioner's administration.

> Jangpura village was recently laid out for ex-proprietors of Ali Ganj, Alipore Pilanji and Jur Bagh etc. The idea as I understand it was to call it 'Youngpura' after the name of Mr. Musworth Young, our Deputy Commissioner. The proposal did not meet his approval and the name of the village was distorted and made into Jangpura.[23]

By 1924, the colonial administration decided to abolish the Arab Sarai village Post Office, as the village would be evacuated to form a part of Delhi's archaeological zone so as to serve the aesthetic needs of the New Imperial Capital. Acquisitions of parts of the village had already begun a decade earlier, but there were no talks of its evacuation.[24] As these plans changed, discussions on the post office's future centred around two nearby contenders on the opposite side of Mathura Road. One was the fourteenth-century settlement of Nizamuddin, the namesake of Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya. The second was an inconspicuous village coming up South of Nizamuddin, aka Jangpura. After much deliberation and discussion, it was decided, in 1925, to shift the post office building to this emerging village. The reasons given were twofold: that Jangpura had a higher population than Nizamuddin (1731 as compared to 683), and the availability of space for a proper building that could serve residents of Jangpura, Nizamuddin, and other nearby villages.[25] By 1925, a Lambardar had been appointed to collect rents.[26] The settlement had begun to flourish.

Jangpura's establishment can be revisited through archival traces and oral histories of residents. As residents inform me, Bhogal was a settled space for those displaced from their villages. *Bhogal basaya gaya tha.* 'Bhogal was settled'. *Hum uthe hue log hain.* 'We are displaced people'. Popular memory traces the foundation of the village to around 1922 when populations from relocated villages began settling down,[27] although orders for the allotments

---

[22] DSA/DC/70/1924; DSA/DC/1/1907.

[23] 'Constitution of Raisina Estate', DSA/CC/Education (Edu)/4/1926.

[24] Superintendent of Post Offices to DC, 26 August 1924, DSA/DC/70/1924; DSA/DC/31/1914.

[25] DC to Superintendent of PO, 28 May 1925, DSA/DC/70/1924.

[26] He would be paid three per cent of the rents collected. See DSA/CC/Edu/35.

[27] Ashok, Interview; Rakesh Sagar, Interview, 6 December 2018, Mange Lal, 6 December 2018; Kishan Lal, 5 June 2017; Private Archives of Rakesh Sagar; See also DSA/DC/42/1927.

were issued by 1918.[28] The constituent villages of these areas were Madarsa, Pilanji, Judhbagh, Kherpur, Garhi, Kushak, Arab Sarai, and Aliganj.[29]

Ten smaller roads and streets intersected three main roads that connected to Mathura Road. Eight hundred forty-three rectangular plots corresponding to the *Khasra* (register) number were uniformly laid out in a strict grid pattern, and a corresponding street accompanied each road. Like Karol Bagh, Jangpura village reflected the normative planning ideals of 'model' settlements. However, the plots were not uniform due to the terrain. According to residents, Jangpura was on a slope, and the plot shapes and sizes were contingent on the flat or uneven ground underneath them. The area was also littered with unmarked graves that were left undisturbed, forcing the patwaris and planners to cut plots accordingly (Figure 1.3). Another factor was the planned needs of the different communities, like the Kumhars, who would require larger plots to tie their donkeys and ample space for their potter's wheel. The plots ranged anywhere from 108 to 422 square yards.[30]

The allotments for these plots were based on specific rules and regulations. First, these plots were meant for dispossessed agriculturalists, menials, and labourers, many of whom were employed in colonial infrastructural projects.[31] Secondly, those not meeting this condition and wishing to obtain a plot had to be useful to the neighbourhood's inhabitants. For example, a retired Clerk's application for a plot in Jangpura was denied in 1927.[32] Lastly, plots were based on the household size:

> Like a village that was picked up, someone who had two kids, boys. Not for girls. They were given two plots, but the condition was that they were supposed to pay 2 annas rent per year. And paying 2 annas rent was also quite difficult. So, he only took one plot.[33]

Thus, as stipulated, one compound was given to one man and his family. Families moved into one house to save money when it was difficult to pay the rent for two plots. This

---

[28] CC to DC, 3 February 1926, DSA/CC/Edu/35/1927.

[29] Naturally, the names in oral narratives vary from the official records. See also Scheduled Caste inhabitants of Jangpura (Bhogal) to Jagjiwan Ram, Labour Minister, 4 August 1948, NAI/MHA/ Public/51-114/1949.

[30] *Lok Sabha Debates Vol. XIII, 17 April 1978*, Government of India (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1978), 120-21.

[31] DSA/CC/Edu/35(B)/1927.

[32] DC note 27 June 1927; CC to DC, 3 February 1926, *Ibid.*

[33] Ashok, Interview.

rent, however, was lower than the rates set for its counterpart settlement in the west, Karol Bagh. While discussing the rent to be collected by the Lambardar from residents of the village, Chief Commissioner E.R. Abbott expressed disappointment at the proposed low rent to be charged to residents. While the terms of the 20-year lease were the same as the Karol Bagh settlement (8 annas per 100 square yards per mensem), the amount could not be the same due to the nature of the settlement: Jangpura was a poorer settlement as compared to Karol Bagh. Thus, it was to be four annas per 100 square yards per mensem.[34]

Let us look at Figure 1.1, the most comprehensive representation of the village from 1938, reflecting the lived space of the village over a decade after its settlement. Here, the uniform rectangular plots have given way to irregularly shaped houses and open spaces. Guerrieri aptly sums up the reason for this: "Two significant examples dating to the end of the 1920s are Jangpura and Karol Bagh colonies. In both cases the British chose an area, provided a network of orthogonal streets, decided the size of the plots to be assigned to each Indian to build his/her house, and then left any further development to the discretion of the owner."[35] Within the limits of their economic abilities, Jangpura's inhabitants transformed the built environment to address their community and residential needs. By the 1930s, the New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC) would receive a flurry of requests from Jangpura's residents seeking to improve or add to their accommodations. The fate of these requests depended on the building plans submitted and the alignment of the plans with the Municipal bylaws.[36] However, these material changes or the upcoming demands also reflected the populations settled.

---

[34] As the introduction states, files around the proposed establishment and settlement of the new 'model village' are untraceable in the archive. Interestingly, during discussions around the rent to be charged, officials were unable to trace the files that indicated details of Jangpura's allotment. After a flurry of notes exchanged between the Public Works Department (PWD), the CC, and the DC, the administration was able to reconstruct the terms through the presence of an unofficial note from 1914. CC E.R. Abbott to DC, 3 February 1926, DSA/CC/Edu/35/1927.

[35] Pilar Maria Guerrieri, *Negotiating Cultures: Delhi's Architecture and Planning from 1912 to 1962* (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2018), 25.

[36] DSA/DC/48/1941; DSA/CC/Local Self Government (LSG)/6-5/1940; DSA/CC/Edu/4-7/1932.
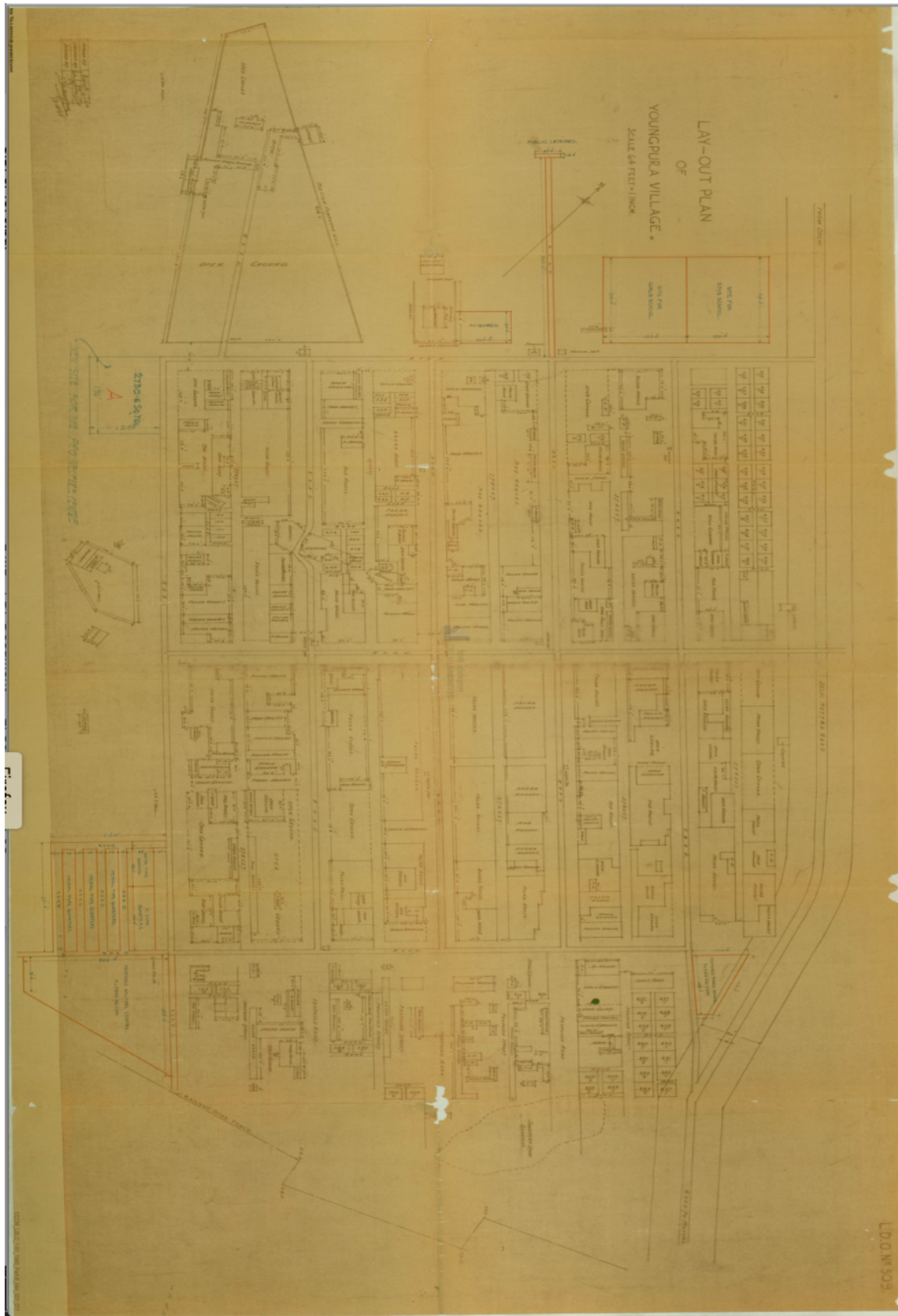
Figure 1.1: Comprehensive Layout of Jangpura (1938).[37]

---

[37] DSA/CC/LSG/1-51/1940.

1.3. The Heterogenous Space Begins: Populations Settled

The social background of those resettled is reflected in colloquialisms used by residents. In my quest to recover the history of the space, I encounter the terms *basti kaminaan or kamin badha* as informal names for Jangpura. *aap khaton mein dekh lo iska naam hai basti kaminaan*. "If you look in the records, you will see its name as basti kaminaan".[38] This could loosely be translated to the residing place of *kamins*. *Kamins* was a term for Dalit agricultural labourers or menials who carried out various tasks in the village. Their residence, while usually in the same village, was at a distance from the caste-Hindu or zamindar households. These socio-spatial relations were maintained and reordered in Jangpura.[39]

The Ravidas Mandir, located on Hospital Road, houses a small old *Bhumi mata* or *Bhumi Devi* (the earth goddess) temple. Initially, this temple was separate from the Ravidas Mandir and became part of the complex in the postcolonial period (Chapter 3). Residents inform me that Bhumi mata was worshipped in the relocated villages and was supposed to bring good fortune to settlements in rural Delhi. Thus, it made sense that the foundations of a new village would accompany the installation of the mata's temple to protect a new settlement, i.e., Jangpura village (now Bhogal). The land on which the Ravidas Mandir stands lay at the Western edge of Jangpura village, thereby enveloping the entire neighbourhood in the domain of its protection. This becomes important in the context of the nature of property relations that this new settlement facilitated. Traditionally Dalit agricultural labourers in Delhi's rural area were tenants-at-will at the mercy of Jat, Gujjar, Bania, Brahmin, Rajput, Saini, and Sheikh zamindars. Unlike the scores of dispossessed landless peasants in the wake of land acquisitions, the Dalits of Jangpura benefitted from colonial aspirations of a model settlement. Through their payment of the *salaana lagaan* (yearly rent), their relocation to this 'model' space established them as property owners. Thus, Bhumi mata could protect the settlement from misfortune at this new 'home'.

Thus, the emerging working-class settlement comprised Dalits (former untouchable castes), primarily Chamars (Leather workers), along with smaller numbers of Chuhras

---

[38] Mr Vashisht, Interview, 5 March 2019. When I inquired about the *khatas* (records), I was informed of a registry containing the names of the different villages and communities. Some residents claimed to have copies of their allotments and the registry as well. However, perhaps owing to property disputes in the city, they were apprehensive about sharing their documents. Regular trips in search of these khatas failed as residents deliberately delayed or subverted discussions about the possibility of me looking at the registries and allotment papers.

[39] Wood and Maconachie, *Final Settlement Report*, 79; *Gazetteer of the Delhi District, Part A.-1912*, Punjab District Gazetters, (Lahore: The Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1913).

(sweepers), Dhobis (washermen), lower-caste Kumhars (potters), and Muslims.[40] For example, Ashok, a Bhogal resident, informs me that his family were Jatavs belonging to a village called Madarsa, a village of *raj mistris* (master craftsmen) and labourers in regular colonial employment for a variety of infrastructure projects across Delhi. His ancestors originally lived near the present-day Bhikaji Cama Complex but left due to the possibility of finding masonry work with the colonial state.

Rakesh also belongs to one such family that traces its origins to the village Nimka in Rajasthan, who moved to Delhi in the late nineteenth century. Having established a residence in Aliganj, they were relocated to Jangpura village (now Bhogal). In our first meeting, he recounts the arrival of his ancestors to Jangpura.

> Yes, like I was telling you, we are here from 1922. Like our ancestors, my great-grandfather came here, from there, he had migrated from Aliganj. They were labour, masons, labourers, contractors type. Like this they all worked together. After doing the work many years had passed living in Delhi. And Delhi at that time did not have many people. They had built a small separate space for a colony themselves by building small slums. There was a certain man named Young or someone. He was an officer in the English government. He was allotted the entire area and he set up a colony for poor people here, in which our ancestors came and settled.[41]

Similar is the case of individuals like Kishan Lal, DC or Meherchand belonging to Jatav families of Jor Bagh and Kushak villages, employed in 'government service' such as the post and telegraph offices or the Golf club. At the same time, the 'model' village also required populations and infrastructures 'useful' to these residents and the surrounding region (discussed in Chapter 2). This is where the *vyapaaris* (traders), i.e., the Banias and Jains, entered the fray. They were joined by a small number of other caste-Hindu populations like Brahmins and Sainis, former zamindars of the resettled villages, establishing shops and businesses for the market that would serve surrounding villages. The names of Nanakchand, Alopi Pershad, Gauri Shankar, Hakim Meherchand Jain, Chimman Lal and especially Lala

---

[40] The associated professions refer to 'historic' occupational caste professions defined by colonial knowledge production. They do not necessarily reflect the actual professions these communities were involved in.

[41] Rakesh Sagar, Interview.

Samman Lal are often recalled by residents as being the dominant families of the village. Chimman Lal's family were relocated from Pilanji, while Lala Summan Lal and his son Anoop Singh moved from Arab Sarai to run a banking business in the village. Adding to this were trading families that moved from other areas of the province to take advantage of the emerging opportunities with the city's expansion. The proprietors of Kadimi Sweets came from Nizamuddin;[42] Jain Saab's family from Farrukh Nagar (near Gurgaon) to open a grain store; or the Gargs from Sarai Julena who still run a ration store they established in 1930. The villages settled live on in the colloquial reference terms used in the neighbourhood, *Kushakiya, Judbaghiya, Sarai* waale…These caste and village histories were combined in Jangpura's spatial layout.

In December 2018, Rakesh introduced me to the descendants of Chimman Lal. After getting out of his guest house on Bhogal Road, we got on his *scooty* (colloquialism for gearless scooters), the go-to vehicle for many middle-class residents in Delhi and headed towards Summan Bazar (named after Lala Summan Lal), passing deep into the settlement, and ending up on Temple Road, the site of the dual Jain Mandirs and Bhogal's construction market. Like Mr Vashisht, Gauri Shankar and Steel Corps claim their family's relocation from Pilanji village before Bhogal's settlement. They belong to a big Bania family of Bhogal with an assortment of businesses in Jangpura-Bhogal. The family is present in the archive through one brother who owned land in Bhogal Pahari before its acquisition. Of the two brothers running the business, the younger brother, Sushil, emphatically tells me about the area's diverse presences and religious sites. He highlights the distinct *abadis* (settlements)*,* populations, and their spaces of worship as a mark of great urban planning and heterogeneity.[43] Echoing similar statements made by other residents, Mr Vashist situates Bhogal's layout within the idea of segregated and peaceful co-presence of different castes and communities: "meaning they (the British) did the allotment in such a way that one caste, one community, they stay in one place. So that they do not fight".[44] Similarly, the Dalit residents praise the organised and planned nature of the space, even if they elide the 'positive' aspects of this segregation. Conversations show that this diversity was contingent on segregated mohallas of castes and communities. Ashok captures this irony when he juxtaposes Jangpura's efficient geometrical planning with the endemic

---

[42] Along with some Muslims, they were tenants on properties owned by Pir Zamin Nizami, the caretaker of the Nizamuddin shrine. See Pir Zamin Nizami to Wakf Commissioner, Delhi Province, 21 March 1974, DSA/Wakf/12/1974.

[43] Gauri Shankar, Interview 25 December 2018.

[44] Mr Vashisht, Interview; Amma, Interview, 18 July 2017; Hari Ram Gupta, Interview, 18 July 2017; Panditji, 12 December 2018; Jain Saab 26 February 2019; Dr. Verma, Interview, 22 October 2021.

socio-spatial order. "Bhogal was settled along caste lines. Like in all areas, it was innovative yet had all the old contradictions".[45]

These statements piqued my curiosity. With a fragmented archive and an untraceable foundation file, how could I reconstruct this segregated neighbourhood, especially in the contemporary moment marked by the incessant exchange of properties and a booming rentier economy? Fortunately for my research, the spatial predicates of historic presences have continued in the present day. While a new tenancy regime has broken down some of the marked homogenous *mohallas,* residence patterns of the original *Bhogaliyas* (Bhogal residents) have largely remained the same, a point that I fully realised through the spatial locations of my varied interlocutors and journeys between these *mohallas*. A clear continuity of segregated living is visible and thriving in Bhogal. For example, the journey from Rakesh's guest house to the Steel Brothers unintentionally turned into an exercise in spatial mapping. From Bhogal Road, the site of Jatav residences and shops, we moved on to Central Road, Jangpura-Bhogal's commercial hub and historic site of interaction, eventually moving into the domain of Bania and Jain establishments and residences, where we met the Steel brothers. In contrast, my conversations with Rakesh, DC, Kishan Lal, or Mange Lal always took place on the other side of Central Road, the site of Dalit habitations. Figure 1.4 reproduces the segregated layout based on conversations and mental maps drawn by residents.

---

[45] Ashok, Interview.
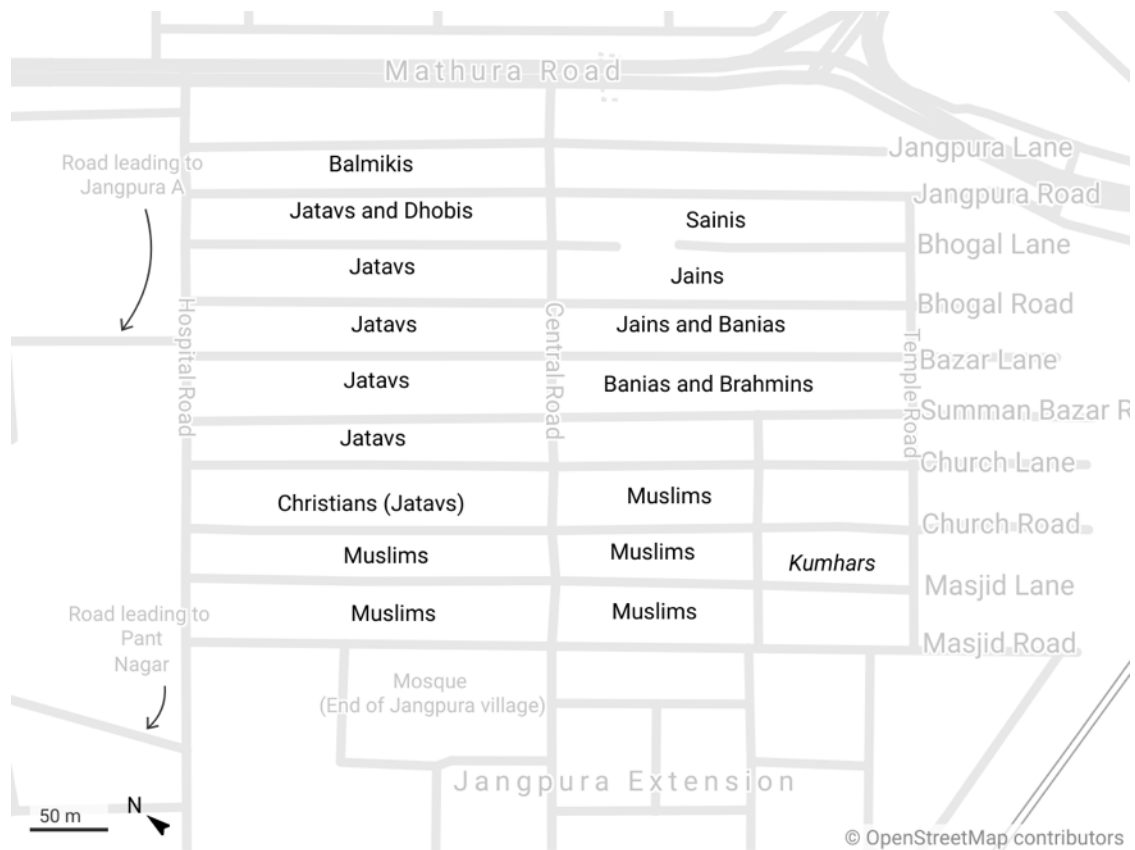
Figure 1.2: Spatial divisions in Jangpura village. (Note: The map is not an accurate representation and is for illustrative purposes only)

As we can see from the diagram, the settlement pattern was, according to residents, along village and caste lines. Central Road, the main road cutting across the neighbourhood, became the dividing line between Dalits and caste-Hindu groups. Taking the figure above as the basis of our orientation, we can see that the right side of Central Road, primarily Church Lane to Bhogal Lane, housed the Jatavs, Balmikis, and Dhobis. The beginnings of Church Road and Church Lane also had a small settlement of recently converted Christians, primarily recruited from the Chamars. Although their settlement extended beyond Central Road, they were separated from the caste-Hindu *galis*. Church Road, Church Lane, Masjid Lane, and Masjid Road housed Muslims and a few Kumhars (at the end of the road). The Banias, Brahmins and Jains mainly resided along Summan Bazar Road and Bazar Lane, the centre of their activities. Examples of discrete caste and village compositions are Bazar Lane which houses former residents of Madarsa; Bhogal Road, which is home to ex-inhabitants of Aliganj; Church Lane, which is lined with Judbaghiyas. Meanwhile, the Sainis resided along Jangpura

57

Road on the caste-Hindu side of the settlement.[46] As a result, Central Road would become the primary site of interaction between the different communities.

By the 1930s, Jangpura was a fully functioning settlement with a market, dispensary, and school catering to populations from within and outside the village. Forging a sense of place in the neighbourhood entailed engaging with the planned space of the neighbourhood, the spatial boundaries of locales, and formulating a new set of social relations in the neighbourhood. The stories of original arrivals to Jangpura—a compensation for displacement and as a space of opportunity— now became a key point among residents to lay claims to the space as *mool niwasis* (local residents) of the neighbourhood.

The resettled populations came from different villages and social communities now placed within a new socio-spatial order determined by community and village predicates. The segregated nature of the space guided settlement and interactions among its inhabitants. Jangpura's neighbourhood diversity at its founding moment was contingent on spatially proximate segregation. Although now organised around colonial logics of uniformity, 'modern' urban sensibilities, and ease of surveillance, it replicated caste, religion, and village-based spatial arrangements. This segregated layout determined religious spaces established close to their relevant devotees, interactions, and contestations in the village through shifting social configurations, constantly adapting to newer arrivals.

2. The Space Expands: Jangpura to Jangpura-Bhogal

The first demographic transformation in the neighbourhood was linked to a process of transition to a postcolonial space. As colonial India was getting ready to prepare for the devolution of power in 1947 and independence from colonial rule, the distinct territorial futures of India and Pakistan as two independent states were now a reality. Nationalist politics, exemplified by the Congress and the Muslim League, active since the early twentieth century, reached a crescendo with the ostensible incompatibility of the Muslims and Hindus. Furious debates, mobilisations, and political rallies around the idea of a territorial future turned, as Parveen argues, every lane, street, and neighbourhood into a putative homeland and contested space.[47] These articulations significantly impacted the emergent idea that minorities on either

---

[46] Rahul, personal communication, 3 March 2021; Kishan Lal, Interview, 18 November 2018; Amma, Interview.

[47] The idea of a territorially defined Pakistan only emerged in 1940 through the Muslim league's proposals for separate states in Muslim majority provinces in Northwestern and Northeastern India. Later, in 1946, the brief agreement of the Cabinet Mission Plan to establish distinct Muslim majority

side now lost their claims to the land. Thus, the achievement of Independence was in many senses dwarfed by the indiscriminate violence and displacements of the Partition.

We can trace the formal beginning of the violence to the Muslim League's 'Direct Action Day' of August 1946 that sparked off a chain reaction across India's northern belt.[48] By March 1947, North-West India witnessed ongoing political demonstrations, political machinations, and the sudden eruption of violence. Roving mobs mercilessly attacked minorities, burning, and pillaging their settlements, forcibly converting populations, and abducting and raping women: a common pattern followed in the East and West. This violence and its attendant displacements had peaked even before the Cyril Radcliffe-led Boundary Commission finalised the actual physical boundaries. Here rumours of violence and the final boundaries of India and Pakistan served as triggers for large-scale mobilisations for attacks on minorities. As the plethora of studies on the Partition have highlighted, these acts and the long-term bureaucratic procedures of state border regimes solidified the identities of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Indian, and Pakistani. By the end of the violence, around 15 million had been displaced, and almost 2 million had died.[49]

Delhi was not immune to this violence that exploded in September 1947. The months leading up to the violence witnessed the arrival of thousands of traumatized Hindu and Sikh refugees into Delhi, bringing stories of rape, pillage, murder, and abductions from the other side of the border. By the end of August, it was estimated that there were approximately 130,000 refugees in the city.[50] Delhi became a "Partition city" as refugee arrivals accompanied large-scale violence against Muslims, and their departure. The arriving non-Muslim refugees outnumbered the departing Muslims by 3:1. 495,391 refugees led to an almost 90% increase in Delhi's population i.e., it went from 9,17,939 in 1941 to 1,744,072 in 1951. Memoirs, Partition studies and numerous fictional works highlight tales of looting of shops, roving armed mobs, the streets of Old Delhi being patrolled by the army, and houses in Old Delhi being ransacked

---

provinces, was short-lived owing to disagreements between the Congress and the Muslim league. This vague territorial definition was however, actualised through the political machinations of the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha who saw the only solution through the strict physical separations of Punjab and Bengal along religious lines Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Parveen, *Contested Homelands*.

[48] In August 1946, violence broke out between Hindus and Muslims in Calcutta leading to several thousand deaths. This violence soon spread to Bombay, East Bengal, Bihar, Garhmukteshwar, Northwest Frontier Provinces and eventually Bihar. See Pandey, *Remembering Partition*.

[49] Pandey, *Remembering Partition;* Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[50] *The Times of India*, 25 August 1947.

by residents and refugees. More importantly, they point to the dramatic movements of Muslim and non-Muslim masses towards spaces of refuge that emerged across the city.[51]

2.1. Housing the 'Citizen-Refugee': Land Acquisition and Housing

As Uditi Sen has argued, this was the period of the 'citizen-refugee', a paradoxical category emerging from the chaos of the Partition: displaced millions who were automatically citizens of their 'putative homelands'.[52] Almost half a million refugees flooded the city taking up shelter in railway stations, religious sites, historic ruins, empty houses left behind by Muslims, old war time accommodations, pavements, and haphazardly set-up refugee camps. Kaur and others trace this moment of arrival to inform us that there were four large refugee camps in the city at Kingsway, Rajinder Nagar, Purana Qila, and Pul Bangash.[53] After the refugee registration process that determined refugee abilities to obtain food and clothing, self-sufficient refugees were housed in the concrete barracks, and those in need of assistance were sheltered in cloth tents. The different accommodations, thus, divided refugees based on a reproduction of social class in these liminal spaces.[54]

However, these temporary accommodations in camps and other spaces in the city were inadequate to rehabilitate and promote a self-sufficient and modern citizenry. Thus, a major task of the Ministry of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation under K.C. Neogy was the construction of refugee dwellings, a first step in the process of recovery. The crisis required

---

[51] Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2011); Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, "A Debt to Pay", in *Orphans of the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India*, ed. Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal (New Delhi: UBS Publishers and Distributors, 1995); Nirad C. Chaudhry, *To Live or Not to Live: An essay on living happily with others* (New Delhi: Indian Book Company, 1970); Suraya Qasim, "Where did She Belong: Stories on the Partition of India", in *Orphans of the Storm*, ed. Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal (New Delhi: UBS Publishers Distributors, 1995).
Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998); Pandey, *Remembering Partition*; Kudaisya and Yong, "'Capitol landscapes'"; Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Kaur, *Since 1947*; Vanita Sharma, "Inherited Memories: Second-Generation Partition Narratives from Punjabi Families in Delhi and Lahore", *Cultural and Social History* 6, no. 4 (12/2009 2009), https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2009.11425870; Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Geva, *Delhi Reborn*.
[52] Sen, *Citizen Refugee*.
[53] Kingsway camp was the largest camp with an estimate 30,000 occupants. See Kaur, *Since 1947*, 99. See also Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Sutton, "Masjids, monuments and refugees in the Partition city of Delhi, 1947–1959"
For details on the approximate refugee numbers in camps, see 'Statement showing the name of camps, number of refugees, etc', DSA/CC/RR/3-193/1948.
For a comprehensive illustration of all of refugee and evacuee camps, see Erin P Riggs, "An Archaeology of Refugee Resettlement: Delhi After Partition" (PhD, Binghamton University, 2020), 4.
[54] Social networks played a key role in the everyday life of the camp. See Savitri Puri's story in Kaur, *Since 1947*, 100.

the rapid building and construction of refugee dwellings in a city with a history of housing shortages. As a result, through extensive land acquisitions that expanded the city, the Rehabilitation and Development Board (RDB) in collaboration with the DIT, PWD, and private firms like Delhi Land and Finance (DLF) constructed 20 refugee colonies like Lajpat Nagar, Shadipur, Malka Ganj, Kalkaji, Patel Nagar, Rajendra Nagar, spread over an area of 3000 acres.[55] In addition, vacated Muslim properties under the protection of the Custodian of Evacuee Property (next section) would become part of the compensation pool for refugees.

The Rehabilitation Ministry and its requirements 'urbanised' Jangpura village, which now became part of Administrative Zone V: Transferred Area.[56] 156 acres, primarily the open agricultural fields and barren lands surrounding Jangpura village, were quickly acquired for the Jangpura Village Extension Scheme. Since this area was already Nazul land, the Rehabilitation Ministry incurred no costs in its acquisition.[57] Completed by the mid-1950s, the scheme would comprise Jangpura-A, Jangpura-B, Pant Nagar, and Jangpura Extension. This period also saw the return (in official correspondence) of the older village name for Jangpura village: 'Bhogal'. While initially 3000 tenements to accommodate 15000 people were planned,[58] about 1200 plots housing approximately 8500 people were built, making Jangpura-Bhogal one of the lower-density refugee settlements. This excluded the evacuee properties that were allotted to refugees. Unfortunately, the incremental nature of constructions makes it difficult to determine the exact number of completed tenements in each neighbourhood. Here we only have information about the number of intended tenements in two areas, i.e., Pant Nagar (286) and the belt along Masjid Road (480).

---

[55] For the full list see Guerrieri, *Negotiating Cultures*.

[56] Jangpura belonged to the 24 Nazul estates transferred to the Delhi Improvement Trust in 1937. See Comptroller and Auditor General of India, *Land Management in Delhi Development Authority*, Union Government: Ministry of Urban Development (2016).

[57] DSA/CC/LSG/1-158/1955; DSA/CC/LSG/1-112 /1951; DSA/CC/LSG/1-103/1951.
See also A. Bopegamage, *Delhi: A Study in Urban Sociology* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1957), 82.
However, the speed of these acquisitions led to lapses in paperwork and at times confusion about jurisdiction over land. For example, see the discussion around the establishment of burial grounds DSA/CC/LSG/1/1949; or land acquisition in Jangpura for the potential relocation of Purana Qila inhabitants. NAI/Home/Rehabilitation (RHB)/5(II)58-H/1959.

[58] Press Note, NAI/RDB/B-12/1948.
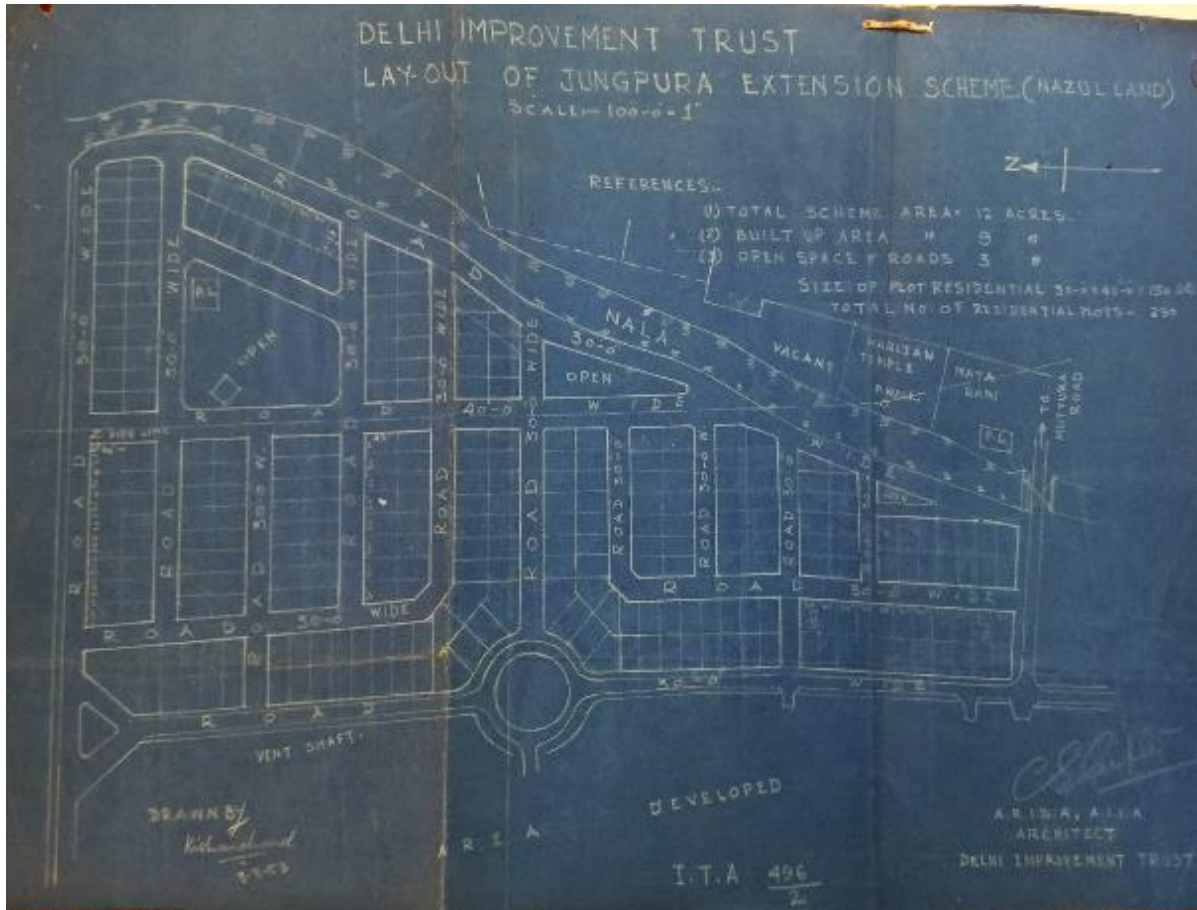
Figure 1.3: Layout of Pant Nagar. [59]

---

[59] DSA/CC/LSG/1-93/1953.

Table 1.1: Details of Government Built Properties.

Type of Residence	Details	Approximate Size
Houses or Bungalows	Independent	500-1000 sq yards
Single Storey (SS)	2 rooms, common baths with latrines	200 sq. yards
Shops-SS	Shop-cum-residence	100 sq. yards
A-type Double Storey (DS)	2 rooms on ground floor and first floor, common staircase,	Greater than 200 square yards, some allottable
C-type DS	Single room tenements along corridor	100-200 sq. yards.
Shops with flats	One flat over two shops	Greater than 200 sq. yards

Table 1.2: Refugee housing in Jangpura-Bhogal

Colony	Type
Jangpura-A	Single Storey tenements Bungalow Plots
Jangpura-B	Bungalow Plots Single Storey (DS) Double Storey (DS)
Pant Nagar	Double Storey (DS)
Jangpura Extension (including outskirts of Bhogal)	2 room houses Bungalow Plots DS tenements Shop-cum residences and Evacuee property Shops
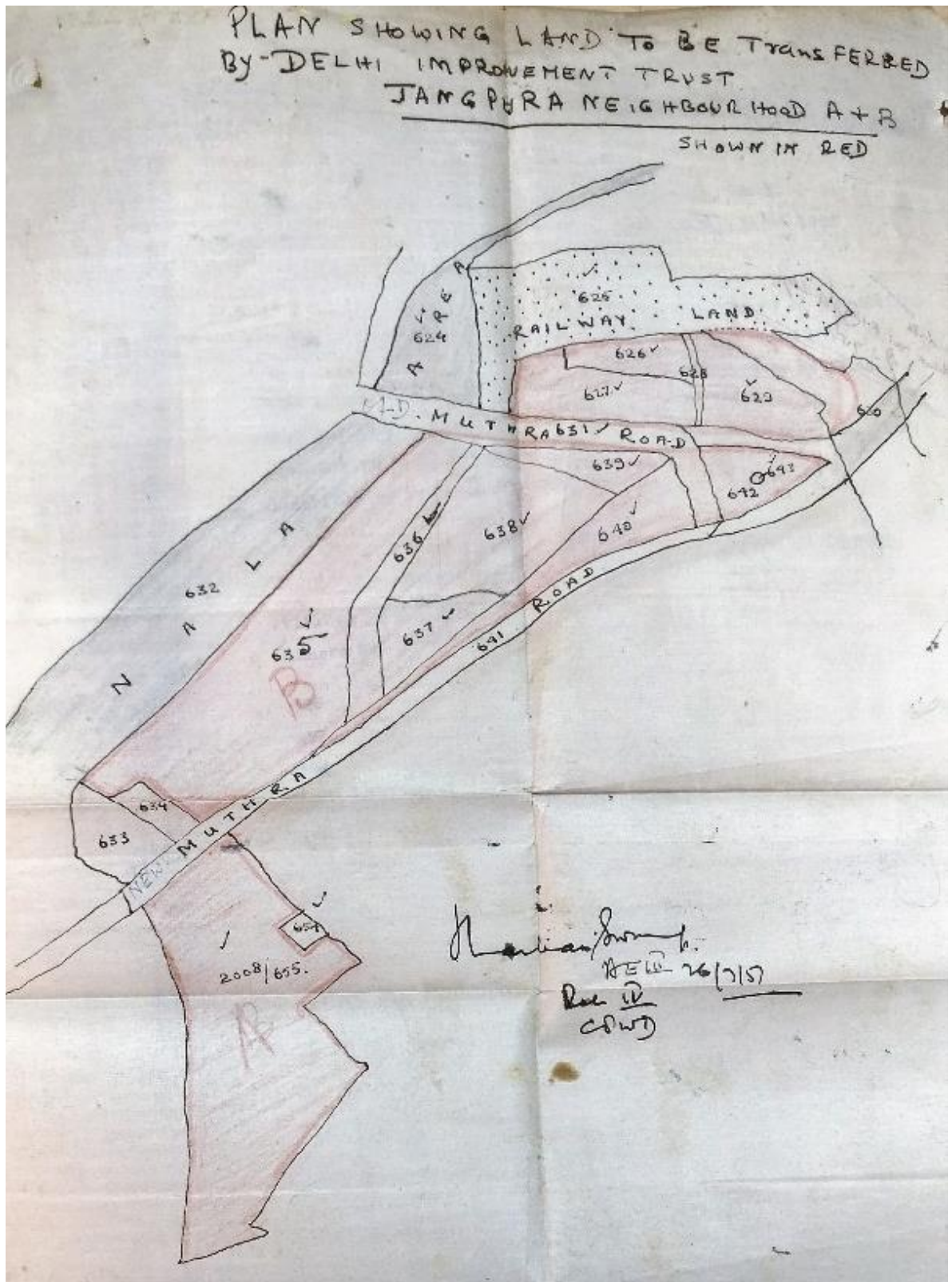
Figure 1.: Area acquired for Jangpura-A and B.

Lastly, a brief reference to the displaced persons' colonies may also be made. They are located all around the city; Gandhi Nagar in Shahdara in the east; Rajendra Nagar, Patel Nagar, Moti Nagar, Ramesh Nagar. Tilak Nagar, etc., in the west; Malkaganj, Kingsway, Vijay Nagar, etc., in the north; and Nizamuddin, Jangpura, Lajpat Nagar, Kalkaji, Malviya Nagar, etc, in the south. There are mainly three types of houses in these colonies — the bungalow type, the one or two storey tenement type, and the small one floor tenement type. The bungalow type houses have generally three rooms, kitchen, bathroom, etc., with small lawns. In the one and two storey tenement houses, there are three rooms on each floor with a separate bathroom and lavatory. The small one floor tenement houses have either one or two rooms and are built in a row, generally on either side of lanes. In addition to kitchen, bath and lavatory, these houses have small front and backyards also. The size and pattern of each type of these houses is more or less uniform in most of the refugee colonies.[60]

Different kinds of accommodations were constructed to accommodate the refugee populations, but we can broadly divide them into two kinds of settlements, i.e., smaller and bigger than 200 square yards. Dwellings over 200 square yards would be auctioned. The constructions below 200 square yards were eligible for strict allotments on rent for the lower middle class and poor refugees. Owing to the contingencies of land and planning, corner and plots at the end of a street larger than 200 square yards, were exempt from these rules. In addition, displaced persons could buy pre-built Evacuee properties that were deemed eligible for refugee allotments. Despite attempts by the state to restrict the exchange or sale of properties—for e.g., the rule that refugees could not transfer plots for five years—refugee dwellings could be bought and sold on the property market.

2.2. The nature of allotments and populations settled

These allotments were based on an elaborate recording of refugee backgrounds through details of their socio-economic lives before arriving in Delhi, allowing the state to calculate approximate compensation amounts. Following the release of advertisements welcoming applications, refugees could apply for accommodation based on their compensation amounts. Although up to 200 square yard plots could be leased (10-20 rupees per year), refugees had the

---

[60] Chopra, *Delhi Gazetteer*, 184.

option to purchase the tenement by offsetting the price with the compensation received, a rule that also applied to strictly saleable tenements.[61] These provisions were based on the Evacuee Property Agreement between India and Pakistan that turned the state into the sole trader of properties. Despite these restrictions, Jangpura-Bhogal witnessed many transfers of plots between refugees or areas as individuals and groups traded properties and allotments to settle in desired areas, close to the city's core or to be near residents from their regions.[62] The nature of the construction would determine the rent, the arrears, and the infrastructural arrangements in their colonies.[63]

There were three types of refugee constructions: Houses or Bungalows, DS A-type or C-type, and SS tenements. These also included SS shops or flats above shops. Jangpura-Bhogal saw instances of all these constructions. As Masjid Road expanded towards the West, constructions parallel to the existing Jangpura village included both A-type and C-type DS tenements. The other parts of Jangpura Extension contained houses, bungalows, and shops, with Link Road at its Western edge, home to large bungalows purchased by wealthy refugees. Jangpura B, like Jangpura Extension, had single, DS, and bungalow plots. Jangpura A, smaller in area and lacking shops, comprised single and DS houses and bungalow plots. Finally, Pant Nagar had C-type DS tenements. Lastly, these accommodations were joined by Muslim Evacuee properties on Masjid Road, Masjid Lane, Church Road, and Church Lane.

By 1948, the RDB formulated a scheme to allot properties based on a regional quota system: each planned neighbourhood would accommodate refugees from the different regions now falling under Pakistan. A regional quota system echoed pre-independence residential patterns by supplementing class and caste norms. Details on the proposed regional makeup and its implementation in individual colonies are difficult to determine. However, we can confer this broadly based on other neighbourhoods with a richer archive. Thus, the composition of the Shadipur settlement that resembled the Jangpura scheme had the following break up: 35% for West Punjab; 20% for NWFP; 20% for Sindh; 15% for Bhawalpur; 10% for Baluchistan; and 5% for armed forces.[64] Another set of settlement conditions placed the 'productive' or 'self-

[61] DSA/CC/RR/3-7/1951.

[62] *Ibid*; DSA/CC/RR/39S-22/1955.
In this regard settlements near Old city received a much higher number of applications as compared to relatively far-off settlements like Jangpura. Kaur, *Since 1947*.

[63] DAS/CC/RR/7-35/1951.

[64] NAI/RDB/B/12/1948.
Neighbouring Nizamuddin also had similar quotas for allotments. However, in either case, it is difficult to determine the extent to which this was followed. See *Ibid;* Mehra, "Jangpura Triptych".

rehabilitating' refugees at the forefront, i.e., those offering services, government servants, pre-employed, those with the likelihood of employment and those willing to undertake vocational training. A third was co-operative organisations like the Model Town House Building Co-operative Society, which had reserved plots in the locality.[65] The last condition was determined by household size, i.e., a family of 5 could apply for one plot. Larger families could apply for two plots.

Refugee reasons for arrival in Delhi ranged from familial connections, fellow refugee travellers, and rehabilitation opportunities offered by the capital. They also intersected with the diverse modes of arrival. The popular narrative of the Partition represents refugees crossing borders in long foot caravans, crowded trains and trucks that were subjected to concerted attacks by mobs. While these haunting images of chaos and uncertainty speak to the large-scale refugee experiences, Kaur reveals that elite refugees used different and much safer modes of transport to cross the border. This was a similar story for some of my interlocutors who deployed class and familial connections to migrate on trains or flights. Unlike the mass of refugees who would live in the different refugee camps across the city, some residents of Jangpura-Bhogal resided in official government spaces or other regions. Take, for example, Mr Dua and his family, who were airlifted through his brother's official connections and brought to Dehradun, where they stayed for two years, after which they lived in Jaipur for another two years; or Keval and his family arriving by plane to Delhi, again through familial connections.[66] The Sikhs of Rawalpindi and Peshawar narrate a more common tale: Trains or trucks would often stop after crossing the border at Amritsar or Patiala, where refugees would eventually make their way to refugee camps in Delhi before obtaining allotments in Jangpura-Bhogal.[67]

Refugee colonies across the city saw the emergence of neighbourhoods based on biradiri, caste, community, religion, and region, living in names of those settlements like Derawal Nagar (NWFP), or Model Town that echoed Lahore's upper-class settlement. Another element was the refugee camps and emergent social relations developed through cohabitation, the classic example being most Purana Qila camp refugees who moved to Lajpat Nagar.[68] A similar pattern emerged in Jangpura-Bhogal. For example, Bhogal primarily saw the influx of

---

[65] 55 plots were reserved for them. 'Housing and Rent Officer to Allotment Officer', 7 May 1952, DSA/CC/RR/3-7/1951.
[66] Mr Dua, Interview, 27 July 2017; Keval, Interview, 17 August 2017.
[67] Singh Saab, Interview 15 January 2019; Residents of Pishori Mohalla, Interview, 4 February 2019; Gandhi brothers, Interview, 11 November 2018; Arwant Singh, Interview, 25 February 2019.
[68] Kaur, *Since 1947*.

Sikh refugees from Mirpur in Kashmir and Rawalpindi along refugee constructions and evacuee property. Harpal narrates this arrival:

> Our village was in Kashmir, and the maximum people came from Rawalpindi. The ones from Peshawar live in Pishori Mohalla (Jangpura Extension). Thamali, Thoa Khalsa, 2-3 villages were from there. There are from there. Ours was also close by. It must be 30-40 kms away. Everyone used to come and go, there were relations among them. Villages upon villages left together and came. Almost every person from our village came. Be it Thoa Khalsa, Thamali, all these villages have come. They have all come to Bhogal. Maybe some of them may have gone here and there but the maximum came to Bhogal.[69]

His grandfather, Harnam Singh from Mirpur in Kashmir, purchased a newly constructed DS shop-cum-residence on Masjid Road and an Evacuee property on Church Road through his personal savings and the compensation amount received from the Ministry of Rehabilitation.[70] Similarly, others like the Gandhi cousins, Arwant Singh, and Jagdeep Singh from Rawalpindi were allotted evacuee property on Church Lane and refugee constructions in the C-type DS quarters on Masjid Road. They were also joined by Hindu families like the Duas and their family friends from the Miyan Wali district in NWFP. Through their government-employed family members, the Duas and their friends purchased four flats in the A-type DS tenements opposite Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) school[71]. Meanwhile, the Multani proprietor of Chacha Chai Stall was allotted his SS shop-cum residence[72] on Central Road and the Bhallas, from Bhaun village in West Punjab, bought their house in 1954.[73]

This primarily Sikh neighbourhood saw its opposite in Pant Nagar, which emerged as a majority Hindu neighbourhood with arrivals from West Punjab, Northwest Frontier Provinces, and Baluchistan. Keval belongs to one such family from the Jhang district in Punjab. After flying to Amritsar and living there for a year, they eventually reached Delhi by truck to live in Daryaganj before being granted a C-type DS allotment in Pant Nagar. The

---

[69] Harpal Singh, Interview, 17 January 2019.
[70] Private archive of Harpal Singh.
[71] Mr Dua, Interview.
[72] Chacha, Interview, 11 December 2018.
[73] Interview with Mr Bhalla and Anil Goswami, 10 January 2019

neighbourhood also housed later examples of refugee 'success stories' like media mogul Gulshan Kumar and actress Neetu Singh.

Similarly, Jangpura-A housed Sindhis and Sikhs and Hindus from Punjab and NWFP. However, the Sindhis, primarily settled along a row of 20 houses, eventually sold off their tenements to move elsewhere to Nehru Nagar and Lajpat Nagar.[74] This allowed the movement of Hindu refugees like Shyam Sundar, popularly known as Daadu from NWFP, who, through loans from his office, bought his two-roomed SS house in 1962.[75] Jangpura-B, home to various tenements, would witness the arrival of Hindus and Sikhs primarily belonging to West Punjab, exemplified by the now-shut Lahoriyan di hatti, a locally famous *halwai* (sweets shop) catering primarily to the Punjabi refugees. Jangpura Extension, the largest settlement, like Jangpura-A, housed a mix of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Punjab, NWFP, and Sindh.[76] Here Pishori Mohalla, a row of three streets, housed Pashto and Punjabi-speaking Sikhs from Peshawar, who moved into their SS tenements from the Pul Bangash camp in North Delhi. The populations settled largely belonged to upper-caste, lower-middle class, upper-middle class, and wealthy refugees employed in a variety of professions ranging from government services, public sector companies, small and medium businesses, shop-owners, or mechanics.[77] The layout of the space and the neighbourhoods ensured the emergence of distinct and diverse neighbourhoods, segregated yet connected to each other.

Jangpura expanded to become Jangpura-Bhogal through the arrivals and attendant refugee constructions that transformed its social demography. The refugees had different trajectories of arrival and regional and socio-economic backgrounds that combined to determine visibly separated Sikh and Hindu settlements. However, the nature of these settlements was common, as Delhi witnessed several such instances of refugee resettlement. In this context, Pant Nagar was the most homogenous settlement among post-Partition additions, a predominantly Hindu neighbourhood. Then there were the moderately mixed neighbourhoods of Jangpura Extension, Jangpura-A and Jangpura-B. Bhogal remained an extremely heterogenous space, primarily housing Sikhs, a few Hindu refugees, and earlier

---

[74] Residents of Jangpura-A, Interview, 5 March 2019.
[75] Shyam Sundar, Interview, 4 July 2017.
[76] Kapil Kakkar, Interview, 27 May 2021; Mr Dua, Interview,
[77] Dalit refugee settlements replicated segregated patterns of social life. While Jhilmil colony was built afresh, Rehgarpura abutting Karol Bagh already had a history of Dalit settlements, home to as the name suggests, Rehgars and Chamars employed in the leather industries. Kaur, *Since 1947*; Kumar, "Making of the 'New City'".
For discussion on Dalit settlements in the East, see Sen, *Citizen Refugee*.

diverse populations. Spatial proximity, pre-existing social relations, religious spaces, and the market would frame social space in Jangpura-Bhogal. For example, Jangpura-A and Pant Nagar were connected through the patronage of Sanatan Dharam Temple. Everyday interactions and emerging market relations forged relationships between Bhogal's original residents, and the Sikhs of Bhogal and Jangpura-B. Within this context, Jangpura Extension, the largest settlement, especially its bungalow area, remained socially isolated from the other neighbourhoods, becoming an extremely self-contained neighbourhood. However, specific moments and concerns of material and social infrastructures initiated negotiations and alliances with other populations in the space (Chapter 2). Before moving on to the later streams of arrivals, I draw attention to the departures accompanying this moment.

2.3. Displacements: Evacuee property and the Case of Chand Khan

The Sikhs living along Church Road, Church Lane, Masjid Road, and Masjid Lane reside in post-Partition constructions and former Muslim properties allocated by the Custodian of Evacuee Property. They replaced Muslims who, according to residents, peacefully, albeit in a rush, vacated their homes and sought refuge elsewhere. Ever since I started my fieldwork, I was fascinated with the history of a now absent population. I encountered their presence in the archive and through the existence of the Bhogal Mosque (which predates the original settlement) now utilised by Afghans and Kashmiris. How does one recover the past of a community that is now absent? I soon realised this was a challenging, if not impossible, task. With this in mind, I regularly pestered residents about the neighbourhood's Muslim pasts. I know they left, but where did they go? Did they remain in Delhi or did they depart for Pakistan? In this context, I was conversing with Kishan at the Ravidas Mandir. I repeatedly asked him what I had asked many others: did some Muslims go to Nizamuddin? Or did they all go to Pakistan? His answer led to the discovery of a decades-long process of displacement. As he informs me "Most of them left for Pakistan. Maybe one or two moved to Nizamuddin. I know about one person. His name was Chand Khan. People would call him *Chandu Chandu*. His property case is still underway".[78]

Jangpura's Muslims departed the village following partition violence that first began in the rural areas around Delhi and soon spread to the city, with the Old City witnessing the worst of the onslaught. Tales of violence carried by refugee entering the city, news from the radio

---

[78] Kishan Lal, Interview.

and newspapers, and rumours of Muslims planning attacks led to mass hysteria and multiple incidents of violence in a city with an already tense social fabric[79]. The riots during this period included attacks on Muslim neighbourhoods and homes; the desecration and occupation of Muslim monuments and places of worship; and numerous incidents of abduction and rape of women. An estimated 25,000 Muslims were killed while others sought refuge in 'evacuee' camps like Purana Qila, 'Muslim zones' like Nizamuddin or Ballimaran, or religious sites like the Jama Masjid.[80] While there was no official data recorded on the number of Muslim departures, the 1941 and 1951 censuses revealed a decline of 205,470 Muslims in Delhi (3,04,971 in 1941 to 99,501 in 1951).[81] Over a decade, the Muslim population of the city thus declined from over 33% to a little over 5%.

In various parts of Delhi newly arrived Hindu and Sikh refugees and local non-Muslims started occupying empty houses and spaces left behind by Muslims or driving Muslims out from non-Muslim majority neighbourhoods. The violent expulsions and illegal occupations across North-western India prompted the extension of the office of the Custodian of Evacuee Property, under the East Punjab Evacuees' (Administration of Property) Ordinance of 1947, to Delhi. Introduced as a measure by the Indian and Pakistani governments to control forceful dispossessions, the Custodian was the guardian of abandoned properties until the original owners returned. However, ideological divisions within the administration—those supporting Muslims vs officials who questioned Muslim loyalty—facilitated a complicated process of Muslim displacement through arbitrary measures and forceful occupations. Muslims sought refuge in "Muslim zones" i.e., Muslim majority areas where the Indian state could guarantee protection. Muslims were relegated to these pockets as their other neighbourhoods were over-run by refugees.[82] As Muslims departed from non-Muslim majority zones towards more homogenous neighbourhoods, the Custodian declared many other Muslim properties as Evacuee property, based on the idea of 'intending evacuees'. In many instances, the Custodian acquired abandoned properties of Muslims who were still in the city.[83] Although the archive

---

[79] Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Hindu Nationalist Movement in Delhi", in *Delhi: Urban Space and Human Destinies*, ed. Veronique Dupont, Emma Tarlo, and Dennis Vidal (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000); Legg, "A Pre-Partitioned City?"; Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Geva, *Delhi Reborn*.

[80] Pandey, *Remembering Partition*; Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Geva, *Delhi Reborn*.

[81] Prabha Chopra, *Delhi Gazetteer*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (New Delhi, 1976), 130.

[82] Muslim zones were Muslim majority localities where people had sought refuge and were sites that could be protected by the state. For a greater discussion see Parveen, *Contested Homelands*.

[83] DSA/CC/R&R/17-11/1950.

See also Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Geva, *Delhi Reborn*.

and oral memory are silent on the matter of Muslim departures, we can get a sense of the displacement process through the following instance of a property dispute.

Chand Khan was a resident of Jangpura-Bhogal. After losing his brothers and nephews in the violence of 1947, Chand Khan sought refuge in neighbouring Nizamuddin. Assuming his death or departure to Pakistan, the Custodian acquired Chand Khan's three properties in 1948 i.e., plot 591,592, and 594. Its mission as the temporary guardian of properties with the intention of restoring them to original owners quickly changed. With the continuing refugee crisis and the immense shortage of housing resulting from it, the Custodian now became a trader of properties, authorised to auction, and allot abandoned and unclaimed properties to refugees.[84] This change in legislation allowed the Custodian to rent plot 594 to three refugee brothers in 1948, after evicting a local who was occupying it.[85]

By 1954, Chand Khan, the only surviving member of his family and thus entitled to all three properties, approached the Custodian for their restoration. A year later in 1955, these properties became part of the compensation pool for the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation. Chand Khan had to approach the Custodian again which through its enquiry reports in 1962 and 1963 proved the veracity of his claims. While the order for restitution of the properties to Chand Khan was eventually issued, officials delayed the proceedings, leading to the sale of plot 591 by the Rehabilitation Ministry in 1965 and its resale in 1966, thereby introducing major complications.[86]

In 1966, the official order for the restoration of properties accompanied a letter by Chand Khan agreeing to receive rent as compensation for the properties. However, by 1972, this compensation arrangement was annulled, and the Settlement Commissioner ordered eviction of the occupants. This new order was issued in response to an amendment that had recently been passed, striking down the possibility of calculating compensation for mistakenly acquired properties.[87]

---

[84] Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Geva, *Delhi Reborn*.
[85] S. Balbir Singh And Others (Ors.) vs Rajni Kant, Settlement Commissioner, 1983 (4) DRJ 287 (Delhi High Court 29 November 1981).
[86] Qayyum Khan vs DDA And Ors., 126 (2006) DLT 418 (Delhi High Court 2 January 2006); Union of India (UOI) vs Qayyum Khan and Ors., LPA 375/2008 (Delhi High Court 13 April 2009).
[87] The court cited Lachhman Dass & Others vs. Municipal Committee, Jalalabad & Others, 1969 AIR 1126, 1969 SCR (3) 645 (Supreme Court of India, 12 February 1968).

The eviction decision was challenged in the Delhi High Court by the occupants of Plot 594 in 1972, who agreed to pay rent in lieu of their eviction. The court quashing the eviction order in 1982, argued that the Evacuee Property Act and its amendments meant that an allotment by the Settlement Commissioner (part of the office of the Custodian) was equivalent to a lease, thereby negating the earlier issuance of eviction orders. Moreover, the court stated that the Office of the Custodian had failed to officially declare the properties as non-evacuee properties. During this time, Chand Khan's attempts came to an abrupt stop: he died in 1979, having neither received compensation nor restoration of his properties after twenty-five years of litigation. His attempts were continued by Chand Khan's heir Qayyum Khan, who was until recently still involved in litigation around his father's properties either with the state or his own family members.[88]

Chand Khan's dispossession was a prolonged process involving a constellation of actors, playing out in the offices of the Custodian, the courtroom, and the housing market. It began with an overt violent, communal act against his family by locals that led to the material dispossession of his property, formalised through the Custodian whose actions displaced another local occupant of the property and introduced newly arrived refugees into the chain of possession. The market emerging from the new property regime being formed at the time now entered the story, complicated the process of recovery, and later, assisted by the court and a now evolved Evacuee property legislation, finalised the dispossession and reuse of this Muslim property.

Unlike Pir Zamin Nizami (Custodian of Nizamuddin's shrine), who succeeded in the recognition of, and realisation of rent from his mistakenly acquired properties in Jangpura.[89] Chand Khan's efforts were marred by a complicated and bureaucratic recovery process. Although it was never designed as a regime to displace Muslims, this was the effective outcome. Contingent factors like bureaucratic delays, the development of lessee rights, and

---

[88] Qayyum Khan vs DDA And Ors; U.O.I vs Qayyum Khan and Ors; Mohd. Yusuf Khan vs Qayyum Khan, (Delhi District Court 2 January 2013).

[89] Like Chand Khan, his tenants had departed the neighbourhood. He was also assumed to have departed for Pakistan and his properties came under the charge of the Custodian in 1948. By 1952, he appealed this decision and was able to recover his 8 properties in Jangpura. See 'Certificate' by Finance and Account Officer, Office of the Custodian, 22 September 1953; 'Deputy Custodian Order', 16 October 1952, DSA/Wakf/12/1974. Although more details on this case are unavailable, it is quite likely that Pir Nizami's social capital as a former magistrate and the servitor of the Nizamuddin Shrine ensured this recovery.

market forces together provided legal sanction to Chand Khan's protracted displacement, first from the neighbourhood, and then from his property.

The discussion above has shown how state-sanctioned and facilitated arrivals during the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods formed the original core of Jangpura-Bhogal's populations. Partition and independence transformed the colonial-era segregated and diverse 'model' settlement which included groups of caste Hindu, Dalit, Muslim, and Christian populations. The Muslims departing Jangpura-Bhogal would never return to the space, having either been killed, settled elsewhere in Delhi, or left India for Pakistan. Their story in Jangpura-Bhogal ended, and they were replaced by new arrival populations. The Hindu and Sikh refugees brought new patterns of socio-spatial segregation in line with regional and class identities.[90] With continued access to state support and the possibility of property ownership that this enabled, these new arrivals would transform into locals/residents: landlords of newly arrived Kashmiri and Afghan tenants and employers of Tamil migrants.

In the following section, I move from the (colonial and national) state to another set of institutional forces that played a crucial role in shaping the trajectories and conditions of arrivals in Jangpura-Bhogal, namely those associated with a rentier economy, the real estate market, and geopolitical realignments.

3. The City Expands: Liberalisation, the Rentier Economy, and Arrivals

3.1. Jangpura-Bhogal's Real Estate

Jangpura-Bhogal is centrally located in Delhi's spatial geography. It is close to the Jangpura metro station on Lala Lajpat Rai Marg and opens on the Mathura Road, two arterial roads connecting Central Delhi to South and Southeast Delhi. In addition, central Delhi, the Railway station, the High Court, and Supreme Court, and important spaces of consumption like Connaught place, are also in the area's proximity—a primary reason for rising rents in Jangpura-Bhogal. Asserting the practicality of the locality in terms of its spatial location, Harpal jokingly informs me that he once justified the high rents to a potential tenant by telling him: *kabristan bhi paas mein hai!* "The graveyard is also nearby", clearly referring to the nearby Nizamuddin graveyard and crematoriums on Mathura and Lodhi roads. Based on

---

[90] There were continuities in certain sets of caste-spatial relations, however. Jangpura-Bhogal's caste-segregated character was further accentuated, and the new arrival populations did not include Dalits refugees who were settled in the fringes of the city, as Kaur reminds us. Kaur, *Since 1947.*

information gleaned from real estate websites, Jangpura-Bhogal provides a variety of accommodations ranging from Single rooms–Four rooms and above dwellings, divided into apartments and builder floors. [91]

Jangpura-Bhogal reveals the differential urban transformations that are characteristic of Delhi. Bhogal, although with relatively smaller houses and congested streets, benefits from its spatial location and ease of access. The planned nature of the settlement gets lost on the ground as the visitor encounters congested streets and tall narrow three-storey buildings all around. Jangpura-A and B, accessible through Hospital Road or Mathura Road, provide slightly different options for prospective tenants. Unlike Bhogal's nature as a mixed commercial and residential space, the two neighbourhoods convey a more residential appearance with more open spaces and diverse housing types. Jangpura Extension and its bungalow areas have witnessed a dramatic proliferation of posh builder floors that, since the 1980s, have catered to lawyers, journalists, and artists. Apart from the residence history of such groups, the land values, location, and more well-off residents have ensured its rentier success. Pant Nagar is a relative outlier, accessible through a small gate near the Jangpura-A garbage dump and from Hospital Road after the Ravidas Mandir and Buddha Vihar. Here, we see lower buildings, usually SS or DS dwellings catering to middle-class tenants.

The difference in their material landscape also extends to the options available. Bhogal and Jangpura Extension DS provide proper two-roomed apartments, single rooms, single room apartments and *barsaatis*.[92] The absence of kitchens in some of these accommodations is substituted through an extensive market infrastructure for readymade meals. In contrast, Jangpura-A, B, and Extension provide *barsaatis*, less congested and more open spaces, including large builder floors. This difference in housing typologies is naturally reflected in the rents in these areas, which are also determined by the associated land values based on colony types and their accessibility to other parts of the city. Rents can range from about 7500 – 1,50,000 rupees per month.

Haphazard multi-storey constructions, which have emerged through the efforts of residents, property dealers, and builders, are visible in most colonies in Delhi. As residents

---

[91] For details see, 'Jangpura: Property Distribution', Housing.com, https://housing.com/rent/flats-for-rent-in-jangpura-new-delhi-P5ws952wtcsec5kez (accessed 18 December 2021); 'Property Rent Rates & Price Trends in Jangpura, Delhi – 2020', Makaan.com. https://www.makaan.com/price-trends/property-rates-for-rent-in-jangpura-delhi-53769

[92] *Barsatis* are usually 1- or 2-room dwellings. They emerged at a time when building bylaws restricted the number of floors. Homeowners would maximise terrace spaces by building small accommodations in one corner of the terrace and leasing them out.

repeatedly narrate, this process began in the 1980s. *80 ke dashak mein shuru ho gaya tha*. "It started in the 1980s". During this time, the Indian National Congress-led government under Rajiv Gandhi began moving away from license raj and a highly regulated economy towards facilitating private enterprise by relaxing permissions and rules for various industries, including builders. With the historic real estate firm DLF acquiring cheap lands from Delhi and Gurgaon's villages[93], lower-level aspirational builders, with the assistance of local political representatives, began working in neighbourhoods such as Jangpura-Bhogal. By this time, Delhi's rents had already been pushed up because of increasing migration and an attendant housing shortage. Facilitated by a DDA unable to meet this housing shortage, property dealers joined hands with these builders to fill the gap, leading to the normalisation of rapid multi-storey constructions across the city.[94] This indiscriminate building activity had drawn attention in the 1980s, but the Municipal Corporation and the DDA could not control the large-scale land acquisitions, speculations, and fervent construction.[95] By the 1990s, Delhi's building regulations changed to allow four-storey constructions. This led to soaring land values as the construction industry made inroads into pre-established colonies, emerging colonies, and other settlements, facilitating an expanding rentier economy.[96]

Jangpura-Bhogal's residents, who became property dealers, builders, and contractors, eagerly recruited middle-class families to agree to extend their flats and make profits out of the sales and rents. The Banias and Jains, dominant in the space and reservoirs of a fair amount of liquid capital, needed enterprising partners who could strike favourable deals with the police

---

[93] DLF was founded by Chaudhary Raghvendra Singh in 1946 and until 1957 constructed some private refugee colonies like Rajouri Garden and Model Town, and upper-class settlements like Hauz Khas. With the arrival of the DDA and its ownership of all land in Delhi, DLF shifted its focus to Gurgaon where it made its fortunes. Today, it is one of the largest real estate developers in the country and has built plush new private townships. See Srivastava, *Entangled urbanism*; Pati, *Properties of Rent*.

[94] Diya Mehra, "Remaking Urban Worlds: New Delhi in the Time of Economic Liberalization" (PhD The University of Texas at Austin, 2011), 43; Baviskar, *Uncivil City*.

[95] Mehra, "Jangpura Triptych", 66.
These processes are beautifully captured in pop culture through the spectacular comedic Bollywood film *Khosla ka Ghosla* which showcases middle-class aspirations, shady land deals, skeevy property dealers, and boisterous builders like Kishan Khurana. This image of the unscrupulous builder has been reinforced through instances of hoarding and fraud, a common feature of Delhi's real estate life. "SC sentences Delhi builder", *The Times of India,* 9 February 1995; "I-T raid on Delhi builder yields Rs 53 cr", *The Times of India*, 3 November 2007.

[96] "Land dealers desecrate Delhi's green belt", *The Times of India,* 6 February 1981; "Builders of Delhi's illegal shopping centres flayed", *The Times of India,* 1 July 2003; 'City Blights', *The Times of India,* 21 January 1997; 'Capital Chaos', *The Times of India,* 24 June 1998. See Sohail Ahmad et al., "Delhi revisited", *Cities* 31 (2013), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2012.12.006; Solomon J. Benjamin, "Neighborhood as Factory: The influence of land development and civic politics on an industrial cluster in Delhi, India" (PhD, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996); Ghertner, *Rule by Aesthetics*; Crowley, *Fractured Forest, Quartzite City*.

and government. Jangpura-Bhogal's well-off Punjabis, who now became the city's dominant social community, took the lead here. Like in other parts of the city, builders and property dealers would approach the middle-class residents to make offers and expand buildings in complete disregard of building bylaws.[97] This middle class, primarily working in small businesses or government employment, saw this as a financially productive activity.

The basic pattern of such deals is as follows: a builder or a property dealer on the builder's behalf approaches a house owner with an offer to add a few more storeys to their building. Since the time of their settlement, the family has grown to include more members. After marriage, as sons and their wives continue to live with the family, a need for more space to accommodate this new familial unit emerges. In other instances, the father's death sometimes leads to a tussle among the sons and daughters over rights to the property.[98] The builder and other parties involved take advantage of the situation and approach these diverse stakeholders to construct multiple storeys over the house. With this, the owners now have more flats and space for the expanding family, or they can choose to rent the additional properties to private or commercial tenants. Meanwhile, the builder and intermediaries make money off the sale or rent the floor they own. In some instances, they can negotiate more flats from the owners. For example, a three-storey building usually would have four flats that could be equally divided between the owners and builders.[99]

Conversations with residents reflect this pattern. For example, through a builder, some residents like Kishan Lal and Asha could expand their houses and lease them out to tenants, providing a much-needed disposable income. Other residents like Anil or Mr Dua, who made additions on their own, utilised Bhogal's hardware market for construction materials and the required labour from the labour chowk at Summan Bazar. After all, Bhogal had families that were involved in construction projects in colonial and postcolonial Delhi (contributing, for example, to clearing the forest area for the construction of the CGO (Central Government Offices Complex) near Defence Colony.

However, the focus here is not the transformation of housing typologies but the arrivals and the rentier economy it facilitated. By the early 2000s, Jangpura-Bhogal's locals, property

---

[97] Until the late 1980s, buildings could not have more than two storeys. However, the housing needs of an overburdened city, land speculation, and property development led to a shift in building byelaws allowing for multi-storey constructions.

[98] Like in other parts of the city, Jangpura-Bhogal has witnessed many such property disputes between family members or tenants and landlords.

[99] See also Solomon J. Benjamin, "Understanding Urban Housing Transformations: A Case Study of Bhogal-India" (MSc, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985).

owners through colonial and postcolonial state patronage, became landlords to a flurry of distinct arrivals, many of whom sought refuge in the relatively peaceful Delhi environment: in single rooms, apartments, or guest houses that flooded the neighbourhood. Now spreading across the city, this new tenancy regime would enrich the 'locals' through high rents and limited legal disputes. At the same time, it would require them to re-examine and reconfigure ideas of the neighbourhood community.

3.2. Itinerants to residents: Kashmiris in Jangpura-Bhogal

Savileroy and his brother run a small suit tailoring business in their Jangpura-A home. While the main stitching centre is in Old Delhi, they handle the finer intricacies of the fitting at their makeshift workshop on the third floor. The second floor is their residence. Over a cup of *Kahwa* (Kashmiri Green Tea) and the overwhelming smell of fresh saffron in it, Savileroy tells me that his family has a history of making suits for political elites, bureaucrats, and high-profile journalists. He described how they arrived in the neighbourhood:

> Savileroy (SR): I've been here for the past 30 years. My father started working
> for the embassies here in 1955.
> Author (SA): Was he here? In Jangpura?
> SR: No not in Jangpura. Jangpura was not there at the time. This was a jungle.
> At that time, he was there in Ballimaran, Purani Dilli side. Before that, my
> grandfather was based in Sialkot, Punjab till 1933.
> SA: So, when you came here in the 1990 did you buy this house?
> SR: No, I was not here. After coming in 1990, I rented a two-room set over Om
> Hotel for 1000 rupees. There I stayed for three years…after that I came to
> Jangpura Extension where I stayed for 3-4 years (on rent). After that I bought
> this and properly started my business. It was an issue as work was difficult (in
> terms of space). Our shop is there, in Srinagar. It has been shut for the past 28
> years. The shop next to ours was owned by a Kashmiri Pandit who sold his shop
> for 80000 – 1 lakh and left. Most Kashmiri Pandits sold off their homes and
> shops and left.[100]

---

[100] Savileroy, Interview, 27 November 2018.

He went on to describe how the militancy's onset led them to shut their shop in Srinagar and temporarily move to Delhi. With the continuing unstable situation back home, they extended their stay in Delhi and began living in a neighbourhood that was witnessing a growing Kashmiri presence: Jangpura-Bhogal. Within a few years, they made enough money to buy the house and another floor in Jangpura-A to make this place home. With little incentive to return, he established a small sewing centre in Old Delhi once their business expanded. Their migration to Delhi was now complete.

In our conversation, Savileroy kept coming back to the Kashmir insurgency and indiscriminate killings by militants and his realisation that the region may never return to normal. Because of circumstances beyond his control, he has become a *dilliwallah*, he says. They are one of many Kashmiri Muslim families who eventually made Delhi their home.

This story of departure from their homes and a reluctant but necessary settlement in Delhi is a common narrative among Kashmiris who escaped the chaos of the insurgency, the roots of which lay in the processes set off by the Partition of India. At the time of postcolonial transition, Kashmir's ruler, Hari Singh, was debating the question of accession as he weighed the respective advances made by India and Pakistan to add Kashmir to their territories.[101] As Pakistan supported a tribal-led invasion of Kashmir, Singh sought assistance from the Indian state. The Indian state intervened when the maharaja agreed to accede to the Indian Union on the condition that Kashmir would be granted a special constitutional status (enshrined in Article 370) and have a right to decide its future based on a plebiscite. The region subsequently became a battleground for the first war between India and Pakistan, leading to its Partition in 1949. Successive governments failed to hold the promised plebiscite, and the Centre's policies contributed to the slow dilution of Kashmir's special status through administrative tinkering, fraud elections, and suppression of protests.

The blatant disregard for electoral processes and political vacillations intensified in the 1980s, which witnessed the removal of Farooq Abdullah's elected government, direct rule of Kashmir, and the later pact between the Congress and National Conference. Increasing disenchantment with the Indian state led many Muslim youths crossing the international border to engage with Pakistan-funded cross-border training camps. Taken together, the Indian state's

---

[101] Following Independence, Princely States could choose to join either India or Pakistan. As postcolonial India worked towards consolidating its territories, it faced resistance from states like Hyderabad and Junagadh, who wanted to join Pakistan. India, however, succeeded in including them in its territories. Kashmir, in contrast, wished to remain an independent state.

failing promises to ensure Kashmiri sovereignty, rigged elections, and mass discontent in the 1980s led to the breakout of a full-scale armed movement for an independent Kashmir in 1989.

By early 1990, violence by both state and non-state forces and the resulting instability led to the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits and the departure of Kashmiri Muslims from the region.[102] As many Kashmiri Pandits sought refuge in camps in Jammu and Delhi, some families moved to the already present Kashmiri Pandit neighbourhood of Pamposh Enclave, or Amar Colony.[103] Kashmiri Muslims soon followed the Hindus to Delhi, hoping to wait out the insurgency. By March 1991, about 7-10,000 Kashmiri families sought refuge in Delhi.[104] The 2001 report on migration counted 40,000 migrants from Kashmir who had been present in the city anywhere between 1-10 years.[105] In 2002, it was estimated that nearly 200,000 Kashmiris lived in Delhi, most of whom were present between September and March.[106] This was connected to an older history linking Kashmir and Delhi.

In the 1970s and 80s, Kashmiri Muslims were mainly itinerant traders who travelled to Delhi in the winter months to trade in shawls, dry fruits, and carpets. Initially they resided in Old Delhi and some of them established small shops dealing in these goods. Eventually, demographic growth and Old Delhi's congestion drove many to move out towards the South of the city. The increasing migration because of the instability in Kashmir, land acquisitions, demographic growth, and material additions made Jangpura-Bhogal a suitable site to welcome new tenants. Jangpura-Bhogal's central location, the neighbourhood's welcoming nature, and the flexibility of landlords were key factors in this settlement.

---

[102] Deepti Sharma "The Kashmir Insurgency: Multiple actors, divergent interests, institutionalized conflict" in *Ethnic Subnationalist Insurgencies in South Asia: Identities, interests and challenges to state authority*, ed. Jugdeep S. Chima, 17-40 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Chitralekha Zutshi, 'An Ongoing Partition: Histories, Borders, and the Politics of Vivisection in Jammu and Kashmir', *Contemporary South Asia* 23, no. 3 (2015): 266–75, https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2015.1040734; Mridu Rai, "Kashmir: From Princely State to Insurgency", *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia: Asian History* (2018); Manisha Gangahar, "Decoding Violence in Kashmir", *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 4 (2013): 35-42; Sumantra Bose, 'Kashmir', *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 154-204.

[103] "Sad story of Kashmiri migrants", *The Times of India,* 19 March 1990; "Kashmiri migrants' future uncertain", *The Times of India,* 4 June 1990; "Kashmir refugees—nobody's children", *The Times of India,* 21 July 1990; "Street wise: How Dal Lake lotus gave a Delhi colony for Kashmiri Pandits its name", *The Indian Express,* 1 November 2019.

[104] Vandana Mandlekar, "Muslims fleeing Valley to Jammu and Delhi", *The Times of India,* 12 March 1991; Dwarika Prasad Sharma, "Focus on Migration of Muslims in J&K", *The Times of India,* 4 June 1992.

[105] *Census of India 2001, Language: India, States and Union Territories (Table C-16)*, Government of India (New Delhi: Office of Registrar General, 2007).

[106] People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), *Shadow of Fear: Harassment of Kashmiri Muslims in Delhi* (Delhi: PUDR, February 2002), 5.

As I am informed, the Kashmiris were willing to pay an inflated rent for flats in the locality than others. They would usually come in the winter months, rent houses in Jangpura-Bhogal to conduct their trade, and then head back to Kashmir at the end of the season. Those uncertain of returning settled down in Delhi, initially renting and eventually buying houses. As property dealers, residents, and landlords inform me, other Kashmiris continued the historic trend of spending the winter months in Delhi for trade. In some instances, Kashmiris would keep the flat empty and pay rent for it throughout the year to ensure they had a space when they returned.

Shamim and Arif are two seasonal traders I encountered at Chacha Chai Stall in Bhogal. Shamim, whom I primarily spoke to, has been in Jangpura-Bhogal since 1989 as a shawl trader, catering mainly to customers in South-East Delhi colonies like C.R. Park and Alaknanda. However, his pattern of long periods of stay in Delhi was altered when he got married and moved back to Srinagar, now mostly coming in the winter months, between November and February.[107] For them, Jangpura's central location and ease of access to other parts of the city were significant factors in their decision to make this their base. Two elderly gentlemen I encountered in Kashmiri Park, sitting on a bench after the *jumme ki namaaz* (Friday prayers) have a similar story. I approached after hearing what sounded like spoken Koshur (Kashmiri). Dressed in *charak* (starched) white kurtas and matching skull caps, they asked me to join them to discuss Jangpura-Bhogal. When asked about their continuous residence periods in the winter months for the past 25 years in Jangpura-Bhogal, they, like others, stated the convenient geographical location and the diverse nature of the space.[108]

These Kashmiri visitors, residents and their children can routinely be encountered in the neighbourhood's public spaces. A group of young Kashmiri men in their twenties, enrolled in universities in the city or working in private sector 'corporate' jobs in Gurgaon or Noida, often frequent Kashmiri Park to 'hang out' and chit chat.[109] Kashmiri shawl traders showcasing their products to potential customers, primarily middle-aged or older women, are a common sight in the winter months. Recent estimates suggest that about 2865 Kashmiri speakers are in the Defence Colony tehsil. Their presence is also visible through Kashmiri establishments such as Wazwaan restaurants, which are now disappearing.

---

[107] Fieldnotes, 5 December 2018.
[108] Fieldnotes, 11 January 2019
[109] Interview with young Kashmiris, 26 December 2019.

Departing Kashmiris

Majeed saab, the proprietor of a Kashmiri Wazwaan restaurant on Summan Bazar Road, came to Delhi with his brother in the late 1970s to live in Greater Kailash 1. As their trading business continued to expand and fortunes improved, he established the restaurant in Bhogal by the mid-2000s to cater to the scores of Kashmiris now present. His relatively cold demeanour changed when he asked me my name, saying, "you should have told me earlier that your name is Saeed!" Clearly, my Muslim name gave him a sense of comfort and invited great warmth as he instructed one of his cooks to prepare something for his special guest quickly. After inquiring about my base in Germany and origins from Delhi, he continued his story. By the early 2000s, his brother brought a house in Jamia Nagar, the Muslim-majority middle-class colony in South-East Delhi, and he followed soon after. Although I was aware of probable reasons for their move to Jamia Nagar, I still asked him about it. He complained about the infrastructural shortcomings in the area and an idea of 'locals' vs 'outsiders' that causes disagreements about his shop. This relatively generic explanation quickly changed to a discussion on identity as he attributes the problems to a growing mistrust of Kashmiris and Muslims, signalling a shift in the locality's mindset. Because of this, he planned to shut down his restaurant in Bhogal and sever ties with the locality. He was true to his promise as the restaurant was replaced by an establishment dealing in car tyres four months later.[110]

We can also link this ongoing departure to other experiences that Kashmiris in Jangpura-Bhogal had lived through in recent years. For example, residents narrate that intelligence agencies and the police would frequent Jangpura-Bhogal to keep track of its Kashmiri residents.[111] The fears arose from the prospects of militants infiltrating these settlements and orchestrating terrorist attacks in the city. In the late 90s and early 2000s, the Sadar Bazar and Lajpat Nagar bomb blasts and the Parliament attack of 2001 invited police harassment, surveillance, screening, and arrests of Kashmiris in Jangpura-Bhogal.[112] This has continued with the BJP's ascendance in national politics since 2014, especially after events like the Pulwama attack of 2019, where a van loaded with 300 kilos of explosives crashed into a

---

[110] Fieldnotes, 15 November 2018; Fieldnotes, 9 March 2019.
[111] Savileroy, Interview; Anil, 10 January 2019.
[112] "Award announced for militant's arrest", *The Times of India,* 24 January 1996; "Delhi detain many blast suspects", *The Times of India,* 25 May 1996, PUDR, *Shadow of Fear*; "In Delhi, Kashmiri Muslims lead uneasy lives", 20 November 2003, Al Jazeera; "After 14 years, freedom strange to acquitted man", *Indian Express,* 23 April 2010. See also PUDR, *Shadow of Fear*, 8.

CRPF convoy in a Kashmiri district, killing over 40 soldiers.[113] In the aftermath of Pulwama, Kashmiris across the country were harassed and attacked by their neighbours and organised mobs.[114] Pakistan's alleged involvement in the event invited the ire of neighbourhood groups who organised Pakistani flag burnings in many Delhi neighbourhoods, including Jangpura-Bhogal.[115]

However, Majeed saab's statements about the shift in neighbourhood sentiments seem to be an outlier in the Kashmiri Muslim experience of Jangpura-Bhogal. This narrative is neither reflected in conversations with landlords and property dealers nor in the multiple conversations with Kashmiris in Jangpura-Bhogal, who reiterate the welcoming nature of the space. For example, Hayat saab explains that Jangpura-Bhogal is a *mikas ilaaqa* (mixed locality). According to him, Kashmir has problems because it is not as mixed as Jangpura-Bhogal, pointing to the lack of communal discord and the welcoming nature of property dealers, landlords, and residents. This was in response to my queries about the social environment following the Pulwama attack. In another instance, while generally discussing the locality, Iqbal saab, a long-time resident of Jangpura-A, assertively states that although there are more Kashmiris and Muslims (Afghans) in Bhogal, he has always enjoyed great warmth and love in Jangpura-A.[116]

While several Kashmiris have a history of continuous residence in Jangpura-Bhogal, most Kashmiris still comprise seasonal winter migrants. Paradoxically, Kashmiri presence rarely invokes the ire of residents but is also not always seen as a part of local social circles. Jangpura-Bhogal emerges as a space of temporary Kashmiri Muslim arrivals but also pushes Majeed saab towards a Muslim-majority area like Jamia Nagar. Kashmiri tenants are preferred not only for the high rents but also for the temporary duration of their stays, which ensures the absence of potential legal conflicts around residence rights. Yet, property dealers and residents suggest declining the Kashmiri presence in Jangpura-Bhogal, 'Less Kashmiris come now'.

---

[113] "Kashmir attack: Tracing the path that led to Pulwama", *BBC*, 1 May 2019 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47302467; "Two years of Pulwama: Terror attack that killed 40 CRPF men explained", *Hindustan Times*, 13 February, 2021, https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/two-years-of-pulwama-terror-attack-that-killed-40-crpf-men-explained-101613233180243.html; "Pulwama attack HIGHLIGHTS: Rajnath Singh hits out at 'elements' in Valley funded by ISI, Pakistan", *Indian Express*, 22 October 2020, https://indianexpress.com/article/india/jammu-and-kashmir-eight-crpf-injured-in-awantipora-ied-blast-militants-pulwama-live5584067/.

[114] Shubham Bhatia, "How these Delhi citizens created safe houses for Kashmiri students", *Newslaundry*, 1 March 2019.

[115] Facebook video,

[116] Iqbal saab, Interview, 25 February 2019; Harpal, personal communication, February 2019.

Thus, while seasonal migrants and long-term residents still reside in Jangpura-Bhogal, they are also shifting to Muslim-majority neighbourhoods. These contradictions and an altered trajectory stem from another urban process underway since the 1980s.

While trying to recover the history of the Shahi masjid in 2018, I met Haji saab, a resident of Okhla and a regular to the Bhogal Mosque. He belongs to some of the earliest non-Kashmiri post-colonial Muslim arrivals to Jangpura-Bhogal, migrant Muslims from different parts of Uttar Pradesh who sought a neighbourhood near Nizamuddin. He, along with his uncle and other Muslims revived the Bhogal Mosque after 1957. However, the multiple decades of comfortable living changed in the 1980s when neighbourly warmth decreased, and people treated him with suspicion. Although he does not explicitly mention his Muslim identity as a factor for his departure from the neighbourhood, his tone and the conversation suggest a shift towards a subtle anti-Muslim sentiment. While his construction business contacts, the mosque, and friends continue to attract his presence to Bhogal, he chooses to live in Okhla.[117]

Scholars have documented that Delhi, like many cities, has undergone a shift in Muslim residence patterns, witnessing increasing segregation out of fear, alienation, and communal violence. Although it has a relatively sparse history of post-Partition communal riots unlike other segregated cities in India[118], Delhi today is marked by a visibly segregated urban pattern and the growing intensity of anti-Muslim discourse in its public life. Muslim spatial, political, and social marginalisation has become part of the normative urban with Hindutva's rise since the 1980s. Examining the 'self-segregation' of Muslims in Muslim neighbourhoods, Kirmani shows that memories of communal ruptures against minorities generate fears of potential violence against Muslims. In this context, rising Hindutva and popular memory of the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom drove Muslims to seek protection in Delhi's Muslim spaces.[119] Yet, even in these neighbourhoods, news reports indicate that Muslim landlords are apprehensive of Kashmiri Muslim tenants as they fear harassment by the police and intelligence authorities.[120] Thus, while Muslims in general are resigned to specific spaces, Kashmiris face the brunt of a Hindutva inspired persistent housing apartheid—Muslim rentiers are forced to move to Muslim-majority areas in the city. Thus, while conversations suggest that Jangpura-Bhogal

---

[117] Haji saab, Interview, 6 November 2018; See also Mehra, 'Jangpura Triptych'.

[118] Laurent Gayer, "Safe and Sound: Searching for a 'Good Environment' in Abul Fazl Enclave", in *Muslims in Indian cities: Trajectories of Marginalisation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

[119] Kirmani, *Questioning the Muslim Woman*.

[120] Ahan Penkar, "No Kashmiris please: Housing discrimination in Delhi's Muslim majority areas", *The Caravan*, 20 November 2019.

seems resistant to these exclusions, Kashmiri numbers are dwindling. However, it has hardly altered other Muslim arrivals into the space, i.e., Afghans.

3.3. Geopolitics, refugee regimes, and Afghans

If you go to Bhogal, it will seem like you are in Kabul.

Soon Bhogal will become like Kabul!

The first is a general statement made by Anil about a transformed sensory landscape in the Bhogal market, marking a new moment of arrival. The second is an anxiety-ridden comment by a resident about what he perceives as the negative demographic and material transformations underway: A young man rushes to the Afghan *naanwaais* at 1:00 pm to pick up naan for lunch. Meanwhile, a travel agency office with a board in Dari is graced by customers looking for affordable flights to Afghanistan. Kids throng to the Afghan school and BOSCO centre for their afternoon English, Maths, and Computers classes. Hijabed Afghan mothers visit Kashmiri and Birbal Park for socialisation while their kids play. And young Afghan men loiter outside shops, restaurants, and in public spaces in their free time. As one walks through Jangpura-Bhogal, the sounds of Hindi, Punjabi, Kashmiri are accompanied by Dari and Pashto. These are markers of the latest arrivals to Jangpura-Bhogal: the Afghans. This is a common sight in Jangpura-Bhogal and its neighbouring Lajpat Nagar, which today are home to several refugees, medical tourists, students from Afghanistan[121], and smaller numbers of Africans and Europeans.

In February 1981, B.V. Desai, a Lok Sabha Member of Parliament (MP), questioned Yogendra Makvana, Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, about the ostensibly drastic arrival of 3000 Afghans in January. Makvana responded by quoting figures of arrivals, saying that there was no abnormal influx of Afghans into India, further arguing that the arrival of 10,484 Afghans since 1980 was accompanied by the departure of 10,479 from the country. Therefore, he assured the MP that this was a regular movement of populations and should not raise any alarm. A month earlier, the *Times of India* reported that 3000 Afghans had entered

---

[121] Suhasini Krishnan, "A Guide To Delhi's 'Little Kabul', Built By Afghan Refugees With Love", *Homegrown*, 26 June 2018, 2018, https://homegrown.co.in/article/802669/a-guide-to-delhi-s-little-kabul-built-by-afghan-refugees-with-love; Tamanna Naseer, "Afghani Flavours in Delhi's Neighbourhood", *The Statesman*, 28 October 2015, https://www.thestatesman.com/features/afghani-flavours-in-delhi-s-neighbourhood-99908.html.

India from Pakistan on tourist visas in the last few months. It stated that about 6000 Afghans had arrived in India since 1980, primarily comprising elite migrants who had applied for visas to the United States, West Germany, and France. Although officially denied by the Indian government, the influx had begun.[122]

The arrivals resulted from geo-political machinations, the attendant Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and the outbreak of a war between an expanding Soviet Union and American-backed Mujahideen (later the Taliban). As the Cold War raged on, Afghanistan became a centre of the Soviet-American rivalry playing out through their efforts to implement massive development projects in the region. However, around the same time, the rise of national communist parties and Daoud Khan's insufficient reforms began a period of great uncertainty and, eventually, Khan's replacement. This new left regime, beginning a process of repression and violence, sought assistance from the Soviet Union to bring rebellious elements under control, thus facilitating a large-scale Soviet invasion. However, soon enough, America began providing covert support to fragmented Islamic factions (Mujahideen) engaging in a guerrilla war with the Soviets. This marked the beginning of the conflict that ruptured the nation's social fabric.[123]

The resulting chaos led to the departure of Afghanistan's residents, first to neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. However, due to the crowded nature of the refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran, Afghans made their way to India, with some arriving on tourist visas from Pakistan via trains and air. These were primarily Afghan urban elites with a history of trade relations and movements between India and Afghanistan, exemplified by the popular images of Kabuliwala or the Pashtun moneylender.[124] However, facts of a full-scale war underway in Afghanistan and the growing Afghan presence made political representatives question the nature of Afghan presence. The External Affairs ministry dismissed inquiries about the existence of 'Afghan refugees' by referring to a historical practice of tourists and traders

[122] 'Influx of Afghans to India', *Lok Sabha Debates*, *25 February 1981*, Government of India (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1980); "Afghan refugee influx to India continues", *The Times of India*, 2 January 1981.

[123] For a greater discussion, see Anwesha Ghosh, *Identity and Marginality in India: Settlement Experience of Afghan Migrants* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

[124] Sahil K. Warsi, "Being and belonging in Delhi: Afghan individuals and communities in a global city" (PhD, SOAS, University of London, 2015).

visiting India during the winter months.[125] Eventually, this influx was visible in the soaring rents across South Delhi as landlords took advantage of the well-off Afghan arrivals.[126]

Taking cognisance of this growing influx, the UNHCR began its operations in 1979 after a brief interlude when it shut down its office in 1975.[127] Much to the surprise of the Indian government, the organisation began providing Afghans with asylum-seeker documents. By this time, over 5000 Afghans were already living in India, and the UNHCR convinced a reluctant Indian government to allow them to function on a de facto status under the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).[128] By June 1981, 8000 of the approximately 13,000 Afghans in India were registered with the UNHCR.[129] Two kinds of Afghan refugees were present at the time. Those willing to move on to greener pastures in the West and those looking to return to Afghanistan once the war ended.[130] However, Afghan presence complicated India's position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Afghans utilised the city during Soviet state visits to stage multiple protests against the Soviet occupation.[131]

Jangpura-Bhogal's Older Afghan Connect

Afghan presence in India and Delhi is not a new phenomenon. Apart from their role as military personnel during the Mughal empire, Afghans travelled to India for a variety of purposes, often visiting as moneylenders or traders. Sohail Hashmi and DC mention the historical connection of Bhogal to the Pashtun money lenders who came to the area in the 1950s and 60s.[132] Through an interesting turn of events, Jangpura-Bhogal's foundational wave of arrivals is linked to its

---

[125] 'Influx of Afghan refugees', *Lok Sabha Debates,* Volume XIII, 232. For a brief discussion on Indo-Afghan relations since the early modern period, see Warsi, "Being and belonging"

[126] Rattan Mall, "Delhi rents pushed up by Afghan DPs", *The Times of India*, 20 June 1981.

[127] According to the External Affairs Minister, B.R. Bhagat, the UNHCR had established a branch office in 1969. See 'UN Convention on Status of Refugees', *Lok Sabha Debates, 7 May 1986,* Government of India, 32 (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1986).

[128] Nithya Rajan, "'No Afghan Refugees in India': Refugees and Cold War Politics in the 1980s", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 44, no. 5 (2021), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2021.1964048.

[129] "13,000 Afghans In India as refugees", *The Times of India*, 30 June1981.

[130] Many refugees began coming to India by the 1980s and transformed Delhi into a refugee waiting room. Afghans were accompanied by Burmese, Tibetan, Sri Lankan, Iraqi, Bangladeshi, Iranian, as well as Somalian refugees.

[131] In some instances, such demonstrations were internationally organised and were witnessed in Iran, Pakistan, and the US. See "Afghan DPs demonstrate outside Soviet embassy", *The Times of India*, 22 March 1982; "Afghan refugees demonstrate", *The Times of India*, 28 December 1982; "100 Afghan protesters held in Delhi", *The Times of India*, 27 November 1986; "Afghan refugees' protest in Delhi", *The Times of India*, 28 April 1987.

[132] Interview on 11 August 2017; Sohail Hashmi, personal communication, 11 May 2017; Sohail Hashmi, "The Role of Partition in Making Delhi What It Is Today", *The Wire*, 15 August 2017.

newest migrations. Hotel Kabli, located at the corner of Masjid Road, at the end of Bhogal is a testament to this historical relationship.

The full story is revealed by the current proprietors of Hotel Kabli, a guest house catering to mostly Afghans and other foreigners visiting Delhi. Within the larger architectural scheme of buildings in Jangpura-Bhogal, Hotel Kabli stands out as a remnant of a bygone past, a white double-storey colonnaded bungalow. As we enter through the large metal double gate, the visitor is greeted with a small reception that houses two clerks to look after the guest registrations before a porter takes people and luggage to the assigned rooms. Outside is a small shaded sitting area where I meet the hotel's proprietor Sukhbir Singh Kabli (SSK). Our conversation is interrupted by a call from someone inquiring about his address. His response is prompt and cheeky, *Lal qila dekha hai? Address kya hai lal qile ka? Accha famous hai toh pata hai na? Ye (Hotel Kabli) South Delhi ka lal qila hai!* "Have you seen the Red Fort? What is the address of the Red Fort? Ok, it's famous so you know how to find it, right? This (Hotel Kabli) is South Delhi's Red Fort". He grins as he finishes the call and tells me the story of this out-of-time hotel.

His father, Pritam Singh Kabli (PSK), came to Delhi from Kabul along with his grand-uncle Ram Singh Kabli in the early 1920s. Educated in Delhi, he then caught the eye of Sardar Sobha Singh (one of the most prominent contractors who built Imperial Delhi), who allotted him and his uncle a contract to build the Palam airport. This allowed Kabli to build a fortune through which he could purchase a few properties around the city. When asked why Pritam Singh Kabli chose to buy property in Bhogal (due to its obscure and non-central location), SSK tells me that this was the only land available in the city at the time. Initially constructed as accommodation for his employees in 1942, a corner of the bungalow became PSK's residence after a bank collapse during the partition led to the loss of their other properties. After his marriage and the expansion of the family, they constructed an additional portion after 1947. When visiting family in Kabul in 1969, relatives convinced PSK to establish a guest house for Afghans in Delhi. PSK's son and grandson, fluent in Dari, now run the hotel that caters to numerous international tourists, including Afghans. Today, the family lives right next to the bungalow in a newly constructed building.[133]

---

[133] As SSK proudly tells me, they had their own brick kiln in Taimur Nagar due to which all bricks in the house are stamped with PSK's initials. SSK, Interview, 14 May 2017; Inder Bir Singh Kabli, Interview, 20 May 2017; Kai Friese, "Afghans in India and One Hotel's Curious History: Bungalow in Bhogal", *Bidoun*, 2007.

SSK was born and brought up in the Hotel Kabli and hardly knew Dari. However, his interactions with Afghan guests in the 1970s convinced him to learn the language. These newly acquired language skills allowed SSK to assist the initial wave of post-1979 refugee arrivals in navigating the city. He informs me that many people living elsewhere often told the police they were staying at Hotel Kabli. SSK's answer to my inquiry about the reason for Afghan presence in Jangpura-Bhogal places the hotel at the centre of an information network in Kabul that directs people to Jangpura-Bhogal.[134]

Refugee Arrivals

SSK initially catered to the elite, primarily Pashtun Afghans who escaped Afghanistan through their social networks and with the requisite travel documents. However, these initial migratory flows were followed by a larger number that escaped a repressive regime in more chaotic and precarious ways. Soon after the rise of the Taliban in 1996, "Afghans of Indian origin" (Hindu and Sikh Afghans) and 'ethnic' Afghans such as Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Arabs, and Nuristanis, and Pashtuns started arriving in India.[135] As residents and property dealers inform me, 'They started coming when tensions started there'. This led to an unprecedented operation by the UNHCR to process thousands of asylum applications for refugees. By 1995, India was reported to have 325,000 refugees, of which 22,150 were Afghans.[136] Within a year, this number rose to an estimated 25,000 Muslim Afghans and approximately 40,000 non-Muslim Afghans.[137] The last significant influx accompanied the fall of the Taliban in the early 2000s and persistent economic decline.[138] Although there are no reliable figures on the number of Afghan refugees in India, the UNHCR reports from 2021 suggest 15,543 registered refugees and asylum seekers.[139] Numbers have dropped as refugees have gained asylum in the West while others await their applications. Some among them have resigned to a possibly permanent stay in India. Recently, the return of the Taliban after the US military withdrawal led to 60,000

---

[134] SSK, Interview.
[135] Warsi, "Being and belonging", 29.
[136] Other refugees included: 121,000 Tibetans; 104,000 Sri Lankans; 48,000 Bangladeshi Chakmas; 30,000 ethnic Nepalese from Bhutan; 1650 Naga and pro-democracy activists from Bhutan; 350 Somalis; 230 Iranians; and 220 from other countries. "India has 3,25,000 refugees", *The Times of India* 1 June 1995.
[137] "Afghan refugee Problem in India may worse", *The Times of India*, 29 September 1996.
[138] Warsi, "Being and belonging"; Ghosh, *Identity and Marginality.*
[139] 8537 Refugees, and 6857 asylum seekers.

applications from Afghans for the Emergency Indian Visa launched by the Indian government.[140]

This presence in India is conditioned by a complicated and largely ad hoc Indian refugee regime. India is neither a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees nor the additional 1967 Protocol but has signed several international agreements on refugees. In addition, the Fundamental Right to life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution applies to all citizens and non-citizens in the country. The grey zone of Afghan refugee presence in India (Chapter 2) is replicated in their economic life through their employment in Delhi's informal economy and the gig economy of the medical tourism business. In addition, the UNHCR's partner NGOs, like the BOSCO Centre, provide a variety of services to registered refugees.

While the refugee influx has slowed down over the years, they have been joined by medical tourists and students, who can often be encountered in Kashmiri Park in the evenings. Inhabiting Afghan spaces or areas close to universities like Jamia Millia Islamia, these students visit areas like Bhogal for various needs. Medical tourists in Delhi are usually clustered in prominent Afghan settlements like Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar or close to hospitals offering services to medical tourists.[141] These residence patterns are also determined by ethnicity. For example, Jangpura-Bhogal is primarily home to non-Pashtun Muslim Afghans compared to Ashram, which primarily houses Pashtuns. Hindu and Sikh Afghans primarily live in West and North Delhi areas like Tilak Nagar and Wazirabad.[142]

Many of the refugees in Jangpura-Bhogal are at different stages of their presence in India, echoed in their arrival stories and journeys after coming to India. Take, for example,

---

[140] Arunav Kaul, "Afghan Refuges in India Highlight the Need for Indian Domestic Refugee Law", *Just Security*, https://www.justsecurity.org/78586/afghan-refugees-in-india-highlight-the-need-for-indian-domestic-refugee-law/.

[141] A perfect example in Khirki Extension, located opposite Max Hospital Saket. See Shajan Perapaddan Bindu, "Interpreters without borders", *The Hindu*, 28 January 2019, https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/interpreters-without-borders/article26106962.ece; "Indian Hospitals are doing a Roaring Trade in Medical Tourists from Afghanistan", *Time*, 3 March 2014, https://time.com/11213/afghan-medical-tourism-india/; Joe Harkins, "Afghan Medical Tourism Patients Find Welcome Mats in India", *Medical Tourism Magazine*, https://www.magazine.medicaltourism.com/article/afghan-medical-tourism-patients-find-welcome-mats-india; Syed Zafar Mehdi, "For Afghan patients, all routes lead to Indian hospitals", *Scroll.in*, 27 November 2014, https://scroll.in/article/690844/for-afghan-patients-all-routes-lead-to-indian-hospitals.

[142] Nithya Rajan, personal communication, 19 March 2020.
The ethnic, class, religious differences, and waves of refugee arrivals largely condition Afghan forms of belonging, and how Afghan bureaucrats frame them in the discourse of displaced citizens. Warsi, "Being and belonging".
For a greater discussion on Afghan Sikh refugees in Delhi, see Ghosh, *Identity and Marginality*

Jameel, who worked in one of the Afghan-run restaurants. My regular visits eventually invited customary greetings from the servers in a space that was hardly visited by non-Afghan customers. Jameel, one of the servers, would regularly join me at my table whenever he was free. Over the sounds of loud conversations at adjoining tables and the blaring television playing Bollywood films in Dari, Afghan dramas, or popstar Shafiq Mureed's songs, Jameel tells me his story. After arriving in Delhi with his siblings as a refugee a few months ago in 2018, he was awaiting the decision of his reunification application to Finland, where his father was based. To subsist and provide for his family (being the eldest sibling), Jameel got a job in the restaurant through the local informal Afghan network. A month later, he greeted me at the restaurant with a big smile to tell me that his family's application had been accepted and they would be going to Finland, feeling elated that he was leaving a place with too much *gandagi* (dirt).[143] When I returned two weeks later, Jameel had been replaced by a young Afghan refugee barely in his twenties. Soon enough, my confusion about his sudden absence was cleared when he sent me greetings from his new home in Helsinki.[144]

However, only some were as fortunate as Jameel. His colleague Mehmood, a registered refugee, had been in Bhogal for three years, seemingly with no prospects of leaving India.[145] Then there were the Sharif brothers, fresh arrivals living in Jangpura Extension DS and awaiting the results of their Refugee Status Determination (RSD) application. Between our first and second meetings, their application was declined, and they would have to wait for six months to know the outcome of their appeal against the rejection. Abdullah and Zubeida, the proprietors of an Afghan grocery store, had been in Bhogal for two and seven years, respectively. While Abdullah was born and brought up in Herat before coming to India, Zubeida was born in Kabul but grew up in Pakistan as a refugee. At the time of our meeting, they had submitted a visa application to the United States to join their relatives who used to live in Bhogal. Their repeated applications in the past three years had been rejected but Zubeida seemed confident that the application would be successful.[146] When I returned in 2021, their shop was gone, and their phones were unreachable. My repeated inquiries only revealed that

---

[143] He was repeating regular description by Afghans and 'locals' about the congested and filthy nature of the streets in the packed Bhogal market.
[144] Facebook message to Author, 7 December 2018.
[145] Mehmood, personal communication, 30 October 2018.
[146] Abdullah, Interview, 15 November 2018; Zubeida, Interview, 11 November 2018; Zubeida, personal communication, 28 December 2018.

the shop shut down, and the proprietors had left. I do not know if they have made it to the United States.

The stories of these families and individuals are also accompanied by those of multiple others like the *naanwais* on Central Road in Jangpura-Bhogal for 13 years; Omer from Mazar Sharif, present for three years and working at a travel agency; or Khadija present for over a decade. An Arab born in Iran to a family from Afghanistan, she and her family moved to Delhi in 1998, first residing in Dwarka and then Vikas Puri before moving to Bhogal a few years ago.[147] Afghan "medical tourists"[148] comprise another group. They primarily stay for short periods ranging from a few weeks to a few months, shuttling between their residence and private hospitals in the city. Sometimes, familial connections allow them to stay longer and gain access to translator services at relatively affordable rates. For example, Hamid arrived for his brother's treatment two months before I met him. He knows that the stay would be almost a year. Luckily, his cousin is a student in Delhi and helps the family around. Another medical tourist, Mohammed from Kabul, had followed his brother-in-law and had been in the country for less than a month.

As their numbers grew and rents rose, they began moving to Lajpat Nagar and Jangpura-Bhogal, areas with adequate, affordable housing. According to DC, the shared culture of the Afghanis and Partition migrants from NWFP drove Afghans to Bhogal. Partition refugee descendant like Anil attribute the shared culture, trade, and language of the NWFP Sikhs and Pashtuns and the proximity of Nizamuddin in attracting Afghans. Conversations with Afghans point to a familial and information network that places Jangpura-Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar as important Afghan spaces. An added advantage is the presence of the Bhogal Mosque.

Other neighbourhood "pull" factors for Afghan refugees and medical tourists are the market infrastructure and a booming rentier economy. Hindu and Sikh property owners and brokers rent one-room dwellings in Bhogal to refugees after they have obtained asylum in India. Afghan medical tourists are charged rent on a monthly or daily basis, usually starting at

---

[147] Khadija, Interview, 13 November 2018; 14 January 2019; Chitra Balasubramaniam, "The naanwais of Delhi: On the Afghan bread trail", *The Hindu*, 20 July 2017, https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/food/on-the-afghan-bread-trail/article19318032.ece; Shivam Saxena, "Inside Delhi's lil Afghanistan: Aroma of Kabuli pulao, murmurs in Dari", *Hindustan Times*, 4 March 2015, https://www.hindustantimes.com/travel/inside-delhi-s-lil-afghanistan-aroma-of-kabuli-pulao-murmurs-in-dari/story-COE0J9leoOmNkKykVoEIGM; Shivam Saxena, "Delhi's Afghan connect", *Hindustan Times*, 5 January 2017.
[148] Foreigners seeking medical care in India and providing patronage to a plethora of private hospitals in cities like Delhi.

an average of about 1000 rupees per day. In some transactions I observed, property dealers and landlords rebuffed Afghan efforts to reduce the daily rate. For example, at Temple Properties, an Afghan visitor was first shown an available room by an employee. After coming back to the office, he was unsuccessful in convincing the proprietors to reduce the rate to Rs. 900 and left soon after.

Afghans and seasonal Kashmiri migrants are generally preferred over the average tenant seeking accommodation. The property dealers I visited gave me two primary reasons for choosing Afghans and Kashmiris: higher rents and shorter durations of stay. This ensures maximum revenue and fewer complications in terms of property disputes. During fieldwork, property dealers informed me that my efforts to rent a room might be unsuccessful: I was a bachelor, had roots in Delhi, and landlords could not charge the same rent as Afghans and Kashmiris.[149]

Since India mainly serves as a transitory hub or revolving door for refugees, numerous refugees from that time have left for greener pastures in the West.[150] Others have resigned themselves to a prolonged and possibly permanent stay in India, a situation that recent events in Afghanistan could exacerbate. With the decreasing prospects of returning home, Afghans have organised protests outside the UNHCR office demanding refugee status and solidarity meetings for those suffering under the Taliban regime.[151] As of now, they are here to stay, adding to the diverse presences in Jangpura-Bhogal.

3.4. The Heterogeneous Space Expands: A new tenancy regime

The Kashmiri and Afghan presence in Jangpura-Bhogal is a different kind of arrival. Unlike the colonial and postcolonial arrivals, these migrations are not influenced by the rationales of planning and settlements. Like the Partition refugees, they stem from violent political events elsewhere, driving them to seek refuge in Jangpura-Bhogal, a space for the displaced. The reconfiguration of building bylaws by the 1990s, the slow promotion of private enterprise, and the mushrooming of property dealers facilitated Jangpura-Bhogal's economic and material transformation. Expanding middle-class families and aspirations drive multi-storey expansions

---

[149] My name did not figure in the discussion as they never made inquiries.

[150] In Göttingen, I encountered two Afghans who spent a considerable amount of time in India, residing in Bhogal and Greater Kailash.

[151] Priyangi Aggarwal, 'Delhi: Away from gunshots and explosions, Afghan refugees lose sleep over turmoil back home', *The Times of India,* 15 August 2021; Vasudha Venugopal, 'Help our families before it's late: Afghan women', *Economic Times,* 19 August 2021.

to take advantage of migratory flows. Kashmiri arrivals coincide with these developments, turning old trading and itinerant histories into a new settlement story. The Afghan presence stems from geo-political interests, the rise of religious fundamentalism, the international refugee regime, and an expanding medical tourism industry to inject a different kind of presence in Jangpura-Bhogal. This emergent rentier class welcomes this new tenancy regime that contributes to soaring rents, disposable income, and provides patronage to the surrounding infrastructure. These arrivals, however, make residents reframe their ideas of the neighbourhood community through contrastive projects of memory work (Chapter 4). However, before we discuss the myriad social and material infrastructures that accompany these arrivals, I briefly introduce another set of presences that have always had a tense relationship with the city.

4. The Invisible *Jangpurias*: Tamils of Jangpura-Bhogal

Jangpura-Bhogal has pockets of slum clusters in Pant Nagar, Jangpura-B, and the Railway Crossing between Lajpat Nagar and Jangpura Extension. In Pant Nagar, as we proceed towards the temple complex, the road is split along two paths by a small triangular MCD Park. On the left are the post-partition refugee constructions. On the right are the community centre, mohalla clinic, and narrow path over a stream over the Barapullah nala, which leads to Jangpura A. Between the park and the temple is a small cluster of 58 mud and brick *Jhuggis* painted in various pastel shades. I was on the left side of the space, abutting a Syntex water tank that had been installed on the wall of a house. It was connected to a tap where Laxmi was cleaning utensils and other household items. Born in the jhuggi to Tamil parents from Madras in 1979, she tells me that this settlement has been present for at least the past 40 years and has never been removed, unlike the ones in Jangpura. She further tells me that some of her relatives live in the Jal Vihar settlement on the railway tracks, another establishment of Dalit Tamils. Time after time, local MLAs and governments tried to relocate them to far-off places in the city, but they refused, citing the opportunities for domestic work here. While their negotiations for the right to stay have been successful, their dominance in the domestic labour market has been challenged by recent migrants living in the nearby Balmiki *basti* that houses Bangladeshi and UP migrants. As she informs me, their ability to take lower wages had dented the earning potential of the Tamils, who have a long historical presence in Jangpura-Bhogal.[152]

---

[152] Fieldnotes, 8 March 2019.

This conversation provides a window into a decades-long historical settlement linked to regional affiliations, the demands of a middle-class resident public, and other population movements, including displacements. Laxmi refers to the Jal Vihar, a settlement notorious locally and in the city, as the source of a variety of vices: illicit liquor, marijuana, and hashish. Every night, cars are parked along the railway tracks of Jangpura Extension, and young people are seen crossing the tracks to access Jal Vihar's jhuggis. References are also made to the now absent jhuggis from Jangpura-A, echoing a relationship of the city's history with slums. Laxmi also draws attention to newer arrivals, their settlement, and emergent professional rivalries. Lastly, she connects her presence to a long migration history from Tamil Nadu.

> I remember, like in the schoolbooks they talk about the ruinous walls of Mohenjodaro na, that's how their jhuggis were. And we used to, on top of the *malba* of the jhuggies, we used to play *pakdam pakdai*. It was a bit like the ravines of Chambal. Mud and dust used to be flying around. But slowly slowly, those jhuggis again became *abad*….

Residents recall the presence of these jhuggis from their time in the 1970s and 80s, primarily home to Dalit Tamils and a few Balmikis. Their arrival coincided with socio-economic improvements in the space as the propertied middle classes, mostly employed in small businesses or with the government, required domestic services. Tamil women established a monopoly in Jangpura-Bhogal cleaning houses across the locality, mainly for its upper-caste residents, while the men generally worked in manual labour jobs and construction projects. The existence of these slums can be recorded as early as 1974 when the Delhi administration began noticing their presence and marked them for 'environmental improvement'.[153] Although their origins are shrouded in mystery, Jangpura-Bhogal's middle-class residents attribute this to the possibility of trains from Madras stopping at Nizamuddin. We can trace their expansion to India and Delhi hosting the Asian Games and the ensuing need for workers who would build the Asian Games Village for housing athletes, the Siri Fort Sports Complex, and the various flyovers across the city. Once the construction was over, many of these migrants stayed on, building shanties across the city, including Jangpura-Bhogal.[154]

---

[153] *Lok Sabha Debates Volume 39,* Government of India, 174 (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 29 April 1974).
[154] Baviskar, *Uncivil City.*

The open area on the banks of the Barapullah drain between Nizamuddin and Jangpura and the railway crossing of Jangpura Extension became home to Tamils and Balmikis. However, the sensory experience of these new settlements made Jangpura A and Pant Nagar's residents uneasy. Problems arose around the aesthetics of the slums and the sights and smell attributed to the butchering and consumption of pork. 'They used to cut pigs, and it used to smell quite bad', the residents of Jangpura-A tell me. Eventually, the settlement was razed, a wall built, and a recreational park for Jangpura A's residents was established.

However, the infrastructural needs of the city and its middle class brought the Tamils back, and they found newer sites along the railway tracks between Lajpat Nagar and Jangpura Extension, the Barapullah bridge, and Pant Nagar. Unlike the DDA that prevented them from constructing their shanties on its land, MCD and Railway land could be used for the Tamil settlements. Local political representatives assisted these efforts, they saw this as an opportunity to increase their vote share in the constituency by creating a grateful clientelistic 'vote bank'. Politicians and middle-class residents who required cheap domestic labour protected Tamil migrants from the onslaught of government agencies seeking to reclaim their land.[155]

Although split up among the various settlements that mushroomed around Jangpura-Bhogal, Tamil migrants eventually returned to the area where their arrival story in Delhi had begun. Today, these Tamil settlements are split between the Pant Nagar South Indian Camp, the Jangpura B Madrassi *basti* (settlement) housing approximately 3-400 families next to the historic Barapullah bridge, and the Jal Vihar settlement across the railway tracks between Jangpura Extension and Lajpat Nagar. According to the 2011 Census, the number of recorded Tamil speakers in the Defence Colony Tehsil is 10,024, which seems quite under-reported (media reports have estimated that there are approximately 1.5 lakh Tamil migrants in Delhi).[156] While other settlements in Jangpura-Bhogal's past have been unsuccessful in

---

[155] Anil and Rakesh, personal communication, 24 January 2018.
This echoes a classic example of Partha's Chatterjee's description of political society when discussing Railway land squatters in Calcutta. The urban poor, disenfranchised as 'citizens' and treated as 'populations', resort to illicit means and local collusions to claim rights to space. Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.
[156] "Give us alternative house or we will die on railway tracks: Delhi Slum-Dwellers", *Indian Express,* 13 September 2020.
This does not include the middle-class Tamil migrants who primarily reside in other parts like R.K. Puram.

returning (discussed in Chapter 2), these success stories are routinely subjected to arbitrary policies of urban planning agencies.

The Tamils of Jangpura-Bhogal are an example of fluctuating presences, departures, returns, and displacements determined through urban planning ideals and aesthetics, vote bank politics, and local infrastructural needs. They exemplify an unrecognised stream of arrivals that expand and unsettle normative ideas of 'diverse space'.

Beginnings of Neighbourhood Formation

The *bhaichara* narrative presents a seamless and rich story of arrivals. This chapter complicates this narrative by tracking Jangpura-Bhogal's multiple arrivals and displacements that stemmed from historically contingent processes and urban transformations. First, a range of actors and forces shaped these continuous and diverse streams of arrivals. We see a colonial state seeking by resettling displaced villages to make way for the new imperial capital. Populations are settled along caste, community, and village in a new model village. Partition and independence in 1947 necessitate an expansive refugee rehabilitation program by a nascent postcolonial state to accommodate Sikh and Hindu refugees. Here again, segregated patterns of settlement along caste, class and regional divisions define the individual colonies of Jangpura-Bhogal. Finally, national, political, economic, and geopolitical shifts shape later waves of migration that differ from the colonial and postcolonial settlement cultures. Itinerant Kashmiri traders turn into residents following the Kashmir insurgency. International organisations like the UNHCR, an emergent rentier economy, property brokers and landlords facilitate Afghan arrivals. And Tamils migrate to address the post 1980s construction and domestic labour needs of the city.

Second, these diverse arrivals have differential relations with the state that affect their abilities and capacities for place-making. I show that an uneven state legibility mediates property relations and settlement in Jangpura-Bhogal's diversity matrix. Colonial subjects and postcolonial citizens as propertied residents play host to later tenants and service populations of traders, international refugees, medical tourists, and labour migrants. The next chapter examines the distinct power matrices emerging from varying state-subject relations to craft material and social infrastructures. Third, these arrivals have been accompanied by Muslim displacements. Jangpura-Bhogal's pre-partition Muslim population departs for Nizamuddin or Pakistan by force or their own will. We also see a story of accretive Muslim erasure documented through Chand Khan's displacement. Interestingly, a space of post-1947 Muslim

departures also becomes a site of post-1980s temporary Muslim arrivals. Kashmiris, although present, are slowly seeking security in Muslim-majority neighbourhoods because of a larger urban phenomenon of Muslim marginalisation. Although Afghan movements are unaffected, they are displaced in discussions of the diverse space (Chapter 4).

However, this is only the first step in the neighbourhood's production. The process of arrival and housing initiates place-making practices to produce Jangpura-Bhogal through processual constitutive transformations of the built environment, contestations, negotiations, and narrative strategies around the idea of the neighbourhood community.

INFRASTRUCTURES: Legality, Morality, Enterprise

News of a theka: Protecting a moral neighbourhood

In late 2021, news emerged of the potential opening of a *theka* (a colloquialism for liquor stores) on Hospital Road next to the Axis Bank ATM and entrance to Jangpura-A. Invoking the potential effects on Jangpura-A and Bhogal's *mahaul* (environment), the Bhogal Vyopar Samiti (Bhogal Traders' Association), AAP's Jangpura unit, Jangpura-A and Bhogal residents, and the Resident Welfare Associations (JEWA and JRWA) came together to resist the opening of this establishment. It was argued that the store's location violated land use regulations under the Delhi Excise Policy, which prohibited tobacco or liquor stores within 100 metres of educational, religious, or medical institutions.

From November to December 2021, different Jangpura-Bhogal WhatsApp groups began mobilising residents to protest the opening of this site. Of note were the 'Unity of Jangpura-A' and 'Team Spirit Jangpura-A' groups. The first formal call to mobilisation appeared on 7 November 2021, highlighting the danger of the site and the practices that the space would facilitate. It was speculated that the shop owner acquired the license through his contacts with the MLA Praveen Kumar. Apart from allegations of collusion and land-use violations, residents drew attention to the seemingly unsightly activities accompanying liquor consumption—smoking, vomiting, and public urination—that would affect the safety and security of women and children. This moral claim was accompanied by arguments of a disruptive economic transformation: the wine shop would cause a loss of tenants and a dip in property prices. Citing the historical absence of liquor stores in the neighbourhood and the failed attempts to open one near the Shiv temple three years ago, residents urged for a stay order and a signature campaign for an application to the Nizamuddin and Jangpura police posts. Accordingly, the group organised a meeting on the same day in the Jangpura-A park that was attended by approximately 30 residents, including women, members of the Bhogal Vyopar Samiti, and the Jangpura unit of AAP.[1]

Subsequent meetings involved residents, local resident and Delhi Commission for Women member Sarika Chaudhury, and MLA Praveen Kumar. By now, it was revealed that

---

[1] Team Spirit Jangpura-A, WhatsApp message, 7 November 2021.

the person intending to open this shop was the Jangpura Extension liquor store manager. Support was also mobilised through the Facebook pages connected to members of the AAP Jangpura unit: the Bhogal Buddha Vihar and Bhogal Vyopar Samiti. However, this furore against a liquor store was not an isolated incident. In the coming days, Daryaganj witnessed a similar mobilisation with the support of BJP and AAP MLAs. These protests were in response to the Delhi government's recent decision to deregulate and disinvest from the liquor business in the city. As per the new regulations of the Delhi Excise Policy, private vendors would replace all government-run liquor stores, marking an end to the Delhi government's control of about 60% of the city's liquor market. The policy was a move to expand the Delhi government's purse, crack down on the liquor mafia, and facilitate the expansion of a 'modern' liquor business in the city: premium liquor stores and home delivery of alcohol. These rules would come into force on 17 November 2021, when all government-run stores would shut down.[2]

Soon, the local BJP unit led by Impreet Singh Bakshi organised a protest to question the Delhi government's policies, invoking issues of public morality and the damaging effect it could have on children's psyche. "Kids will see men buying these products and think they are toys. They will say that they also want these toys. Alcohol will become a toy for children".[3] These initial protests and letters by residents and MLA Praveen Kumar did not prevent the opening of the shop which began its sales on 20 November. Residents of Bhogal and Jangpura-A began protesting at the site to prevent the sale of liquor and used social media to mobilise public support. While the MLA was missing, members of his unit were part of the protesting crowd and were briefly removed by the police. BJP members stepped in to mobilise support on social media against the wrongdoings of the Delhi government, and administrators of the WhatsApp groups called on women and senior citizens to take the lead in the protests at the shop.

By November 20, a full-scale protest had begun. The women residents of Jangpura-A took the cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PR theatrics during the 2020 Covid lockdown, reinventing *thali bajao* (clang plates) to disrupt customers entering the store. As the police looked on, men blocked the street to shout the slogan that became the mainstay of the

---

[2] "Delhi excise policy: New retail outlets to open from November 17 in Capital", *Hindustan Times*, 12 September 2021, https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/delhi-excise-policy-new-retail-outlets-to-open-from-november-17-in-the-capital-101631383808150.html; Delhi Excise Policy for the year 2021-22, ed. Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (2021). https://delhiexcise.gov.in/pdf/Delhi_Excise_Policy_for_the_year_2021-22.pdf.
[3] Speech by BJP member at protest, 16 November 2021.

agitation: *nahin khulega nahin khulega, sharaab ka theeka nahin khulega*. "It won't open. It won't open. The alcohol shop will not open!". By the evening, the numbers increased, utensils continued clanging, and the slogans became louder. Residents drew attention to the haphazard parking by customers and untiringly continued to disrupt the store's transactions.

This prompted the proprietors to shut the store early, providing ample space for a larger crowd of protestors to join, who brought placards and began painting graffiti on the shop shutters. While this became the general pattern of the protest in the coming few days, AAP's local unit began defending Praveen Kumar's role in the entire matter. The MLA became a regular to the meetings (perhaps to absolve himself of all blame) along with INC MCD Daryaganj ward councillor Yasmeen Kidwai. Candlelight vigils, multiple letters to government officials, continued protests, and media coverage were followed by petitions from residents and Sarika Chaudhury against the shop in the Delhi High court. The court indulged these legal appeals—which argued that no liquor store could be within 100 metres of social, religious, or cultural institutions—by ordering the Delhi government to respond. The Delhi administration soon jumped into action and began measuring the exact distance of the store to religious sites marked in the petition. Eventually, a permanent protest staging area was established at the base of the stairwell leading to the shop. Throughout the day, the garlanded corpse of the liquor store on a bier (*arthi*) was guarded by different protestors who were provided meals by the women of Jangpura-A. The Sai Mandir and Mai da gurdwara also organised *kirtans* and *paaths*, and distributed langar, eventually attracting greater crowds.

While the courts waited on deciding the future of the shop, the local BJP unit joined their political rivals and other associations of Jangpura-Bhogal. Social media was abuzz with discussions and questions of public morality and religious blasphemy. Eventually another actor would enter the fray: the BJP led SDMC vowed to suspend licenses of stores in violation of the excise policy, including payment of conversion charges, completion certificates, property tax returns, building by-laws, and licensing norms.[4] Following the excise department response to the High Court, the liquor store's license was revoked, and the store shut down by 3 December 2021, inviting great celebrations among the residents.

This agitation was important for a few political aspirants in the build-up to the 2022 MCD elections. Monu Chadha, president of Jangpura Residents Welfare Association (JRWA),

---

[4] Paras Singh, "Delhi's south corporation to seal new liquor vends that violate norms: Mayor", 28 November 2021, *Hindustan Times*. https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/delhis-south-corporation-to-seal-new-liquor-vends-that-violate-norms-mayor-101638123861769.html

would join the BJP and be announced as their MCD candidate for the Siddharth Nagar Ward (which includes parts of Jangpura-B). Rakesh Sagar, a member of the AAP Jangpura unit, would attempt to promote his name as a candidate for Daryaganj Ward, that now became an SC/ST (reserved) seat. Through their activities in the traders and resident associations, such individuals would continue canvassing in the coming few months, regularly posting about their contributions to Jangpura-Bhogal.

Through this agitation, Jangpura-Bhogal's social and material infrastructures came together. The fluid socio-spatial boundaries between Bhogal and Jangpura-A were mobilised to recruit protestors against the liquor shop through ideas of fear, morality, public practice, and ideal urban space. The street, public parks, social media, and religious spaces served as arenas of protest. Residents, religious spaces, political units, MCD representatives, MLAs, the MTA and RWAs banded together to define the market space. The alliances forged emerged from historic spatial proximities, socio-economic relations, political histories, and aspirations formed around infrastructural space.

While the theka agitation is symptomatic of mediatised middle-class politics enabled through millennial Delhi's legislative and governance measures, it emerges from a history of collective endeavours to craft social infrastructures in Jangpura-Bhogal. The arrivals, migrations, and departures in Jangpura-Bhogal accompanied concerted processes of crafting and negotiating space in the neighbourhood. This chapter examines instances of resident and institutional negotiations around infrastructural interventions to define spaces, religious, economic life, presences, and absences in Jangpura-Bhogal. Here, I see infrastructure both in terms of its material and non-material assemblages. In other words, infrastructure constitutes both basic infrastructures of water, electricity, and roads; social infrastructures such as schools, markets, medical, or religious buildings; and what Simone calls 'relational infrastructures' of collectives.[5] Social relations, thus, also constitute an infrastructure for inhabitation. Diverse agents and strands crystallise to produce the neighbourhood's infrastructures. Local political networks, socio-economic capital, historic spatially proximate relations, varying administrative and legal regimes, and a persistent presence-absence dynamic mediate these processes. The chapter also reconsiders scholarly claims of a neoliberal disjuncture in middle-class politics by

---

[5] AbdouMaliq Simone, "Relational infrastructures in postcolonial urban worlds," in *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context*, ed. Stephen Graham and Colin McFarlane (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015).

unpacking a longer history that provides the foundation for contemporary RWA and MTA practices.

After a brief foray into the history and overview of Infrastructures and RWAs in Jangpura-Bhogal, I examine specific instances in the history of these collectives that enable the events of November-December 2021. Finally, contrasting this with emergent refugee infrastructures, I illustrate how questions of power, spatiality, historical presence, and state-subject relations influence the production of neighbourhood space.

Figure 2.1: Jangpura-A meeting organised on 9 November 2021

Figure 2.2: Jangpura-A meeting organised on 9 November 2021. Source: Team Spirit Jangpura-A.

Figure 2.3: BJP's protest site, 16 November 2021. Source: Team Spirit Jangpura-A.

Figure 2.4: Sign at protest site. Trans. 'The Kejriwal government should take back its destructive decision.' Source: Team Spirit Jangpura-A

Figure 2.5: Main protest site with effigy. Source: Harpal Singh.

Figure 2.6: Main protest site with Praveen Kumar (holding placard) and Sarika Chaudhury (left of Kumar). Source: Harpal Singh.

1. Setting the Stage: Infrastructures and RWAs In Jangpura-Bhogal

1.1. A brief history

The road where the Jain Mandir was, was named Temple Road. Like this 60-foot, 55-foot, 65-foot wide roads. Service lanes on the backside were given street names. Like Bhogal Lane, Masjid Lane, Church Lane, Jangpura Lane. The narrow service lanes were for waste and sewage while traffic would flow from the main roads. It was made like that…And they say that during the time of British, there used to be something like Kerosene chimney types, lamps on every corner. A man would come with kerosene and light the lamps. And for the sewer system…so that people would not have to face bad smells, the pipes were 25 feet high. That people are living a little lower so that all the smell

would…they wanted to make Bhogal as a model settlement. They also wanted

to make Karol Bagh…So they made a very nice settlement.[6]

Colonial urbanism inspired by ideas of public health in the colonial quarters and especially in the 'native' settlements relied on the idea that material reforms through orthogonal streets, modern amenities like electricity, drainage systems, piped water supply, and healthcare would initiate social change among native populations. Combined with the Garden City articulation of New Delhi, an aggressive distinction between the old and the new city and perpetual concerns about relieving congestion would influence Delhi and Jangpura-Bhogal's infrastructural life. The NDMC would provide filtered water supply for Jangpura and Nizamuddin, signalling a turn towards 'modern' urban practices to reform (disrupt) pre-colonial relations with water bodies.[7] Police constables replaced chowkidars in the settlement, and the Jangpura dispensary was established in 1930 to cater to a population of about 4000 people of the surrounding villages of Garhi, Jogabhai, Kilokhri, Kotla Mubarakpur, Masjid Moth, Zamrudpur, Jangpura and Nizamuddin. A decade later, it was joined by a Child Welfare Centre (established in 1940) that catered to the needs of pregnant women, housing a doctor and two nurses. The haphazard growth of Delhi, marked by slums, congestion, a housing crunch, and spiralling land prices, prompted the establishment of the Delhi Improvement Trust (DIT) in 1937, which took over all Nazul (crown) Lands, including Jangpura village.

The Partition, the mass refugee influx, and quick-fix refugee constructions exacerbated congestion and unplanned growth, leading to the replacement of the DIT with the DDA in 1957.[8] To address this urban chaos, the Delhi Master Plan of 1962 drew on American and German town planning ideas to establish industrial zones, regulate, determine strict land-use patterns, and develop ring towns or counter magnets within the larger Delhi metropolitan area.[9]

---

[6] Rakesh Sagar, Interview, 6 December 2018.

[7] DSA/CC/Edu/4-115/1927.
For a greater discussion on the effects of the introduction of piped water, see Sharan, *In the City*.

[8] The creation of the DIT however, added another institutional body to complicate jurisdictions over land. Delhi's urban and municipal institutions would continue to suffer from failed schemes, and inadequate funds. Eventually the Birla Committee Report ruled that the DIT as an institution had failed and needed to be replaced by a newer and more efficient land development body, the DDA. For a greater discussion, see Diya Mehra, "Planning Delhi ca. 1936–1959", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2013), https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2013.829793; Stephen Legg, "Post-Colonial Developmentalities: From the Delhi Improvement Trust to the Delhi Development Authority", in *Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies of India*, ed. Stuart Corbridge, M. Satish Kumar, and Saraswati Raju (London: Sage, 2006).

[9] This was preceded by the Interim General Plan of 1958.
Ravi Sundaram, "A City of Order: the Masterplan", in *Pirate modernity*; Sharan, *In the City*.

For example, the Hindustan Housing Factory, producing prefabricated houses, was set up on the land between Jangpura and Lajpat Nagar and surrounded by an industrial belt to be developed later.[10] At the time, Delhi, under President's rule with a nominal legislative assembly and active DMC, was ruled by the Congress (victorious in 1958 and 1962), even though the Jana Sangh kept making inroads, supporting a temple agitation in Jangpura (section 3), the Hindi movement in Lajpat Nagar (Chapter 3), and resident attempts to craft space. These developments would see a few collectives emerge around religion and space influenced by interactions engendered by the market (Chapter 3). However, they were also enabled through the relationality of space, as I explain below.

The Congress had swept the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections in Delhi in 1951 and 1952, also winning in the New Delhi constituency, which included Jangpura-Bhogal. Delhi's first elected Chief Minister, Chaudhury Brahm Perkash, was touring the refugee localities of Delhi to take stock of the construction work underway. There, he encountered a combined deputation of the residents of Lajpat Nagar, Jangpura, Bhogal, and Nizamuddin, who submitted a joint memorandum to him. The document submitted was an exhaustive appeal by representative organisations of the four neighbourhoods requesting the government to address their difficulties. Carefully broken down into 29 points and sub-divisions, the memorandum addressed public amenities, educational institutions, economic necessities, religious and social life, and health services.[11] The language marked a tone of orders and suggestions to the government:

> There is no sanitation in these colonies, especially Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar. Filth is left exposed to the houses nearby a latrine. They should be cleaned thrice a day and disinfectants be used which is very rarely done at present. The number of latrines is too small to meet the demand so the number should be increased.[12]

This instance illustrates collective demands to improve the lived space of the neighbourhoods through an organised collective. Broadly, the memorandum concerned four neighbourhood areas: Lajpat Nagar, Bhogal, Nizamuddin, and Jangpura (including Jangpura Extension, Jangpura A and B), all spatially proximate residential neighbourhoods. This joint committee of residents was formed through a variety of relations emerging at the time: market

---

[10] NAI/WHS/Lands I/3-70/1949.
[11] NMML/MSS/Delhi Police/IIIrd Inst./68,69. The entire list consisted of 29 points.
[12] *Ibid*. Other refugee groups interrupted his cavalcade and lined shops with black flags.

relations, residential proximity; familial connections; emerging public and religious space interactions; shared refugee camps or shared regions of displacement in West Pakistan. Utilising the visit of Delhi's Chief Minister, the citizen-refugees tapped into the emergent relations and interactions to express a combined request to improve urban space.

This language of rightful expectations was common in post-partition Delhi as upper caste/class refugees were often increasingly assertive of the state's responsibility towards them.[13] The memorandum argued for the reduction or removal of shop and house rents; infrastructural additions like electricity poles and proper sewer constructions; adequate political representation; the construction of social infrastructures like allotments for religious sites, cremation grounds, community halls and parks; boosting the local economy through the development of the earmarked industrial area, the promotion of cottage industries, and infrastructural improvements in the markets; and connecting the neighbourhoods through an expansion of bus and rail services, as well as providing concessions on travel. These respective demands meticulously referred to specific cases in the neighbourhoods. For example, there was a demand to install doors on either side of the double-storey quarters in Jangpura A. Another was a request to fence the areas close to the railway line (DS in Jangpura-B, Lajpat Nagar and Jangpura Extension) to protect children from injuries.[14]

The refugees submitting the memorandum in 1954 to expand prevalent infrastructures were the inheritors of colonial buildings and services. While the direct outcome of these demands for infrastructural improvements in the space is difficult to trace, a few transformations are observable.[15] The 1954 memorandum's requests for municipal representation succeeded with the Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) Act of 1957, which combined 12 different bodies of Delhi's civic administration into one,[16] and through the establishment of the Delhi Metropolitan Council (1967) consisting of elected representatives. However, it was limited to an advisory role in the Lieutenant Governor's office (replacing the Chief Commissioner's office). The Jana Sangh's work would come to fruition as they enjoyed consecutive victories in the Metropolitan Council and DMC elections in 1967, establishing dominance over politics in the city. The Congress's return to power was briefly interrupted by the post-Emergency influence of the Janata Dal in 1977.

---

[13] This tone would change by the 1960s as refugee constructions were completed and attention turned to the India-China war. For a greater discussion, see Kaur, *Since 1947*.

[14] NMML/MSS/Delhi Police/IIIrd Inst./68,69

[15] 'New Delhi Municipal Committee's Second Five Year Plan', DSA/CC/Financial/6-23/1956.

[16] The Cantonment Board and the New Delhi Municipal Board continued to be separate entities.

By 1961, suburban railways expanded to connect these colonies to other parts of the city. In the coming years, the dispensary added a new Ayurvedic wing, and the DMC would establish and maintain several parks in Jangpura-Bhogal.[17] A fondly remembered councillor of the decade following this is Jagmohan Singh Kocchar (1967-1977), who worked towards ensuring necessary and adequate infrastructural improvements like ample public hydrants and the eventual establishment of the drainage system.[18] From 1957 till the 1980s, the DDA's numerous attempts to develop and dispose lands failed as the 1981 Master Plan exposed the continued uncontrolled growth of the city. While sticking to the core tenets of the 1962 Master Plan, it aimed to displace noxious industries, establish new markets, and revive the Yamuna riverbed.[19] However, the urban expansion of the 1980s due to the Asian Games and the slow introduction of diverse media infrastructures dramatically produced a city of chaos and disorder. Environmental legislation, slum demolitions, haphazard constructions and abject infrastructures would initiate legislative manoeuvres to tackle the urban condition.

1.2. Politics and Representation

Delhi's identity as the capital has drawn diverse and sweeping administrative manoeuvres that have affected Jangpura-Bhogal's political history. As a Chief Commissioner's province, Delhi had a partially elected Delhi Municipal Committee and an appointed New Delhi Municipal Committee. Thus, Jangpura-Bhogal had no representation. The advisory committee to the Chief Commissioner of 1947 continued in its powerless form as Delhi became a Part C State in 1951, following which Delhi became a Union Territory in 1955. The advisory committee continued to have limited powers until the establishment of the DMC and Metropolitan Council. Until the sweeping governance reforms of the 1990s, the powers of these two bodies

---

[17] *Annual Administration Report for the year 1961-62*, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Delhi: Municipal Press, 1965); *Annual Administration Report for the year 1960-61*, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Delhi: Municipal Press, 1962).

[18] Echoing a common discourse about corrupt municipal officials, residents praise Kochhar for being an honest councillor as he was the proprietor of Jagsonpal Pharmaceuticals, and therefore, felt no need to make money through his political life. https://www.jagsonpal.com/about-us

However, every year during the monsoons, residents and local political figures draw attention to the SDMC's mismanagement of the colony by highlighting the faulty drainage system that fails to control flooding in the streets. These critics point to the danger this regularly poses to pedestrians who must often wade through dirty water released from open manholes (and the ever-present danger of falling into them) that are opened to manage the water. This problematic history of the drainage system traces back to 1929. See Records of the Malarial Survey of India. Vol. 1, 1929, 316. Journal of Malaria Institute; DSA/CC/Edu, Health and Lands/24/1933-H; DSA/DC/233/1939; May 3, 1961, *Lok Sabha Debates*, Second Series, Vol. LV, no 59. Thirteenth session, 15162-63. For Delhi's history of continuously failing drainage projects, see Sharan, *In the City*.

[19] Sharan, *In the City*; Sundaram, *Pirate Modernity*; Baviskar, *Uncivil City*.

remained limited, carrying out essential urban interventions and recommending bills to the Parliament for approval. By 1992, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments introduced decentralisation by granting more power to Urban Local Bodies. The Government of National Capital Territory (GNCT) Act of 1991 gave legislative powers to an elected Delhi government through the elected Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and ensured compulsory local municipal elections.[20] Now all but three dominions (police, public order, land) came under the new Delhi administration that would compete with the DDA, the Delhi Jal Board, and the DMC over jurisdiction and responsibilities. Later in 2011, the Sheila Dixit INC government trifurcated the DMC into the North, East and South Delhi Municipal Corporations, citing more transparency, accountability, and representation of resident interests at the local level. Since 2017, the BJP government has been slowly diluting the powers of the Delhi government under AAP. This was further aggravated by the recent move to combine all Municipal Corporations into a single body before the 2022 MCD elections. Having won the recent MCD elections ending BJP's dominance, AAP's effect on municipal governance is yet to be seen.

With a history of frequent administrative adjustments and an absence of explicit spatial boundaries, Jangpura-Bhogal was divided into different constituencies during its political history, thereby producing a maze of constituency illegibility. It was placed in the New Delhi Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly Constituency for the 1951, 1952, and 1957 State and General elections. At the Municipal level, following the creation of the Delhi Municipal Corporation, it was part of the Jangpura constituency. However, there is another caveat here. As governance units, localities do not always correspond to administrative boundaries, often overlapping in constituency spatiality or split between such urban units. Therefore, owing to the limitations of the archive, the delimitation boundaries for each election are difficult to map. The following election tables are based on the delimitation archives, gazettes, election reports, and oral histories under different constituencies, possibly including parts of Jangpura-Bhogal. Currently, Jangpura-Bhogal comes under the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency, the Jangpura and Kasturba Nagar Delhi Assembly constituencies, and the Daryaganj (Jangpura-A, B, and Bhogal), and Kasturba Nagar (Pant Nagar and Jangpura Extension) MCD Wards. The outskirts of Jangpura-Bhogal, melding into other neighbourhoods, are included in the Siddharth Nagar and Lajpat Nagar constituencies. AAP's legislative assembly dominance through Praveen Kumar and Madan Lal intersects with the BJP dominance of the Kasturba Nagar ward and the

---

[20] Stéphanie Tawa Lama-Rewal, Neighbourhood Associations and Local Democracy: Delhi Municipal Elections 2007, *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 47 (2007).

Congress control of the Daryaganj ward. Primarily the Congress dominated on most fronts in Jangpura-Bhogal, interspersed with brief periods of BJP rule in the Hindu majority areas of Pant Nagar, Jangpura Extension, and Lajpat Nagar, followed by AAP's rise as a power in the area.

Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) have existed since the 1950s and were often set up by retired military men, functioning through meagre donations by residents and advocating for basic infrastructural services like park and street maintenance.[21] For example, resident Associations in Jangpura Extension and Pant Nagar were established in 1951 and 1958 and worked towards building better streets and more parks.[22] Such associations in urban India existed alongside other more prominent urban or regional migrant associations working to organise refugee and migrant housing and infrastructures.[23] In Delhi, organisations like The Refugee Association (Kingsway Camp and Humayun Road), The Frontier Pursharti Jirga, and the Sindhi Association regularly organised public meetings in the early 1950s to address refugee problems and communicate with the state.[24]

According to the Registrar of Societies, Jangpura-Bhogal has 33 societies (professional, religious, social, educational, residential, and trade) registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.[25] While some of these organisations merely utilise Jangpura-Bhogal as a base of their operations, the trader and resident associations are rooted in the locality. They exist alongside more informal collectives around particular colonies, streets, or localities, utilising public parks or religious sites as meeting spaces, as well as Facebook pages, Twitter profiles, and WhatsApp groups to communicate with their members. In Jangpura-Bhogal, some of these are the Jangpura Residents Welfare Association (JRWA), Jangpura Extension Welfare Association (JEWA), the Bhogal Vyopar Samiti (Business Association), Jangpura Extension Residents Association (JERA),[26] the Jangpura-A Residents collective, Jangpura Bhogal SC/ST

---

[21] Srivastava, *Entangled urbanism*; Diya Mehra, "RWAs and Political Process in Delhi", in *Participolis: Consent and Contention in Neoliberal Urban India*, ed. Karen Coelho, Lalitha Kamath, and M. Vijayabaskar (Taylor and Francis, 2020).

[22] Mr Dua, Interview, 27 July 2017; DSA/DA/Industries and Labour/19-43/1958

[23] Nikhil Rao, *House, but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898-1964* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Bandyopadhyay, *Streets in Motion*; Kaur, *Since 1947*.

[24] See for example, NMML/MSS/Delhi Police/IIIrd Inst./62.

[25] *South-East District-List of Society*, Registrar of Society, District South-East http://web.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/19caad004388671ab581bd2164917145/PDF+South+East+list+of+socieety.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&lmod=488033480., accessed 4 July 2022.

[26] The JERA was formed after Jangpura Extension's Municipal Councillor Bhupinder Malik and JEWA had a fallout. The JERA, according to the JEWA president, consists of residents sympathetic to the councillor. JEWA president, Interview, May 2021.

Welfare Association, Church Road Bhogal Welfare Association, Neighbourhood Welfare Association, Pant Nagar Residents Welfare Association, and the Jangpura Extension residents' group of Block 1,2,3 and 4 (residents of DS quarters).

Today RWAs and Market Trader Associations (MTAs) in Jangpura-Bhogal, Delhi and urban metropolises continue to participate in everyday activities of infrastructural management like park maintenance, managing security measures like guards and gate closures, negotiating with police and municipal personnel for sanitation and surveillance of 'dangerous' rag pickers, hawkers, domestic workers, and slum dwellers. Although, in theory, they are to function through regular elections and meetings, their inner institutional workings are often opaque, marked by scattered accountability and individual strongholds of leadership.[27] For example, two RWA presidents in Jangpura-Bhogal have led the associations for almost a decade without any elections. They have also established a symbiotic relationship with the Jangpura and Nizamuddin police post and station, local municipal representatives, and various intermediaries such as local unit members of the AAP, Congress, and BJP. These unit members often overlap with other resident and trader associations. For example, members of the AAP Jangpura unit are directly involved in the informal resident collective of Jangpura-A, the JRWA, the Bhogal Buddha Vihar (chapter 3), Bhogal Vyopar Samiti, the Delhi Punjabi academy, the local Sikh community, and Bhogal Welfare Association-- ranging from being mere members to leaders of these collectives. While some of them have political ambitions beyond the neighbourhood, others are invested in, as they state, 'social service'. Since the turn of the millennium, the active promotion of middle-class resident involvement in the Bhagidari scheme,[28] and trifurcation of the DMC has enabled these groups to stake claims in Jangpura-Bhogal. At the same time, these collectives have taken different forms to make diverse infrastructural claims and define space in Jangpura-Bhogal.

---

[27] Seth Schindler, The Making of World-Class Delhi: Relations Between Street Hawkers and the New Middle Class: The Making of World-Class Delhi, *Antipode* 46, no. 2 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12054; Srivastava, *Entangled urbanism*; Mehra, RWAs and Political.; John Harriss, Political Participation, Representation and the Urban Poor: Findings from Research in Delhi, *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 11 (2005 2005); Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria, Guardians of the Bourgeois City: Citizenship, Public Space, and Middle–Class Activism in Mumbai, *City & Community* 8, no. 4 (12/2009 2009), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01299.x.
[28] Only residents of recognized colonies are included in the program.

List of Party Abbreviations.

Note: Data for candidates, party affiliations, and wards is not available and is indicated by othe abbreviation DU.

KMPP: Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party

INC: Indian National Congress

BJS: Bhartiya Jana Sangh

JNP: Janata Party

BJP: Bhartiya Janta Party

BLD: Bhartiya Lok Dal

Table 2.1: Metropolitan Council and Legislative Assembly Elections

Year	Constituency	Winner	Year	Constituency	Winner
1951	Lodhi Road	Shiv Nandan Rishi (INC)	1998	Jangpura	Tarwinder Singh Marwah (INC)
				Kasturba Nagar	Sushil Chaudhury (BJP)
				Minto Road	Tajdar Babbar (INC)
1967	Jangpura	Inder Mohan Sehgal (BJS)	2003	Jangpura	Tarwinder Singh Marwah (INC)
	Minto Road	Sanwal Dass (INC)		Kasturba Nagar	Sushil Chaudhury (BJP)
	Lajpat Nagar	Ram Lal Verma (DU)		Minto Road	Tajdar Babbar (INC)
1972	Jangpura	Jag Parvesh Chandra (INC)	2008	Jangpura	Tarwinder Singh Marwah (INC)
	Minto Road	Surinder Saini (INC)		Kasturba Nagar	Neeraj Basoya (INC)
	Kasturba Nagar	C.L. Balmiki (INC)			
	Lajpat Nagar	Archana (INC)			
1977	Jangpura Minto Road	Inder Mohan Sehgal (JNP)	2013	Jangpura	Maninder Singh Dhir (AAP)
	Lajpat Nagar	Ram Lal Verma (JNP)		Kasturba Nagar	Madan Lal (AAP)
	Kasturba Nagar	Jaswant Singh Phul (JNP)			
1983	Jangpura	Jag Parvesh (INC)	2015	Jangpura	Praveen Kumar (AAP)
	Kasturba Nagar	Jagdish Lal (BJP)		Kasturba Nagar	Madan Lal (AAP)
	Lajpat Nagar	Ram Lal Verma (BJP)			
1993	Minto Road	Tajdar Babbar (INC)	2020	Jangpura	Praveen Kumar (AAP)
	Kasturba Nagar	Jagdish Lal Batra (BJP)		Kasturba Nagar	Madan Lal (AAP)
	Jangpura	Jag Parvesh (INC)			

Table 2.2: Municipal Elections

Year	Constituency	Winner	Year	Constituency	Winner
1958	Jangpura	INC (DU)	1997	Nizamuddin	Vijay Pal (BJP)
				Jangpura	K.S. Gujral (Independent)
				Bhogal	Anita Arya (BJP)
1962	Jangpura (S.C.)	Mitter Sain (DU)	2002	Nizamuddin	Farhad Suri (INC)
				Jangpura	Subhash Malhotra (INC)
	Lajpat Nagar	Kalu Ram (DU)		Bhogal	Darshana (INC)
1967	Nizamuddin	Jagmohan Singh (INC)	2007	Nizamuddin	Farhad Suri (INC)
				Lajpat Nagar	Veena Abrol (BJP)
	Jangpura	Sita Ram (DU)		Bhogal	Darshana (INC)
	Lajpat Nagar	Madan Mohan Abrol (BJP)		Kasturba Nagar	Jagdish Mamgain (BJP)
1971	Nizamuddin	Jagmohan Singh (INC)	2012	Nizamuddin	Farhad Suri (INC)
				Bhogal (SC)	Darshana (INC)
	Jangpura	Sita Ram (DU)		Kasturba Nagar	Ravi Kalsi (INC)
	Lajpat Nagar	Madan Mohan Abrol (BJP)		Lajpat Nagar	Kavita Malhotra (INC)
1977	Nizamuddin	Mam Raj (DU)	2017	Daryaganj	Yasmeen Kidwai (INC)
	Jangpura	Bir Bahadur Singh (DU)		Lajpat Nagar	Darshana (INC)
	Lajpat Nagar	Madan Mohan Abrol (BJP)		Kasturba Nagar	Seema Malik (BJP)
1983	Jangpura	K.S. Gujral (Congress)	2022	Daryaganj	Sarika Chaudhary (AAP)
	Lajpat Nagar	Madan Mohan Abrol (BJP)		Lajpat Nagar	Kumar Arjun Pal Singh Marwah (BJP)
				Siddharth Nagar	Sonali (BJP)
				Andrews Ganj	Anita Baisoya (AAP)

Table 2.3: Parliamentary (Lok Sabha) Elections

Year	Constituency	Winner	Year	Constituency	Winner
1952	New Delhi	Sucheta Kripalani (KMPP)	1991	New Delhi	Lal Krishna Advani (BJP)
				South Delhi	Madan Lal Khurana (BJP)
1957	New Delhi	Sucheta Kripalani (INC)	1996	New Delhi	Jagmohan (BJP)
				South Delhi	Sushma Swaraj (BJP)
1962	New Delhi	Mehr Chand Khanna (INC)	1998	New Delhi	Jagmohan (BJP)
				South Delhi	Sushma Swaraj (BJP)
1967	New Delhi	M.L. Sondhi (BJS)	1999	New Delhi	Jagmohan (BJP)
				South Delhi	Vijay Kumar Malhotra (BJP)
1971	New Delhi	Mukul Banerji (INC)	2004	New Delhi	Ajay Makan (INC)
				South Delhi	Vijay Kumar Malhotra (BJP)
1977	New Delhi	Atal Bihari Vajpayee (BLD)	2009	East Delhi	Chetan Chauhan (BJP)
				South Delhi	Kanwar Singh Tanwar (BSP)
1980	Jangpura	Atal Bihari Vajpayee (BLD)	2014	East Delhi	Mahesh Giri (BJP)
1984	New Delhi	Krishan Chandra Pant (INC)	2019	East Delhi	Gautam Gambhir (BJP)
	South Delhi	Lalit Maken (INC)			
1989	New Delhi	Lal Krishna Advani (BJP)			
	South Delhi	Madan Lal Khurana (BJP)			

2. Educating the Public: Marking Territory and Infrastructural Space

The Mission's latest development in the way of schools has been specially designed with this aim in view. St. Michael's School, Jangpura, was founded in 1924. It is not far from New Delhi, but completely in the open country, and the buildings are of sun-dried mud bricks with earthen roofs…Numbers are limited--not more than forty--to ensure a family life and freedom from a multitude of rules. The children are taught in every way to be independent and resourceful…In a beautifully kept little chapel they meet morning and evening for prayers, and on Sunday--the happiest day of the week at St. Michael's--they learn the joy of worship and communion in the Holy Eucharist, celebrated by an Indian priest and sung to an Indian setting. The whole life, simple, healthy, and merry, is Catholic in the best sense, and its aim is to send back to the villages Christian wives and mothers who will be lights to their own homes.[1]

In 1924, The Cambridge Mission established St. Michael's industrial school for girls, providing technical and religious education in a large compound. The Church inside it would later find a new home in the nearby St. Michael's and All Angel's Church in 1935.[2] The school and Church catered to Jangpura and the surrounding villages with a growing Christian community and a residential pastor.[3] Today, opposite the side entrance to St. Michael's Church, one sees two abandoned and dilapidated structures with a dusty board stating that they belong to the Diocese of Delhi. "That is shut. The British made it. Our priest and the maintenance people used to live there…they own both sides".[4] Along with the school run by the Church, there was another M.B. Boys Primary School catering to around 70-80 students and expanding by 1937.[5] By the 1930s, the Delhi administration funded a few institutions in Jangpura through

---

[1] Lilian F. Henderson, "Building the Church", in *The Cambridge Mission to Delhi: A Brief History* (Westminster: The Cambridge Mission, 1931).

[2] James P. Alter and Herbert Jai Singh, *The Church in Delhi* (National Christian Council of India, 1961), 53.

[3] Such lands were allotted on concessional rates for Social and Charitable purposes. The Cambridge Mission and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) began their operations in Delhi in 1854 through education in the Government College and the activities of the Delhi Mission Society. The Cambridge Mission began in 1876, eventually joining the SPG in proselytizing and education across the city. These efforts manifested in the establishment of St. Stephen's Church, hospital, and college in 1886. For a greater discussion on the Christian missions in Delhi, see Alter and Jai Singh, *The Church in Delhi*, 17-68.

[4] Kishan Lal, Interview, 11 August 2017; Mange Lal, Interview, 6 December 2018

[5] DSA/CC/R&A/B-121/1937.

grants in aid, i.e., the SPG Mission school, St. Michael's. school, and M.B.s Boys School, and established an adult night school for depressed classes following petitions by the residents of the village.[6]

Figure 2.7: St. Michael's School.[7]

With the neighbourhood's expansion in the postcolonial period, the government began expanding the municipal education facilities and allowing charitable and private institutions to establish their schools. Layout plans of the neighbourhood outlined several spaces for green areas or open spaces, schools, and religious sites. Along with the Church, the Sanatan Dharam society and NDMC established more schools in the constitutive neighbourhoods. The DAV school, started in 1945, expanded from a primary to a middle and high school by the late 1950s. S.D. High School in Jangpura Extension was established around the same time the neighbourhood began coming up.[8]

Soon we see a concerted process by residents negotiating with plans and the state to establish infrastructural space. Following the construction of Jangpura Extension, debates began about relocating a Jain school that had been running in Bhogal for several years and applying for land in the upcoming neighbourhood. However, Jangpura's residents objected to this allotment and the construction of temporary school buildings. The reason was its relocation to a particular site in Jangpura Extension, opposite the recently constructed Eros cinema.[9]

---

[6] *Annual Administration Report of the Delhi Province for 1933-34*, Government of India (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1935); *Report on the Administration of the Delhi Province for 1927-28*, Government of India (Calcutta: Central Publication Branch, 1929), 28; *Adminstration Report 1930-31*.

[7] Henderson, 'Building the Church'.

[8] DSA/CC/Development/6-137/1951; DSA/CC/LSG/1-121/1948; DSA/CC/LSG/1-136/1957.

[9] For the construction of Eros cinema, see DSA/CC/Home/29-51/1955.

This, however, was not the first instance where residents attempted to mobilise support to prevent the opening of a school. In 1958, the Ministry of Education planned to establish a higher secondary school adjacent to the pre-existing primary school building, initiating diverse articulations of 'The Plan' by different actors. This allotment by the Delhi Administration first drew the ire of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), which highlighted a violation of the intended land use that stipulated the space for a park.[10] The resulting adjustment reduced the amount of space earmarked for the new school building adjoining the school playground. Following this, DDA would argue that the site was earmarked for both a community centre and a school, further complicating intended use: a site for common use by residents and school children and a breathing space in the neighbourhood. Jangpura's bungalow residents surrounding the site protested the construction of the school on that site. They took recourse to legal injunctions to prevent the Ministry of Education from constructing the school building. Eventually, the President stepped in to approve a multi-storey construction of the school building adjoining the park to be maintained by the Delhi Municipal Corporation.[11] Unlike other instances where green open spaces were established as enshrined in the proposed layout plans, this park was founded through resident efforts.

In September 1963, Mehr Chand Khanna, the Minister for Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation, wrote to Brahm Perkash, the Metropolitan Council head, regarding Jangpura's residents' objection to the allotment of land to the Jain primary school. Khanna's counterclaim argued that most residents favoured the school's location opposite Eros Cinema.[12] Residents began with court injunctions and petitions to the Chief Commissioner to highlight its violations of intended land use, citing the Cinematograph Rules, 1953, that prohibited the construction of cinemas within 250 metres of religious spaces, educational institutions, and hospitals. As a result, the administration decided to consider the application by Jangpura's residents seriously.[13] Questions were also raised around the potential law and order situation that could emerge with a girl's school close to a cinema.

Like other cinema halls, Eros is now a multiplex, and the parent company is involved in the hospitality, real estate, and media industry. Eros Group, accessed 8 January 2023, https://eros-group.com/legacy/.

[10] Circular issued by A. Sankaran, Engineer, CPWD, WHS Min, 17 March 1960, NAI/WHS, Lands I (LI)/L-3/42/1958.

[11] A.A. Khwaja, Under Secy. Govt. of India to Land Development Officer (L&DO), 4 December 1961, NAI/WHS LI/ L-3/42/1958.

[12] Mehr Chand Khanna to Brahm Perkash, NAI/WHS LI/1/2/1962.

[13] Note, 7 September 1963, *Ibid.*

Enquiries by the Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply (WHS) found that the Rehabilitation Ministry had allotted the land without consulting the Ministry of Education in January 1962.[14] Although in violation of the Cinematograph rules, the allotment was made based on the layout plan's stipulation for a school. However, Jangpura Residents began a campaign to prevent the school's functioning through multiple petitions and visits to important political figures, supported by the Bhartiya Jana Sangh and their Lok Sabha representative Balraj Madhok. Although not in power at the time, the Jana Sangh had been trying to gain a foothold in Jangpura-Bhogal since the 1950s (discussed in chapter 3). Using the discourse of public morality through Cinematography Rules, they argued that a girl's school in front of a cinema would have a deleterious effect on young students. The reasoning was that the cinema would usually attract bad crowds and thugs in the evenings close to its show timings, resonating with earlier newspaper debates around connections between cinema culture and public morality.[15] Residents claimed this was a period of great crime in the city and the neighbourhood, which had witnessed murders, kidnappings, and arson directed at the nearby police post. In addition, they cited anxieties about the circulation of unknown bodies due to the Lajpat Nagar Railway stop and Link Road, which served as entry and exit points to Jangpura Extension. Around the same time, the owner of Eros Cinema had recently applied for a gun license citing threats to his life and attacks on his employees at the cinema.[16] Keval, an erstwhile resident of Pant Nagar, informs me that this period witnessed instances of crime, smuggling and drug trade around the cinema as refugees sought to make a living, a narrative also found among Bhogal residents like DC.[17]

In 1964, arguing that the neighbourhood already had three schools functioning and there was no need for an additional educational institution, residents submitted a petition to the DMC Commissioner stating their arguments against the school. The first objection concerned the intended demography of the school as the institution primarily catered to outsider residents from Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar and no local students from Jangpura Extension. Therefore, shifting a pre-partition school to a Partition colony was undesirable, and the older school building in Bhogal was adequate to serve the school's needs. Secondly, they turned to questions

---

[14] Dharma Vira, Secy. Rehab Ministry to T. Sivashankar, Secy. WHS Min, 9 January 1962, *Ibid.*

[15] In the early 1950s, debates on national public culture in the editorial columns of Delhi raised concerns about opening of cinema halls in refugee neighbourhoods and their potential impact on public morality. See Saeed Ahmad, Daily Akhbar: Newspapers and Reading Publics in Delhi, 1945-1952 (MPhil University of Delhi, 2016), 88-96.

[16] DSA/Home/Delhi Administration (DA)/20-92/1959.

[17] Keval, Interview; DC, Interview, 11 August 2017.

of land use and planning, arguing that the site was initially intended for a Post Office, a Bank, and a public park. According to residents, the construction of a boundary wall by the 'non-resident' Jain Society had disfigured the colony and created slum and has converted the place to be a polluted sport and a space of bad smell where from one cannot pass without shutting his nose. This place is being used by the cinema goers as urinal at the time of intervals.[18] Furthermore, the boundary wall encroaching more land than it was allotted covering the drain would interrupt future infrastructural projects like road extensions, eventually leading to drainage and rainwater collection problems. Moreover, shops constructed around the site and sub-leased by the owners served commercial rather than educational purposes. Thus, the JRA petitioned the Delhi administration to "save young and innocent girls from the immoral and unscrupulous persons".[19] As they reasoned, the site could serve a better purpose as a hospital, maternity and welfare centre, boys' work centre, or a public park, in case it could not become a post office or bank.[20]

With the later file untraceable in the archive, we do not know if the school site remained. However, we know that three years had lapsed since its allotment by 1964, and the WHS Ministry was reluctant to change its decision. Today, Eros Cinema is surrounded by three parks and no school. More importantly, we see resident attempts to displace an educational institution due to its alleged land use violations and the infrastructural needs of a present and local population. The local population was absent from the school that catered to outsiders. Violations of intended land use produced an absence of infrastructure vital to residents of Jangpura Extension. This presence-absence dynamic continued to influence other instances in Jangpura-Bhogal.

3. The Sacred and the Historical: A tale of two temples

As the introduction highlights, a crucial element of Jangpura-Bhogal's narrative of conviviality is its religious diversity exemplified through the material landscape of different religious sites (Chapter 3). The inherent spatial segregation discussed in Chapter 1 also determined the spatial locations of the religious sites established. Thus, the Jain mandir established by Lala Summan Lal Jain on Temple Road, corresponded to the location of the Jain population. Shahi Masjid and its vicinity were home to the Muslims of the village. The Church and Ravidas temple came

---

[18] Jangpura Residents Association (JRA) to Commissioner, MCD, 4 April 1964.
[19] JRA to President, Prime Minister, et. al, 11 July 1964.
[20] *Ibid.*

up on hospital road, close to the primary residential locations of the Jatavs. Burial grounds would be established opposite the settlement on the land now primarily occupied by Jangpura-B. While some religious sites came up through requested allotments, others, like the Ravidas or Balmiki mandirs, would appear through the appropriation of land for religious purposes and eventually be recognised as legal structures. In other instances, residents attempted to protect historically significant but 'officially obscure' religious sites.

In 1939, the Hindu residents of Jangpura requested permission to build a wall around an old temple situated on Mathura Road. These requests fell on deaf ears as the administration could not prove the site's history as a temple.[21] In the post-partition period, several spaces earmarked for religious sites would be claimed by temples and gurdwaras,[22] some of which emerged through the occupation of pre-existing structures that had previously belonged to other religious communities. In a rare instance, the Mai da Gurdwara in Jangpura-A belonged to an old refugee widow remembered as Mai, who began regular *paaths*, allowing the gurdwara to flourish.[23] The Bhogal gurdwara initially began following the occupation of the Shahi masjid by refugees soon after Muslims departed the neighbourhood. Eventually, it was established on former Panchayat land on Jangpura road in the 1960s.[24]

If we recall chapter 1, the site for the new capital complex at Delhi, with the material backdrop of ruins, served a dual purpose for the colonial state. One was the aesthetic value of a picturesque landscape observable from atop Raisina Hill. Second, the contrast between the new site and the ruins surrounding it served a symbolic purpose by juxtaposing the imperial capital with material remnants of Delhi's historic empires. Connected to this was the emergence of these sites as the archives of past Indian empires by the twentieth century.[25] With land acquisition for the new capital underway, discussions abounded regarding the future of the city's ruins. In 1913, colonial officials prepared lists cataloguing the ruins falling within the planned Imperial Capital Complex, categorising them as sites worthy of protection and

---

[21] DSA/DC/23/1939.

[22] NAI/WHS/Lands/L-3-163/1962.

[23] Anil, 17 October 2018.

[24] The Sunni Majlis-e-Awkaf (the Delhi Wakf Board's predecessor) documented this widespread phenomenon in the immediate aftermath of the Partition. DSA/DC/4/1949; DSA/CC/R&R/32-2/1954; See also Taneja, *Jinnealogy;* Delhi Development Authority, *List of Items Resolved by DDA from 15 January 1958 to 29 September 1979* (1979).

[25] Mrinalini Rajagopalan argues that the colonial classification of 'monuments' and their histories affected understandings of 'native' relations to these pasts. This also framed popular claims to these sites around key events, figures, and narrative devices used by the colonial state. See Rajagopalan, *Building Histories*.

preservation, sites to be turned into literal ruins through non-preservation, and other sites to be ignored unless they interfered with colonial building projects.[26] Some of the sites included in Nizampur village were 2 *Shivalas* (Shiv temples), a tomb by the name of *Makbara Madarsawala*, and a *ghair-abad* (deserted) mosque, all considered unworthy of protection and preservation.[27]

Almost a decade later, the colonial state published an exhaustive four-volume list of Delhi's monuments citing the descriptions, known period of construction, current state, and their proposed future. In Volume II of the *List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments*, Nizampur village contains numerous unmarked tombs and structures. The sites mentioned earlier are now nameless and deemed unworthy of protection or preservation. Similarly, colonial, and postcolonial cartographic representations show the presence of a Muslim tomb and other nondescript structures in the area now occupied by Jangpura-Bhogal. More specifically, the tomb lies in the area now inhabited by the Pant Nagar Sanatan Dharam Mandir. These structures have been replaced by Birbal Park: a public park at the beginning of Jangpura-Extension's bungalow plots. The structure it replaced found a new lease of life on the southern edge of Jangpura Extension as the Sanatan Dharam Mandir.[28]

This section narrates the story of two spaces: unprotected and nameless ruins in the eyes of the postcolonial state. The contestations around 'monuments' and their meanings between their official and public memories followed diverse trajectories in the postcolonial period. In the first instance, a Hindu religious space and its dormant practices are revived. In the second instance, Muslim historical space is transformed into Hindu religious space. Although groups invoke popular memory to claim space in both instances, their trajectories are determined through a varied relationship with the state and differences between active, present populations and departed, absent populations.

---

[26] Mushirul Hasan and Dinyar Patel, eds., *From Ghalib's Dilli to Lutyen's New Delhi: A Documentary Record* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 197-220.

[27] As mentioned in chapter 1, the area occupied by Jangpura-Bhogal originally fell under the Nizampur village estate.

[28] J.A. Page, *List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments, Volume II: Delhi Zail (Excluding Shahjahanabad)* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Publishing, 1919).

3.1. Reviving the Sacred: The Jangpura Extension temple

> The debris of the sacred place of worship still lies on the spot unremoved giving vivid testimony to what befell it.[29]

In 1952, the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation and the Public Works Department (PWD) was working overtime to construct tenements required for the scores of refugees in need of housing in Delhi. During this process, officials encountered an old structure surrounded by a wall interfering with the construction. This was not unusual, as urban planning projects frequently encountered sacred spaces across Delhi. For instance, Lajpat Nagar and Khyber Pass had similar structures come in the way of refugee constructions.[30] While authorities cleared the compound wall, they left the structure standing. In response, the Secretary of SD High School in Jangpura wrote to the Superintending Engineer in April 1952 about the demolition and rumours of the possible removal of the temple. Arguing that such a move would injure the feelings of the Hindu public, the letter ended with an appeal to prevent encroachment by the authorities on the public land around the temple.[31] Later in July, the Hindu Sabha, a Delhi-based religious body, appealed to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Delhi to access the area to manage the temple, which the DC assured, the authorities had no intention of demolishing.[32]

In response to this, D.R. Bahl, the Superintendent Engineer, along with other members of the Rehabilitation Ministry, including Sucheta Kriplani and Sushila Nayyar, inspected the site in August 1952. They noted the site was functioning as a temple and residence for the priest and his family. As the structure would interfere with the construction process, the officials planned to evict the family, allot an alternative accommodation to them, and another site for the temple. The claims of residents to its historical antiquity and meaning soon manifested in the legal recourse they took to prevent its demolition. However, before the hearing on the case scheduled for January 1953, the municipal authorities demolished the temple on 12 December 1952 and handed over control of the site to the PWD.[33]

---

[29] DSA/CC/R&R/16-33/1952.
[30] *Ibid*; DSA/CC/Conf/32/1953.
[31] Secretary, S.D. High School, Jungpura to the Superintending Engineer Rehabilitation Circle III, 17 April 1952, DSA/CC/R&R/16-33/1952.
[32] DC to Assistant Secretary(R&R) to Delhi State Government, 15 July 1952, *Ibid.*
[33] Anand Shankar Sharma, Secretary, Gandhi Smarak, to Jawaharlal Nehru, 4 January 1953, DSA/CC/Conf/32/1953.
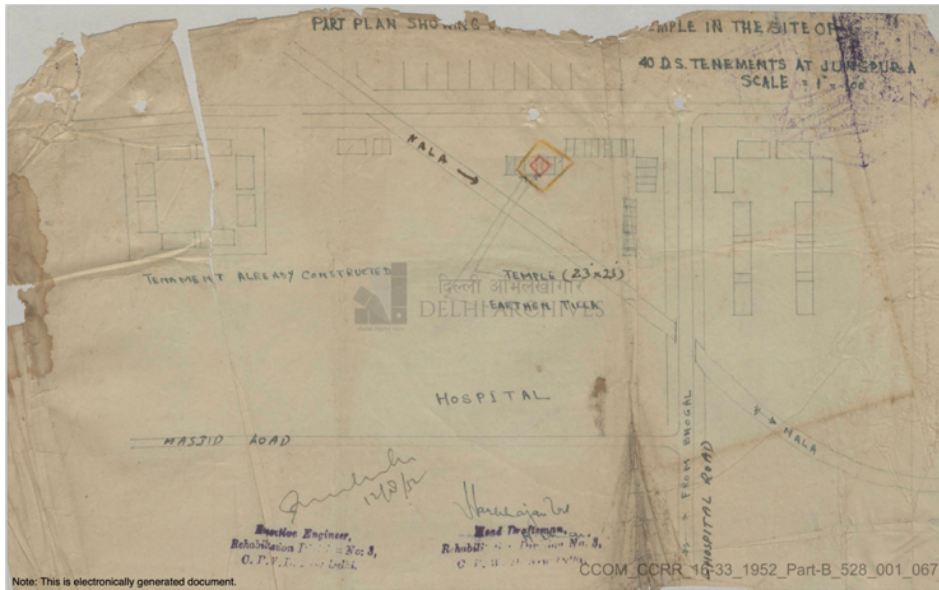
Figure 2.8: Location of the Makeshift Temple in Jangpura Extension.[34]

Figure 2.9 and 2.10: The structure before and after demolition.

This caused much dismay among residents and the media, who made public appeals through sit-ins, dharnas (protests), publications, and petitions to the government to provide adequate restitution for harming religious sentiments. The Mandir Raksha Committee, active in Delhi since the Shiv Mandir agitation of 1938, urged Sushila Nayyar (Minister for Health

---

[34] DSA/CC/R&R/16-33/1952.

125

and Family Welfare) to restore the structure, the demolition of which had caused great harm to Hindu sentiments. In an extremely emotive letter sent to Chief Minister Brahm Perkash in May 1953, members of the Jangpura Temple Committee (JTC) appealed to the now absent site's historic and affective nature. The JTC stated that the residents of Jangpura, Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar established the temple through great effort. Using evidence from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), residents asserted that the medieval structure containing the allegedly 'illegal' temple was a Shiv Temple, a fact also acknowledged by the Deputy Commissioner in his correspondence with the Rehabilitation ministry in September 1952. Adding 'popular' evidence to the official facts, they pointed to stories heard from Bhogal's older residents who informed them of the temple's importance during pilgrimages made to the historical Kalka mandir in the colonial period. They argued that the Hindu community to which the temple catered had simply revived the practices of the space and that it was the property of the 'entire community' rather than a group of people. Like the Mandir Raksha Committee, they expressed their discontent and resentment at the demolition of the site and questioned its implications for the future:

> If in a country like India, where full religious independence is guaranteed to every citizen by the Constitution, such things were tolerated, really it would set a very distasteful precedent and any temple or mosque could be pulled down any time on the mere pretext that the premises were to be requisitioned for some development scheme. In India, all ancient temples and mosques do not of necessity possess any such bonafides by the Government as this unfortunate temple has got recognising and giving it the full status of a place of worship. But no one is ever endeavoured to be obliterated on the flimsy grounds forwarded in this instance. Then why wrath be let fall on THIS alone?[35]

Contrasting the 'big, deserted, dilapidated mosque' in the area (the Bhogal mosque) that remained untouched by the state, with a 'centuries old shrine' that had been ruthlessly destroyed, they pointed to the blatantly differential treatment of religious structures by the state, and the meaningful differences between a 'dead space' like the deserted mosque, and the 'alive space' of the Shiv temple filled with devotees.[36] The vocal discontent of the residents, the

---

[35] Original emphasis. Letter from JTC to CM, 20 May 1953. DSA/CC/R&R/16-33/1952
[36] I borrow from Taneja's formulation of 'dead' and 'alive' spaces with respect to the monuments and ruins of the city. See Taneja, *Jinnealogy*.

negative media coverage, and the 'historical proof' provided by the ASI yielded results and led the government to allot another site for the Shiv temple towards the southern end of the neighbourhood.[37] Hindu residents' attempts to construct a space of religious community in Jangpura-Bhogal, while briefly interrupted, were nonetheless allowed to flourish.[38]

The arrival of refugees initiates the revival of a space long forgotten. Drawing on the colonial legacy of defining monuments, the postcolonial state, while partly acknowledging its historicity, deems it illegal. The entire saga that plays out involves local and urban actors, including the JTC, the resident pujari, the Mandir Raksha Committee, the Hindu Sabha, and the Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry. Residents use both its affective and archival dimensions, i.e., its importance for the larger Hindu community and its recognised antiquity through what Taneja calls 'the magic of documents'. Here, this larger community comes to include not only recently arrived refugees of Jangpura Extension but also the Hindu upper-caste residents of Bhogal. These emotive appeals of a space alive with meanings bear fruit as the recovery of practices of the old temple, although interrupted, resume at a new site with the postcolonial state's efforts at damage control.

3.2. Transforming Historical Space: Gufa Waala Mandir

Like I was telling you that the place, it had a tomb. It was a very big tomb. Whose tomb it was we do not know. But it was occupying the space. On all four sides there was a courtyard type around it. The tomb was made over it.

---

[37] DSA/CC/R&R/16-33/1952.

[38] As the temple issue was resolved, another short-lived conflict among stakeholders emerged. The Sanatan Dharam Temple Committee wrote to the Delhi administration against the activities of the JTC at the temple site. First, citing 'shastric irregularities' such as a 'west' facing hall, and its use as a prayer and residence room, they claimed great unrest among the Sanatanists in the locality. Secondly, they questioned the existence of the Jangpura Temple Committee, its registration as a society, and their rights to administer the temple. One of the major objections to the JTC was the grant of permanent tenure to the pujaris of the temple that would allow hereditary rights to their family members. This 'unfortunate' arrangement would, they argued, be detrimental to the prosperity and growth of the temple. Signed by almost 400 residents, the petition requesting control to be handed over to the Sanatan Dharam Committee affiliated with the larger Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha was a success.
Today, the temple is in C-Block of Jangpura Extension and houses a free clinic run by retired senior doctors from the surrounding area. Set up in 1975, it caters to the medical needs to low-income populations.

The value for the land was given to the government…the money was collected and given to them…they (temple authorities) have the free hold, allotment paper, everything…the mandir had been made and then the Sanatan Dharam Sabha made it (expanded).

As mentioned earlier, colonial and postcolonial cartographic representations show the presence of a Muslim tomb from the Pathan period in what is now the Pant Nagar neighbourhood of Jangpura-Bhogal.[39] Today, however, the tomb is absent. In its place is the Pant Nagar Hindu temple complex, home to the famous Gufa Wala Mandir (cave temple) built by the Media Moghul Gulshan Kumar, who came to Pant Nagar as a refugee.[40] The complex houses three temples, i.e., the Sanatan Dharam temple, the Hanuman temple, and the Gufa Wala Shiv temple. At the entrance to the complex is the photo of Ganesh Dutt, credited with establishing the Sanatan Dharam temple, the first to be built. Right opposite the entrance is an old, dilapidated and deserted flat. The story of the temple begins in the ruinous property and the combined efforts of its former inhabitant, a homeless man, and a young priest. The two quotes at the beginning of this section highlight different stages of its past and reveal its transformation from a Muslim historical space to a Hindu sacred space.

In 2017, while collecting oral histories of the neighbourhood, I am told that the site of the complex was initially a Muslim tomb that was converted into a temple, a story embedded in popular memory and narrated by numerous residents. As I am informed, the key actors involved were a refugee widow, a young priest, ordinary residents of the neighbourhood, and well-connected figures like Goswami Girdhari Lal.[41] Family members of the refugee widow first revealed this story to inform me that a researcher working on Jangpura-Bhogal's history should know this.

---

[39] Guerrieri, *Maps of Delhi,* 236, 245, 249; *First, Second and Final Reports of the Delhi Town Planning Committee*, 58-65.

[40] Gulshan Kumar was the founder of T-series, a cassette company that made its name through devotional music for *satsangs, jagratas*, and remixes of popular Bollywood songs. Today it is one of India's biggest media companies. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/how-bhushan-kumar-has-transformed-t-series-into-an-entertainment-behemoth/articleshow/57048309.cms?from=mdr. https://www.cinemaazi.com/feature/gulshan-kumar-and-the-rise-of-t-series

[41] He was the Head Priest of the Laxminarayan Temple and was, I am told, a relative of the refugee widow. Interview with family member, 4 February 2019.

My conversations with the widow's son, relatives and other residents enrich the details of the tale of how the newly arrived majority Hindu residents of Pant Nagar in the 1950s encountered a large desolate Muslim tomb with an unmarked grave. In the late 1950s, an old Brahmin sought shelter in the structure's complex and was able to sustain himself through the mercy of the middle-class Hindus of the neighbourhood, who provided him with food and water. However, he died soon after.

Figure 2.11: Entrance to the temple complex. Source: Author

One Brahman, old man, he must have been 70 at that time. And he had no one. What happened was that he would, at the tomb there…he would keep a towel over his shoulder, he would place that and sleep. An old woman gave him two rotis. It happens in the Hindu middle class more…pity. On top of that two rotis so he was fine. Now what happened, it started raining. Now when it is raining, what can he do? He did not have a home. He did not have anyone. What he did was that he went behind the tomb. He used cow dung to cover. Cleaned and covered. The grave was in the middle. Now he was prepared to deal with the rain too. Now what he did next was that he used coal to make an image of Hanuman.[42]

---

[42] Widow's son, Interview, 17 August 2017.

A refugee widow from West Punjab and her two children lived in the now abandoned house opposite the grand tomb structure. In the 1960s, she got acquainted with a young man from Rajasthan who had just arrived in Pant Nagar and who helped her take care of her cows. Taking inspiration from the now-dead homeless man's coal drawings of Hanuman, the widow and the young man cleared the grave, purified the site (*shuddikaran*), and added stone-made statues of Hindu gods to establish a makeshift temple with regular kirtans (religious recitals) to attract a huge crowd, which also served as a source of income for both. As the widow's son informs me, "Now it cannot be that you have a temple, and there is a grave in the middle. How can both things exist together?".[43] The formal structure that we see today was constructed by the Sanatan Dharam Sabha with donations from residents.[44] By 1972, the DDA officially allotted land for the temple and a children's burial ground.[45]

Soon enough, people from nearby Nizamuddin, along with the Delhi Wakf Board, laid claims to it as Wakf property, said to belong to a famous *hakim* (Muslim healer) from Nizamuddin.[46] Although according to the widow's son, the land belonged to the Wakf, the Jana Sangh, in control of the Metropolitan Council and DMC, denied their claims.[47] While the tomb persisted, the space around it was turned into a Hindu complex consisting of two temples. The remnants of the tomb, including the dome, were finally demolished in the late 1980s, and a new structure, the Gufawala (cave) temple, was added to the complex by the efforts of Gulshan Kumar.[48]

The transformation from Muslim historical space to Hindu religious space played out through a gradual and sedimented process. Residents encountering a pre-existing space with earlier histories of meaning and practice had to claim, repurpose, and transform it. This process

---

[43] *Ibid*

[44] Residents of Jangpura-A

[45] See DDA, *List of Items Resolved*; DDA, Lands – Institutional Allotments https://dda.org.in/lands/INSTITUTIONAL.htm, accessed 26 June 2022.

[46] Wakfs are 'permanent dedications' of moveable or immoveable property for pious, religious, or charitable purposes under Muslim law. They can neither be sold nor transferred. The Wakf Act of 1954 and subsequent amendments make the Delhi Wakf Board the de-facto guardian of all Muslim religious, spiritual, and historical spaces in Delhi. http://centralwaqfcouncil.gov.in/sites/default/files/The%20Waqf%20Act%201954.pdf.

[47] Interview with widow's son, 17 August 2017. The Jan Sangh won the Municipal and Metropolitan council elections in 1967 and 1971. Jaffrelot, The Hindu Nationalist Movement in Delhi, 181.

[48] Interview with resident, 29 January 2019.
The claims as Wakf property in the 1970s can be contextualised within the emergence of a new Muslim political discourse claiming a 'Royal Muslim past' and Delhi's medieval ruins as Muslim heritage. Around this time, the Delhi Wakf Board released several Gazette Notifications for Wakf properties. See *Ahmed, Muslim Political Discourse*.

was accompanied by the erasure and displacement of meanings around the old space, in this case, the meanings and practices associated with the Muslim population that revered the structure.

Like the protracted process of dispossessing Chand Khan of his property discussed in Chapter 1, the erasure of Muslim historical space represented by the tomb's makeover as a Hindu temple was also a gradual and sedimented process. An occupation by a homeless man seeking shelter begins the displacement process in the 1950s. Eventually, there is a makeshift temple, and the grave is destroyed, again through the actions of ordinary residents of the area. With the construction of a formal temple by the Sanatan Dharam Sabha in the 1960s, new meanings and practices replace earlier histories, although the dome, a material remnant of that past, still remains. The project of displacement is complete with the official denial of the space's Muslim past and destruction of the dome to expand the temple complex only in the late 1980s.[49] Without any deliberate project or intentional plan of Muslim erasure, Muslim historical space becomes Hindu religious space.

Of Ruins and Histories

The postcolonial bureaucratic regime built upon the legacies of the colonial state to categorize the ruins of Delhi into 'monuments' for symbolic recollections of the past. Others were turned into 'ruins', unprotected and of no historical or cultural interest to the state.[50] The new populations now inhabiting spaces of the city, both victims and perpetrators of displacement, were disconnected from the histories and meanings of such ruins.[51] While these ruins became the picturesque backdrop of elite neighbourhoods and the city's landscape, many of these 'dead' spaces became sites of contestation and meaning-making.[52] Like their names, the

---

[49] For another history of accretive and sedimented displacement around sacred Muslim space, see Sunil Kumar, *The Present in Delhi's Pasts* (Gugaon: Three Essays Collective, 2010), 73-91.

[50] Taneja, *Jinnealogy*; Hilal Ahmed, *Muslim Political Discourse*; Sundaram, *Pirate modernity*. The process of converting 'ruins' into 'monuments' routinely encountered and contested with 'non-official' histories and claims to these spaces. See Deborah Sutton, Inhabited Pasts: Monuments, Authority, and People in Delhi, 1912–1970s, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 4 (November 2018): 1013–35, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911818000906; Mrinalini Rajagopalan, *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[51] Taneja, *Jinnealogy.*

[52] *Ibid.* Sutton, Masjids, monuments and refugees in the Partition city of Delhi, 1947–1959.

shivalas, the *makbara* and their histories were forgotten. However, with resident attempts to produce spaces of community, their popular histories encountered different trajectories.[53]

The transformation from refugees to citizens and residents required state-facilitated measures and place-making in the neighbourhood through demands to improve the lived space or building religious spaces,[54] some of which emerged through illegal occupations. In the process, the newly arrived Hindu residents of Jangpura-Bhogal encountered pre-existing spaces with earlier histories of meaning and practice. "Whoever comes to power will decide what will happen".[55] This statement by a resident in the context of the Pant Nagar temple captures the difference in the trajectories of the temple and the tomb. One was the instance of a proclaimed historic Hindu temple, where a forgotten past was 'recovered' and articulated by a recently arrived population. Although it was demolished, its meanings and practices continued to prosper in a new space. The other was a Muslim tomb repurposed into a temple, its history and significance forgotten in the absence of the populations for whom the historical space had meaning. The interplay of presence and absence also reflected in the differential access of communities to the state. Thus, while the temple demolition agitations prompted the state to grant new land for building the temple again in the neighbourhood, Muslim claims to the space of the tomb were turned down by the municipal authorities, now with a Hindu nationalist political party in power.

4. Unsightly Presences: Slums and The Noor Masjid

As documented in Chapter 1, Tamil presence in Jangpura-Bhogal dates to the late 1960s and early 70s when they began working as domestic and manual labour in the city. Historically, their settlements were cleared for spaces like the Jangpura-A park, or the clean expanse on the banks of the Barapullah Nala between Nizamuddin and Jangpura. The build-up to the

---

[53] Based on the scarce evidence available, it is difficult to be certain that one of the shivalas and the makbara are the sites discussed in this section. However, some evidence works in this speculative argument's favour. First, names listed as owners of the sites such as Lala Shri Ram or Alopi Pershad figure in the archive and narratives about Jangpura-Bhogal. Based on later studies and vast amounts of writing on Nizamuddin's monuments, these sites seem to be the only ones not located in what is now the Nizamuddin area. Moreover, the descriptions of these sites in the archive and narratives coincide at certain points.

[54] NMML/MSS/Delhi Police Records/IIIrd Inst/F. No. 68 and 69; NAI/WHS/Lands/ L-3-163/1962. See also Kaur, *Since 1947*.

[55] Interview, 29 January 2019.

Commonwealth games witnessed the eviction of 400 Dalit Tamil families in April 2010.[56] In another instance, H-block in Jangpura Extension housed several slum settlements that were removed after petitions by residents against hutments on encroached land around 1990-91.[57] Residents attribute the 15-year reign of former MLA Tarwinder Singh Marwah (1998-2013) to the proliferation of slums around and near Jangpura-Bhogal. My visit to the Pant Nagar Madrassi *basti* and conversation with Laxmi revealed the contributions of Marwah to infrastructural provision—access to water and electricity in particular—for the settlement. But the political dispensation is now urging them to move. She informed me that both the Congress and AAP governments have offered land to the *basti* residents in exchange. However, the resettlement sites are far away from their jobs in Jangpura-Bhogal, their only means of livelihood.

In 2010, the government issued an order prioritising the Pant Nagar JJ cluster as one of 44 slum clusters to be relocated, and their residents rehabilitated.[58] In 2015, recognised as an 'unauthorised' colony, the Pant Nagar camp 'squatting' on South Delhi Municipal Corporation Land (SDMC) was eligible for relocation as per the Delhi Shelter Board rules. However, without any warning, in September 2020, the SDMC came to demolish their shanties leading the Human Rights Law Network (HRLN) to file a petition on their behalf to prevent the demolition. The court's ruling in their favour directed the MCD to pay up the rehabilitation charges and find a space for relocation before they demolish the jhuggis.[59] In another instance, the Supreme Court in 2020 ruled that all settlements along Delhi's railways tracks are to be cleared, leading to increasing anxiety among the residents of Jal Vihar. Meanwhile, the Madrassi Camp in Jangpura-B, the settlement that emerged following their relocation from the banks near Pant Nagar and Jangpura-A, continues to see visits by Yasmeen Kidwai and Praveen Kumar to check for infrastructural arrangements, ensuring an ever-expanding vote-bank.

---

[56] Specifically, the demolition made way for the construction of the elevated Barapullah Road connecting the Commonwealth Games village in East Delhi to the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Central Delhi. *Housing and land rights in India: status report for Habitat III*, Housing and Land Rights Network (New Delhi: Habitat International Coalition, 2016), 54; *Planned Dispossession: Forced Evictions and the 2010 Commonwealth Games*, Housing and Land Rights Network (2011), 7.

[57] Kapil Kakkar, Interview, 15 May 2021. For another discussion, see Mehra, Jangpura Triptych.

[58] Department of Urban Development, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, 19 February 2010.

[59] Pant Nagar South Indian Camp vs Delhi Shelter Improvement Board, W.P. (C) 5999/2020 (Delhi High Court, 7 September 2020); Surkeerat Kaur, 'Of Eviction and Inadequacy: Delhi's Pant Nagar', The Citizen, 26 November 2021.

This is an unsurprising tale. Slums emerge on Delhi's riverbanks and are demolished. While the unlucky ones are 'rehabilitated', some fortunate groups strike deals with local political leaders to obtain water, electricity, and voter ID cards and establish rights to the space. They must, as Partha Chatterjee argues, resort to illicit means and practices to gain substantive rights to the city. This is a classic example of 'political society' in action.[60] My purpose here is not to repeat a richly documented story of slum demolitions, abject infrastructures, the exclusionary urban condition, and questions of rights to the city. Rather, I examine how slums and their materiality lead to a different kind of displacement.

This section addresses the displacement of Muslim religious space through its intersections with middle-class ideals of appropriate land use and the Plan in a different historical moment: the millennial contexts of 'new India' in the era of economic liberalisation. Once again, we see a process of displacement unfolding over a period of time, where the outcome of Muslim displacement is linked to discourses and initiatives that are not apparently or immediately connected to an overt majoritarian project. Instead, the new ideal of 'world-class city-making' and the attendant counter-discourse of obstructive 'illegalities' that must be vanquished engineers the displacement of a Muslim religious space.

> …another major incident that happened, the Sikhs has built up numerous stocks of Badarpur, of *rori* (building materials), Badarpur we called stone dust…Jangpura RWA went to high court that master plan says that there should be garden and a community centre here, and the high court ordered to make that garden and community centre for the community here. There were a lot of Jhuggis there too. Then one Bangladeshi said that there is a masjid here. The place was 12 foot by 9 feet …he said, there was a slum there, he said no this is a masjid and I will not let it be broken, eventually high court ordered…the Noor masjid one, the Noor masjid was demolished.[61]

In March 2020, Anil took me to meet the president of the Jangpura Residents Welfare Association (JRWA), Monu Chadha. As we rode on his scooty to Jangpura-B, we headed towards its bungalow zone on the street parallel to the main road abutting Mathura Road. Finally, we reached a house and entrance to the office of the Satyamev Jayate Foundation,

---

[60] Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.
[61] Interview with JRWA member, 12 October 2018.

which seeks to Implement the Rule of Law. The empty office was a plush space with a large sofa before the desk where Monu Chadha was sitting, talking on his phone. He gestured to Anil and me to sit on the chairs opposite him as he finished his conversation. On our left was a drawer full of documents, behind which was a large Indian flag. The organisation's name, office space, and Monu Chadha's character exemplified urban middle-class activism. Mr Chadha was dressed in a *charak* (starched) white *kameez* (A *kurta* or tunic with neck and shirt sleeves) with the emblem 'Being Indian' embroidered gold on the chest pocket. On the right was a whiteboard with the list of RTIs to be filed against illegal encroachments, including one of the Afghan restaurants. Embodying the materiality of the Delhi Khatri Punjabi (hilariously represented through Boman Irani's portrayal of Kishan Khurana in Dibakar Banerjee's *Khosla ka Ghosla*), Mr Chadha was armed with the latest iPhone, gold neck chain and a bracelet. As he ended his call, we began the usual round of introductions, and Anil told Monu to recount the tale of the Noor Masjid demolition:

> Whatever happened in this Noor Masjid case, happened within the rule of law. It wasn't that I wanted something, and I put it. Earlier for many years, there were slums. We tried really hard to remove these jhuggis. At the time, the local MLA here was Marwah who was hand in glove with them. Because they were his vote bank. He didn't let them get removed. They were just increasing, and fires were also taking place. Plastic used to be burnt. We filed a petition so the order came that the government of NCT Delhi should ensure that no plastic activities should take place here. This kept increasing. Then the bulldozer came. The temporary hutments all got cleaned. What they (Bangladeshis) did was that there 2-4, 3 routes to enter. At the main entrance they what do you say, they erected a masjid…two things were remaining there. One Balmiki mandir that was not demolished and this Noor masjid, the name also came later. So called mosque. It did not have a name. After that, a religious committee was made to remove this encroachment…the structures would be demolished after the report of the religious committee.

In 2006, the JRWA filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) for the removal of unauthorised structures and encroachments, including a mosque and slum settlement of migrant Muslims by the Barapullah nala in Jangpura-B, which they argued were in direct violation of the Master Plan regulations for the city. In response, the Delhi High Court ordered clearance

of the encroachments in 2006. While the slum was cleared, the mosque, Noor Masjid, was left standing.

Unsatisfied with the outcome, the JRWA revived the litigation in 2008 arguing for the immediate demolition of the mosque. The court in its order of 8 July 2008 stated that the removal of the *jhuggis* (slums) and the construction of a wall to prevent future encroachments were adequate responses. While agreeing to reconsider the JRWA's requests, the Court felt it unnecessary to continue monitoring the situation and disposed of the petition.[62] In October 2010, the JRWA filed a contempt petition against the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), for its failure to fully carry out the High Court's orders. The DDA, under the Congress responded with the demolition of Noor Masjid three months later, on 12 January 2011.[63]

A demolition in response to a PIL was not a new phenomenon in the life of the city. Delhi's growth in the postcolonial period was accompanied (and made possible) by 'planned illegalities'. Urban planning failures to address the housing needs of the urban poor culminated in the proliferation of makeshift slums and tenements on public land. As Gautam Bhan argues, these 'illegalities' emerge not only from the very nature of the settlements but also their location vis-à-vis the spatial limits of the Master Plan. In this context, slums or JJ (*Jhuggi-Jhopdi*) clusters developed mainly in areas that came within the boundaries of the Master Plan's intended urban development.[64] In contrast, middle-class colonies developing outside the spatial limits of the Master Plan were eventually regularised.[65] The city's numerous slum settlements have periodically faced the ire of Delhi's planners and administrators through slum clearance drives, especially during the Emergency (1975-77) and the build-up to the 2010 Commonwealth Games with violent, concerted attempts to 'beautify' the city at the cost of the urban poor. This discourse of slums as anathema to the city has persisted since the colonial period, more as urban interruption than a nuisance, exemplified by Hume's report on the Relief of Congestion in Delhi.[66] Like other neighbourhoods, Jangpura-Bhogal has witnessed numerous slum removals in line with urban planning ideals and ideas of illegal encroachment.

---

[62] Jangpura Residents Welfare Association vs. Lt. Governor of Delhi and Ors., W.P. (C) 9358/2006 (Delhi High Court); Anuj Bhuwania, *Courting the people: public interest litigation post-emergency India* (2017), 105.

[63] "DDA razes 'illegal' masjid, Jangpura erupts", *The Indian Express*, January 13, 2011, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/dda-razes--illegal--masjid-jangpura-erupts/736703/.

[64] See Bhan, "Planned Illegalities", 44-94.

[65] However, the case of Delhi's urban villages was different as they were protected as Lal Dora land and fell outside the municipal bylaws and planning regulations. See Pati, *Properties of Rent*.

[66] Led by master planner Jagmohan, the most notable among them were the Turkman Gate (1976) and Yamuna Pushta (2004) slum clearances. See Véronique Dupont, Slum Demolitions in Delhi since the

In millennial Delhi, the efforts were taken up by the new middle classes, an influential political constituency in the age of economic liberalisation and mediatised politics. Empowered by the state and supported by the courts, initiatives of 'bourgeois environmentalism'[67] used the discourse of 'illegality' to target habitations or means of livelihood of the urban poor, i.e. hawkers and slums.[68] Since the early years of the twenty-first century, PILs have been weaponised to cleanse public spaces of the city of undesirable elements guided by ideals of urban order and a 'world-class' city aesthetic.[69] Claims about 'illegal encroachments' on public land have been vital to this process, and their use in the context of the Jangpura-Bhogal demolition litigation was not unusual, nor was the DDA's acquiescence in the face of negative media coverage. 2006 was a particular moment, the *annus horribilis* of Delhi's governance[70] when the Supreme Court intervened to address land-use issues emerging from the inherent and long-standing disorganised coordination between state and central urban bodies. As Ghosh and others argue, public action on the issue of land use proceeded in 2006 with contradictory statements, repeatedly postponed deadlines and the extensive use of bulldozers.[71]

I often encounter the terms 'illegal' or 'encroachment' in discussions about slum settlements, multi-storey buildings, or religious sites. For example, the Shani Mandir in Jangpura Extension is considered illegal and disrespectful to the label of a religious site due to its encroachment on government land and its proximity to a garbage shed.[72] The Sati Mata temple has been subject to litigation along similar grounds of encroachment.[73] Similarly, the different Jangpura-Bhogal resident associations (like JEWA and JRWA) have been advocating against the uncontrolled expansion of the Modi bakery building and its facilitation of Afghan

---

1990s: An Appraisal, *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 28 (2008), http://www.jstor.org/stable/40277717.; Tarlo, *Unsettling memories*; Pati, Jagmohan; Sharan, *In the City. Slum Clearance Demolitions Etc and Firing in Turkman Gate during the Emergency (June 25, 1975-March 21, 1977*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (1977).

[67] Baviskar, *Uncivil City*, 35.

[68] D. Asher Ghertner, Gentrifying the State: Governing Through Property, in *Rule by Aesthetics*.

[69] Ghertner, *Rule by Aesthetics*.
It is ironic that PILs, introduced to allow vulnerable populations a quick recourse to justice following the excesses of the Emergency (1975-77), are now the very weapons to divest them of rights to the city. See Bhan, "Planned Development And/as Crisis: Evictions and the Politics of Governance in Contemporary Delhi", in *In The Public's Interest,* 95-145.

[70] Archana Ghosh et al., A Comparative Overview of Urban Governance in Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai, in *Governing India's Metropolises*, ed. Jöel Ruet and Stéphanie Tawa Lama-Rewal (New Delhi; Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 41.

[71] Ghosh et al., A Comparative Overview, 42.

[72] Kapil Kakkar, Interview.

[73] Shyam Goel vs. Parvesh Kumar, (Delhi District Court, 28 May 2012); Shri Kishan Gopal Goel vs Delhi Development Authority, CS No. 490/2004 (Delhi District Court, 11 January 2010)

tenants in Jangpura Double Storey. They and their respective presidents have filed court cases against illegal encroachments on public land. The authorities have also not been spared, as the JRWA filed a PIL against the South Delhi Municipal Corporation owing to their failure to remove encroachments in Pant Nagar.[74]

However, the difference here lay in the absence of a demolition order from the High Court. Inquiries by the Zakat Foundation of India, an NGO, revealed that the order instructing the DDA to demolish the Noor Masjid was issued by the Religious Committee of the Lieutenant Governor's (LG) office on 30 April 2010.[75] As news about this emerged, there were large-scale protests by Muslims in Delhi, supported by local and national political and religious leaders.[76] In addition, Imam Bukhari,[77] the Chief Imam of the Jama Masjid, led protest prayers at the demolished site. Opposition leaders also entered the fray and questioned the role of the INC-led state and central governments in the razing of the mosque.[78]

The Delhi Wakf Board staked claim to the land where the Noor Masjid had formerly stood, citing the revenue record of 1947-48, and a 1975 gazette notification showing the site as allotted graveyard land. However, the court did not consider it adequate and ruled in favour of the municipal authority's ownership of the land.[79] Even though the Wakf's claims were denied

---

[74] Jangpura Residents Welfare Association vs South Delhi Municipal Corporation, W.P. (C) 8299/2015 (Delhi High Court, 29 January 2019); Jangpura Extension Welfare Association vs Delhi Municipal Corporation, W.P.(C) 1793/2017 (Delhi High Court, 24 October 2017).

[75] Seema Mustafa, "LG, CM ordered mosque demolition", *The Sunday Guardian*, 16 January 2011. http://www.sunday-guardian.com/investigation/lg-cm-ordered-mosque-demolition; Zakat Foundation, Jangpura Masjid-High Court did *not* order demolition, accessed 10 June 2020. http://www.zakatindia.org/jangpuramosque.html.
This Religious Committee was especially formulated to determine the status of thousands of unauthorized religious structures in the city. It also authorized the demolition of an illegal Jagannath temple in Pushp Vihar in South Delhi, razed on the same day as the Noor Masjid. "Post-demolition, protests resonate amid prayers", *Hindustan Times,* 15 January 2011. https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/post-demolition-protests-resonate-amid-prayers/story-WkgNOa6CULHjum0e16AmtL.html.

[76] Shoaib Iqbal, Asif Mohammed Khan, the chief Imam of the Jama Masjid in Delhi Imam Bukhari, and three-time Jangpura Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Tarwinder Singh Marwah. "After bulldozers, Come The netas", *Indian Express* 14 January 2011. http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/after-bulldozers-come-the-netas/737208/0.

[77] For a history of his rise as a political and cultural leader of Delhi's Muslims, see Ahmed, *Muslim Political Discourse*.

[78] *Ibid;* "SP Condemns Demolition of Mosque in Delhi", *Outlook Magazine,* 15 January 2011. https://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/sp-condemns-demolition-of-mosque-in-delhi/708512

[79] Zakat Foundation, Jangpura Masjid
This area of Jangpura-B was graveyard land for Muslims, Christians and Balmikis in the colonial and postcolonial period. DSA/CC/1-36/1949.
Legally, the land would have belonged to the Wakf. However, graveyards are one the most contentious issues between the Wakf and the DDA. See Delhi Minorities Commission, *Problems and Status of Muslim Graveyards in Delhi: A Report* (Delhi Minorities Commission, New Delhi: 2017).

by the judiciary, the massive protests and political furore around the incident meant that the DDA had to allot an alternative piece of land for rebuilding Noor Masjid in July 2011, paid for by the Delhi Wakf Board.[80] Much to the disdain of the JRWA, the Noor Masjid today is located behind the DDA park of Jangpura-B.

Almost a decade later, the rebuilt Noor Masjid is tainted by a perception of its illegality, even though it is now a legally sanctioned structure on purchased land, established by and through a judicial order. The perceived illegality of Noor Masjid stemmed from its continued association in the public discourse with the now destroyed slum and departed slum populations. As a member of the JRWA told me, "It was not a Masjid. It was just a slum".[81] The JRWA president outlines the materiality of the site:

> So they erected a mosque on one of the main thoroughways to enter Jangpura-B. People lived downstairs, they used to live upstairs, and the mosque was below them. Now you tell me one thing, if the Quran is below, can someone live upstairs? You are walking above it. I have photos. The Quran is below. You are making food above that, sleeping, walking, defecating…

The Religious Committee had also considered the case of the Balmiki temple situated close to the Noor Masjid but decided on allotting an alternative plot rather than demolition, a decision that raised criticism from those protesting the demolition of the mosque.[82] Although it was also included in the JRWA petition, the JRWA did not pursue it and accepted the committee's decisions. The orders issued by the religious committee and conversations with residents suggest its protection from being demolished due to its use and location. Its presence outside the slum cluster and its meanings for a present propertied Balmiki community residing in Bhogal ensured its survival. Although the JRWA has resigned to claims of an earlier historical presence, the Balmikis are actively trying to prove this to prevent any action against it, and I was recently asked about its presence in the archive and to share appropriate documents.

---

[80] "DDA to allot land to mosque 3 months after demolishing it", *Hindustan Times,* 29 April 2011. https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/dda-to-allot-land-to-mosque-3-months-after-demolishing-it/story-YnjC84ntgyHOGOoACdP7NJ.html;
[81] Interview, 17 October 2018.
[82] Delhi Home Department Letter to DDA, 28 October 2009, accessed, 10 June 2020. http://www.zakatindia.org/pdf/Jangpura%20masjid%20Delhi%20Home%20Dept%20letter%20to%20DDA.pdf; "After bulldozers, Come The netas".

The mosque's origins in the practices and spaces of the un-propertied could not easily be disavowed in local public imagination.[83] At the same time as this idea of the mosque's essential and foundational illegality linked it to the now absent slum, other discourses stressed the *absence* of a slum population that warranted the existence of a mosque. The urgent needs of Jangpura-B's residents for a community centre and religious spaces were juxtaposed against the 'unnecessary mosque', which no longer had a population to cater to once the Barapullah settlement cluster had been razed. "Jangpura-B does not even have a single Muslim".[84]

This was accompanied by the trope of the 'Bangladeshi' that is often used against Bengali- speaking migrants in the city. "And whose slums were they? Bangladeshis! so all illegal immigrants who are into all kind of bad things. Like here, from prostitution to hooch liquor…all bad things used to happen. Even the police could not enter there". As Gayer and Mahajan have shown, harnessing this abstract imaginary of dangerous 'outsiders' with the potential to threaten urban social life, residents articulated fears about the unwanted people that the mosque was likely to attract since there was no local constituency for it any longer. A new idea was put forward and gained rapid popularity in local circles that Noor Masjid should be shifted out of the neighbourhood entirely and be moved to where the slum dwellers had been relocated, to where the Muslims were.[85]

> It was broken in 2011, in 2014 they….anyways. Now the question of alternative land. I filed an objection to that too. Because how come you are awarding the encroachers by giving them a legitimate land? Did I want to make a hotel there? Did I want to make any housing there? Everything happened for the rule of law, for public interest. But who created this problem? Politicians. The CM pledged. Went there and pledged that they would rebuild the mosque at the same site. I

---

[83] Baviskar's highlights how their identities as migrants and middle-class definitions of property are used against the urban poor to divest them of rights to the city. Baviskar, *Uncivil City*, 49-50.

[84] Interview, JRWA member, 17 October 2018; "Jangpura wants land for temple, HC seeks status", *Hindustan Times,* 20 August 2012. https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/jangpura-wants-land-for-temple-hc-seeks-status/story-wVkOAf8X0TexD0Y2gmubFO.html. Interestingly, a quick glance through the electoral rolls of Jangpura-B reveals a number of Muslims registered as voters.
"Jangpura residents to finally get a community centre", *Hindustan Times,* 15 July 2016. https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/jangpura-residents-to-finally-get-a-community-centre/story-eL0gkbtyw7fbpOQ226PPLP.html

[85] Laurent Gayer and Chakraverti Mahajan, Delhi's Noor Masjid: Tales of a Martyred Mosque, 46, no. 10 (2011). For a wider discussion see Sujata Ramachandran, Operation Pushback: Sangh Parivar, State, Slums And Surreptitious Bangladeshis In New Delhi, *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 7 (2003), https://www.jstor.org/stable/4413218. Baviskar, *Uncivil City*, 50. Ahmad, "Muslim pasts and presents", Creative Commons CC BY

filed a contempt of court petition, naming the CM also. How can you say so? You are overreaching the judicial order by saying that the mosque..it happened through a judicial order. Tomorrow every religion will have this. Everyone will encroach. If you break it then you will reward them. This is bad precedent set by the that government. Meaning how can they reward the encroachers? And the CM also gave the money for it.

Like the material dispossessions discussed earlier, Noor Masjid's material and symbolic displacement was a prolonged process. The JRWA and the court first drew on the Master plan and imagined urban ideals to remove the 'encroaching' Muslim slum cluster. Second, the absence resulting from displacing a population utilizing it, and its presence in a slum delegitimized the mosque's existence, eventually leading to its demolition. Instead, the JRWA argued in favour of land utilization for community and religious needs of present and propertied non-Muslim populations. Third, the perceived illegality of the new structure continues to taint its existence and relegate its presence to an *elsewhere*, outside the spatial imaginary of Jangpura-Bhogal. Without overt ideological efforts to deny Muslim presence, these processes nonetheless displace Muslim religious space.

5. Forging Economic Life And Spaces

The market in Bhogal………the old British maps show that market was allotted in 1922. And people even from far away Palwal used to come here for shopping. People from Ballabgarh, Palwal, Loni, from far off places used to come to do their shopping.[86]

Apart from the major wholesale markets in Delhi, especially in the old city, for non-residents of the locality, Bhogal is known as the go-to wholesale market in South Delhi. Its identity is intimately tied to its congested market that forms the centre of references to the neighbourhood by Delhi residents, sometimes overshadowing its residential aspect. Although locations like Kalkaji extension and Ashram have also emerged as wholesale markets for hardware, sanitation, lighting, timber and steel, Bhogal remains a key choice owing to the proximity of diverse establishments next to each other. Here, we primarily see customers gracing the stores

---

[86] Rakesh Sagar, 6 December 2018.

for different kinds of construction materials: Timber, sanitation; steel; mixing material; and ceramics. These shops are run mainly by the locals and see a flurry of contractors and eager customers coming to buy their respective construction materials. The labour necessary for the various establishments is provided through the residents of nearby Sarai Kale Khan, who, for example, can be seen loading Saria (TMT steel bars for concrete reinforcement) onto trucks parked outside Gauri Shankar and Steel Corporation.

Typical of most neighbourhoods in Delhi, every street or lane hosts diverse establishments, including grocery stores, meat shops, mobile stores, barbers etc. Entering Bhogal market from the side of Mathura Road and coming down Central Road, one sees remnants of old shops like Kadimi Sweets, Garg and Company, or Gauri Shankar and sons, with claims of their long historical presence. Central Road is a perfect example of the space as palimpsest, wherein shops owned by Jains and Banias give way to Sikhs and Afghan Muslim establishments, in line with the settlement and spatial divisions of populations in the neighbourhood. Many families have gone beyond their traditional businesses. Jewellery, ration, cloth stores abut eateries, shoe stores, pharmacies, and restaurants. Every Tuesday, the road plays host to the Weekly Market, authorised temporary markets running across Delhi's neighbourhoods. The hawkers showcasing their goods, from cheap clothes to kitchen utensils and snacks, have been setting up their stalls for about 20 years, often in front of the same houses and shops.[87] Naturally, for the guardians against encroachment practices, these markets are anathema to public health, especially in times of Covid. The JRWA has been quite vocal against the permissions granted to these markets, especially on the same day when the Bhogal market is also open.[88]

---

[87] Samprati Pani, Of Basti and Bazaar: place-making and women's lives in Nizamuddin, Delhi, in *Urban Neighbourhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020).
[88] Monu Chadha, Tweet, 13 January 2022.

Figure 2.12: Kadimi Sweets on Central Road. Source: Author

Meanwhile, Central Road's less congested sibling, Hospital Road, houses the locally famous Rama Tent House, eateries, four motor workshops, hawkers, and *dhabas*. Closer to the end of Masjid Road, a property dealer sits next to Basis Cake and Café, an attempt at an up-market eating establishment seemingly out of place in Bhogal's visual landscape. It would, however, fit well further ahead in the Jangpura Extension market near the INOX Eros One cinema complex, hosting a beer and wine shop, McDonald's, an expensive hair salon, and an up-market gym. Close by, a row of shops allotted to Partition refugees contains a pharmacy, a Woodland outlet, and a few small restaurants. This is a much more open and green area far from the chaos of Bhogal.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, potential residents seeking allotments in the upcoming Jangpura village were eligible if they were agriculturalists, menials, or labourers. Those not meeting this criterion had to contribute to the emerging settlement in a productive manner, facilitating the entry of traders from Arab ki Serai, Pillanji, Aliganj and other parts of the city. Samman Lal's land became Jangpura village, and his family set up the banking firm Messrs. Samman Lal Anoop Singh Jain. Gauri Shankar and his family began with a ration shop in the late 1920s, eventually expanding to other businesses like Steel products. From nearby, Nizamuddin Sultan Singh Jain would arrive and rent Khwaja Hasan Nizami's property to establish Kadimi (old) Dukaan by 1925.[89] This period also witnessed the arrival of non-

---

[89] DSA/Wakf/12/1974; Sultan Singh Jain (deceased) vs Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Anr., 13 September 2010 (RSA 56/1994).

allottees purchasing property to set up shop. For example, Jain Saab's family established a grain shop after shifting from Farukh Nagar, Gurgaon. Similarly, Hari Ram Gupta tells me about his family's arrival in 1929 to Bhogal from village Sarai Julena at the behest of an invitation from his family members to open a grain trade business.

Although agriculture was weak in Delhi, its products largely included Jowar, Bajra, Sugarcane, Cotton, and Fodder Crops. Fruits and vegetables were primarily grown in the city's vicinity in the *Khadar* and *Khandrat* circles.[90] By 1927, the market had been functioning as a nodal point for trade in products like corn, flour, jaggery, and other agricultural produce for the nearby villages. In a conversation with him and his grandfather, proprietors of the grain and flour shop Garg and Company, Dinkar Garg tells me about the functioning Bhogal market in the colonial period:

> Like I told you earlier, this used to be a mandi for jaggery. Jaggery bullock carts used to come. Two to four spots were allotted where the stuff used to be kept. Like our shop, it earlier used to be a storehouse for jaggery. It used to be dropped in the middle of the market, some two to four people would buy it. We used to earn a commission from the stuff sold.[91]

This area was an interesting space with a grain market, stone quarry, and Nizamuddin railway station in its vicinity. While the connections between these different spaces are difficult to determine (as the archive cannot reveal such explicit details), we can conjecture that a few socio-economic relations emerged. I am informed of a now absent *dharamshaala* catering to travellers alighting at Nizamuddin. The raj mistris and labourers, residents of Jangpura village, would participate in different colonial infrastructure projects throughout the city, often seeking employment through one of the labour *chowks* at Kashmiri Gate. Other stone masons were probably employed for work in the Jangpura stone quarry (the *Bhogal Pahari* in the former Nizampur village estate) to mine *Kankar*[92] till the 1930s while the New Capital construction

---

[90] Radhka Narain, *Some Aspects of Rural Economic Conditions in Delhi Province*, International Labour Office (Delhi: S.Chand and Company, 1935), 14.
By the twentieth century, Delhi had emerged as a major trading port for the three surrounding regions of Rajputana, United Provinces, and Punjab, dealing in grain and piece goods. Delhi's had small scale industries including textile, leather, pottery, ivory, gold and silver threading, building, etc.[90]
[91] July 18, 2017.
[92] DSA/DC/23/1908. The Jangpura stone quarry served the needs of the New Capital project and other urban projects in the city till the 1930s. See DSA/CC/Edu/4-7/1932.

was underway, lying close to the newly set up railway tracks that proceeded to Raisina Hill before turning North.[93] The archives and oral history inform us that while agricultural land was leased out in the area now occupied by Jangpura Extension,[94] the majority of Bhogal's inhabitants were either employed in the grain business, as manual labour, or as Class IV government employees at the Delhi Golf Club, the Post and Telegraph Office, or other public sector organisations. Some Balmikis gained employment as sweepers for the neighbourhood and buildings like the dispensary and as small-scale piggery owners.[95] The market's expansion by the 1930s is observable through numerous building applications and requests to the New Delhi Municipal Committee about the possibility of constructing or expanding shops and commercial buildings.[96] Other businesses emerging included storage houses for grains, oil pressers, brick masons, meat sellers, and concrete factories.[97]

Independence, Partition, and the attended urban explosion expanded the market, bringing several newspaper offices, small manufacturing units, and other businesses to the city.[98] By the 1950s, as Jangpura started transforming into Jangpura-Bhogal, housing accompanied the construction of shops and shops-cum-residences for refugees. In this process, the Ministry of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation had to contend with an inefficient and underfunded DIT that would transfer the land to them. The rapid constructions accompanied a rise in land prices around the Jangpura-Bhogal area and Delhi owing to massive land speculation since the transfer of the capital in 1912.[99] Underfunded municipal and civic institutions and grand but continuously failing urban development schemes (like the Western Extension or the Ajmeri Gate schemes) prompted the DIT to use every opportunity to realise rents and revenues from leased land.[100] Here is where the older residents of Jangpura village came in, submitting a petition to Nehru in July 1955, appealing to their historical presence and displacement from erstwhile villages to Jangpura-Bhogal. They protested the DIT's U-turn in

---

[93] Other quarries were in Chandrawal, Jhandewala, Malcha, Najafgarh, Palam, and Naraina. An estimated 116 quarries were active for extracting stone, *kankar,* and *murum*. See, 'Notes on Stone Quarries, etc. in the Province of Delhi'. DSA/CC/Industries/47/1932.
[94] 6 leases comprising 305 square yards. *Annual Administration Report of the Delhi Province for 1933-34*, 12.
[95] For a history of the Balmikis in Delhi, see Prashad, *Untouchable Freedom*.
[96] DSA/CC/Edu/4-7/1932; DSA/CC/Edu/4-27/1930; DSA/CC/Edu/4-102/1937.
[97] DSA/CC/Edu/4-7/1932
[98] See for example, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. *Press in India 1971, Part II* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1972).
[99] Vanaik, *Possessing the city*.
[100] Legg, Post-Colonial Developmentalities.; Sharan, *In the City*; Mehra, Planning Delhi.

the earlier exemption given to pre-trust shops from paying rents and premiums on leases.[101] For the DIT, the issue arose around the question of the mutation of residential plots into residential cum commercial plots.[102] This decision came in response to recent legislation regarding the change of user plots that superseded earlier orders: a change in original allotment purposes would necessitate the recovery of 50% of the difference between the market value of the land and the residential use market value. In addition, ground rent based on the full difference was also recoverable.[103] The DIT alleged that this user change was rampant in Jangpura and Karol Bagh and thus required immediate government attention to prevent urban disorder and realise revenue.[104] Therefore, the shop-owners had no option but to complete the required payments.

This was not the first time the petitioners had failed to convince the colonial state to comply with their demands. Earlier in 1939, following a decade of disruptions, disagreements, and confusions around Bakr-Eid processions (Chapter 3), the administration decided to name Jangpura's streets by 1939 to efficiently formulate safe procession routes and ensure quick dispersal of forces in case of disorder.[105] In December of 1938, the Chief Commissioner received a letter from the residents of Jangpura protesting against naming the main market as Summan Bazar. Hari Ram Gupta informs me:

> The name in the beginning was Samman Bazar. But some people made placards against Samman Lal. They wanted to name it Ram Bazaar. But the name wasn't kept as Ram Bazaar. It remained as Samman Bazaar. They wanted to name it Ram Bazaar. Posters were put up….Ram Bazaar, name it as Ram Bazaar.[106]

Inquiries revealed that Samman Lal's family owned the land on which Jangpura was built and that he and his son, Anup Singh, were involved in individual philanthropic work and had contributed to colonial famine relief operations. Therefore, the NDMC decided to proceed with renaming Main Bazar as Summan Bazar. The Chief Commissioner agreed with this

---

[101] See Rajkishan to Jawaharlal Nehru, 23 July 1955, DSA/CC/LSG/1-81/1955.
Nazul lands including Jangpura were transferred to the Delhi Improvement Trust in 1937. DSA/CC/R&A/121(B)/1937.
[102] Lands Officer, DIT to Asst. Secy, Delhi State Government, 14 June 1956, DSA/CC/LSG/1-81/1955.
[103] Govt. of India, Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply to Secy, Delhi State LSG dept, 5 July 1954, *Ibid.*
[104] 'Principles regarding change of user plots', *Ibid.*
[105] See DSA/DC/46/1935; DSA/DC/37/1939.
[106] Hari Ram Gupta, Interview, 18 July 2017.

decision and rejected the petition.[107] These efforts were unsuccessfully revived in 1955 when residents again began a short-lived agitation to rename the market. Although their appeal was denied, I am informed that these efforts unsuccessfully continued till the 1980s.[108] While collective efforts stemming from material relations of the Bhogal market failed in convincing a colonial and postcolonial state administration, a different collective would succeed in its demands.

The elements of efficient zoning and land use were on display in 1954 when objections arose around the motor workshops in Jangpura, whose' relocation would require close to 15000 square yards of land, including open spaces. The 29 motor workshops of concern were primarily owned by the earlier Banias and the newcomer Sikhs and Hindus, comprising owners and rentiers, established on pre-existing and recently purchased Evacuee properties. Such a mammoth requirement, it was suggested, could be satisfied through the newly planned Okhla Industrial Estate, a potential 'model' industrial colony.[109] However, it was meant to cater to 'productive' rather than 'maintenance' industries and therefore was not the ideal space for their relocation. In addition, complaints by some plot owners against the rentiers running these shops revived the questions of appropriate land use against residential plots utilised for commercial purposes.

The proprietors represented through the Jangpura Motor Workshop Association (JMWA) claimed that they had a pre-existing agreement with the former NDMC chairman that these shops were granted licenses and were, therefore, not illegal. While they agreed to be relocated, they approached the courts for this restitution. Meanwhile, a plan to acquire 76 acres near the Okhla Industrial Estate was underway but would require time to be developed. As a result, it was decided to withdraw or cancel suspension notices and stop issuing notices and criminal proceedings against the transgressions.[110] Later, the NDMC resolved to renew the current licenses of these workshops and urged for their relocation at the earliest possible.[111] This emerged from an earlier petition submitted by the (JMWA) to the Chief Commissioner, claiming that initial temporary licenses were issued on the promise that these shops would be relocated to the planned industrial belt near Hindustan Housing Factory along the Jangpura-

---

[107] Secy. NDMC to DC, 22 December 1938; CC to Secy., Edu, Health and Lands, 6 April 1939. DSA/DC/37/1939.
[108] Enter file ref, Mange Lal
[109] Director, Industries and Labour to Secy. LSG, 6 August 1957, DSA/DA/LSG/1-68/1957.
[110] DIT meeting resolution, 21 March 1957, *Ibid.*
[111] Secy., NDMC to Secy., LSG, 11 March 1957, *Ibid.*

Bhogal railway line. The JMWA agreed to the relocation. However, the shopkeepers requested to continue their businesses and not be bothered by the state authorities until the land was developed.[112] JMWA succeeded in this demand as the processes were stopped while the land was developed for their relocation.[113] They would later be moved to the liminal zone between Siddharth Basti and the end of Bhogal. While some still exist in this area, Sikh shops and trucks were looted or burnt during the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom.

By the 1960s, certain refugee houses would provide milk to residents through private cow sheds, a practice that was discontinued by the 1970s when the Indira Gandhi regime enforced Municipal restrictions against cattle farms and stalls in residential neighbourhoods.[114] These would be replaced by officially sanctioned Mother Dairy booths in Jangpura Extension and the Nizamuddin colonies.[115] As the Jangpura market expanded, several other businesses would emerge, including printers, arms manufacturers, electrical traders, *Jhatka* meat shops, vegetable stalls, and chemical traders. The Bhallas are a success story here, starting out as *dalda* (vegetable oil) storage tin producers and expanding to trade in industrial chemicals by the 1980s.[116]

Kadimi Sweets, active since 1925, produced sweets unfamiliar to a now Punjabi populace, who were primarily served, as residents inform me, by Lahoriyan di Hatti in Jangpura-B. Modi Bakery, run by Partition Sikhs, provided biscuits and cakes to earlier and later refugee arrivals. Residents recall other eateries and businesses reminiscent of their homelands through the Bharbunjas, a community of gram roasters who came with the Partition refugees located at every neighbourhood corner. Some of these gastronomical transformations introduced new emergent social spaces, the most prominent being local community tandoors (ovens) or *sanjha chulhas* spread across Jangpura-Bhogal. With the absence of adequate burning fuel in refugee homes, refugees would often utilise these spaces for the tandoori rotis (baked oven flatbreads). Generally, refugees would knead their flour and take it to the community tandoor to be baked. If required, customers could also purchase lentils made by the proprietor. They emerged as important social spaces for residents where long waiting times would lead to conversations about local life and politics. As Anil informs me:

---

[112] Jangpura Motor Workshop Association to Chief Commissioner, 25 January 1957, *Ibid.*
[113] DIT Resolution, *Ibid.*
[114] Shri Ram Properties; Anil; Ashok Senior; Kewal Goswami.
[115] *Lok Sabha Debates Volume XVI, 25 July 1979,* Government of India, 218-219 (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1979).
[116] Mr Bhalla 2018.

All the politics would be discussed there, the entire country's, five-year plan,

etc. Because you have also come to make rotis, he has also come, I have also

come. And everyone will have their turn because they cannot all be made

together. He was also very arrogant. He would abuse us if my mother put a little

extra water while kneading the flour, that 'this is the flour you have kneaded'.

And we were scared of him. That if he does not make them then what will

happen to our rotis? There my mother will scold me. So he had to redo the

atta…and we used to think he is doing a service to us even though he is abusing

us. At least he is making the rotis.[117]

He was referring to the *tandoor* in the market surrounding the Pant Nagar Temple complex, which later benefitted from media Moghul Gulshan Kumar's business expansion, providing food to his factory workers in Noida. As Anil narrates, he was one of the many beneficiaries of Gulshan Kumar's economic growth and provided various services to his ever-expanding enterprise. However, other tandoors would continue to function as community tandoors and began declining once cooking gas and affordable stoves entered private homes. Residents narrate that the tandoor owners and *Bharbhunjas* eventually passed away, and their children branched out into other professions.[118]

By the 1980s, the market and the city exploded following the Asia' 72 Exhibition and Trade Fair and Asiad Games of 1982, accompanying a technological revolution sweeping across the city through cable television, technological markets, and mobile telephony infrastructures.[119] Local Banias and Sikhs involved in the grain or transportation business would branch out to opening sanitation, timber, and steel stores in Shastri Market. The accompanying labour migration addressing Delhi's construction boom led to the emergence of a labour chowk around these shops serving the needs of the neighbourhood and the city.[120] Being former Raj mistris, many local Jatavs would serve as skilled labour for local construction projects. For example, Ashok's grandfather was the primary individual involved in renovating and expanding Anil's house in the late 1990s.[121]

---

[117] Anil, October 2018.
[118] Arwant Singh; Anil Goswami; Sikhs of Pishori Mohalla; Mr Bhalla.
[119] Sundaram, *Pirate Modernity*.
[120] Today this labour chowk is situated on Hospital Road.
[121] Shyam Sundar, Anil, and Ashok, 4 July 2017.

As the 1990s underwent liberalisation and relaxed procedures for business licenses, Delhi and Jangpura-Bhogal witnessed a visible material and social transformation through the construction boom and migration.[122] The non-trader communities also began entering the market, opening guesthouses, pharmacies, and property dealerships by the early 2000s, catering to incoming Afghans. Some Afghans resigned to an extended stay in India and began opening their own establishments by taking up shops for rent. The *Kali da dhaba*, a partition-era tandoor on Central Road, would gain a new lease of life with the Afghan naanwais that set up shop in its stead. These were opened by one of the earlier arrivals to Jangpura-Bhogal, the proprietors having been there for the past 15 years.[123] They reflect a new emergent material infrastructure.

6. Refugee Infrastructures

There are four naanwais located on Central Road, while numerous others dot the various lanes of Bhogal. Providing a variety of Afghan breads, they cater to Afghan refugees and medical tourists residing in Jangpura-Bhogal and its nearby areas. They begin their operation at 7 in the morning to heat the tandoor, a round clay oven placed above ground, and to knead the flour for the assorted breads sold. There is always continuous traffic to these establishments, drastically increasing during lunch and dinner when Afghan families prepare to eat. The naanwais also provide services to Afghan-run restaurants. During my fieldwork, Mukhtar, an employee at an Afghan restaurant, would routinely go to the *naanwai* at the corner of Masjid Road, ignoring the *naanwai* next to the restaurant, to pick up 20-30 naans for potential customers. The two restaurants are supported by a few smaller establishments serving Afghan cuisine. These spaces are largely devoid of a non-Afghan populace, catering primarily to refugees, medical tourists, or Delhi's liberal youth on the Afghan food trail. Marked by a sensory landscape of familiar smells, flavours, Dari language cinema or music blaring on the television, the restaurants serve as informal social spaces for refugees, students, businessmen, and medical tourists, Along with other Afghan establishments, they often rely on a revolving pool of cheap Afghan refugee labour, providing them with necessary subsistence payments and free meals.[124] From 2017-

---

[122] Sundaram, *Pirate Modernity*; Baviskar, *Uncivil City*.

[123] Interview.

[124] See also Balasubramaniam, The naanwais of Delhi: On the Afghan bread trail.; Aabid Shafi, Meet the Afghan naanwais selling naans, lavasas and roghanis at the Afghan bakeries in Delhi, *Scroll.in*, 12 August 2018, https://scroll.in/magazine/887641/photos-of-naanwais-the-afghan-bakers-who-are-recreating-the-taste-of-home-in-delhi; Shivangini Gupta, Women Afghan refugees creating their own destiny with food, *News Intervention* 2019, https://www.newsintervention.com/women-afghan-refugees-creating-their-own-destiny-with-food/; Krishnan, A Guide To Delhi's 'Little Kabul', Built By Afghan Refugees With Love.; 4 Afghan Refugee Women Run Delhi's Most Sought After Catering

2021, restaurant employees kept changing, dependent on visa applications to the West or Afghans finding gainful employment elsewhere. For example, as an aspirational young man with dreams of becoming a model, Jameel succeeded in his visa application and departed for Finland. Another waiter, whom I never spoke to, left the restaurant within two months of joining to open a fruit stall in front of a local tea stall. Apart from the restaurants, a few grocery stores cater primarily to the Afghan community, with bright boards in Dari, with the painting service provided to several establishments in Nizamuddin. Abdullah and Zubeida, a young couple, ran one of these stores and a mineral water service to Afghan households across the neighbourhood, also employing refugees like Sameer, who would change locations soon after to work in an Afghan electronic store. Similarly, one can find Afghan barbers, furniture stores, pharmacies, and travel agencies spread out across the neighbourhood.

While such establishments collapse all ethnic distinctions between Afghans, these differences are observable in Jangpura-Bhogal's public parks. Sahil Warsi's brilliant and rare ethnography of Afghans in Delhi shows the varied forms of belonging among Afghans, cutting across class, status, ethnicity, and religion. In his conversations with members of the Afghan embassy, Warsi noted a disdain for the current stock of 'illiterate', and 'uncivilised' refugees in contrast to the educated and sophisticated refugees that entered India in the 1980s.[125] In Kashmiri Park, I struck up a conversation with two Afghans. The young man talking to the much older Afghan man, Hamid, tells me that he works in the service sector in Noida and initially came to Delhi as a student. While agreeing that Jangpura-Bhogal, like other spaces in Delhi, has a major Afghan presence, he establishes a clear distinction between 'productive' individuals like him, i.e., medical tourists, students, businessmen, and the 'unproductive' or 'lazy' refugees. He substantiates this by arguing that the refugee status is an easy way out for many Afghans seeking to leave Afghanistan without adequate funds, thereby underplaying the violent ethnic majoritarian politics that guided the peak Taliban years. The ethnic differences play out through residential patterns, and most of the dominant ethnic Pashtuns reside in Ashram, utilising the Bhogal market for grocery needs. Afghanistan's ethnic minorities like the Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Arabs, or the Nuristanis are the primary residents of Jangpura-Bhogal, who have their social sub-groups. The Wakeel brothers and their fellow Tajik friends

Company, D for Delhi, updated 2 November 2018, https://www.dfordelhi.in/ilham-afghan-cuisine-in-jangpura/; *Disquieting gifts: humanitarianism in New Delhi*, Stanford studies in human rights, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012); Saxena, Inside Delhi's lil Afghanistan: Aroma of Kabuli pulao, murmurs in Dari.

[125] Warsi, Being and belonging.
An example is Mrs Khoresh, a former resident of GK1 in Delhi, who I encountered in Goettingen.

regularly meet to play badminton and other sports in Jangpura-Bhogal's public parks, communicating in Tajik rather than Dari. However, a new emerging economy is unifying these differences.

The Indian medical tourism industry is a booming economy valued at approximately 9 billion US dollars, serving as the third largest market for medical tourists across the globe. It flourishes in India's big cities like Delhi and corporate and private hospitals like Max, Apollo, and Moolchand, attracting medical tourists from a few days to a few months. Afghans constitute a significant clientele providing patronage to this business, leading to the mushrooming of various infrastructures across the city. For example, Khidki Village and Extension opposite the Max Saket hospitals are now emerging as Afghan settlements like Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar. In the hospitals, separate Dari desks serve Afghans supported by an army of secretaries and translators, recruited mainly from the student and refugee population. This is accompanied by a system of private or hospital-run Afghan or Indian taxi services to take medical tourists around the city. The entire formal apparatus is also supported through an informal parallel system of private arrangements and family assistance for medical tourists. For example, in Jangpura-Bhogal, friendship or family networks are mobilised to obtain translators, accommodation, or transport services through refugees, businessmen and students.[126] This gig economy provides decent and regular employment to refugees who face a precarious existence in India.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) main Delhi office is in one of the city's more affluent areas housing Delhi's wealthy business class magnates, Vasant Vihar. This area is also home to smaller embassies and consulates, while others are located on Shanti Path in central Delhi. The first visible site indicating the location of the UNHCR office is a red brick bungalow cordoned off by the quintessential Delhi police barricade, behind which are two security guards dressed in the stereotypical blue uniform of private security companies. Behind them, a small path turning left leads to the main entrance to the bungalow. During my visit there in November 2018, I approached the guards to inform them of a scheduled meeting with a UNHCR representative, following which I was asked to

---

[126] The rise of the Taliban was reported to affect the industry by 2 billion dollars. "Afghan unrest may cause Rs. 2 billion hit to India's medical tourism", *Business Standard,* 17 August 2021.
Recently, Afghan's political unrest, Sri Lanka's economic crisis, the pandemic fallout and rising dollar rates have severely impacted the industry. Soumya Pillai, "Medical tourism market reels under Covid hit", *Hindustan Times*, 18 July 2022.

show my ID and enter relevant details in a thick register. I was then told to wait as the representative would come to get me.

The street was the waiting area, and I joined the Somali and Afghan refugees awaiting their turn. From time to time, an official or translator would appear out of the building to escort the refugees into the building or communicate the status of their Refugee Status Determination (RSD) case. Those on the street would have to find space on the footpath or under trees to sit while the UNHCR called upon them. A few impatient people would routinely approach the guards to inquire about the estimated period of their entry into the building, naturally receiving vague answers. Finally, feeling dejected, they would return to their waiting spots on the road while momentarily clearing for cars to pass through.

This was a bizarre sight for me. Here was an international organisation that is the go-to place for vulnerable and displaced populations seeking to ensure their ability to reside in this transitory nation before their asylum applications are accepted. However, this humanitarian work was counterposed by the seemingly disdainful approach towards refugees confined to a public street as the waiting room. While I was familiar with the bureaucratic navigations that refugees were exposed to, seeing a spatial manifestation of this process was surprising. The apparent difference between insecurity and security was divided by a yellow barricade, wherein crossing the threshold would mark the transition into the space of a formal refugee organisation in a country without a refugee policy.

Refugees in India are divided into Mandate and non-Mandate refugees. Mandate refugees like Afghans, Somalis, etc., fall under UNHCR protection, while non-Mandate refugees like the Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils are the Indian government's responsiblity. The latter non-mandate refugees have been given the title of 'refugees', a label that has evaded their Mandate counterparts. This is mainly because of India's ad hoc policy of dealing with refugees in the absence of adequate refugee legislation. India is neither a signee to the 1951 Protocol on the Convention of Refugees nor to the 1967 addendum, a history that traces back to the moment of decolonisation, the formulation of the refugee convention, and France and the USA's reluctance to recognise Partition refugees, who although 'displaced', were also citizens.[127]

---

[127] While the United Kingdom supported India and Pakistan's casue, France and USA, owing to their foreign policy interests, did not see value in this recognition. Pia Oberoi, South Asia and the Creation of the International Refugee Regime, *Refuge* 19, no. 5 (2001), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.21228.

India has often complained about the Euro centric vision of 'refugees' but has been a high donor for development and humanitarian aid worldwide. It has signed the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through which refugees have a right to seek asylum in India.[128] Refugees are protected by the Fundamental Right to Life as per Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and administered through the Foreigners Registration Act and the Indian Citizenship Act 1955. It has also signed other international agreements, including the 1966 International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the 1984 Convention Against Torture; The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.[129]

Refugee presence in India is mediated through the Foreigners Record and Registration Office (FRRO), the UNHCR, its partner NGOs, and India's international obligations. Although refugees are present throughout India, Afghans are primarily located in Delhi, the location of the UNHCR office, the outcome of India's reluctance regarding UNHCR operations in its borders. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the UNHCR's entry following the Afghan crisis was primarily restricted to India, and the organisation was denied operations in the South and Northeast to address Sri Lankan and Chin refugees. Finally, after years of deliberation, they were allowed to open a field office in Chennai. However, while from the 1980s till the late 1990s, the Indian government allowed refugees to easily extend their stay in the country, the election of the BJP government changed the narrative, introducing political hostility against the Afghans, a persistent reality for many refugees in the country. Furthermore, with the Amendment of the Citizenship rules for India through the Citizenship Amendment Act, Afghan Muslim refugees have been displaced from any future claims to citizenship in India while contending with an ever-growing anti-Muslim sentiment now entrenched across the nation.

The path from Asylum seeker to Refugee is determined through RSD, where applications and regular interviews are conducted to check whether the Asylum seeker falls under the status of 'refugee'. If an application fails, refugees must wait six months before they can apply again. Until then, minor financial assistance is provided without refugee cards.

---

[128] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (1948).
[129] Veerabhadran Vijayakumar, Judicial Responses to Refugee Protection in India, *International Journal of Refugee Law* 12, no. 2 (2000); Prabodh Saxena, Creating Legal Space for Refugees in India: The Milestones Crossed and the Roadmap for the Future, *International Journal of Refugee Law* 19, no. 2 (2007); Shuvro Prosun Sarker, *Refugee Law in India: The Road from Ambiguity to Protection* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Rajan, 'No Afghan Refugees in India': Refugees and Cold War Politics in the 1980s.

Although the blue refugee cards would theoretically ensure access to a wide range of Indian government services like bank accounts to access assistance payments, the Indian state's incoherent refugee policy ensures that bank or school officials often turn individual refugees away.

Until 2000 refugees were not allowed to work or establish businesses in India. While initially, refugees were provided with a monthly subsistence allowance, the rise of the Taliban and the increasing number of refugees in the 1990s led to the termination of that allowance and replaced by a lumpsum payment. It was argued that since many refugees were well off, the Indian government expected them to become self-reliant. Since the informal economy was open for the Afghans to exploit, the UNHCR thought it prudent to replace money with accommodation and food while also providing a push factor towards refugee self-sufficiency. This entrepreneurial shift in the refugee policy through self-sufficiency reflects recent neoliberal transformations of migration management, primarily handled through business loans rather than monthly subsistence payments. In this context, the ILHAM initiative, an Afghan catering service run by Afghan Muslim women, has been labelled a success story of refugee entrepreneurialism and settlement through a business infrastructure provided by the UNHCR and its partners for these Afghan women.[130]

The UNHCR provides refugee assistance through several partner NGOs based in Delhi, including the Socio-Legal Information Centre, Human Rights Law Network, The Migration and Asylum Project, the Abhigyane Foundation, and the BOSCO (established by the international Catholic Don Bosco organisation). Access to the UNHCR and BOSCO was slightly complicated. Through a friend at the United Nations Development Program, I obtained the email address of one UNHCR representative who requested that I provide a short synopsis of my dissertation project. Following this, I began corresponding with the UNHCR media representative, who requested a letter of certification from my supervisor and a list of questions I would ask the Afghan refugees. After this bureaucratic exchange of documents, I could schedule a meeting with the media representative, who explicitly denied permission to be recorded.

---

[130] Singh, 4 Afghan Refugee Women Run Delhi's Most Sought After Catering Company. Jessica Field, Anubhav Dutt Tiwari, and Yamini Mookherjee, Self-Reliance as a Concept and a Spatial Practice for Urban Refugees: Reflections from Delhi, India, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 33, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez050.

The meeting took place in November 2018, and the paperwork had been for show. The media representative neither read my proposal nor the questions and assumed I was a student filmmaker. I am informed that the UNHCR acts as an intermediary between the Indian government, NGO partners, and refugees, communicating for Afghans who find homes on rent. A few informal groups for young and older people that help in settlement, including sports and old age groups, sometimes come to the UNHCR to express their problems. However, I would not be allowed attend those meetings because Afghans are wary of outsiders. I requested to be put in touch with the administrators of the BOSCO Bhogal office. Upon contacting them, I was informed that the permission would officially have to be transmitted through the UNHCR. After multiple reminder emails, I was finally granted permission to visit BOSCO.

The BOSCO centre is located at the South-East corner of Bhogal, close to Shastri Market. The building is a classic contemporary three-storeyed inconspicuous blue structure with cheap panelled glass, narrow stairways, and generic tiles built at a minimal cost. Ironically, the building is diagonally opposite a large Indian flag gracing the chowk. A tiny wooden guard booth signals the first contact point, accompanied by the signature blue UNHCR mailbox also present at the HRLN and UNHCR offices. The uniform entry book I encountered at the UNHCR office is also here for me to enter my contact details. The security guard asks me the reason for my visit and my ID, ignoring the Afghans and Somalis who pass me by to enter the building. They are regulars to the space. Upon telling him I have a meeting with the education administrator, he makes a quick call to confirm. After the due confirmation arrives, I am told to go to the second floor of the building. Another security guard got up from his chair, stopped me at the entrance, asked me to state the reason for my visit and told me to wait while Mr Khan finished an admission. The reason for this security, I am informed, is that the only Indians allowed in the building were either BOSCO employees or UNHCR officers. Classes had just finished, and kids began running towards the stairs past me to get out of the building, berated by the security guard for not running. This soundscape of excited and screaming kids, approximately 5-7 years old, was accompanied by the frenzied movement of BOSCO teachers towards the break room for lunch. As Mr Khan's meeting ended, I was directed to go to his room, visible from the entrance. Here again, like the UNHCR, permission to record the conversation was denied.

BOSCO's three centres cater to Afghan, Somali, and Chin refugees. The Bhogal centre used to be in Lajpat Nagar but shifted here as most refugees reside in Bhogal. Their Refugee Assistance Project provides many services to refugees. The first floor houses the medical centre

with trained nurses and doctors on site and tie-ups with government hospitals to ensure that they are easily admitted in cases of further treatment. They also have Dari and Pashto translators from the refugee population on standby for people who neither speak Hindi nor English.

The second-floor deals with several education programs. First is the creche or playschool consisting of Afghan teachers owing to familiarity with language, culture, and face types. The second kind of training addresses Hindi and English language education for kids under 14, a program to facilitate their admissions into government schools where BOSCO coordinates the admission. This is possible due to the Fundamental Right to Education of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees schooling to all those residing in India until the age of 14. They believe kids can pick up individual subjects once they know the language. The third program imparts local language training to kids over 14 who are too old to be admitted into government schools. Here, they are then given the option of Open School, where they can give their tenth-grade exams, and BOSCO can try and get them admitted into the eleventh grade in a regular school (as that is allowed). The open school also allows them to give their twelfth-grade exams. In the evenings, BOSCO also holds classes for adult language training and provides tuition for Afghan students enrolled in government schools. They also provide subsistence to some people in great need, but only for people under 18 or who cannot work due to mental or physical disabilities or single mothers. The fourth type is language training and connecting them to the informal labour market, wherein BOSCO has succeeded in helping refugees attain gainful employment in spaces like Lajpat Nagar. Finally, the third floor has the psycho-social wing, which provides psychological support to refugees and students.

Aside from this, BOSCO also organises regular cultural, educational, and social events for refugees, including Health Camps in collaboration with Action Aid. It is also a partner of the Deutscher Akademische Fluchtlings Initiative (DAFI) scholarship program, a German federal global funding scheme for refugees enrolled in university education in host countries. In addition, BOSCO's Yuva Youth Club regularly organises exhibitions around particular topics every month and participates in sports events. During the Covid lockdowns, as BOSCO shifted many of its classes online, the Yuva Youth Club was making videos on proper mask etiquette and participating in ration distribution to refugees.

As we can see, the Afghan refugee presence has necessitated the emergence of various familial, ethnic, humanitarian, and spatial infrastructures to settle in Jangpura-Bhogal. First, the many public parks are spaces where Afghans lay claim to space in the evenings playing

badminton, taking walks, waiting for their kids to finish playing, and socialising. These parks would become important sites for protests and solidarity meetings after the withdrawal of US forces and the Taliban's return to power. The market provides a material infrastructure around jobs, subsistence goods, and socialities. 'Local' individuals like Harpal, Chanranjeet, Jain saab, Happy Properties, and others provide homes or services to rent spaces in the neighbourhood. Finally, institutions provide social infrastructures for refugees to become 'self-reliant' through education, psychological support, and business loans, helping them navigate an arbitrary and unwelcoming refugee regime.

Pandemic communities

In early 2021, the brutal Covid wave swept across India, causing the already weak public health infrastructure to collapse. I returned in March 2021 after a failed fieldwork trip in 2020. As I began fieldwork, cases spread across Delhi, bringing everyday life to a halt. Hospitals and crematoriums started running out of space, and there was a shortage of medical oxygen cylinders and medicines. A nearly absent public health communication campaign led to chaos as patients and their families lined up to buy prescribed medicines on the black market. Soon private doctors and the Chief of AIIMS began regularly addressing the public to ensure citizens remained calm and followed the correct procedures for proper home care. Informal collectives sprang up across social media, meticulously documenting and circulating information on hospital beds, medicines, test centres, and oxygen cylinders via lists that were uploaded daily.

Amidst this chaos, informal and formal organisations in Jangpura-Bhogal also began a rigorous process of providing the necessary infrastructure for fellow residents. With a strict lockdown and growing cases, physical interactions started reducing, and neighbourhood conversations shifted to social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. Individual profiles, community pages, and groups were full of discussions about beds, oxygen, medicines, and vaccinations. Some groups took this further and acquired Oxygenators for community use, a Delhi-wide phenomenon in middle-class and posh neighbourhoods. JEWA took the lead by acquiring Oxygen concentrators and cylinders. As the JEWA president informs me, in 2020, they anticipated the chaos and acquired the infrastructure only to be used by two or three residents. However, during the Second CoVID 'Delta Wave', 50-60 residents of Jangpura Extension lost their lives. With this medical infrastructure, he claims, JEWA could serve 100 residents and save 70% of the residents. As he argues, while the residents did not appreciate these efforts during the first wave, the second wave made residents realise JEWA's importance

to Jangpura Extension. Along with this, resident volunteers manned a COVID helpline to answer neighbourhood requests, queries, and complaints, as well as distributed covid gear like Face Shields, masks, sanitisers and gloves to street vendors and municipality sweepers. A few months they were able to coordinate with Moolchand Hospital to provide vaccinations to residents.[131]

Such actions were repeated on other platforms, including the Jangpura Facebook page and resident WhatsApp groups. Discussions abounded regarding the violation of covid norms by MCD staff and the inability or success of Municipal councillors in sanitising the public spaces of Jangpura-Bhogal. Many of these WhatsApp groups included local political unit members of the BJP, the Congress, and the AAP, promoting their respective representatives' contributions in the fight against the pandemic. However, Afghans were excluded from these discussions and Covid efforts, instead relying on the UNHCR and BOSCO for support.[132] The only outlier was the Jangpura Facebook page, which includes Afghan subscribers informing them of flights departing for Kabul during the first lockdown. By April 2020, the Afghan government began evacuating medical tourists in collaboration with airlines and other transport companies. Information began to be shared about registration for evacuation, departing flights, and procedures to be followed. For the refugees stuck in India, BOSCO and its youth organisation, Yuva Youth Club, took the initiative in distributing rations to refugees across the city, collecting clothes, making masks, sharing helpful information about covid resources and vaccination, and spreading messages about staying indoors.[133]

It was evident that Afghans were to be taken care of through the organisations responsible for them rather than fellow residents who would need to look out for their 'own community'. The institutions facilitating their presence in the city are responsible for them, not their fellow residents. For locals, UN support includes massive financial payments and infrastructural support for Afghans. By this reasoning, Afghans would not require the level of attention and communication as Jangpura-Bhogal's Indian population.

---

[131] JEWA, WhatsApp Message, 9 May 2021; JEWA, WhatsApp Message, 22 May 2020.
[132] Yuva Youth Club, Facebook post, 13 April 2020, Covid Helpline.
[133] *Yuva Youth Club,* Facebook post, 13 July 2021; BOSCO, Facebook Post, 14 May 2020; BOSCO, Facebook Post, 20 March 2021.

Socialities and Infrastructures

These historical and contemporary relations have produced several collectives mobilised during moments of crisis to negotiate with larger urban, national, and global processes to craft the neighbourhood, its imaginaries, and practices. For the 'locals,' this collective would emerge during the persistent sealing drives that rocked the city in 2006, 2008, and recently in 2018.[134] These continued actions against 'encroachers on government land' have been important opportunities for the rise of MTAs and RWAs as pivotal figures in local urban politics.[135] Most recently, the BJP's demands to shut meat shops during Navratri met resistance as the Bhogal Vyopar Samiti supported Jangpura-Bhogal's Sikh and Muslim meat sellers resisting this majoritarian and economically disastrous move by the government.[136] When seen within a more extended history, the *theka* agitation discussed at the beginning of the chapter combined these long-standing socio-economic relations to determine legality, morality, and enterprise in Jangpura-Bhogal.

This chapter has documented the production of diverse infrastructures in Jangpura-Bhogal's past and presents mediated by questions of presence and absence, populations with differential access to the state, and shifting caste, class, and religious conjunctions. Market relations, apart from historical residence and spatial proximity, have been vital to producing not only neighbourhood sociality but also its social infrastructures. In a recent volume, Sebastian Schwecke and Ajay Gandhi draw on historical studies of markets to argue that they are key sites and enablers of sociality, reputation, and trust. Historically durable and shifting networks of community (ethnic, religious, spatial, gender) and power (political or economic power) continue to affect not only markets but also their material and immaterial relations. Relational networks at multiple scales affect the politics of markets, localities, and their political framings.[137]

---

[134] "Ruhi Bhasin, Sealings come back to haunt traders", *The Times of India*, 29 April 2008, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/sealings-come-back-to-haunt-traders/articleshow/2993239.cms.

[135] Ghosh et al., A Comparative Overview.

[136] "Meat shop owners in Delhi forced to shut down for Navratri, 6 April 2022", *The New Indian Express,* https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2022/apr/06/meat-shop-owners-in-delhi-forced-to-shut-down-for-navratri-2438593.html.

[137] Ajay Gandhi et al., eds., *Rethinking Markets in Modern India: Embedded Exchange and Contested Jurisdiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Mekhala Krishnamurthy, *Mandi* Acts and Market Lore: Regulatory Life in India's Agricultural Markets, in *Rethinking Markets in Modern India: Embedded Exchange and Contested Jurisdiction*, ed. Ajay Gandhi et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

The instances explored above play out in the domain of 'civil society', actions initiated by rights-bearing citizens. However, they cannot be merely confined to this. Research on the media industry's subaltern elites in small-town India, RWA politics in Delhi, and local figures in Ahmedabad's workers' neighbourhoods have questioned Chatterjee's binaries of 'civil' and 'political' society. While granted that these categories provide a necessary differentiation between 'citizens' and 'populations', and that 'civil society' as an interventionist political project is demographically limited, the practices often overlap.[138] The urban poor and marginalised rightfully must rely on often illicit or illegal acts to stake their claims on urban space as rights-bearing citizens through a variety of local social and political intermediaries. Questions of substantive citizenship rights must be negotiated with a state seeking to manage and provide basic welfare to populations and the disjuncture between policy and practice.

The literature on the middle-class highlights that a retreat of this amorphous constituency from the 'messy' domain of the politics has been accompanied by a state sponsored involvement in 'governance' rather than explicit 'politics' to manage and improve urban space in line with ideas of the world class city. Research on RWAs and elections argues that this division is in reality quite arbitrary, with local political candidates often overlapping in party and association memberships, utilising these associations as launchpads for their own careers.[139] While it is true that the propertied neighbourhood associations have been emboldened through bureaucratic feat, bypassing and in direct conversation with local urban bodies and representatives, their historical relationship although less explicit and intense, needs to be examined.

Historically, the South Asian city has been marked by a differentiation of populations, playing out through planning's intersections of colonial difference, white and black town imaginaries, or class and status boundaries. The middle-class, in its various iterations, has benefitted from several urban planning and political schemes, and has utilised a variety of networks in urban civic politics since the 1920s.

---

[138] Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*; Mehra, RWAs and Political.; Srirupa Roy, When the Revolution is Televised: Reflections on Media, Civil Society and Power in Contemporary India, in *New Cultural Histories of India: Materiality and Practices*, ed. Partha Chatterjee, Tapati Guha-Thakurta, and Bodhisattva Kar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014); Barua, *In the Shadow of the Mill.*

[139] Harriss, Political Participation, Representation and the Urban Poor: Findings from Research in Delhi.; Lama-Rewal, Neighbourhood Associations and Local Democracy: Delhi Municipal Elections 2007.; Ghertner, *Rule by Aesthetics*; Srivastava, *Entangled urbanism*; Leela Fernandes, *India's new middle class: democratic politics in an era of economic reform* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, 2006).

With the instance of the Jain school, Jangpura-Bhogal's residents were involved in a process of symbolic gating utilising arguments around appropriate land use, public morality, and 'local' residents to mark the social infrastructures of the neighbourhood. A new collective emerged in the management of economic life when the Market Trader's Association would frame their claims on the right to economic life and legal precedence through social capital. The question of religious spaces would mobilise residents through the functioning S.D. High School, the Jangpura Residents Association, religious bodies, and politicians to revive and replace religious sites. Here emotive registers of 'religious community', presences and absences, and documentary evidence would determine the future of these sites. In 2011, land use, infrastructure needs of present and propertied populations, and the illicit slums would frame the discourse mobilising resident associations, local and national level politicians, and municipal bodies. These processes showcase the different power matrices around which resident collectives mobilise to craft infrastructures in Jangpura-Bhogal. Unlike these, an emerging refugee infrastructure is unable to negotiate beyond basic access to services and amenities. Afghans, unlike Jangpura-Bhogal's Indian population do not have a rich history to rely upon.

Several formal and informal collectives such as trader/market associations, religious associations, resident collectives, refugee organisations, and resident welfare associations have evolved out of social and material relations around shifting configurations of power. A history of entanglements between the state, judiciary, and neighbourhood socialities translates to different infrastructural possibilities for Jangpura-Bhogal's diverse populations. They also produce spatial and historical displacements to craft space in Jangpura-Bhogal. We now move on to a more extended discussion of religious collectives that define space, streets, and practices in the neighbourhood.

Chapter 3

CONFLICT: Streets, Spaces, And Contested Histories

Hospital Road and Central Road are the two main entrances to Jangpura-Bhogal, directing traffic towards the different neighbourhoods, streets and lanes and serving the commercial needs of the neighbourhood, surrounding areas, and the city. These commercial and functional meanings exist alongside other spatial regimes. For one, they provide a material landscape, a palimpsest of the layered histories of the space. The sites, spaces, and intersections on these streets serve as a testament to the diverse arrival populations and histories of Jangpura-Bhogal. Take, for example, Hospital Road. The approximately 500 metres stretch from Lord's Clinic (at the beginning of Hospital Road) to Birbal Park (the beginning of Jangpura Extension's bungalow zone) houses an assortment of religious sites: the Pracheen Kanthi Mata Temple; the Arya Samaj Temple; St. Michael's and All Angels Church; the Bhogal Buddha Vihar, and the Sant Guru Ravidas Mandir. This religious boulevard, with a site every 100 metres, contains a few of the numerous religious spaces.[1]

At various points of time during the year, these streets become arenas of religious congregations, processions, and events. With immense police presence, Hospital Road and St. Michael's Church light up on Christmas eve for locals and visitors to the Midnight Mass. Thai monks and pilgrims can be seen going in and out of the Bhogal Buddha Vihar and serving food to the needy on Vassa. The Sanatan Dharam Mandirs in Pant Nagar and Jangpura Extension recently hosted Janmashtami celebrations. Central Road routinely witnesses scores of Muslims proceeding to offer Eid and Jummah prayers at the Shahi masjid on Masjid Road. Mahashivratri celebrations and processions block off Central Road for the extensive celebrations and crowds. And Sikh processions on Gurupurab (Guru Nanak's birthday), or the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, occupy the streets and lanes for hours as they pass through Jangpura-Bhogal.

Recall my first meeting with Harpal, who informs me of his desire to make a film on the histories of all the religious sites. For him, like other residents, the religious sites of Jangpura-Bhogal are a testament to the sheer diversity of the space. "Delhi?! You can write a

---

[1] Bhogal houses the Shahi Masjid on Masjid Road; the Bhogal Gurdwara Singh Sabha on Jangpura Road; the dual Jain mandirs, a Shiv Mandir, and the Pracheen Sheetla Mata mandir on Temple Road; and the Shri Radha Krishna mandir, and gurdwara Santa da Dera on Church Road. Then there is the Mai Da Gurdwara, Shiv, and Gau Gopal mandirs in Jangpura A. Jangpura B houses the Balmiki mandir and Noor Masjid. Jangpura Extension is home to the Shiv Mandir, the Sanatan Dharam Mandir, the Shri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, and the Gufa Bali mandir. Finally, Pant Nagar houses the famous Sanatan Dharam Sabha temple complex.

history of India!".[2] Pointing to the religious sites, processions and bodies, residents like Harpal often define Jangpura-Bhogal as a harmonious and convivial space. They substantiated these claims by emphasising the lack of communal tensions and the neighbourhood's political history as a Congress and AAP stronghold.

While the narrative of the heterogeneous space is examined in the next chapter, I draw attention to spaces, streets, and religion in Jangpura-Bhogal. This chapter addresses religious conflict by examining communal violence and a spatial-religious conflict across Jangpura-Bhogal's century. Resident articulations, grand celebrations, and everyday religious practices conceal the contested histories of Jangpura-Bhogal's religious diversity. As we will see, the oft-celebrated, religiously diverse populations of Jangpura-Bhogal have routinely clashed over religious spaces, streets, and practices through dramatic episodes and daily assertions. Serving as the third element of neighbourhood and city-making, these conflicts crystallise through shifting configurations of community (and destabilise it) that draw on arrival histories, historical practices, majority-minority relations, and local vs outsider rhetoric. We will see that the celebrated *bhaichara* (community feelings) of Jangpura-Bhogal is facilitated through diverse and unevenly accessed place-making strategies that simultaneously displace or attempt to displace particular sets of spatial claims, histories, and practices. Let us begin with an overview of communal violence in the colonial and postcolonial period (Section 1), followed by a closer look at the persistent but dynamic patterns of religious-spatial assertion and the conflict they sparked in Jangpura-Bhogal from the early decades of the twentieth century to the new millennium.

---

[2] Harpal, personal communication, 15 January 2019.

Figure 3.1. Map of religious sites in Jangpura-Bhogal. (Note: The map is not an accurate representation and is for illustrative purposes only)

1. Communal Violence: Defining Streets and Practices

1.1. The Sacred and Profane: Bakr-Eid and the Hindu space

The Hindu Festival of Narjala Akasthi fell on the first day of Bakr Id, but no clash ensued. Indeed, all three days of the Id passed off peacefully in Delhi City, although a partial but by no means complete hartal was observed by Hindus. An incident which might have had serious consequences but was well controlled by the magistrate and police on the spot occurred between Jungpura and Nizamuddin in the South-East portion of the New-Delhi Municipal area, where a mob of 100-150 Hindus tried to rescue a cow, which was being taken for

165

sacrifice from Jangpura to the Nizamuddin Slaughter House. The police repulsed the Hindus and prevented them from laying hands on the Muhammedans or the cow. Two head constables sustained very slight injuries but it is not known that the attackers received any. Help was speedily sent from Delhi, and after due enquiry certain necessary arrests were made.[3]

Jangpura village, newly populated with residents of displaced and resettled villages in 1922 and taking shape through colonial infrastructural developments, required resident efforts to forge a sense of place, to 'settle in'. However, the process of crafting and negotiating space led to contestations among different (primarily religious) communities. On 30 May 1928, an altercation interrupted Muslim Eid celebrations when Jangpura's Hindu residents attempted to save a cow. The violence on the second day of Bakr Eid celebrations by residents of Jangpura and nearby villages injured the police contingent present, the termination of the Lambardar, arrests, and a prolonged rioting trial. Echoing Bakr Eid disruptions across North India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the conflict arose over the route of the procession escorting the cow for sacrifice. The authorities quickly suppressed the attack and ensured the cow reached its destination in the slaughterhouse. This brief skirmish resulted from rising communal tensions between Jangpura-Bhogal's inhabitants.

The 'facts' of the event and those responsible are not the focus. Instead, I draw attention to the event and its pre-history to understand the production of Jangpura village as a 'Hindu space' through questions of 'acceptable' practices, religious sentiment, and neighbourhood demography. As we will see, the event was the culmination of spatial assertions underway since 1927.[4] Through the articulation of religious practices and rituals, residents sought to define Jangpura as a Hindu spatial community at the levels of the street, the neighbourhood, and a larger urban area. Simultaneously, these attempts at place-making ended up displacing the rights, practices, and histories of Jangpura's Muslim residents.

---

[3] Demi-Official letter to Secretary Government of India, Home Department, 2 June 1928. See *Fortnightly Report for May 1928*, NAI/Home/Political/F-1/1928.
[4] These tensions are observable in the archive since 1927. However, that does not deny the possibility of strained relations prior to that.

Tensions Begin

When seen within the larger context of Delhi's history, the 1928 event was not an isolated incident. By the 1920s, Delhi was plagued by riots, including the Bakr Id riots of 1924;[5] Municipal Election riots of 1925; a riot in Rithala village in 1926; Riots in 1926 after the assassination of Arya Samaj leader Swami Shraddhanand, and following the culprit Abdul Rashid's hanging.[6] The creeping communal discord marked by Hindu-Muslim polarisation since the late nineteenth century resulted from concerted and increasingly violent assertions often occurring during religious festivals and processions. The long-term activities of the *Gaurakshini Sabhas* (Cow Protection Organisations), the Arya Samaj, the Tabligh and Shuddhi movements often coalesced around disruptions during Bakr Eid.[7]

The increasing instances of communal clashes in the city led to intensive planning, surveillance, and control of public religious life in Delhi during Bakr Eid celebrations. Within municipal limits, the authorities forbade residential sacrifices, determined 'safe' procession routes for Muslim cow processions under police escorts,[8] and banned residents from carrying items that could be used as weapons. Special magistrates, police officers, and multiple armed pickets were posted across the city to ensure denizens' compliance with the orders.[9] With the precautions in place, celebrations began on 11 and 12 June. News trickling in from the different police stations across the city reported that the sacrifices largely went off peacefully except for an incident near Faiz Bazar.[10]

---

[5] The Sadar Bazar riots were one of the biggest riots in recent times. Margrit Pernau, "Riots, masculinity, and the desire for passions: North India 1917–1946", *South Asian History and Culture* 12, no. 2-3 (2021-07-03 2021), https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2021.1878789; Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires*.

[6] Khan, *Census of India 1931 Volume XVI, Delhi: Report and Tables*, 14.

[7] Anand A. Yang, "Sacred Symbol and Sacred Space in Rural India: Community Mobilization in the "Anti-Cow Killing" Riot of 1893", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 4 (1980); Sandria B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Reece Jones, "Sacred cows and thumping drums: claiming territory as 'zones of tradition' in British India", *Area* 39, no. 1 (2007).

[8] In certain instances, there was resistance to prescribed routes in certain *ilaqa*s and *mohallas* like Kucha Nawab Mirza. See Ibid.

[9] For details, see Police Arrangements, Bakr-Id, 27 May 1927, DSA/DC/45/1927; Orders to Magistrates for Bakr-Id 1927, 1 June 1927, *Ibid*

These efforts must be seen in a larger context of urban policing and governance in Delhi at a time of economic distress, a rising anti-colonial movement, and growing communalism. The need to maintain public order, protect New Delhi, and control urban populations, introduced diverse policing mechanisms that attempted to make the city visible by mapping the city and its zones.

These visualisations produced a fragmented urban space that could be controlled and policed through a series of punitive measures,. Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism*, 119-48.

[10] For details, see Report of Magistrate, 1 June 1928, *Ibid.*

On June 11, 1927, deep in the Mussalman mohalla of Jangpura village, some Muslims came together to sacrifice a cow in a resident's home. Neither was the cow publicly sacrificed, nor was there a procession. As discussed in Chapter 1, micro-localities typified the settlement of Jangpura village on caste and religious lines. Segregated from the rest of the village, the Muslims lived at the western edge of the settlement, along what today are the streets of Church Road, Church Lane, Masjid Road, and Masjid Lane. Yet somehow, news of this private act soon spread in the village. A significant grain market by now, Jangpura was hosting numerous visitors from nearby villages. By the next day, as rumours of Muslims planning two more sacrifices spread, Gujjars and other inhabitants from nearby *abadis* rallied to prevent this act. Fortunately, the village chowkidar approached the head constable of the Nizamuddin police post and Khwaja Hasan Nizami (caretaker of the Nizamuddin shrine) to inform them of the sacrifice and the mobilisation of a potentially violent crowd. In anticipation of the violence, the constable contacted the Sub-Inspector of Police (SSP), who immediately sent reinforcements to the village. Nizami, the SSP, and Lambardar diffused tensions by reassuring the crowd that Muslims had no plans to sacrifice more cows. At a village panchayat (meeting) later in the evening, Muslims reassured the Hindus by dismissing the rumours, and both parties agreed to prevent further escalation and resolve the matter.[11]

However, the next day, the Hindus of the village reneged on this promise and sent a deputation accompanied by Swami Ramanand Sanyasi, President of the All-India Dalit Udhar Sabha,[12] to visit the Deputy Commissioner (DC). The deputation claimed that Muslims sacrificed a cow without a license and objections by the Hindu crowd foiled their plans to sacrifice two more. Since no cow sacrifice ever occurred in the recently established village,[13] they appealed to the DC to prevent future instances. However, this was not the end of the problem. On June 29, 1927, Jangpura's Hindu residents directed the matter to the District Magistrate (DM), claiming that the ritualistic anomaly in neighbourhood practices was a deliberate attempt to 'injure the feelings' of the predominantly Hindu neighbourhood's residents. Signed by about 100 residents of the village, it requested the DM to investigate the

---

[11] Ramanand Sanyasi to DC, 13 June 1927, DSA/DC/42/1927; SSP to DC, 15 June 1927, *Ibid*; Notes of Meeting at DC's house, 12 May 1928, DSA/DC/45/1947.

[12] Based in Naya Bazar, Daryaganj, the organization worked towards Dalit social, economic, and cultural improvement in the city. This involved educational and cultural negotiations with the colonial state for Dalit emancipation. For example, they facilitated the award of 9 scholarships for the education of Dalit boys. See *Report on the Administration of the Delhi Province for 1927-28*.

[13] Note by DC, 14 June 1927, DSA/DC/42/1927.

matter, punish the Muslim culprits, and forbid such acts.[14] While inquiries conveyed a breach of Bakr Eid slaughter laws by the Muslims, the administration decided against legal action, instead aiming to maintain order for the next Eid.

A few months later, in March 1928, a letter from a 'silent stranger' stated that while in 1927 the Lambardar's efforts pacified the crowd, Jangpura's 'mischievous Mohameddans' prompted by their friends in nearby Nizamuddin, were planning a cow sacrifice again on the coming Eid. Reminding the DC that sacrifices were a primary cause of tension between Hindus and Muslims in Delhi, the stranger pointed to the massive Hindu presence in Jangpura (90% Hindu) and the surrounding villages (all Hindu). After asserting the absence of a pre-history of such acts in Jangpura or the original resettled villages, the 'Silent Stranger' appealed to the DC appropriate order to the Lambardar and Nizamuddin Police Post to put an end to such rituals.[15] The District Magistrate received a letter along the same lines in April 1928. Signed by almost all Hindus of the village, the letter recalled the 1927 event to argue that Muslims were again planning a sacrifice merely to injure the feelings of Hindus in the region. Referring to the earlier petition from June 1927, they expressed discontent at the inaction in punishing Muslims who had clearly broken sacrifice laws. Thus, like the silent stranger, they requested prohibiting such sacrifices in Jangpura and the surrounding areas.[16]

Inquiries by the administration revealed that three Muslims and possibly a fourth were planning sacrifices on the upcoming Bakr Eid. After being explained the provisions and restrictions under the Punjab Laws Act of 1872, the Muslims inquired about the possibility of sacrificing the cows at an alternative location, permission for which was granted at the temporary slaughterhouse at Nizamuddin. This makeshift slaughterhouse would cater to the needs of Muslim residents of Nizamuddin, Jangpura, and others from New Delhi, not wishing to go to the old city for sacrifices.

---

[14] Residents of Jangpura village to District Magistrate, 29 June 1927, *Ibid*.
Petitions, pamphlets, and litigation became important strategies to argue for or against cow sacrifices. See Rohit De, "Cows and Constitutionalism", *Modern Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X18000422.
[15] A Silent Stranger to the Deputy Commissioner, 22 March 1928, *Ibid*
[16] Residents of Jangpura village to District Magistrate, 13 April 1928. *Ibid*.

The Unavoidable Conflict: The Event Unfolds

Like the previous year, the appropriate precautions and personnel were deployed for Bakr Eid celebrations. However, while the authorities honoured the demands of Hindu residents to prohibit cow sacrifices within the village, an additional problem emerged. The proposed new location in Nizamuddin meant that the cows would now be transported through the village. During an inspection round of the arrangements on May 28, the Magistrates found resistance among the Hindus to allow the procession through a particular route. The cow of one of the Muslims, Maula Bux, was in a shed that opened towards the main bazaar. Objecting to the transportation of the cow through the main bazaar, the Hindus wanted the procession to pass 'quietly and in an inoffensive manner' *through the Mussalman locality*.[17] One of the magistrates agreed to these demands and provided Maula Bux with two substitute route options. First, they could take the cow out from the shed's side door, which opened at a right angle to the main bazaar. Alternatively, they could transfer the cow to another Muslim, Mohd. Avaz's house at a less contentious location and transport it to Nizamuddin. Although Maula Bux wanted to take the main street, he agreed to the first option after consulting his Muslim contacts in Nizamuddin.[18] If we are to conjecture and reconstruct the route, it would start close to the western edge of the village, turn right and head straight past the Barapullah nala (residents used it for crossing over to Nizamuddin) to the Nizamuddin slaughterhouse.[19]

With this route decided, the magistrates informed the Lambardar and other leading Hindus about the procession planned for 30 May. All shops were closed, the streets were empty, and police personnel were deployed in the neighbourhood. The SSP, Magistrates, the Lambardar, and two armed constables would escort the Muslims and the cows. Proceeding from the *Mussalman gali* to the slaughterhouse, the first procession safely shepherded the cow without any problems. However, the second procession escorting Maula Bux's cow from the contentious location (at the shed's intersection with the main bazaar) met resistance. Within 400 metres of the procession's movement, a crowd of about 100-150 armed men from different points of the village assembled to snatch the cow. As the magistrates and police endeavoured to continue with the procession's movement, the Lambardar got left behind in a rush. 40-50 men from the mob attacked the procession as it reached the edge of the nala to cross over to

---

[17] Emphasis mine. *The Times of India*, 17 July 1928.

[18] *Ibid*; Report of Hanraham, DSA/DC/45/1927.

[19] It is difficult to determine the exact location of Maula Bux's shed and the proposed route since the roads were still unnamed.

Nizamuddin.[20] During the brief skirmish between the attackers and 16 constables, some men broke away from the crowd to release the cow, injuring the constable who attempted to stop them. The magistrate and police successfully quelled the violence within 5-10 minutes and pushed back the mob to protect the Muslims and the cow. Soon enough, reinforcements arrived to assist the police and ensure the procession reached its destination in Nizamuddin where it was sacrificed, and the meat safely brought back to Jangpura. The next day inquiries were conducted, statements recorded, and arrests made amidst a massive police presence.

The magistrate suspected the involvement of the Lambardar and key village leaders who were aware of the procession's proposed route. Witness statements revealed the direct involvement of at least 18 people from Jangpura. Suspecting the altercation to be a planned attack, the authorities began criminal proceedings against the accused. Authorities fired the Lambardar for failing to inform them about the brewing tensions and preventing the incident. However, in July, a certain Hindu Raksha Committee (HDC) wrote to the Delhi administration, citing two resolutions made during a public meeting of Hindus in Delhi. They condemned the Bakr Eid incident, the hurtful nature of the procession through a prohibited route, and the open display of beef on public thoroughfares in a 'Hindu abadi'. The Committee, which included leading men of Jangpura village, Municipal commissioners, and lawyers, demanded the retraction of criminal proceedings against the Hindus of Jangpura and nearby villages.[21] Their efforts failed as the administration continued the prosecution well into September 1928.[22] Although there were no other reported instances on Bakr Eid, the administration's yearly attempts at different procession routes repeatedly faced Hindu resistance. By this time, the official labelling of sensitive Hindu and Muslim spaces through the 'Communal Riot Scheme' of 1934 solidified spaces linked to religion.[23] Ultimately, the administration's desire to efficiently plan safe procession routes necessitated the naming of Jangpura's streets by 1939.[24]

---

[20] The report stated that two men in the crowd were also armed with muskets but did not fire their guns. Report of Magistrate Hanraham, DSA/DC/45/1927.

[21] Hindu Raksha Committee to Chief Commissioner, 27 June 1928, *Ibid.*

[22] *Hindustan Times,* 20 September 1928.

7 people were accused and sentenced to one year of rigorous imprisonment. Following that, they were to submit Rs. 100 each as security for good behaviour for the next two years. See Government of India. *Report on the Administration of the Delhi Province for 1928-29* (Calcutta: Central Publication Branch, 1930), 13.

[23] For details on the scheme and its antecedents, see Legg, "A Pre-Partitioned City?".

[24] See DSA/DC/46/1935; DSA/DC/37/1939.

While used as administrative governance and policing categories to make the city more legible and easier to police, scholars have argued that local knowledge and the importance of districts, rather than streets, was paramount for most urban dwellers. As a result, colonial efforts to establish clearer systems of house and street numbering often ineffective. Richard Harris and Robert Lewis, "Numbers didn't

After 1947, these processions for rituals outside the village and their attendant anxieties departed the neighbourhood with the Muslims.

Producing the Hindu Space

Through their public celebration, festivals like Bakr Eid, Mohurrum, Ramlila, Diwali, and Ganesh Chaturthi by urban religious communities simultaneously encountered contestations over specific practices. The increasing communalisation of urban centres was especially observable in neighbourhoods: the arenas for religious celebrations, assertions, and conflicts. Jim Masselos's rich examinations of colonial urban life illustrate how, rather than merely reflecting socio-political developments elsewhere, claims of historical practices and religious sentiment were often grounded in localities and lived spaces, be it the street, the neighbourhood, or a larger urban area. For example, particular routes and processions passed through Mussalman or neutral mohallas, staying away from Hindu neighbourhoods and spaces. In times of assertion, such processions were sites of competition between neighbourhoods or utilised a politics of antagonism to instigate other communities.[25] Bakr Eid precautions intended to prevent such instances of violence with carefully planned routes through seemingly unproblematic lanes, streets, and neighbourhoods. However, as is evident in colonial urban history and the instance of 1928, the riots became a mode of claiming space and repudiating certain rituals and routes. Through this, populations established, what Reece Jones calls 'zones of tradition'.[26]

The petition resulting from the sacrifice in 1927, the repeated requests to prohibit the practice, the apprehensions over the proposed route and the eventual attack on the procession showcase resident attempts to define and articulate a Hindu religious space. With the planned mobilisation of an armed crowd to prevent the cow's transportation to the Nizamuddin slaughterhouse, the Hindu residents disregarded prior agreements to assuage tensions with the Muslims. Here, the state, seeking to control the city's spaces during an increasingly fractured time, becomes an arbitrator in this contentious battle of place-making in the village.

---

count: the streets of colonial Bombay and Calcutta", *Urban History* 39, no. 4 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926812000429.

[25] Masselos, "Power in the Bombay "Moholla", 1904–15: An initial exploration into the world of the Indian Urban Muslim"; Jim Masselos, "Change and custom in the format of the Bombay Mohurrum during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1982); Masselos, "Appropriating Urban Space"

[26] Jones, "Sacred cows and thumping drums: claiming territory as 'zones of tradition' in British India"

Using emotional, historical, and spatial registers, the Hindu residents attempted to define Jangpura and its 'acceptable' practices. The claims of a Hindu spatial community to disavow Muslim attempts at religious practice in space functioned at different levels. First was at the level of the street, its uses, and practices. The procession could not pass through the Hindu market on the main street. Historically, the market was primarily located along present-day Central Road and Summan Bazar. A key site of interactions between the different micro-localities, and the heart of the grain market catering to nearby villages, it was out of bounds for a state-sponsored procession for a disavowed Muslim ritual outside the neighbourhood. Catering to these demands, the Delhi administration prepared an alternative route through the edge of the village, close to the Mussalman locality. Despite that, the intersection of the second cow's route with the main bazaar remained a bone of contention. The reluctant acceptance of this route by Jangpura's Hindus and the mob's attack conveyed the Hindu disregard for a purportedly offensive act. However, the afterlife of the violence brought another aspect to these inhibitions, particularly the transportation of the cow's meat, as the HDC claimed, through 'public thoroughfares and past the Hindu temple'. The eventual product of the profane ritual could not be taken through public and sacred paths.

The second was at the level of the neighbourhood, its practices, and its history. Occurring within the confines of Muslim homes, the private sacrifices of 1926 and 1927 invited public scorn by Jangpura's Hindus, who utilised petitions to draw the state's attention. In the appeals made to the DC and DM, Hindus invoked Jangpura's religious majority, Hindu sentiments, and deliberate Muslim intentions to harm them. Here, the stark social distinctions between Dalits and caste Hindus were elided in order to advocate the idea of a 'Hindu neighbourhood' by referencing village origins and historic social practices. As the Hindu residents claimed, they were resettled in Jangpura after the large-scale colonial land acquisitions. Since the original villages had no history of cow sacrifices, such rituals had no place in the nascent *Hindu* settlement. The impassioned social claims were connected to the act's illegality in a space like Jangpura. Since municipal rules prohibited private cow sacrifices, and Jangpura was under the NDMC, the 1926 and 1927 cow sacrifices were unlawful. However, the state's agreement with these assertions required the subsequent provisions for a 'lawful' sacrifice outside the neighbourhood, culminating in violence against the police and Jangpura's Muslim minority.

Lastly, these procedures played out through ideas of an urban religious identity. These claims of a *Hindu abadi* were also connected to the larger spatial imaginary of a rural Hindu

area south of the city. A bourgeoning grain market run by the Banias and Jains (the traders of the city's agricultural produce) connected Jangpura to the socio-economic lives of villages like Kale Khan and Kilokhri. Like in 1927, when they were present in the village, they joined the attackers in 1928 in a premeditated attack on the Muslims. The 'innocent' members of the *Hindu abadi* and larger Hindu rural area were first disrespected through the unacceptable cow sacrifice, it was claimed, and the Hindu actions were a reaction to this original offensive act. In the event's aftermath, a larger Hindu urban body articulating demands on their behalf petitioned the state to reconsider the unjust criminal proceedings against the innocent Hindus. As a result, these diverse assertions of space and identity linked Jangpura to a spatial imaginary of a Hindu religious space.

However, the process of defining and articulating a Hindu space, its populations, histories, and practices simultaneously displaced other claims to space. Muslims could not sacrifice cows in the privacy of their homes due to legal provisions and Hindu sentiments. They had to negotiate their claims to the space, conforming to power relations within the village and through the colonial state, which granted them provisions in a nearby Muslim settlement. Even here, their efforts were momentarily rebuffed by the violent act of 1928. A Muslim procession taking cows through the edge of the neighbourhood was unacceptable to Hindu residents.

These tense inter-community relations reached a climax in August 1947 when Muslims departed the neighbourhood after the outbreak of Partition violence in the city. The scattered oral histories point to the suddenness of the Muslim departure, with residents reiterating its peaceful nature. As they vacated their houses and sought refuge in Muslim camps and Muslim majority areas like Nizamuddin, they only took valuables and left behind other things. As a resident narrates:

Khaali karke gaye. Wahan toh rehne ko koi tayaar nahin tha. Bas unko ye umeed thi jiss wakat who jaa rahe the nizamuddin mein jaa rahe hain, temporary ek hafte ke liye. Mashalla ye jhagda khatam ho jayega, phir waapas aa jayenge. To isliye wo poora samaan nahin le gaye, jewar wevar paisa, aisi cheez le gaye, baaki sab chhodh gaye. Kabaad yahin chhodh gaye.

They emptied them. No one wanted to live there. They only hoped that the time they were going, that it was a temporary move. This fight will get over and we

174

will come back. So that's why they did not even take all their stuff. Jewellery, money, they took things like that. The rest of it they left behind.[27]

Although oral histories about 1947 are largely silent, slippages in memory and the archive provide a window into the past. Individuals like Chand Khan left for Nizamuddin after the violence resulted in the killing of his brothers and nephews. There are tales of looting of empty Muslim houses and of Muslims failing to recover objects left behind with neighbours. Anis Kidwai recalls the abduction of a Muslim girl by her neighbours in Bhogal. Gyanendra Pandey reports Muslims being driven out of the village by refugees who came to the city.[28] These scattered tales will be revisited in the next chapter. But for now, we turn to the aftermath of the Muslim departure. Now, the original inhabitants of Jangpura had to forge new relations with populations now inhabiting the space, i.e., Partition refugees. As we will see, this demographic transformation initiated newer attempts to define the neighbourhood, its spaces, and practices.

1.2. Forging Social Space: Hindus and Sikhs

Sikhs, along with Hindus, are a majority in Jangpura-Bhogal which is often considered one of the strongholds of the Sikh vote in Delhi.[29] Although they make up a mere 3.90% per cent of Defence Colony Tehsil's population,[30] they are socially and culturally dominant in the neighbourhood. A walk through Bhogal's Central Road reveals an expansive Sikh presence through bodies and establishments all along Masjid Road, Masjid Lane, Church Road, Church Lane (the streets where they settled), and public spaces. Sikh property dealers, pharmacists and other shops are the primary non-Afghan establishments catering to the new Afghan arrivals. For example, the Modi Bakery, owned by Partition era Sikhs, is a prominent landlord leasing flats to Afghans. Charanjeet Singh's office on Masjid Road sees a constant footfall of Afghan medical tourists seeking short-term rooms on rent. The Sikh presence is also exemplified by the four gurdwaras in Jangpura-Bhogal: two in Bhogal and one each in Jangpura-A and

---

[27] Mange Lal, Interview,

[28] Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*; Pandey, *Remembering Partition*.

[29] Gurpreet Singh Nibber, "Delhi Assembly Polls 2020: Sikhs' Influence Greater than the Sum of Its Numbers", *Hindustan Times*, 20 January 2020, https://www.hindustantimes.com/assembly-elections/delhi-assembly-polls-2020-sikhs-influence-greater-than-the-sum-of-its-numbers/story-iXfldUl2XayJ4A8qvlQ50M.html.

[30] *District Census Handbook of All the Nine Districts: Village and Town Wise Primary Census Abstract (PCA)*, Government of India (Directorate of Census Operations, 2011).

Jangpura Extension. Lastly, Sikh processions on Gurupurab or Guru Gobind Singh's birth anniversary are a constant feature of Jangpura-Bhogal's visual landscape.

Residents often recall that the arrival of Punjabis, particularly the Sikhs, transformed Jangpura-Bhogal's cultural landscape by introducing new food and ways of living and behaviour in everyday contexts. As a resident tells me, "The arrival of the Punjabis led to many changes. We learnt progress and rudeness". These apparently contradictory terms, *tarakki* and *badtameezi*, often appear in the description of traits accompanying refugee arrival.[31] My key informants draw particular attention to the everyday transformations brought about by the Sikh refugees of Jangpura-Bhogal. During one of my visits to his home, Anil points to the divergent business methods of the Sikhs and Banias. He contrasts the low-risk business acumen of the Banias to the aggressive and high-risk Sikh methods. *Sardar the gunde, aur Baniye, darpok*. "The Sardars were goons, and the Baniyas, cowards." He situates these differences in the context of the lifestyles developed through their respective historical geographies. According to him, since the Punjab region (including the former NWFP) was repeatedly subjected to wars, and the prospects of death seemed likely, a tendency emerged to live in the moment, to eat well, and have fun. In contrast, the Banias had a primarily sedentary and safer lifestyle oscillating between the shop and home. Echoing popular stereotypes around Banias and other trading communities, Anil points to their *chindipana* (frugality) and satisfaction with smaller profits compared to Punjabis and Sikhs, who always sought a maximum profit by any means necessary. According to Anil, a refugee status accompanies desperate means and procedures to make a living, including engaging in illicit, nefarious, or amoral activities. However, according to residents, these cultural differences were reconciled through the passage of time and business relations (Chapter 2).

These remembered brief histories of cultural differences and inter-cultural negotiations following refugee arrival obscure the at-times violent efforts to craft social space in Jangpura-Bhogal. During a conversation about refugee arrivals in Jangpura-Bhogal, I ask a Sikh resident about possible clashes between older residents and newer Partition arrivals. While initially denying it, he eventually gives a rather abstract reply "Look. Whenever new people come, some problems will happen. The Sikhs who came here were the famous goons of Thamali".[32] In a rare instance, Mr Bhalla, the son of Partition Hindu refugees from West Pakistan, provides a more concrete example of the violent accompaniments of refugee arrival. "A procession of

---

[31] Rakesh personal communication, 25 Dec 2018; DC,
[32] Interview, 17 January 2019.

Sikhs on Gurpurab was being taken. They fired tear gas at the time, and I think there were demands for Punjab".[33] He was referring to a series of incidents in the late 1950s when Jangpura-Bhogal and neighbouring Lajpat Nagar were embroiled in conflict. These clashes emerged around the frequent political and religious processions connected to demands for a Punjabi Suba (province) taking place in the neighbourhood. However, as we will see, these violent incidences primarily occurred between Bhogal's Sikhs and Lajpat Nagar's Hindus. Unlike Muslim failure to establish claims to Hindu religious space, Sikhs, as a minority, can assert a Sikh political space.

Akalis and the Punjabi suba

The fraught relations surfaced after the Partition in the late 1950s when the Sikh question took centre stage. By the late colonial period, the Akali Dal (a Sikh political party) established itself as the primary representative of the Sikhs through its agitational activities and control over the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).[34] As the likelihood of Punjab's split into Muslim and non-Muslim (majority Hindu) areas became ever more certain, the Akali Dal (AD) and its leader Master Tara Singh began advocating for a sovereign Sikh state. The plans were suspended when the Congress assured the Akalis that Sikhs would be guaranteed a special status in the Constitution of India. However, in the post-Independence period, the demand returned, reframed along linguistic lines to argue for a Punjabi *Suba* comprising East Punjab and the Patiala and Eastern Punjab States Union (PEPSU). However, the earlier history of the AD's conflation of the Punjabi language (in the Gurmukhi script) with the Sikh religion proved an obstacle for the acceptance of the new demand, and Nehru and the Congress were reluctant to indulge what they continued to see as a 'communal request'.

The Akali Dal launched a full-fledged campaign for a Punjabi Suba in 1955. As a counter to it, the Arya Samaj-led Hindi Raksha Samiti that the Jana Sangh supported began the

---

[33] Interview with Mr Bhalla and Anil Goswami, 10 January 2019.

[34] The Akali Dal's origins lay in the Sikh gurdwara reform movement of the 1920s when they began questioning the Mahant control of Sikh gurdwaras. The SGPC, the manager of all historic gurdwaras, functioned along with its political wing, the Akali Dal to carry out a concerted campaign to 'return' control of the gurdwaras to Sikhs. See Paul R Brass, "Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab: the development of social and political differentiation", in *Language Religion and Politics in North India* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1975), 311-18 ; Devinder Singh, "Socio-Historical Background (1947-1964)", in *Akali Politics in Punjab (1964-1985)* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1993), 31-35 ; Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966); Gurharpal Singh and Girgio Shani, *Sikh Nationalism: From a Dominant Minority to an Ethno-Religious Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 52-81.

'Save Hindi Agitation' in 1957.[35] While Punjab remained the epicentre of these movements, they had a considerable presence in the capital, Delhi, which was an apt space for the organisations to assert their demands. Gurdwara Sisganj in Chandni Chowk became a significant meeting point for the Akali Dal leaders from Punjab and Delhi. The old city, notably Diwan Hall, also housed the headquarters of the Save Hindi agitation. Delhi's political landscape in the late 1950s, thus, was characterised by processions outside the Prime Minister's residence, neighbourhood rallies, and religious meetings in gurdwaras and temples across the city. The Punjabi Suba movement's agitational nature through mobilisations in Sikh spaces and neighbourhoods, protests outside government offices, and intra-neighbourhood processions were assisted through the growing cadres and presence of the Delhi State Akali *jatha* (volunteer corps).

Jangpura-Bhogal and neighbouring Lajpat Nagar were centres of the opposing sides in the battle for Punjab's language. The partition, the departure of Muslims, and refugee arrival dramatically turned Jangpura-Bhogal into a refugee and Sikh space. Bhogal, as mentioned in Chapter 1, housed the Sikh refugees of Rawalpindi (Thamali, Thoa Khalsa, Mator Nara villages), Kashmir (Mirpur district), some of whom later became prominent Akali workers. The Bhogal gurdwara hosted numerous meetings supporting Tara Singh's movement, including speeches by Delhi's prominent Akali workers and the Amritsar contingent.[36] Moreover, Bhogal's Akalis had links with Lajpat's Nagar's Akali workers, who would often invite their Bhogal brethren to Punjabi Suba meetings at the Lajpat Nagar gurdwara.[37] Lying on the other side of the railway tracks from Jangpura Extension, Lajpat Nagar parts I and II were Hindu majority neighbourhoods, including a 'Harijan' settlement and widowed women's colony.[38] Supported by the Jana Sangha and Hindu Mahasabha, the 'Save Hindi' campaign targeted Hindu majority areas for its mobilization and agitational activities. In Lajpat Nagar, the Hindi Raksha Samiti and its sister organization, the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (International Aryan League), established the Arya Samaj Mandir as an important regional centre. The political and religious processions accompanying the opposing movements

---

[35] However, these organizations differed in their approaches towards the Hindi question. While the Arya Samaj believed in the establishment of Hindi's absolute superiority, the Jan Sangh adopted a more pragmatic approach to ensure Hindu political dominance on a larger scale. Brass, "Sikhs and Hindus", 329-34.

[36] Bhogal's prominent Akali workers frequently attended Diwans and other events across Delhi and Punjab. See DSA/CID/334/1954; DSA/CID, 144,1955; DSA/CID, 138, 1960; DSA/CID/117/ 1960. DSA/CID/106/1958; DSA/CID, 58, 1958; DSA/CID/122/1955.

[37] Report of S.I., 13 September 1955, DSA/CID/144/1955; CID/334/1954; DSA/CID/229/1954.

[38] For a greater discussion on the nature of these settlements, Kaur, *Since 1947*.

eventually led to a series of clashes that produced Jangpura-Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar's social spaces.

Contested Streets

On 9 September 1957, the *Times of India* reported a curfew in Bhogal due to a clash between Hindus of the Save Hindi campaign and Sikhs in Bhogal.[39] The procession from Lajpat Nagar eventually reached Bhogal, where they clashed with Sikhs at the crossing of Central Road and Masjid Road.[40] As a result, 30 people, including policemen accompanying the procession, were injured, and 40 others (Sikhs and Hindus) were arrested on charges of rioting.[41] This was the third communal incident around the 'Save Hindi' movement in Delhi in September. A few days before the Bhogal incident, a similar Save Hindi procession resulted in a clash between Sikhs and Hindus outside Gurdwara Sisganj in Chandni Chowk. While passing through the Gurdwara, the procession raised provocative pro-Hindi and anti-Akali slogans, inviting counter-pro-Punjabi slogans by a group of aggravated Sikhs. Following this, violence broke out between the two groups and required the intervention of a massive police force.[42] The way the violence unfolded would eventually become the set pattern for such events. These processions would pass through spaces or areas with a considerable presence of the other community. Accompanying provocative sloganeering by either side would lead to violence. The police, after momentary confusion, would intervene with a lathi charge and, sometimes, tear gas.[43] In the aftermath, both groups would allege police negligence and blame the other side for breaching peace through antagonistic slogans and violence.

In September 1957, the President of the Hindi Raksha Samiti at Lajpat Nagar requested permission to take out a procession in honour of a recently deceased satyagrahi.[44] The prescribed route would pass from the Arya Samaj Mandir and markets in Lajpat Nagar, through the Sanatan Dharam Mandir and main thoroughfares of Jangpura Extension, and then proceed through Bhogal's main streets like Central Road, Summan Bazar and Hospital Road, before ending at the Children's Park in Jangpura Extension. Eager to avoid a repeat of the Sisganj

---

[39] *The Times of India*, 9 September 1957.
[40] Superintendent of Police (SP), South District, New Delhi to IGP/Delhi, SP/CID (SB), and D.C. Delhi, 8 September 1957. DSA/CID/27/1957.
[41] *Times of India*, 9 September 1957.
[42] Clipping of the *Statesman*, 1 September 1957, DSA/CID/27/1957.
[43] The antagonistic methods of processions, as well as techniques of controlling urban order had a longer history since the late nineteenth century. See for example, Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism*; Masselos, "Appropriating Urban Space".
[44] He was killed in lathi charge in Ferozepur Central jail.

Gurdwara incident, the authorities denied the organisers' initial requests to pass by the Bhogal gurdwara. Now, with an altered route against their wishes by alert authorities, the organizers promised to not raise 'anti-Sikh or provocative slogans'.[45] Thus, on 8 September, a procession of 350 people, including residents of Lajpat Nagar and Malviya Nagar, accompanied by a large police contingent, set off from the Arya Samaj mandir in Lajpat Nagar. Armed with 'Om' flags and a portrait of the deceased associate of the Save Hindi movement, the procession was soon animated by pro-Hindi slogans like "Punjab's language is Hindi" and "The National Language is Hindi". After passing through most of the planned route, it was held up by a group of about 150 Sikhs at the intersection of Hospital Road and Masjid Road.[46]

The Sikh group, objecting to the presumably Anti-Sikh slogans, declared that they would not allow the procession to proceed further and started raising pro-Punjabi slogans like "Long live Punjabi suba", and "We will definitely demand the Punjabi language". Police responded by cordoning off the two groups to prevent a clash. But the procession's movement was temporarily disrupted as sloganeering continued for 30 minutes. Within 15 metres of its resumption, a young Sikh on a balcony threw a brickbat on the procession's members. This triggered a brief exchange of brickbats and stones between the Sikhs and Hindus in the presence of a baffled police force. On the orders of the Duty Magistrate, the police responded with a lathi charge and tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. The clash caused injuries to the magistrate, nine constables, and members from both groups. After suppressing the violence, the police arrested 22 Hindus and 17 Sikhs for rioting and imposed Section 144 and a curfew.[47] Following this incident, the Delhi administration indefinitely banned Punjabi suba and Hindi language public meetings, demonstrations, and processions.[48]

Both parties blamed each other for the antagonising slogans and violence and questioned the police's failures to control the situation. In a public statement, the president of the Sarvadeshik Bhasha Swantantrya Samiti accused the magistrate of indulging the disruptive Akali group which attacked the peaceful processionists.[49] Simultaneously the groups mobilised support for those involved in the altercation. In the telegram sent to Akali-run publications, the President of the Bhogal Guru Singh Sabha stated that the procession threw stones at innocent

---

[45] SP to Inspector General of Police (IGP) and SP, CID (SB), 8 September 1957, *Ibid*.
[46] Daily Diary of 'H' Section, 8 September 1957, *Ibid*.
[47] Office of the District Magistrate Delhi: Order, *Ibid*.
[48] Press clippings, 10 September 1957, *Ibid*.
[49] Statement by Pt. Narendra, 10 September 1957, *Ibid*; Mulk Raj and Bodraj to Prime and Home Minister, Delhi, 9 September 1957, *Ibid;* President, SBSS to Home Minister, 9 September 1957; Motion by Arya Samaj, undated,

bystander Sikhs, and teargas shells fired by the police entered homes, injuring women and children.[50] Later meetings held by Sikhs and Hindus raised the issue again, appealing for a fair and just inquiry into those responsible for the violence. As the inquiries were underway, the Bhogal Arya Samaj Secretary approached the authorities to inform them of a proposed march by Hindus along the same route during the festival of Dussehra. The Delhi administration saw this as a clear antagonistic plan to escalate tensions and formulated a peacekeeping committee of leading Sikhs and Hindus from the neighbourhoods.[51] While they managed to avoid further clashes in 1957, processions and streets would again become sites of Hindu-Sikh confrontations in the coming years.

In November 1958, Lajpat Nagar and Bhogal's Sikhs planned to take out a procession on Gurpurab. With explicitly political Punjabi Suba demonstrations banned, Akali leaders advocated using Sikh festivals for their continuing agitation. Thus, Gurpurab celebrations were an apt event for Bhogal's Akali members to amplify the Punjabi Suba demand. According to the report of the Deputy SP on duty, Lajpat Nagar's Arya Samaj temple, along with the Municipal Councillor, welcomed the procession and paused its evening program out of respect. Here the procession was held up for a Punjabi Hindu poet's recitation in honour of Guru Nanak. Soon enough, the Arya Samaj resumed its program and turned on its loudspeaker while the SP requested the poet to complete his recitation at the procession's final destination. Some younger members of the procession misinterpreted the recommencement of the Arya Samaj program and the SP's request to move the procession as the police favouring the Arya Samaj over their sacred Sikh procession. Before matters could escalate, the main organisers and the SP cleared the air to assure them that no conspiracy was afoot. However, as it reached Central Market in Lajpat Nagar and turned towards the street leading to the gurdwara, 50 Hindus joined Lajpat Nagar's local Hindu spectators to disrupt the procession. By this time, the procession had been raising pro-Punjabi slogans for a while, which were countered by pro-Hindi slogans from the Hindus, leading to a potentially riotous situation. In response, 40 police officers took half an hour to suppress the tense atmosphere by restraining people, ensuring the caravan reached Lajpat Nagar gurdwara. In the gurdwara, some speeches suggested a

---

[50] Harmohan Singh to Akali press, Akali Dal and Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 9 September 1957, *Ibid.*
[51] Superintendent of Police, South District New Delhi to District Magistrat Delhi, 26 September 1957, DSA/CID/55/1957.

retaliation to the disrespectful Hindu actions. While the groups had dispersed by night, the simmering tensions required considerable police presence to ensure no clashes ensued.[52]

Like in 1957, the Hindus and Sikhs blamed each other for the potentially riotous situation. The Hindu group criticized the Sikh political slogans raised at a religious procession to instigate the Hindus. On the other hand, the Sikhs blamed the Hindus for deliberately disrupting the procession and raising provocative slogans. After the two groups lodged police complaints, the main leaders of Hindus and Sikhs came forward to clarify that these were the acts of uncontrollable sections of the groups.[53] The Superintendent of Police accused two dozen Hindus (from Lajpat Nagar) and Sikhs (from Bhogal) of instigating the crowd, arguing that their absence would ensure peace among such processions.[54] Accordingly, he submitted a list of "undesirable" Sikhs and Hindus for surveillance to avoid a repeat of this episode in the upcoming procession for Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom day.[55] However, these tensions soon escalated again.

Two months later, in January 1959, the Lajpat Nagar Singh Sabha took out a procession on Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti. This time, the route would follow the pattern of the Hindi Raksha Samiti's procession in 1957, starting from Lajpat Nagar and ending at Bhogal. The potential attendance of prominent Akali members and other *Singh Sabhas* could lead to political sloganeering and eventual Hindu-Sikh violence.[56] The authorities highlighted the 'mischief mongers' among the Sikhs and Hindus, who were likely to raise instigating slogans at points of Hindu-Sikh encounter. As was becoming the trend, this procession also led to a brief skirmish between Sikhs and Hindus. The 2500-strong procession included members of the Khalsa Naujawan *Jatha* and children from Sikh Senior Secondary High School in Lajpat Nagar. Led by key Akali workers, it soon began shouting pro-Punjabi slogans and encountered Hindu men gathered to chant pro-Hindi slogans. Unlike last year, the exchange eventually resulted in stone pelting before the police could act. Through a lathi charge and tear gas, the

---

[52] Daily Diary of 'H' Section, 23 November 1958; Daily Summary of Information, 22 and 23 November 1958; Report of Deputy SP, Delhi Cantonment/Circle, South District, S.S. Palta to SP Police, South District, 25 November 1958, DSA/CID/75/1956.

[53] Daily Diary of 'H' Section, 23 November 1958; Daily Summary of Information, 22 and 23 November 1958, *Ibid.*

[54] Report of Deputy SP, Delhi Cantonment/Circle, South District, S.S. Palta to SP Police, South District, 25 November 1958, *Ibid.*

[55] It was held at Gandhi Grounds on 5 December 1958 and attended by about 20,000 people. Among members of the Delhi State Akali Jatha, prominent Akali workers from Bhogal like Harbans Singh, Gurmukh Singh, and Balwant Singh were also present. Report of Bishamber Nath, SP, CID, Special Branch, 15 December 1958, *Ibid.*

[56] Information Report of SP, CID, SB, 9 January 1959.

police dispersed the crowd and ensured the procession continued along its route. While this action allowed the procession to resume, members of either group broke off to engage with each other at five different locations in Lajpat Nagar and Jangpura-Bhogal: Government High School, Central Market back road, Ganda Nala, Government Girls High School, and Railway crossing and Eros Cinema. With the police force stretched to control the violence at different hot spots, shops in the central market were damaged, and 26 people, including a magistrate and five police officials, were injured. Accordingly, section 144 and a curfew were imposed in Lajpat Nagar and Bhogal to suppress any remaining violence.[57]

Senior members of the procession who had refrained from violence questioned the inability of the police to control the antagonistic Hindus. Arguing that the police failed to protect the procession despite prior information, they assembled outside the Lajpat Nagar Police Station to express their disappointment. Similarly, the Hindus criticised the police for failing to prevent damage to shops in Central Market.[58] Like their Sikh counterparts, they also converged at the Lajpat Nagar police station to raise anti-police slogans and demand the transfer of the Section House Officer (SHO). At a later meeting of Hindus, Lajpat Nagar's Municipal Councillor echoed statements of the previous year by criticising the wrongful Sikh act of raising "political slogans in a religious procession".[59]

Following the customary Hindu-Sikh blame game towards each other and the police,[60] a Sikh deputation approached the DC to highlight the pre-planned nature of the disruption since they observed some of Lajpat Nagar's shopkeepers and Hindus collecting stones, brickbats, and other materials for the violence. They argued that the police failed to prevent the violence despite being intimated about the potential mobilisation. Meanwhile, the Hindu shopkeepers of Lajpat Nagar shut their shops to protest against the violence and damage in the market. The Hindus of Bhogal and Jangpura also closed their shops in solidarity. Processions and meetings to support Hindi and against the Sikh vandalism were held in Lajpat Nagar and attended by leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, Jan Sangh and Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.[61] While providing support to the Lajpat Nagar shopkeepers through speeches at meetings, the organisations also

---

[57] Press Clippings 11 and 12 January 1959; Information report of the CID, SB, 12 January 1959; CID, 67, 1958.
[58] Information Report, 12 January 1959, DSA/CID/75/1956.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] This can also be witnessed in the language of telegrams received by the Delhi administration from various stakeholders. See Secret Report of Telegrams received on 11 and 12 January 1959; *Ibid.*
[61] For example, about 60-70 students from the Lajpat Nagar Government High School took out a procession on 12 January. See Daily Diary of 'H' Section, 13 January 1959; Information Report, 12 January 1959, DSA/CID/67/1958.

released statements urging the Delhi administration to bring the Sikh perpetrators to task for their repeated attempts at antagonising Lajpat Nagar's Hindus.[62] Based on the Hindu testimonies, the police arrested five Sikhs from Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar.[63] The arrests and appeals made by senior political leaders like Sucheta Kripalani eventually ended the shopkeeper hartal on 15 January 1959.[64] Meanwhile, the Sikhs used the occasion of a grand diwan at Gurdwara Sisganj on 16 January to condemn the Lajpat Nagar incident and appealed to the government to punish the Hindus responsible.[65] A Diwan held at the Bhogal Gurdwara later that day echoed the same demands and questioned the police's failure to arrest the culprits.[66]

A few months later, in November 1959, the Bhogal Sikhs, accompanied by six members of the CID Special branch, again took out a procession on Gurpurab, taking the now-established route and ending at the Lajpat Nagar gurdwara. However, unlike the previous years, this and other Gurpurab processions taken out in Gandhi Nagar and Roshanara Road were devoid of Punjabi Suba slogans or Hindu-Sikh skirmishes.[67] By now, the administration knew how to implement the prohibitory order on Punjabi suba related slogans and established a long-term police presence in Jangpura-Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar. Meetings around the Punjabi and Hindi demands continued in Jangpura-Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar, representing the two warring factions. The RSS, Hindu Mahasabha, and Jan Sangh continued their mobilisation in Lajpat Nagar, while the Akali Jatha used the Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar Sikh mohallas and gurdwaras as a base for their operations. Although there were no further reported incidents, the preceding years had created a tense atmosphere in the neighbourhoods.

By 1961, the clashes around the Punjabi Suba movement and brief arguments during religious events required the provision of a scheme to protect sacred spaces and residences and prevent further communal incidents in Jangpura-Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar. The administration placed armed police pickets next religious space, sites of Hindu-Sikh interaction, points of

---

[62] Statement by Hindu Mahasabha, 12 January 1959, *Ibid.*
Shopkeepers and residents also formed an Action Committee that demanded the government to investigate the incident and begin persecuting the Sikhs responsible. Secretary, Action Committee, Lajpat Nagar to Home Minister, Chief Commissioner and District Magistrate, 13 January 1959; Press Clippings, 13 January 1959.
[63] Daily Diary of 'H' Section, 14 January 1959, *Ibid.*
[64] Press Clippings, 15 January 1959; Daily Diary of 'H' Section, 15 January 1959; *Ibid.*
[65] Information Report, 17 January 1959; *Ibid.*
[66] Daily Diary, 16 January 1959; *Ibid.*
[67] Daily Diary, 12 November 1959, *Ibid.*

communal outbreaks,[68] and prepared a list of the 'communal mongers' in both localities.[69] There were no other reported incidents, even though religious processions and meetings continued.[70] The demand for a Punjabi Suba was eventually achieved with the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966, along Akali demands for a Sikh majority.[71] The Hindu majority was now split between the newly created state of Haryana and the addition of other regions to Himachal Pradesh. Hindu and Sikh groups continued their meetings in these spaces to mobilise support against the Chinese aggression, the India-Pakistan war, and election campaigns. Although the RSS established a *shakha*, it was relatively unpopular in Jangpura-Bhogal, with a substantial Sikh presence. Bhogal remained a Sikh stronghold, while Lajpat Nagar was a Hindu one.

In 1984, nearly 30 years later, Sikh bodies, sites, and property were attacked in Jangpura-Bhogal. The trigger was Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards, which provided the social sanction to armed and well-organised mobs to wreak havoc across the city. It was the outcome of political machinations underway since the last decade. In a city like Delhi and Jangpura-Bhogal, with a prominent Sikh presence, rumours spread by Congress leaders and media helped produce geographies of fear by painting a perception of the weak 'Hindu' and the collapse of the state, culminating in the violence that engulfed the city from 31 October to 4 November 1984.[72] By the end of the five days of carnage, when paramilitary forces spread all over the city to break up the mobs and ensure peace, most of Delhi was littered with burnt bodies, objects, and damaged property. At the end of the violence, the Nizamuddin Police Station reported 146 complaints from the area and considerable damage to vehicles and

---

[68] Scheme for Police Arrangement in Bhogal/Jungpura Area in the event of communal trouble", DSA/CID/127/1961/DSA.

[69] "List of communal mongers in Lajpat Nagar and Nizam-ud-din Police Stations, New Delhi", *Ibid.*

[70] The large Gurpurab processions in Bhogal in 1961(700-800) and 1962 (1000-1200) were also devoid of political slogans. See DSA/CID/106/196; Daily Summary of 10 November 1962, Delhi Administration, Confidential, 26, 1962.
Prabhat pheries were held in 1961 in support of Tara Singh's fast. DSA/CID/106/1961.

[71] By 1962, the Akali Dal split between supporters of Master Tara Singh (Master Group) and Sant Fateh Singh (Sant Group). Having gained the support of most Akali followers, Fateh Singh succeeded in achieving the Punjabi Suba demand. As Brass has argued, he was able to frame it as a linguistic demand as compared to Tara Singh's relatively communal overtones. This also allowed to him to keep Sikhs at the centre of this demand without making it explicit. Nehru's death in 1964, Fateh Singh's fast and threats of self-immolation, made the new administration more amenable to the idea of the Punjabi Suba. Brass, "Sikhs and Hindus"; Singh and Shani, *Sikh Nationalism*.

[72] For a chronology of events, see PUDR and PUCL, *Who are the Guilty?: Report of a Joint Iquiry into the Causes and Impact of the Riots in Delhi from 31 October to 10 November 1984* (People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), 1984), 33-35; Citizens' Commission, *Delhi 31 October to 4 November 1984: Report of the Citizen's Commission*, Citizens' Commission (Delhi, 1985), 11-15.

property. The SHO reported that 66 trucks, 5 buses, 7 cars, 6 taxis, 5 scooters, 10 motorcycles, 2 matadors, 1 jeep, 4 four wheelers, 9 houses and 32 shops were burnt.[73]

> A full-scale contestation took place…People came to kill…But at least About 3-4000 people were there and 4-500 from here…So by god's grace we were saved. A proper contestation happened. It went on for 3-4 days and even after that there was a curfew for 10-15 days. A proper Sikh security was here. The military security was there, but the Sikh security was also there.[74]

This systematic operation of organized mobs brought from the outskirts of the city, local neighbourhood residents and politicians, the distribution of weapons and incendiaries, the use of voter lists to identify Sikh homes, disarming Sikhs by confiscating their *kirpans* (ceremonial daggers), and police and state inaction allowed the violence to go unchecked. By November 1, violence spread to Jangpura-Bhogal as mobs went about burning Sikh owned trucks and vehicles. Citing their own presence that would provide protection, police encouraged the mobs to burn houses and properties.[75] Residents were neither allowed to douse the fires, nor go near the burning vehicles. Their owners watched on as the mobs, with police presence, set the vehicles alight,[76] accompanied by a locally assisted attack on Sikh houses and shops. Eventually the mobs proceeded towards Sikh religious sites where they succeeded in damaging the Bhogal gurdwara but failed to burn it down entirely. As the police, sipping on their teas watched on, the mob attempted to use the oil tanker to set the building ablaze but faced resistance from Sikh and non-Sikh residents.[77]

As sporadic skirmishes replaced the incessant attacks by mobs by November 2, Sikhs and most non-Sikhs of the neighbourhood organised pickets and patrol groups to protect the neighbourhood. However, Sikh attempts to protect themselves backfired as some Sikhs were arrested on charges of "violating curfew orders, shouting anti-national slogans, having an

---

[73] Statement of Ram Phal, Section House Officer (SHO); PUDR and PUCL, *Who are the Guilty*; *Justice Nanavati Commission of Enquiry (1984 Anti-Sikh Riots), Volume I*
Kusum Lata Mittal Report; Citizens' Commission, *Delhi Report*; Smitu Kothari and Harsh Sethi eds. *Voices from A Scarred City: The Delhi Carnage in Perspective*, 13. (Delhi: Lokayan, 1985).
[74] Harpal, Interview, 17 January 2019.
[75] *Nanavati Commission of Enquiry,* 77.
[76] Statement of Witness 114, 3 December 2001, Statements before Justice Nanavati Commission of Enquiry, https://www.carnage84.com/records/witness/witness.htm; Statement of Witness 113, 3 December 2001, Statements, https://www.carnage84.com/records/witness/witness.htm
[77] The Hindu residents partly did it out of the fear of the tanker's potential explosion and possible destruction of Hindu residential buildings around it. Citizens for Democracy, "The Carnage", 15.

unlawful assembly, and being armed with deadly weapons like daggers, swords, and iron rods".[78] Soon however, Hindu residents, political parties, and civil society groups organised peace marches in Jangpura-Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar to provide comfort and solidarity to the Sikhs.[79] The situation improved after the army arrived on November 3 to patrol the area and recover looted goods from the neighbourhood.[80] Apart from the involvement of a few local Congress affiliates and general looters, the locality stood by the Sikhs. While property was damaged, residents assert no Sikhs died in the neighbourhood. Sikh deaths mostly occurred, according to residents, in the worst affected areas like Mongolpuri and Trilokpuri. For the fact-finding reports and residents, the pickets, patrols, and lack of Sikh deaths point to neighbourhood camaraderie and community.[81] The compromised social space seemed to have given way to a cohesive neighbourhood camaraderie, that survived the challenge posed by *San Chaurasi.*

Claiming Streets, Defining Space

Hindu and Sikh refugee arrivals, religious practices, and political developments in Punjab commenced diverse place-making strategies by 'residents' and recent arrivals. The 'religious' and the 'political' came together to craft social space in Jangpura-Bhogal. First, the processions, meetings, and contestations reflected Sikh claims to space. While centred around the Bhogal gurdwara and Sikh settlement, the processions would claim the major spaces of the neighbourhood, including Summan Bazar, Central Road, Hospital Road, and the area near Eros cinema, areas around considerable non-Sikh residences. Religious processions became 'politicized' during this time as Bhogal only allowed the assertions of a pro-Punjabi movement. Serving as a space of Sikh articulation, the presence of a 'Save Hindi' procession was unacceptable in the neighbourhood. The counter slogans raised, and the resulting violence marked a pitched battle between claims to political space. Assembling in numbers against the

---

[78] "Five acquitted in Delhi riot case", *The Times of India*, 27 October 1988. They were all acquitted due to a lack of evidence.

[79] For example, see "Shekhar's Peace March", *The Times of India,* 3 November 1984.

[80] Arwant Singh, Interview; Ashok, 4 July 2017.

[81] See the report of the Statesman from 4 November 1984. PUCL and PUDR, "Annexure 3: Official Pronouncements and News Reports on the Events", in *Who are the Guilty?*; Ashwini Ray, Nanavati Commission; DSGMC Arguments, Misra Commission.

A similar notion is expressed in Arif's examination of the violence in Bhogal Yasmeen Arif, 'Communitas and Recovered Life: Suffering and Recovery in the Sikh Carnage of 1984', in *Wording the World: Veena Das and Scenes of Inheritance*, ed. Roma Chatterji, 160-161 (Fordham University Press, 2014), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt9qds9m.

provocative Hindu procession of 1957, the Sikhs asserted their rights to the political space of the neighbourhood. Second, the later processions of 1958 and 1959 showcase Sikh attempts to extend the boundaries of the political space beyond the physical limits of the neighbourhood. However, when they moved outside to the Hindu space in Lajpat Nagar, the Sikh processions encountered resistance and counterclaims of assertion. In nearby Lajpat Nagar, now a Hindu political space, only pro-Hindi slogans were acceptable. Here, the Hindus would gather in numbers to prevent Sikh political assertions, laying claims to the politico-religious practices permitted in the space. In a similar vein, they failed to claim and establish Bhogal as a Hindu political space. These episodic instances highlight the contested processes of place-making producing localities beyond physically demarcated neighbourhoods.

The major confrontations occurred between the Sikhs of Bhogal, and the Hindus of Lajpat Nagar. Bhogal's Hindus, while reportedly absent from these clashes, were involved in diverse ways. The shopkeeper hartal indicated that some Hindus of Jangpura-Bhogal, especially the Bania shopkeepers, had been silent supporters of the Hindi campaign and the Lajpat Nagar Hindus. The Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharam mandirs in Bhogal were linked to their brethren in Lajpat Nagar, and 2 Hindus from Bhogal were counted among the 'troublemakers' in 1959. There were also reported instances of minor scuffles and disagreements between Jangpura-Bhogal's Hindu and Sikh residents during religious festivals. We also witness the Bhogal Arya Samaj's interference to prevent escalations after the 1957 incident. The list of prominent Hindus and Sikhs prepared in 1958 and 1961 did not list any Hindus from Jangpura-Bhogal. But the area was considered disturbed and required a massive police presence. In the scheme outlining the major points of potential clashes, the sites and spaces of encounter such as major streets, intersections, and religious sites were the focus of attention.[82] The patrols and pickets, thus, were to prevent any later clashes that could emerge among the different groups.

We could conjecture that even though some Hindus supported the Hindi agitation, the high Sikh numbers could have prevented a local Bhogal Hindu assertion like in Lajpat Nagar. Perhaps they participated in regular events organized by the Lajpat Nagar Hindus and were involved in the skirmishes that took place. With a rare archive, and nearly absent oral histories about this time, it is difficult to be certain about the local Hindu levels of involvement in the movement. However, based on these traces, it is also possible to speculate that Sikhs and

---

[82] 'Scheme for Police Arrangements', DSA/CID/27/1961.

Hindus forged a compromised, if not tenuous, social space that allowed Sikh religious and political assertions. Unlike the colonial period, where Dalits combined with caste-Hindus to lay claims to a Hindu religious space, Dalits during this time were engaged in a different domain of identity assertions. As will be discussed below, Ambedkar's public conversion and an assertive neo-Buddhist movement drew their attention and efforts in Jangpura-Bhogal.

The accounts of 1984, nearly three decades later, inform of neighbourhood camaraderie that emerged in times of crisis, an articulation of community against a violent state-sponsored pogrom. Notwithstanding the damage inflicted, residents and evidence largely suggest the neighbourhood's quick recovery from the violence. Perhaps the tense environment because of Punjabi Suba assertions was but an adjustment period between the older and newer arrivals in Jangpura-Bhogal, which was resolved through everyday living and encounters in the public spaces of the neighbourhood. There is also a possibility of other instances emerging in the time between the Punjabi Suba agitations and the anti-Sikh pogrom. However, I revisit 1984 in the next chapter to interrogate the narrative of conviviality.

Jangpura-Bhogal's tumultuous pasts through conflicts over streets and practices produced social spaces of the neighbourhood. Grounded in power relations and cohesions around multiple social registers, the battles for 'accustomed space' through public religiosity and the attendant riots were constitutive of urban neighbourhoods, producing and transforming their spatial relations.[83] Echoing colonial spatial politics and policing, measures and practices, these instances illustrate minority trajectories under different state-subject regimes: Muslims as minority subjects of a colonial state, and Sikhs as co-citizens. The conflicts define the 'inside' and 'outside' of the neighbourhood while operating at different scales of articulation: the local, the semi-urban, the urban, the regional, and the national.

In 1928, the concentrated production of the Hindu space displaces Muslim claims to practices in space through varied spatial articulations of the Hindu neighbourhood community. 1947 is the actualisation of this Hindu religious space, as Muslims are driven out of their homes, never to return. Refugee Sikhs and Hindus, now replacing the Muslims, transform Jangpura-Bhogal's demography, beginning a new process of negotiation for the older residents. The Akali agitations of 1950s and 60s craft the streets and sites of Bhogal as a Sikh political space, unwelcoming to articulations to support Hindi. In this scenario, the Hindus of Lajpat Nagar

---

[83] Masselos, "Appropriating Urban Space"; Chandavarkar, "The Perils of Proximity: Rivalries and conflicts in the making of a neighbourhood in Bombay City in the twentieth century", Massey, *For space*; Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 120-41.

emerge as the primary contenders to Sikh assertions. Local Hindus, apparently silent supporters, do not contest for Bhogal's social landscape. Rather, they forge a compromised alliance with the Sikhs to allow the articulations of the Sikh political space.

These instances illustrate minority trajectories under different state-subject regimes: Muslims as minority subjects of a colonial state, and Sikhs as co-citizens. Inheriting a colonial apparatus and politics characteristic of nationalist agitations, the Nehruvian regime attempted to disavow modes of agitation that echoed attempts to challenge state sovereignty. Under an independent Indian democracy, such disruptions of public order through violence and processions were considered 'acts of hooliganism' outside the domain of the political.[84] However, unlike colonial subjects who were considered incapable of ruling themselves and had to be guided out of seemingly regressive primordial identities towards a civilisational ethic, postcolonial India had to negotiate with citizens in the making. Even here though, these 'infantile' citizens were to be led by a paternalistic state towards an independent and self-sufficient future.[85] As the postcolonial idea of citizenship slowly evolved with the nation-state, the 'refugee' label provided moral fibre and allowed those with ample resources and social networks (self-rehabilitating refugees) to make citizenship claims.[86] Muslims, lacking numbers, support, and socio-economic capital in Jangpura-Bhogal, were unable to establish claims to space. In contrast, the Sikhs, as refugees with adequate socio-economic capital and support from a larger Akali movement, succeeded in producing a Sikh political space.

Today Hindu and Sikh processions have a marked presence in Jangpura-Bhogal's landscape, attended by most residents. These include events like the grand Nagar Kirtan on Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary, or the Mahashivratri celebrations of 2019. The streets and sights of these contestations mostly serve their commercial and social purposes, devoid of any skirmishes. They are extremely important to public religious life and assertions in Jangpura-Bhogal. As we have seen, such celebrations have evolved through a history of communal conflagrations around different notions of community to define the neighbourhood and its practices. We now turn to a different spatial conflict that plays out through a longer and more subtle process of community reconfiguration. Although it is restricted to a specific site, the Bhogal Buddha Vihar, it invariably brings in questions of space, history, identity, and practices.

---

[84] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "In the Name of Politics: Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Multitude in India", *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 30 (2005).
[85] Roy, *Beyond Belief.*
[86] Kaur, "Distinctive Citizenship"; Jayal, *Citizenship and its Discontents.*

2. Reconfiguring and Contesting Space: The Bhogal Buddha Vihar

The adjacent structures of The Sant Guru Ravidas Mandir and Bhogal Buddha Vihar are a testament to Bhogal's extensive Jatav presence and to the historical transformations of Dalit religiosity. On the right side of the Bhogal Buddha Vihar's entrance gate is a crisp white metal board of the Buddha Vihar Managing Committee (henceforth BVMC). The main red board at the entrance has the name in three languages, English, Hindi, and Thai, and an email address to contact the organisation. At the centre of the courtyard is a circle of plants made from recycled plastic bottles. Here, I encountered Bhante ji,[87] the head monk in October 2018 and approached him to inquire about the Thai presence in Buddha Vihar. He invited me to come the next day for a conversation about the space.

The next morning, as I entered the complex, Thai volunteers of the congregation were busy preparing food in the kitchen (on the right side after entering the complex). I encountered Bhante involved in the same activity as the previous day, watering the plants at the centre of the courtyard. He nodded his head in acknowledgement and instructed me to go inside and wait in the main prayer hall. Near where visitors were to remove their shoes was another resident of the complex, a sleeping stray dog, unfazed by the activity around him. Upon entering the hall, I noticed a devotee and a monk engaged in an intense conversation, flanked by two others who kept switching between the conversation and their phones. All of them greeted me and went back to their respective tasks. A little ahead on the left was a shiny silver plaque that mentioned the gifting of Royal Cathin robes by the Thai King Bhumibol Abhulayadej to the Buddha Vihar's monks.

Amid walls decorated with elaborate illustrations of the Buddha's life, one finds his golden statues, designed in the Thai Theravada tradition, at the far end of the hall, flanked by portraits of important leaders of the Wat Sangathan based in Nonthaburi, Thailand. A short table on the right contains a portrait, small statue, and bust of B.R. Ambedkar. Although my presence surprised no one, I was conspicuous as the only non-Thai individual in the entire complex. Cushions and copies of the book of chants were laid out on the floor for the devotees yet to arrive. Within 15 minutes of my arrival, monks and devotees started flooding into the hall. Some of them brought the meal being prepared earlier and placed it on the raised platform on the right side of the hall. Meanwhile, the monks sat down in their respective positions all

---

[87] 'Bhante' is an honorific term used for monks and Buddhist seniors in Theravada Buddhism. In Thai Theravada Buddhism monks carry the prefix 'Phra'.

along the raised platform on the left. Bhante, as the head of the congregation, sat closest to the statues to lead the day's chants.

For a visitor unaware of the larger context, Ambedkar's portrait in the main hall seems out of place in a visibly Thai Theravada Buddhist space. However, from time to time, local Indian Buddhists grace the complex on occasions like Buddha Purnima, Ambedkar's death anniversary, Ambedkar's birthday, New Year's Eve, and the Indian Independence Day. The space becomes visibly 'Indian' as Jangpura-Bhogal's residents throng the main hall for celebrations. Barring the exception of Buddha Purnima and Bhante's ritualistic presence, the congregation of monks is absent from these events. The different spatial identities are also observable on social media through the two separate Facebook Pages of the Buddha Vihar. One caters to a larger, primarily Thai, Buddhist community, informing them of the planned events of the Buddha Vihar. The other, more locally based, caters to Bhogal's Navayana Buddhists, keeping followers abreast of associated developments and events. Through their distinct targeted populations and names, 'Budh Vihar Bhogal'[88] and 'Wat Bhogal', they unite people around two separate Buddhist communities connected to the Bhogal Buddha Vihar.

The material artefacts, practices, events, and social media representations underline the Buddha Vihar's character as a shared space between a Thai Theravada Buddhist community and Bhogal's Neo-Buddhists. One is a South-East Asian community of religious pilgrims living in the complex, for whom the Buddha Vihar is part of everyday life. The other is Bhogal's Jatavs, the largest social community originally settled in Jangpura-Bhogal, who utilise the space during important social, religious, and national events. However, the iterative practices of the shared space have emerged through the Buddha Vihar's contested pasts and presents. In its origins and contemporary life, the Buddha Vihar has witnessed assertions and conflicts over its meanings and practices connected to a major event of Dalit socio-political articulation in Nagpur, i.e., B.R. Ambedkar's public conversion to Buddhism in 1956. The differently imagined and functioning spatial regimes of practices associated with neo-Buddhist or a Theravada Buddhist space, and the attendant conflict around the Buddha Vihar demonstrate how residents in Jangpura-Bhogal utilise fluid notions of 'community' to define its meanings and practices.

---

[88] Although run as a Facebook profile, it mirrors the activities of Facebook pages.

Figure 3.2: Entrance to the Bhogal Buddha Vihar. Source: Author

Figure 3.3: Main prayer hall with Ambedkar's portrait. Source: Author

2.1. Redefining Space: The Buddha Vihar Emerges

Sharing a wall with the Bhogal Buddha Vihar, the entrance to the Ravidas Mandir reads *Sthapit* 1922 (Established 1922). Upon entering the space, one notices the main grand white marble temple with Ravidas' glistening white statue, and a smaller structure on its left with a grand statue of Hanuman. Near the entrance to the left, next to a tree, is a small salmon coloured 'mini' temple. The mandir and the tree are on a raised concrete platform fenced off by a white metal spiked grill. I am informed that this was one of the original sites of veneration prior to the expansion of the complex in the 1980s. The complex also includes a large courtyard, the office of the Managing Committee, and the head priest's residence. Every day the caretaker cleans the compound and arranges chairs near the entrance to the main hall for retired Jatav men of the neighbourhood, including members of the MC, who use the space as an *adda*, a site of sociality. They assemble twice a day to discuss politics, everyday life in their homes, and the neighbourhood. Women are absent from this space but appear during the celebrations of festivals like Ravidas Jayanti.

> The entire area was one (Ravidas Mandir and Buddha Vihar). At that time, those who were there, people from 5 to 7 villages, the Jatavs came together to build it…..In 1922 when they started there wasn't anything fancy here. One small Ravidas mandir was made a little ahead (pointing towards the empty courtyard behind the main hall) and here they would pray to the *mata*. At the time when work was underway, there was a place for the Sant Babaji living here…at the back where the Bhavan is made.[89]

The temple is mostly absent in the archive and cartographic representations of the neighbourhood. According to the oral histories of the retired Jatav men frequenting the Ravidas Mandir, the Jatavs, the largest community originally settled in Bhogal, were the first to lay the temple's foundations. Through the efforts of residents, the empty land lying on the western side of the village, between the SPG Mission ground and the *Barapullah nala* channel that passed through the settlement, was appropriated to establish two small makeshift temples. One was to worship *Bhumi mata* (Earth Goddess) near the current entrance, and the other at a distance towards the north for Ravidas.[90] By 1955, the 'Harijan Temple' and the 'Mata Rani'

---

[89] Kishan, Interview, 28 November 2018.

[90] *Ibid;* Ashok, Shyam Sundar and Anil, Interview, 4 July 2017; DC, Interview,11 August 2017; Mange Lal, Interview, 6 December 2018.

merged to become the Ravi Dass temple, with a registered managing committee by 1960.[91] As the plaque at the residents inform me, the complex was expanded in the 1980s through donations and support from Babu Jagjivan Ram and Indrani Devi.[92]

The site resulted from the Ad-Dharm movement, which by the 1920s expanded and spread out in various parts of Northern and Southern India.[93] Drawing from colonial histories on the Harappan civilisation, Dalit histories claimed their indigeneity to the Indian subcontinent. In this new narrative, Dalits were the descendants of the Harappans, and their subjugation and exploitation under the caste system followed the upper-caste Aryan invasions. Expressing discontent with Hindu groups, the Ad-Dharmis advocated separate institutions and identities, requesting recognition as a separate socio-religious Census category.[94] In northern India, under the tutelage of activist Mangoo Ram, the movement spread from Punjab, the epicentre, to Delhi through organisations like the All India Jati Sudhar Mahasabha and the All India Dalitudhar Mahasabha.[95] Here the Chamars (the largest Dalit group in the city), and particularly the Jatavs (a sub-caste of Chamars) became followers of the Bhakti-era poet Ravidas, establishing temples in his honour in the canal colonies of Punjab, Jangpura, and other parts of Delhi.[96] The movement's interactions with other anti-caste movements in the past and present, including that of B.R. Ambedkar, would eventually lead to a split in communities and space.

---

[91] The Ravidas Temple Managing Committee, Jangpura (Bhogal) was registered on 19 April 1960 under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. Budh Vihar Managing Committee Archives (Henceforth BVMCA), CS SCJ/152/2018, Budh Vihar Managing Committee vs Registrar of Societies (2018). See also DSA/CC/29-3/1955.

[92] In a conversation with another resident, I am told that the money for the temple's expansion came from Gujarati businessmen at the behest of requests from Jagjivan Ram. Interview, 6 December 2018.

[93] Depending on the region, they identified as Adi-Dravidas, Adi-Andhras, Adi-Karnatakas, Adi-Hindus, and Ad-Dharmis. See Prashad, *Untouchable Freedom*.

[94] They succeeded in their efforts in 1931. Khan, *Census of India 1931 Volume XVI, Delhi: Report and Tables*.

[95] Prashad, *Untouchable Freedom*, 84.

[96] They thus started calling themselves Ravidasi or Raidasi. While originally affiliated to the Arya Samaj, leaders like Mangoo Ram broke off from the Arya Samaj which still wanted Dalits to remain within the Hindu fold. For a greater discussion, see Ronki Ram, "Untouchability, Dalit consciousness, and the Ad-Dharm movement in Punjab", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 38, no. 3 (2004): 321-349. For a discussion on the Bhakti movement see Gail Omvedt, "After Buddhism: The Bhakti Movements", *Buddhism in India: Challenging Brahmanism and Caste* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), 186-217.

See also Prashad, *Untouchable Freedom*; Maren Bellwinkel-Schempp, "From Bhakti to Buddhism: Ravidas and Ambedkar", *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 23 (2007): 2177-2183; Ramnarayan S. Rawat. "Struggle for Identities: Chamar Histories and Politics", in *Caste in Modern India: A Reader, Volume 1*, eds. Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2014).
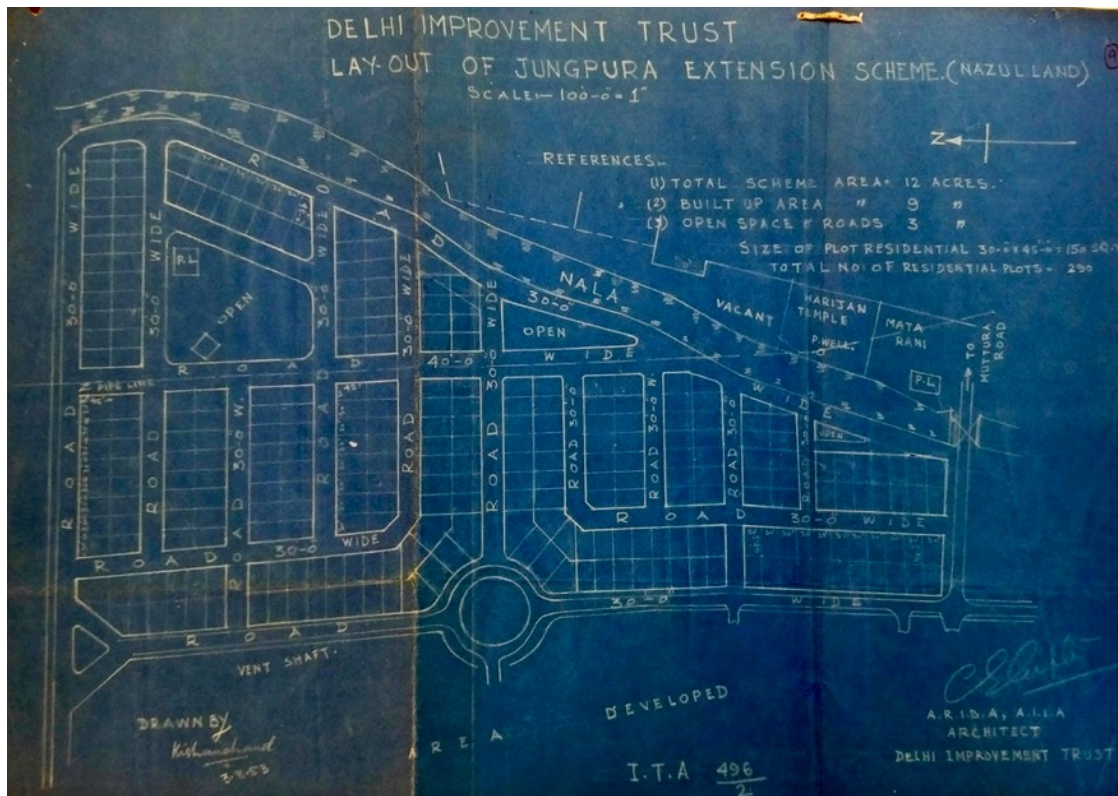
Figure 3.4: Layout of Jangpura Extension (Pant Nagar) showing Mata Rani and the Harijan Temple.[97]

Figure 3.5: Entrance to Ravidas temple. Source: Author.

---

[97] DSA/CC/LSG/1-93/1953.

Figure 3.6: Bhumi Mata Mandir near the entrance. Source: Author

Figure 3.7: Ravidas temple. Source: Author

The Split

B.R. Ambedkar was building on a long legacy of anti-caste movements and leaders like Bhima Bhoi, Jyotiba Phule, and Iyothee Thass.[98] By 1927, he realised that the solution to Dalit exploitation lay beyond Hinduism and began engaging with other religions. Through a long-term study of religiosity in the subcontinent, he found the path to Dalit salvation in Buddhism. His reading of Hinduism traced the origins of untouchability in the Brahmin response to Buddhism. Therefore, the acceptance of Buddhism, according to Ambedkar, would be return

---

[98] Omvedt, "Colonial Challenges, Indian Responses and Buddhist Revival", in *Buddhism in India*, 216-242.

Dalits to their former religion.[99] While he had adopted Buddhism earlier, on October 14, 1956, Ambedkar, along with 380,000 Dalits, publicly converted at Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur, signalling the start of Neo-Buddhism or the Navayana Buddhism movement. In Northern India, some Jatavs (Ravidasias) from Bhogal at the behest of friends, family, and acquaintances in other parts of Delhi, converted in solidarity. These conversions significantly influenced the city's Buddhist population that recorded a 98.68% increase (from 503 to 5,466) between 1951 and 1961.[100] The city Administrative Zone V-Transferred Area (which included Jangpura-Bhogal) counted 523 Buddhists.[101] With a majority of the Ravidasis having converted to Buddhism and families split between the two religions, they still needed a separate space for the spatial articulation of their newfound religion.

According to the stories narrated by residents, the new converts from Bhogal encountered a recently converted Buddhist at Ambedkar Bhavan (near Jhandewalan in West Delhi) who had visited Thailand as a *Bhikku* (monk). He informed them that a Thai Buddhist body would provide the funds for the construction of a Buddhist temple. However, this financial assistance was contingent on the existence of a formal Buddhist institution to manage the proposed Buddha Vihar. Therefore, as the first cashier of the Buddha Vihar narrates, the Buddhists called for a meeting with all the Jatavs from the seven villages settled in Bhogal. There, they agreed to dissolve the Ravi Dass Temple Managing Committee (Henceforth RTMC) and replace it with an 11-member Budh Vihar Managing Committee, comprising representatives from both communities. Through an amendment to the RTMC's registration in December 1971, the 'Budh Vihar Managing Committee' became the official administrator of the space.[102] Additionally, both parties agreed to divide the space (without a physical division) into separate areas for the Buddhists and Ravidasis. Thus, the Ravidasis would retain their space, and the Buddhists, through their official body, could receive funds to erect a Buddhist space. However, this cordial beginning through the concurrent spatial expression of two anti-caste religious movements was short-lived. The entry of new actors within a few years led to disagreements regarding specific practices in the shared space. Below, I present two narratives from either side of the event:

---

[99] Omvedt, "Navayana Buddhism and the Modern Age", in *Buddhism in India*; Omvedt, "Forward: Caste in Classical and Contemporary Buddhism", in *Classical Buddhism, Neo-Buddhism and the Question of Caste*, edited by Pradeep P. Gokhale (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).
[100] *Census of India 1961: Volume I, PART II-C (ⅰ) Social And Cultural Tables*, 484 (
[101] *Census of India 1961: Volume XIX, Part II-C*: Cultural and Migration Tables, 194
[102] BVMCA, Letter from Office of Registrar of Firms and Societies, District South-East, 27 June 2016.

Now that they converted, they started causing problems on the burning of Holi. They started a conflict because of that. Holi will not be burnt here, the Buddhists said. They said that this is a Buddhist temple, that Holi will not burn inside.[103]

…So it happened. So after that they (Ravidasis) started going to the Banias. They started seeking advice that our temple is going. The Buddhists have taken it (laughter). They had a committee. We had a committee. This Makhan was also there in our committee. I saw that they started taking advice from the Banias and Brahmins, going to them and saying, "our temple is going". One Brahmin from here, he went and started sitting there and went on a fast unto death. Now all these people from Jor Bagh supported him, they would take care him and provide for him. They would give him food… we complained and got him removed. He was gone. After that what they did, the Brahmins and Banias got together and started giving suggestions to *our* people.[104] That you should do one thing, Holi is coming. Keep collecting wood. The entire place was an open area. And they kept collecting and putting wood there for Holi. Now this was against our religion. We said do not burn it on Holi. Sit here, pray, it is your place too. They did not listen. A fight broke out.[105]

As these excerpts and other residents narrate, the conflict arose around the practice of the *Holika Dahan*[106] which according to the Ravidasias, was a regular ritual in the temple, *Holi jalti thi yahan pe har saal* "Holika dehen was done every year here".[107] The Buddhists, considering such rituals as an insult to their beliefs, requested the Ravidasias to shift the location of the ritual out of the temple, away from the shared area of the two communities. "Sit here, pray. It's your place too. They didn't listen. A fight broke out."[108] The inability of both parties to achieve a compromise led to a physical altercation and violence. "Such a major fight happened that people injured themselves badly. Heads were bashed. Meaning brothers were

---

[103] Kishan Lal, Interview,
[104] Emphasis added.
[105] Mange Lal, Interview, 6 December 2018
[106] It marks the killing of *Holika*, the sister of the demon king *Hirankashyap* who attempted to kill *Prahlad* a devotee of the God Narayana (Vishnu). The ritual consists of burning wood at sunset the night before Holi.
[107] Kishan Lal, Interview, 28 November 2018.
[108] Mange Lal, Interview, 6 December 2018

ready to kill each other."[109] The violence was followed by a curfew, arrests of the individuals involved, and the entire managing committee (around 14 people). This spatial conflict extended to the legal realm when the competing parties filed civil suits in the Tis Hazari court for total control of the space.[110] One of the local magistrates, an acquaintance of the competing factions, urged them to reconsider the legal proceedings and settle out of court. Summoning their shared histories of caste, families, and villages, the magistrate implored them to not be influenced by the Banias and Brahmins. These appeals, however, fell on deaf ears as both parties persisted in their absolutist demands over the space.

With the court proceedings at a standstill, the former cashier recounts working with the lawyer to take out arrest warrants for the individuals avoiding the court summons. Although the lawyer reminded him that he was essentially suggesting arrests of his family members, he believed that this was the only way to solve the situation. "He (lawyer) said that the guy is your grandfather. I said yes, he is, but this problem must be solved, right? So he got warrants taken out." Naturally, this scared the potential arrestees, who organised another meeting between the Ravidasis and Buddhists. Considering the court's indeterminacy and the complicated nature of the case, both parties decided to resolve the matter on their own. In the concurrent meeting held, the competing factions invoked ideas of brotherhood, community, and blood ties. "I said, let's do it (resolve the matter). It is fine. After all, there are also ours (family)".[111] The Ravidasis and Buddhists agreed to divide the land (almost one acre) equally, and set-up a separate committee for the Ravi Das temple.[112] The extra-legal settlement of May 1979 was followed by a retraction of the civil suits three months later, in August 1979. As a resident informs me, these tensions amongst brothers, people of the same community, although briefly underwent a rupture, were resolved because of Bhogal's *samikaran* (social equation).[113]

---

[109] Ashok, Interview, 4 July 2017.

[110] Today, the Saket District Court Complex (established in 2010) handles cases related to South and South-East Delhi.
CS SCJ/152/2018, Budh Vihar Managing Committee vs Registrar of Societies, BVMCA; No Objection Certificate (NOC), Budha Vihar Managing Committee to Registrar of Societies, 11 June 1979, BVMCA.

[111] Kishan, 28 November 2018. Mange Lal, 6 December 2018.

[112] 'Sant Guru Ravi Das Temple Managing Committee'. BVMCA, Budha Vihar Managing Committee, NOC to Registrar of Societies, 11 June 1979.

[113] This, according to him, is the result of spatial proximity, 'living together' since the colonial period. 25 December 2018.
I have reconstructed the narrative through oral histories and rare traces found in documents acquired from the BVMC. It is difficult to tell for example when Buddhists set up the makeshift Buddha Vihar. We do not know what year the parties filed the civil suits, which could have been in either 1972 or 1973.

Today, both spaces exist together as markers of Ravidasia and Buddhist populations, and a contested history of space, its meanings, and practices. The Ravidas Mandir emerges from the place-making practices of Bhogal's Jatav community, resettled from different villages in a new settlement. Jatav conversion to Buddhism, linked to a national event of Dalit political articulation in the postcolonial period, entails a reconfiguration of meanings associated with the Ravidas temple. The demands for a separate Buddhist temple lead to the emergence of a shared space of different religious practice and rituals. In the period immediately following conversion, different religious practices simultaneously occur within a symbolically divided space between the two groups. However, interactions of Ravidasias of one originally settled villages (Jor Bagh) with other actors, i.e., the Brahmins and Banias (the dominant caste groups in the neighbourhood) introduces a new dimension to such assertions in space. Here, segregated groups of the neighbourhood come together to lay claims to a *Hindu* space through the act of *Holika Dehen*. Unlike the disruption of ritual in 1928, we see here the facilitation of a particular ritual, much to the disdain of the Buddhists. Buddhist demands to shift the ritual outside the shared space and the Ravidasia resistance to these expectations leads to violent attempts to claim space.

The physical altercation leads to absolutist legal claims (as a Ravidasia or a Buddhist space) to determine the site's material and ritual future. The claims of *community* are reconfigured during the conflict when the magistrate reminds the competing factions of their shared blood relations and histories. In the event's afterlife, Mange Lal speaks of *our people*, pointing to their historical and social realities as Dalits and relatives, and difference from Bhogal's caste Hindu groups. Thus, the conflict is resolved through *exclusive* community assertions and a material division of the site. An assertion of a caste community settles this brief rupture of social relations, and the space is uniformly divided to prevent future conflicts. Now, both spaces can simultaneously exist and function, thereby re-establishing community. Thus, we see here the processual and shifting nature of boundaries of 'community', ranging from an experiential history of movement, locale, caste categories, to a religious denomination. Actions around a particular ritual show the spatiality of such diverse ideas of community.

However, this is not the end of claims around the Buddha Vihar. In the contemporary period, the site of the Buddha Vihar is again subject to different meaning making practices involving multiple local and foreign actors around rituals and practices in the space. These assertions surface due to competing administrative claims and representative posturing for a 'Buddhist community'.

2.2. The Temple vs the Monastery – Buddha Vihar in the Present

> And even here (Bhogal Buddha Vihar) the committee has something going on. The Buddhists here brought some people from Thailand. And the Thailand ones also have an issue that they pray according to their own rituals. And the ones here don't understand those rituals....[114]

In February 2017, two notices in English with a Thai translation were posted near the entrance of the Bhogal Buddha Vihar. One listed 9 rules to adhere to when visiting the temple. The second addressed the daily winter prayer and meditation schedule of the Buddha Vihar. For the monastery's residents, the day would begin at 4:30 am with the wake-up bell followed by chanting, meditation, monks' *bhiksha patra* and meals till 10:00 am. Guest visits (those unaffiliated to the monastery) were allowed during the rest time of 12-4 pm. The temple would be cleaned after 4 p.m. followed by evening prayers and chanting, and a last half hour for public visits. According to the notification, the Buddha Vihar would close its main gate by 9 pm. A name of the body or the committee that published these notices was unavailable.

The Budh Vihar Bhogal (Henceforth BVB) Facebook page posted a photo of these notices along with a description speculating that the Thai monks were behind these notices. Pointing to the visiting times listed, the post stated that Indians are supposed to leave once visiting time are over. Such strict visiting times, according to the author of the Facebook post, were perhaps part of a larger conspiracy of the Thai monks. This alleged conspiracy was the intentions of the Thai monks to restrict the BVMC's growing presence in the everyday life of the space. The author backed this claim by narrating the tale of a BVMC meeting earlier that day in the Buddha Vihar. "Whenever there is a meeting, someone or the other comes to overhear our conversations and record them." The post ended by mentioning the incident of Indian Buddhist monk who came to the Buddha Vihar but was denied lodging in a space supposedly catering to Buddhist pilgrims.[115]

As we can see, a notice outlining the Buddha Vihar daily's schedule triggers anxieties. Citing the time restrictions on guest visits, tales of surveillance, and rejections of accommodation, the post attempts to highlight the apparent misdeeds of the Thai monks. Operated by the BVMC, the profile functions as an informative platform about local Buddhist

---

[114] BVMC President, Interview 25 December 2018.
[115] BVB (Henceforth BVB), Facebook post, February 2017.

and neighbourhood matters, and to mobilise public support for the BVMC's claims over the Buddha Vihar. These assertions seek to challenge the control of the Buddha Vihar's Thai residents and administrators, a presence traceable to the activities of the previous managing committees.

Once the spatial conflict with the Ravidasias was resolved, Bhogal's Navayana Buddhists began erecting the Buddha Vihar through charitable donations and resident contributions. However, by the late 1980s, the structure established through the efforts of residents, started falling into disrepair. In addition, the enthusiastic conversions to Buddhism came up against, according to residents, a population unaware of Buddhist religious practice and rituals, *Convert to ho gaye the lekin unko pooja paath ka koi idea nahin tha*. "They converted but had no idea about rituals and practices".[116] To overcome these limitations, help was sought from their new friends in Thailand. As the president of the BVMC narrates:

> Like they adopted Buddhism but after adopting it they needed money and
> requisite know-how on prayers and rituals. So, the committee at the time went
> to Thailand to ask for help. They got some money then the temple was made.
> Here donations were collected from the locals and then the mandir was made.[117]

With a pre-established relationship, residents sought financial, administrative, and religious assistance from Thailand. Such relationships were also facilitated through a prevalent agreement between India and Thailand. In the immediate postcolonial period, the Nehruvian project of nation building, and geo-political aspirations combined to facilitate transnational Buddhist ties with South and South-East Asian nations. As a result, important sites like Bodh Gaya became the arena for the religious collaborations between India and nations like Thailand, exemplified by the Royal Wat Thai as the first foreign built religious institution in Bodh Gaya. The mass Dalit conversions that Ambedkar inspired increased Dalit involvement in Buddhism's official revival in India and encouraged these affiliations. Around this time, the Thai state sponsored Sangha Supreme Council (Thailand's highest Buddhist body) reconfigured its international policy on Buddhism. The initial programmes meant to aid the Thai Buddhist diaspora were repurposed to enhance Theravada Buddhism's popularity. Since the 1970s, the Sangha Supreme Council, in collaboration with the Office of National

---

[116] Ashok, personal communication, 24 March 2021.
[117] Interview, 25 December 2018.

Buddhism, has provided institutional and financial support to facilitate Buddhism's transnational spread.[118]

This financial assistance was accompanied by the transitory presences of Thai Buddhist monks, some of whom began living in the complex by the 1990s. By the early decade of the 2000s, the monks, assisted by the Government of Thailand, set up a monastery and learning centre in the Buddha Vihar. Through this, the 'Bhogal Buddha Vihar' became 'Wat Bhogal' for its Thai residents and visitors, eventually attracting bigger crowds of pilgrims and aspiring monks utilising this space as a residence and a major learning centre. By 2010, a fully functioning Wat Bhogal was organising Thai and Buddhist events in collaboration with the Thai embassy, including the Songkran Festival (Thai New Year), and Vaisakha Bucha Day (Buddha Jayanti).[119] Imitating the functioning of a Wat, it serves as a revolving door for pilgrims who serve the monks for months at a time before heading back to Thailand. During one of my visits there, I encountered one such pilgrim who has been a resident of Delhi for ten years and a regular visitor to the space. He informs me that there are many others like him who come to the Buddha Vihar to serve the monks and attain religious education.[120]

The 'Temple', the 'Wat', and attendant claims

The old committee's behaviour had changed so much that people stopped going there. Whoever went was asked who they are and what they are doing here. If someone is going to pray in a temple and people ask these questions, then either

---

[118] David Geary, 'Rebuilding the Navel of the Earth: Buddhist Pilgrimage and Transnational Religious Networks', *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 3 (May 2014): 645–92, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X12000881; Douglas F. Ober, 'From Buddha Bones to Bo Trees: Nehruvian India, Buddhism, and the Poetics of Power, 1947–1956', *Modern Asian Studies* 53, no. 04 (July 2019): 1312–50, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000907; Pattana Kitiarsa, 'Missionary Intent and Monastic Networks: Thai Buddhism as a Transnational Religion', *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 25, no. 1 (30 April 2010): 109–32, https://doi.org/10.1355/SJ25-1E.
[119]'Merit-Making on Visakha Bucha Day in New Delhi', 28 May 2010, Royal Thai Embassy http://newdelhi.thaiembassy.org/en/2010/05/merit-making-on-visakha-bucha-day-in-new-delhi/;
'Bhikku Vajiro Gave Dhamma Talk to Thai and Buddhist Community in New Delhi', 11 June 2013, http://newdelhi.thaiembassy.org/en/2013/06/bhikku-vajiro-gave-dhamma-talk-to-thai-and-buddhist-community-in-new-delhi/;
Wat Bhogal, "Songkran Festival ::13 April 2010::" Facebook Photo, 4 July 2010, https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=130509693656253&set=a.130509320322957;
Wat Bhogal, "Purnima Day ::27 May 2010::", Facebook Photo, 4 July 2010, https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=130513513655871&set=a.130513156989240
'Thai Airways Supports Buddhist Monastery in New Delhi', 25 October 2013, Royal Thai Embassy, http://newdelhi.thaiembassy.org/en/1990/01/thai-airways-supports-buddhist-monastery-in-new-delhi/
[120] Fieldnotes, 26 October 2018.

they will stop going or a fight will happen. So there was some behaviour, instances like this, so people stopped going. Because the ones who went were locals themselves. So people stopped going. However, now that committee has been functioning since the past 50 years, 30 years. So now again, the elections did not happen, and the old people have died. Now we don't know whether those people (old committee) were earlier there or not.[121]

By February of 2016, members of the Buddha Vihar's General Body began organizing weekly meetings with other members to discuss issues around the Buddha Vihar administration. Citing the dwindling numbers of devotees, stray animals, and frequent robberies, they expressed discontent with the current Managing Committee's (MC) inept management of the space. In addition, they questioned the opacity of the MC's functioning due to near absence of regular meetings and re-elections.[122] As a result, 'life members' and general body members requested the MC to respond to these allegations.[123] With the MC failing to attend these meetings to address the allegations of malpractice, the general body used the by-laws of the Societies Registration Act of 1860 to dissolve it. The new BVMC, elected for an initial period of 6 months in May 2016, promised transparency through regular meetings and notices. Its appointment for a longer-term was contingent on fulfilling promises made to the general body.[124]

Within a week of its election, the temporary BVMC began marking its presence by installing a sound system, garlanding Buddha's statues and Ambedkar's portrait, and attending Buddha Jayanti celebrations.[125] By August 2016, they began the process of staking claims to the space through the organisation and celebration of the Indian Independence Day inside the Buddha Vihar. In a meeting held before the event to discuss relevant procedures, they argued that if the 'illegal' encroachers including the hotel staff do not remove their structures, then they would seek the assistance of the police authorities.[126] By the hotel here, they were referring to the monastery functioning within the compound. They questioned the financial manipulations of the Thai monks in running a 'guest house' within the temple compounds without due permission from the managing committee, a point reiterated by the BVMC

---

[121] BVMC President, Interview, 25 December 2018.
[122] BVMCA, Ordinary Notification, 8 February 2016.
[123] These weekly meetings were organized from February to May.
[124] BVMCA, Minutes of the Meeting (henceforth Minutes), Ordinary Notification, 8 May 2016.
[125] BVMCA, Minutes, 15 May 2016; BVMCA, Minutes, 21 May 2016.
[126] BVMCA, Minutes, 8 August 2016.

president in 2018.[127] By October 2016, the BVMC in a meeting with the general body decided to establish a concrete presence in the Buddha Vihar by utilising the empty room on the left side near the entrance as its office. Furthermore, citing issues of national security, they started requesting for the visa and passport details of the monastery's residents and visitors.[128] The BVMC's everyday presence and administrative interferences to lay claims to the Buddha Vihar eventually invited resistance from their Thai counterparts.

A month later in November 2016, an argument broke out between BVMC members and a Thai administrator in the courtyard of the Buddha Vihar. The problem was a new notice put up by the BVMC, an order from the SDM stating the administrative shift from the Old MC to the new BVMC, to which the Thai administrator reiterated the administrative powers of Bhante and the Thai Embassy. The flummoxed BVMC members questioned how they could be involved in this matter. Pointing to their hold over the Buddha Vihar since the past 30 years, the BVMC assertively asked "What is the problem in making an office? We called them for rituals and prayers. How can they claim to be owners in someone else's space?". Reiterating that the Buddha Vihar is under Thai management, the administrator requested an official court judgement that gave the BVMC control over the Buddha Vihar. In response, the BVMC members asked for an official document that could prove Thai ownership of the Buddha Vihar.[129] This argument about the Buddha Vihar's management and control was the beginning of contestations over the space and its practices.

In a meeting held a few months later with the Thai embassy and monks, the BVMC initially came to an agreement to work together towards the improvement of the Buddha Vihar.[130] However, the inability of either group to come to an agreement regarding practices and presences in the Buddha Vihar ended the brief compromise as the Thai monks claimed the space as a Thai monastery.[131] Since 2017 the BMVC has been mobilizing people in its regular meetings in the courtyard or main prayer hall of the Buddha Vihar, and through the BVB Facebook profile. They have raised concerns around the lack of records about the resident monks and the flurry of unknown guests in the Buddha Vihar, the failure of the monks to inform the managing committee about events,[132] the apparent secrecy around their activities, and their

---

[127] BVMC President, personal communication, December 2018.
[128] BVMCA, Minutes, 29 October 2016.
[129] BVB, Facebook Video, 15 November 2016.
[130] BVB, Facebook post, 16 January 2017.
[131] BVMCA, Minutes, 18 June 2017.
[132] BVMCA, Minutes, 12 February 2017; BVMCA, Minutes, 20 February 2017; President of BVMC, personal communication, January 2019

collusion with members of the old MC. Addressing ideas of the sacred space and the appropriate practices, the BVMC has expressed disappointment at acts of smoking within the compound,[133] the continued presence of stray animals within the complex and occasionally in the main prayer hall,[134] the holding of 'massage classes' by some monks, and the regular celebration of Thai official and national events.[135] These anxieties have often invited the use of terms such as *kabza* (occupation) or *gundagardi* (rowdiness) to characterise their control of the space.

Recently, the Buddha Vihar was closed to outsiders due the second COVID wave in Delhi, with many of its residents having already returned to Thailand. The BVMC posted a photograph of the closed gate, expressing their discontent about the closure of the space and the trouble for Bhogal's devotees. An evident effort at virtual mobilisation against this act, other residents soon joined in arguing that the space had become a guest house where people come and stay for a long time and live off the space. As a resident put it, "The interesting thing is that whenever some visitors from Thailand come, they continue to work and live here. Here, four people who have had control over the space for 20 years, can visit Thailand for free where their food and lodging is taken care of". Other residents highlighted the lack of unity among the locals due to which the 'outsiders' were succeeding in controlling the space.[136] The major issue of the previous alliance of the old MC and the Thai monks in facilitating the development of the Wat is also connected to the alleged disregard for Ambedkar's legacy. Speaking about the old MC's recalcitrant activities that led to the Buddha Vihar's decline and occupation by the Thai supervisors, the BVMC president attributes their emergent claims to the resurgence of Ambedkar's ideas in the public domain.

> Now there is again a resurgence because a newer generation has come. And these days are the times of Facebook and Whatsapp. They have read what Bhimrao Ambedkar did and his writings. So, a new trend is now underway, a redirection towards Buddhism.[137]

---

[133] BVB, Facebook Video, 31 January 2017; BVMC President, personal communication, January 2019.
[134] BVB, Facebook Video, 7 September 2018; BVB, Facebook Photo,10 September 2018,
[135] BVB, Facebook post, 27 July 2017.
[136] BVB, Facebook post, 13 June 2021.
[137] Interview, 25 December 2018.

The BVMC's claims reflect this desire to place Ambedkar at the centre of Buddha Vihar's meanings and practices. Residents like him often utilise social media to highlight Ambedkar's legacy and its influence through posts about Indian Constitutional values, the scourge of Brahminical Hinduism, news of Dalit social and political assertions, and atrocities against them. Through the dedicated Whatsapp and Facebook groups, these residents regularly repost Ambedkarite and Buddhist ideas, news, and developments in Delhi and India. Ambedkar's importance for Bhogal's Jatavs is exemplified by the Bhogal nonagenarian, Mange Lal's statements. We were talking about Bhogal's political history as a Congress stronghold and I inquired about the likelihood of RSS *shakhas* in Jangpura-Bhogal. Asserting that there is no chance of them coming here, he declares *Hum Babasaheb ke sipahi hain! Hum thodi na unko yahan aane denge.* "We are Babasaheb's soldiers! We won't let them come here".[138] This is also reflected in my conversation with one of the retired Jatav men frequenting Ravidas mandir:

> The Thai monks undermine Babasaheb. When there were talks of Babasaheb's Jayanti, they refused to allow his portrait in the main hall. The rights we have, we only got because of Babasaheb. Now they said they don't know Ambedkar. The Thai monks. But then our people also told them that Ambedkar introduced us to Buddha". Ambedkar is the one who introduced us to Buddha. We know Ambedkar first. After that Buddha. Some boys celebrate the event on April 14 with a big portrait which is now there with garlands. [139]

As the excerpt states, problems have arisen around the installation of Ambedkar's portrait in the main hall. The BVMC's repeated efforts at situating the Buddha Vihar within Ambedkar's legacy has encountered resistance from the Thai monks. However, the portrait is a small part of their efforts to shift the focus back to Ambedkar. A common way for the BVMC and Jatavs to honour Ambedkar have been through the *functions*[140] held in Bhogal and the Buddha Vihar. One such event was organised in 2020, after the first COVID wave in India, The Jangpura unit of the Aam Aadmi Party collaborated with the BVMC, and the Bhogal Vyopar Samiti to organise a grand event for Ambedkar Jayanti on Central Road.[141] In the

---

[138] Interview, 6 December 2018.
[139] Interview, 28 November 2018.
[140] Colloquially, 'function' can refer to all manner of events organized in Delhi.
[141] Rakesh Sagar, Facebook Video, 30 March 2021.

Buddha Vihar, the BVMC has organised regular events to mark Ambedkar Jayanti and Mahaparnivan Diwas (Ambedkar's Death anniversary), that have simultaneously turned into opportunities to lay claims to the space.[142] This is done through huge flex posters installed at the entrance to signal the event and highlight its organisation by the BVMC. The number of Ambedkar's portraits have incrementally increased in the Buddha Vihar even as the Thai monks have relegated the main one to the corner of the prayer hall. During the commemorations and celebrations, the BVMC uses a stand to elevate and place Ambedkar's portrait closer to Buddha's statues. Some members contribute by crafting a floral design around the portrait and the status. In 2017, the BVMC organised a more elaborate program for Ambedkar Jayanti, witnessing a much larger crowd, and accompanied by songs in Ambedkar's honour. Bhante was the sole representative of the Buddha Vihar's Thai residents, sitting in the centre just in front of Buddha's statues. The other monks and pilgrims were entirely absent from the hall.[143]

This event seemed to reflect the BVMC's apparent claims about the role of Thai monks. Bhante's presence there served the ritual purpose, for which the Thai monks had initially been invited to a neo-Buddhist space. A few months later in August, the BVMC added another dimension to the space, its role as an Indian Buddhist institution through the celebration of the Indian Independence Day marked by a flag hoisting ceremony in complex's courtyard. Through regular meetings in the courtyard or main hall, the installation of CCTV footage, garlands on the statues and portrait, and the regular organisation of events are important modes of laying claims over the Buddha Vihar. The space's meanings and practices associated with a neo-Buddhist space are only possible by retaining control over the Buddha Vihar's everyday life through the BVMC's presences and materiality. This requires the displacement and erasure of the Buddha Vihar's transnational links to a Theravada Thai Buddhist community.

For the Thai monks, however, the space serves the purpose of a monastery for Theravada Buddhists. Apart from the routine celebrations of Buddhist events, the everyday practices ensure its status as a 'Wat', a term for Thai Theravada Buddhist congregations. Wats can be centred around a temple in a village or a monastic complex. However, the practices around the space largely remain the same. The Buddha Vihar functions as a monastery. Monks complete their stays in Wat Bhogal through everyday rituals and activities, while being served by devotees who cater to the space's daily functioning. This includes cooking daily meals for

[142] Minutes, 22 March 2017, Minutes, 15 June 2017. BVMCA; Interview with President BVMC, January, 25 December 2018; BVB, Facebook Post, 15 April 2021.
[143] BVB, Facebook Post 14 April 2017.

the congregation, regular chanting, conversations with the monks, cleaning their robes, and serving guests during events and celebrations.[144] Although the devotees, the resident and visiting monks primarily come from Thailand, Wat Bhogal also hosts transitory visitors from Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Bodh Gaya. The transnational relations of the space are maintained through other activities in collaboration with three affiliated Buddhist bodies. One is as the office of Buddha Bhoomi Foundation (estd. in 2011) with trustees based in Arunachal Pradesh, Lucknow, Bihar, Maharasthra, and Thailand, including Indian political leaders as honorary members. The trust manages a retreat centre for pilgrims and an education centre for aspiring monks from India and Thailand.[145] The second affiliation is to the Thai Dhammaduta Mission to promote the spread of Buddhism.[146] Lastly, they are also connected to the Wat Sangathan based in Nonthaburi, Thailand.[147] The founder of the Sangathan, Sanong Katapunyo can be found in the main prayer hall in the background of Buddha's statues. Through its affiliation with these organisations and assistance from the Government of Thailand, the Buddha Vihar observes numerous Buddhist and Thai events.

One example is *Khao Pansa* or 'Buddhist Lent' when monks stay in one location for two or three months and engage in 'merit making' through religious rituals, meditation, and public kitchens. The resident devotees and pilgrims seeking merit routinely attend ceremonies honouring the Wat Bhogal monks. They also assist the monks in good deeds such as serving food to the larger public. A local Indian caterer is hired to prepare *desi* food in the courtyard. In the same vein as *langars* or *bhandaras*, the monks and other volunteers stand on Hospital Road serving food to the needy.[148] Aspiring young monks are routinely invited for educational events and honorific events connecting Bodh Gaya and Wat Bhogal.[149] The transnational connections to Theravada Buddhism are also accompanied by the space hosting of Thailand's national celebrations like the Thai New Year and commemorations of the Thai Kingdom.

---

[144]   Kate Crosby, "Monks, Monasteries, and their position in Society", in *Theravada Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity and Identity*, Wiley Blackwell Guides to Buddhism, 197-217 (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2014); Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, eds., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 990 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Karuna Kusalasaya, *Buddhism in Thailand: Its Past and Present,* 34-39 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1983).

[145] BVMCA, *Trust Deed: Buddha Bhoomi Foundation Trust*, June 2011.

[146] Wat Bhogal Buddh Vihar vs Buddh Vihar Managing Committee and Ors. SCJ/577/2017.

[147] Wat Sangathan http://nonthaburi.go.th/en/?p=821 (accessed, 27 July 2021).

[148] Wat Bhogal, Facebook post, 11 July 2011; วัดโภคัลพุทธวิหาร นิวเดลี อินเดีย, Facebook Post, 2 February 2019; Wat Bhogal; 24 October 2018; Bhogal Buddha Vihar, Facebook Post, 9 October 2018; Bhogal Buddha Vihar, 2 February 2019.

[149] Archana Sukhadeve, Facebook post 26 May 2019; April 2018; 'Bhikku Vajiro Dhamma Talk', 11 June

During these celebrations, the courtyard is ornamented with branches wrapped with rice lights by the resident devotees. Tenters and caterers serving Thai food are hired to feed the numerous Thai visitors from other parts of the city and staff of the Thai embassy including the Ambassador.[150] Referring to the Thai New Year celebrations, residents often tell me, if you ever want Thai food, just go there and you'll get it. "Once a year, they especially make Thai food for a larger public. Some people go there".[151] These events link Wat Bhogal to its Thai origins, defining its meaning and practices for Delhi's Thai residents. Thus, Ambedkar's legacy and neo-Buddhist practices are immaterial for the Wat.

These everyday tussles are also reflected in the ongoing legal claims in the Delhi District Courts involving the BVMC, Wat Bhogal, the Old MC, and the Registrar of Societies. Questioning the legitimacy of Wat Bhogal's involvement in the Buddha Vihar, the BVMC has accused the Registrar of Societies in Mehrauli of conspiring with the monks to produce false documents establishing their claim to the space. As the court proceedings point out, in contrast to the BVMC's claim of a temple, their Thai rivals claim the space as a monastery under the aegis of the Thai government. The innocence and illiteracy of the previous managing committee, the procedural lapses in the election process, and the general apathy towards the management of space, the petitioners argue, allowed the Thai monks to take-over the space. The suit thus filed in the 'public interest' of Bhogal is, according to the BVMC, part of their continuous efforts to save the mandir property for the people of Bhogal. They have also pointed fingers on the old MC and its negligence of administrative affairs.[152]

The BVMC's efforts were momentarily interrupted through the interference of the Jangpura-Bhogal RWA SC/ST in the spatial conflict.[153] In 2016, the Jangpura RWA SC/ST, another residential body, raised objections to the old MC's functioning and demanded fresh elections. It also questioned the legitimacy of the newly appointed BVMC and appealed to the Registrar to hand over the reins of the temple to them, the representatives of Bhogal's Scheduled Caste population. The BVMC delegitimised the rights of the RWA showing the presence of blood relatives in the same committee, in violation of the rules and regulations of the Societies Registration Act. While this temporary contest to the BVMC's claims were

---

[150] Icey Zeedz, Facebook Post, 13 April 2016; Wat Bhogal, Facebook Post, 4 July 2010; Bhogal Buddha Vihar, April 2019; Wat Bhogal, 13 October 2018; Facebook post, 24 October 2018.

[151] Kishan Lal, Interview, 31 October 2018, Anil, personal communication, 6 August 2017.

[152] CS/SCJ/152/2018, Budh Vihar Managing Committee vs Registrar of Societies.

[153] BVMCA, Jangpura RWA SC/ST to Registrar of Societies, 8 August 2016; SDM to President, Bhogal Bodh Vihar Mandir, 2 September 2016; Affidavit in the matter of Yograj vs. Budh Vihar Mandir, 22 September 2016; BVMCA, President, BVMC to SDM, 21 October 2016.

subdued without much effort, another player began causing issues. Members of the previous MC now came to the fore, questioning the validity of the new BVMC since the older MC was still active. Requesting to nullify the BVMC's election, and countering allegations of opaque functioning, the Old MC produced documents proving regular elections and meetings.[154]

The multiple and variegated claims to space disrupted the long-term understanding between the older MC and Wat Bhogal. Claiming the Buddha Vihar's management and ownership by the Thai government, the monks and their representatives had turned to the district courts to prevent and purported disruptions in the Buddha Vihar's everyday affairs by the Old MC and BVMC. This response resulted from the emergent claims of the Old MC which began questioning the Thai monks' absolute control and the Thai Government's involvement in the space. As a result, they became new legal claimants of the Buddha Vihar accusing Bhante of producing forged documents of affiliations with the Wat Sangathan and Thai embassy. In a recent judgement, the Saket District Court judge ruled against the Thai monks questioning the rights of the Thai government and its stakes in an Indian Buddhist institution. With the repeated challenges to their control over the Buddha Vihar, the monks have turned to the Thai government for their direct and concerted involvement in the legal proceedings.[155] Interestingly, the involvement of a well-funded foreign government has now led to a reluctant alliance of the old MC and BVMC against Wat Bhogal to claim the Buddha Vihar as a Buddhist space for Bhogal's 'local' Buddhists.[156] However, the COVID outbreak in 2020 and its aggressive return in 2021 has delayed the court proceedings with the courts given preferences to emergency and older cases.

Buddhist Futures

The case of the Bhogal Buddha Vihar illustrates the multiple contestations around meanings and practices of a space. Since its founding, the Buddha Vihar has been caught up in claims of diverse groups around different notions of community. In the present moment, just like in the 1970s, the Buddha Vihar is placed at the centre of a battle between groups staking claims to its

---

[154] BVMCA, Budh Vihar Managing Committee (BVMCO) to Registrar of Society, 17 October 2016; BVMCA, BVMCO to SDM, 21 October 2016; BVMCA, Minutes, 23 February 2014; BVMCA, Notification, 15 March 2014; BVMCA; Meeting and Elections, 14 May 2014; BVMCA, BVMCO to Registrar of Socities, 3 November 2016; BVMCA, List of Governing Body of Budh Vihar Managing Committee: Comparative Chart, 2011 and 2014.

[155] CR No. 503 of 2019, Rumal Singh Rajoria vs State and Ors.; CS SCJ/577/2017, Wat Bhogal Buddh Vihar vs Buddh Vihar Managing Committee and Ors.

[156] BVMC President, personal communication,

control. For the Thai monks, the historical figure of Ambedkar and his ideas about Buddhism have no relevance, and the Buddha Vihar is constructed and run as a Theravada Thai Buddhist space. In addition, through the support provided by the government of Thailand, the Buddha Vihar functions as an important node in a transnational Buddhist network. Within the framework of Wat Bhogal, Bhogal's residents are transient visitors. For the Thai monks, the production of a Wat requires neo-Buddhist meanings and practices associated with the space to be displaced. For the local residents of Jangpura-Bhogal however, the Buddha Vihar is linked to a history of Dalit religious articulation and its resurgence in and through contemporary digital cultures. Inspired by this history, the BVMC seeks to establish the space as a Dalit Buddhist space. They do this through artefacts and events such as the placement of Ambedkar's portrait in the main hall, the grand celebration of events around Ambedkar's life, or through their efforts to increase the presence of local visitors to the space. In this process, they question the activities of the previous MC whose lax management facilitated the Thai presence. Highlighting what they consider to be unacceptable practices and presences in the space, e.g., "stray animals, massages, unknown foreigners, and smoking", they mobilise support for a specifically Dalit-Buddhist space in which the Thai monks are an unwelcome aberration. According to these claims, the Buddhist *temple* must replace the present *monastery*.

The Buddha Vihar shut its gates during the first wave of the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020, putting an end to the activities of the Thai monks and BVMC. Except for a few monks, almost all of Wat Bhogal's residents returned to Thailand. Through 2020 and much of 2021, the Buddha Vihar remained a desolate space. May 2021 witnessed a subdued celebration of Buddha Purnima in the Buddha Vihar, very different from earlier Buddha Purnima celebrations which always attracted large crowds from Bhogal and other parts of Delhi. BVMC members and Bhante came together for a quiet celebration of Buddha's birth anniversary. The cordial and subdued proceedings ended with members of the BVMC seeking Bhante's blessings,[157] effectively confirming Bhante's ritual importance as the head monk of Bhogal's Buddhist congregation in (a now almost empty) Buddha Vihar. However, a month later in June 2021, the BVMC once again brought up the conflict, posting a photo of a closed gate of the Buddha Vihar on social media, and commenting that it was 'unfair on Bhogal's devotees'. Social media posts from residents bemoaned the lack of unity among locals that allowed 'outsiders' to control the space. Concerns were also raised about the arbitrary nature of the Thai administration that allowed access to Thai pilgrims and their supporters at the expense of locals,

---

[157] BVB, Facebook post, 26 May 2021; BVB, WhatsApp message, 26 May 2021.

and about the unwarranted presence of a Thai-run guest house in a sacred space.[158] The battle for the Buddha Vihar's management and practices within it is still underway.

Religion, Spaces, and Practices

Jangpura-Bhogal's multiple migrations gave rise to a range of efforts by its residents to define the physical and social spaces of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood's celebrated religious diversity has undergone a variety of displacements, exclusions and erasures shaped by uneven claims to historical presence, rights as citizens, and violence. They were influenced by the neighbourhood's own interior socio-spatial configurations, and political developments at the urban, regional, and national level.

Violence and conflict between various communities, as we can see, was central to the production of religious spaces and infrastructures in the neighbourhood. Playing out on the streets of the neighbourhood, riots or skirmishes not only marked territories or 'zones of tradition', but also defined spaces of political articulation. The 1928 riot frames Jangpura as a Hindu village and Punjabi Suba violence establish Sikh political space. Similarly, the initial tussle between Ravidasias and Neo-Buddhists takes place around spatial practices and the Hindu ritual of Holika Dehen. Such violent modes of articulation invariably bring in other neighbourhoods and spaces, reminding us that neighbourhood production plays out at different scales that dialogically interact with its interiorities.

These instances illustrate social convergences and deviations to define spaces, practices, and identities. The Hindu-Muslim, Hindu-Sikh, and Dalit-Thai religious and spatial conflicts mapped showcase different majority-minority relations. Different caste populations come together to define a Hindu religious space displacing Muslim histories and practices. Sikhs forge a compromised alliance with Hindus as co-citizens to define Sikh political space. This compromised social space is tested during 1984 when Sikh bodies, properties, and spaces are attacked. Barring minor cases of local involvement, the neighbourhood protects the Sikhs through notions of neighbourhood community. Although initially the Thai monks are invited to assist in ritual practices, the Dalit-Buddhists reconfigure this religious community and anchor claims around 'locals' vs 'outsiders', a 'temple' and a 'monastery'. However, as we see, access to the Thai government's resources and networks of transnational Theravada Buddhism allows the monks to establish claims to the Wat Bhogal.

---

[158] BVB, Facebook post, 13 June 2021.

A question that naturally emerges as a consequence of the foregoing discussion is: What is the relationship of Christians to these other communities? Do they encounter contestations in their claims to space? The answer, like the questions is very straightforward. Christians were part of the missionary-state-nexus in the colonial period. While this may not prevent the majority from repudiating their practices and spaces, another important point emerges. They converted from the dominant Jatav community and continued to hold their caste and village ties. While conversion during the colonial period allowed access to education, land, and resources, the postcolonial period saw, as residents inform me, an 'un-conversion' by some Jatavs. Regardless, although a religious minority, they were no reported or narrated contestations with a population that was part of the social majority.

We see contestations around varied meanings and practices in and of space between uneven communities in Jangpura-Bhogal. These have differential access to power, be it local, urban, or national. Barring the Muslims, every other minority can negotiate and stake claims to space and practice. The denial of their histories and claims to religious practices was followed by their departure. When seen along with discussions of evacuee property, transformations of Muslim historical space, and the disavowal of Muslim religious space, we see the obliteration of Muslim space in all its forms. Muslims, thus, appear as a weakened minority. These layered erasures and modes of displacement influence the afterlives of Jangpura-Bhogal's lived history. The narrative of *Bhaichara* omits these contested histories to present a diverse space of convivial living. Community and belonging, as we will see, is framed through a discursive project of memory work that builds upon the histories I have examined until now. This is the last element in the production of the neighbourhood.

Chapter 4

MEMORY: Remembering Pasts and Imagining Futures

Happy100 [*sic*] birthday to you Bhogal jangpura a village expanded by Colonel Young in d year1920 [*sic*] seven villages namely pilanji ,Jor Bagh ,Aliganj kusak gadi arab ki sarai etc. were shifted here to create Lodhi Garden and residentials there. [*sic*]So Young Pura came into existence later being called jangpura and still post independence expansions happened and went on till jangpura extension [*sic*]. people were settled on different roads and lanes as per caste and religion of all shades the masjid road had Shahi masjid and Muslim living along ,the Church road had Christians along with Saint Michael Church the main bazaar road now known as saman bazaar road had jatavs on this side of Central road and on the other side were Baniyas the bhogal road had similar configuration the jangpura lane had people from Balmiki samaj brahmins were on the temple road On the higher foothills of aravalis. The Buddhist monastery ,Ravidas Mandir ,Sheetla Mata Mandir, Shiv Mandir, sanatan mandir [*sic*], Valmiki Mandir, Gurdwara besides other religious places symbolises the divergent India living together. No major roit [*sic*] has happened except one instance in 1928 ..n minor skirmishes in 1984. Peaceful coexistence is what this demography represents...my mini INDIA...BHARAT ...garv se kaho hum bhartiye hein..!!

Since last hundred years they are living together without any major right or conflicts depicting the idea of India.

We also welcome your knowledge and please share your knowledge, thoughts, experience along with evidence and stories.[1]

If we are to believe local memory, Jangpura village (Bhogal) completed a century in November 2022. Throughout my fieldwork, my interlocutors would highlight this when assisting me in recovering oral histories of the space. "Bhogal is going to complete a 100 years", "We are planning to do a cultural program to celebrate this." Since 2021, members of the AAP Jangpura unit Anil and Rakesh had been suggesting organising a program to commemorate Bhogal's centenary and instructed to help them. Since this was a public commemoration of local history

---

[1] JRWA-Jangpura Resident's Welfare Association (Regd.), Facebook Post, 25 August 2021.

and I had committed to share my findings with those having assisted me, it was logical that I would contribute. Naturally, the brutal second and third COVID waves interrupted plans to hold this event.

A formal presentation of the neighbourhood's history was first mentioned in August 2019 when Anil instructed me to prepare a history of Bhogal in bullet points. This history was intended for a display board to be installed at the Mathura Road entrance to Central Road. I asked him whether it should be based on what he and others have told me, my archival findings, or both. His emphatic response was "Brother the history of Bhogal will be that which we tell you right?!"[2] Upon reviewing the text, he informs me that he is removing the mention of Afghans and Kashmiris in the neighbourhood as it could be a controversial issue. The resulting board would include crucial dates, colonial and postcolonial arrivals, and the locations of all religious sites in the neighbourhood.

Taking this moment of narrative rejection as the point of departure, this chapter interrogates the production of *bhaichara* and community narratives through different modes of memory in Jangpura-Bhogal. Commemorations show how particular neighbourhood histories and recalling violence project neighbourhood and community identity. Recollections of contentious pasts and minority histories illustrate not only the simplistic suppression or selective remembrance of past ruptures, but also processes of reconciliation, and un-remembering. As I will show, unlike forgetting, un-remembering is narrative displacement and replacement of population groups, histories, and their diluted recollections. Material and physical absences are produced by the accretive erasure of spaces and histories of departed populations. As time goes one and populations directly associated with the memories are not present to recall them, memories of their presence and their histories often unintentionally get relegated to a corner of public memory. Recollections replace these memories with histories of present populations and newcomers that replaced the departures. Thus, memories of populations now absent must be extracted through queries that are welcomed. But they only reveal weakened histories.

Commentaries on Jangpura-Bhogal's contemporary life rework the narrative of the heterogenous space to exclude contemporary migrant arrivals and frame belonging to Jangpura-Bhogal. I show how notions of property, historical presences, the transformed neighbourhood, and populist notions of migration work to exclude contemporary Tamils and

---

[2] Anil, personal communication, August 2019.

Afghans from the idea of the 'diverse' space. The chapter ends by examining the idea of living together with difference through vignettes of a fragile and processual neighbourhood infrastructure.

1. Commemorations

1.1. Revisiting History: Bhogal's Centenary Celebration

The epigraph to this chapter was a teaser, as discussions in the comments section introduced me, hinted towards an upcoming grand celebration, and requested residents to contribute to the event's content. As cases began declining at the end of 2021, I was instructed to begin sorting out documents. When I inquired about why the event could not wait till November, I was informed that it would coincide with canvassing efforts for the upcoming SDMC Elections, providing ample political mileage for the AAP. As discussed in Chapter 2, Jangpura-Bhogal is divided into four SDMC constituencies i.e., Daryaganj, Lajpat Nagar, Siddharth Nagar, and Andrews Ganj wards. Rakesh, a Jatav vying for a ticket for a now Scheduled Caste (SC) Daryaganj Ward[3] for Bhogal, had emerged as an ideal candidate for the post. Describing this situation he tells me, *ye toh nehle pe dehla ho gaya.*[4] "This is serendipitous".[5]

Figure 4.1: Post congratulating Bhogal residents.

---

[3] Scheduled Caste Wards are electoral units reserved for candidates classified as Scheduled Castes.
[4] Rakesh Sagar, Personal communication, January 2022.
[5] However, as table 2.2. shows Sarika Chaudhury was the victorious AAP candidate after the delimitation revoked the SC status of the Daryaganj ward.

Translation (moving from top to bottom): Welcome to the Centenary settlement of Jangpura. Bhogal Vyopar Samiti Welcomes you. 100 years in honour of Jangpura. Congratulations to all residents on the 100th year. Informant: Rakesh Sagar)

Figure 4.2: Post on Child Welfare Centre.

Trans.-"Do you know: The Child Welfare Centre (the location of the community centre) on Masjid road in Bhogal-Jangpura was established in 1940.
100 years in honour of Jangpura.
Rakesh Sagar, Lok Sabha official, East Delhi, JJ Cell.
President Bhogal Vyopar Samiti.
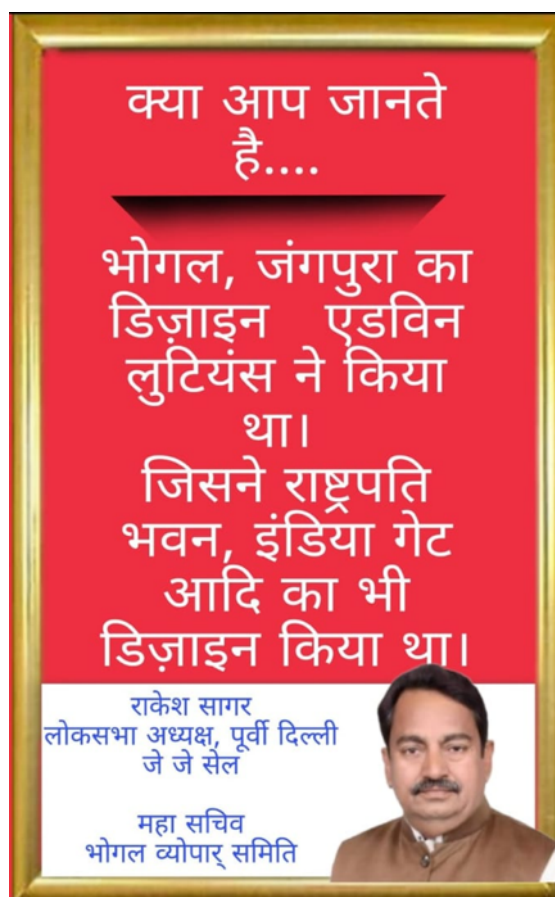
Figure 4.3: Post on Edwin Lutyens.

Trans.-Do you know: Edwin Lutyens who designed Rashtrapati Bhawan, India and gate and other buildings also designed Bhogal-Jangpura.[1]
100 years in honour of Jangpura.
Rakesh Sagar, Lok Sabha official, East Delhi, JJ Cell.
President Bhogal Vyopar Samiti.

Figure 4.4: Invitation to the Event.

Trans-You may be happy to know that our Bhogal-Jangpura is completing 100 years. Congratulations to all of you on this anniversary. In honour of this anniversary, members of the Bhogal Vyopar Samiti and the Budh Vihar Managing Committee are organising a cultural program: 100 years in honour of Jangpura-Bhogal.
Date: 9 March 2022, Wednesday, 5:00 p.m. You are welcome on Bhogal Road, Central Road.
Chief Guest: Mr Rajendra Pal Gautam Honoured Minister, Delhi government. Special Guests: Ms Atishi, honoured MLA (Kalkaji), Mr Praveen Kumar, honoured MLA (Jangpura), Mr Madan Lal, honoured MLA (Kasturba Nagar), Mr Rohit Mehrauliya, MLA (Trilokpuri).

With access to the archival documents provided by me, a series of social media posts by Rakesh introduced interesting facts about the neighbourhood's history, in a sense foreshadowing the event. The task of organisation was undertaken by the Jangpura AAP unit, including their Nizamuddin colleagues. I was required to send archival files about migration moments, building establishments, and the nature of the communities settled. On the day of the

program itself, the organisers instructed me to provide sound bites, videos, and relevant archival pages for a planned PowerPoint presentation being prepared by some members.

The event began after 5 p.m. on 9 March 2022. The intersection of Bhogal and Central Road, the site for many religious and public celebrations, saw a large stage and LED screen in the background. The invited guests included the Senior AAP leader Atishi Marlena, two-time Jangpura MLA Praveen Kumar, Kasturba Nagar MLA Madan Lal, and Trilokpuri MLA Rohit Mehrauliya.[6] Local guests included Lala Summan Lal's grandson and elder residents of the neighbourhood. Central Road was blocked off with hundreds of chairs laid out for the attendees. As is the case with numerous events or processions, Central Road was largely blocked off from traffic.

The event began with a few notes of introduction by the convenor Ravindra and Rakesh who congratulated the audience on 100 years of Bhogal and emphasised the neighbourhood's *bhaichara*. But first, the nation had to be honoured. The LED screen lit up with the tricolour and the national anthem played in subtitles as the audience sang along. The 'cultural program' primarily consisted of hired performers of 'famous' dance forms from North India (especially Rajasthan). These included Ghoomar, Chari, Bhawai, and Kalbelia, performed to a backdrop of neon computer generated visualisations on the LED screen.

Every performance would be followed by Ravindra either introducing a guest to garland with flowers or welcoming another performer on stage. The audience was repeatedly reminded to stay till the end for the video that would recount the history of Bhogal. After the first round of performances, Lala Summan Lal's grandson came on the stage to provide a brief history of the settlement, linking the neighbourhood's origins to the New Capital, its naming after the Deputy Commissioner D.N. Young (Youngpura), his refusal and change to Jangpura., and Summan Lal's contributions to the neighbourhood. Following this speech, he was garlanded, photos with the convenors and organisers were clicked, and he stepped down.

Finally, the chief guests Praveen Kumar and Rohit Mehrauliya were introduced, who began with requesting the crowd to chant *Jai hind* and *Bharat mata ki jai*: arbitrary slogans of contemporary India meant to convey fealty to the nation. Following this, the speeches uttered the same tropes of *bhaichara* and community. They argued that Jangpura-Bhogal was one of the most unique spaces, not only in Delhi but also India where people from different

---

[6] Atishi Marlena and Madan Lal did not attend the event.

communities had peacefully co-existed for so long. Kumar and Mehrauliya urged the audience to maintain this *bhaichara* as this was an example to look up to.

After the last round of dance performances. Rakesh came on stage to speak on similar lines. Citing the historical arrivals and presences, he argued that this *bhaichara* and camaraderie was an essential and constitutive part of the neighbourhood, forged through the multiple arrivals of diverse populations, and their interactions with each other. As he congratulated everyone on a century of the neighbourhood, the LED screen behind him lit up with the words in Hindi, *Sau Saal Bhogal Jangpura ke naam* "A hundred years in honour of Bhogal Jangpura", accompanied by the sound of firecrackers. The convenor assured the crowd that these sounds of *aatishbaazi* (fireworks) were part of the presentation.

The presentation began with a map of Shahjahanabad, followed by images of the Delhi Durbar of December 1911. My sound bites led the narrative, providing the audience with an introduction to the transfer of villages to the new model settlement. Accompanying visual aids showcased the villages settled as a list, the 1938 comprehensive layout (labelled as a 1920 layout), names from the 1927 petition against cow slaughter (out of context), and stock and archival images to represent 'native' Indian communities. For example, the mention of Kumhars brought images of an earthenware seller, and Urdu signatures (of non-Muslims from the 1927 cow slaughter petition) represented Muslims. This was followed by core details of infrastructural additions like the 1930 dispensary and 1940 Child Welfare Centre. The focus then shifted to the postcolonial period with the story of refugee arrivals, the incremental land acquisitions, the expansion of the space, and the regions where they came from. Again, these statements were supported by images of land acquisitions files, proposed layouts, and the most common and powerful images of refugee foot caravans. The history ended there followed by a video I recorded to introduce me and my project to Jangpura-Bhogal's residents.[7] With the program over, another montage circulated on social media represented Jangpura-Bhogal through its contemporary material landscape: its diverse religious sites including the Shahi masjid, the road names, and the infrastructure buildings including the dispensary and schools. This was followed by infrastructural plans of Jangpura-Bhogal's future along Mathura Road.[8]

As we can see, the property owners and stakeholders of Jangpura-Bhogal were the prime targets of this event for the upcoming elections. Perhaps this came to fruition as AAP won the recent MCD elections, winning in three of the four wards that include Jangpura-Bhogal

---

[7] Jangpura, Facebook video, 9 March 2022; Rakesh Sagar, Facebook video, 9 March 2022
[8] Harpal, WhatsApp message to author, 18 March 2022; Rakesh Sagar, Facebook video,

(Figure 2.2). This corresponds to Doreen Massey's arguments about places and their pasts: "The identity of places is very much bound up with the histories which are told of them, how those histories are told, and which history turns out to be dominant."[9] As integrations of space and time, the identity of such places are formed not only through the relations of the past with the present, but also through negotiations with wider spatial and social relations of power.[10]

Only Jangpura-Bhogal's colonial and postcolonial arrivals were mentioned. The later arrivals i.e., Tamils, Kashmiris, and Afghans, and instances of communal violence in 1928, 1947, and 1984 were omitted. Even though I sent soundbites of the Bakr Eid riot and Muslim departures (after confirming with Anil and Rakesh), they were not included in the final presentation. The 'facts' were thus selectively utilised to present a coherent narrative. The availability of documentary proof (for example Lutyens' links to Jangpura, or the missing foundation file) naturally, did not matter. Recognising the contentious past would undermine the *bhaichara* and community narrative that emphasises peaceful co-existence. It was also politically logical to appeal to the dominant constituency of colonial and postcolonial arrivals. After all, Kashmiri numbers have dwindled, Afghans have no voting rights, and representatives utilise vague housing and infrastructural guarantees during slum visits to appeal to the Tamils. Here, a memorialised neighbourhood history simultaneously recalls and displaces populations and contentious histories. We now turn to another form of commemoration that follows a different approach to the neighbourhood's pasts.

1.2. Recalling Violence and Displacement: Forging a Migrant Community

Every year on March 13, the Bhogal gurdwara hosts the 'Shahidi Diwas' to honour the martyrs of Thamali, Thoa Khalsa, and Mator and Nara villages from Rawalpindi. It is organized by the survivors (and their descendants) of a large-scale massacre and mass suicide of Sikh men and women to protect the community's honour during Partition violence in 1947. Especially, the women of these villages chose to jump into the village wells rather than be captured by the Muslim mobs rampaging the villages. Death was considered better than prospective abduction, rape, and conversion.[11]

---

[9] Doreen Massey, Places and Their Pasts, *History Workshop Journal* 39, no. 1 (1995): 186, https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/39.1.182.

[10] Massey, *For space*, 130.

[11] Thoa Khalsa suffered the worst attack and instance of martyrdom as 90 women jumped into the well. The survivors from this village, as Butalia argues, are held in high regard among the Rawalpindi refugees. For a greater discussion, see Urvashi Butalia, Honour, in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices*

I attended the event in March 2019 in the crowded gurdwara with Sikhs and non-Sikhs. All along the corners of the hall, chairs had been laid out while the rest of the attendees sat on the floor on the right side. The gurdwara cashier, a resident of Jangpura-B, was sitting on the floor with a small wooden box, energetically collecting donations for the gurdwara and handing out appropriate receipts. Diagonally to the left near the *Takht,* preparations were underway for the upcoming kirtan. The largely middle-aged residents and their children were accompanied by a few older residents, perhaps some of the remaining survivors of the massacre of 1947. Mr Gandhi, a Sikh resident, who I encountered a few months earlier, was also present.

The *Granthi* (Custodian and ceremonial reader of the Guru Granth Sahib) introduced the crowd to a Prabhjyot Kaur,[12] who recently lost her son to a car accident. She wanted to honour his memory by taking part in the *kirtan* along with the regular *Kirtaniyas*. Then, the Granthi, in line with the significance of the event, began talking about Sikh history and the Partition. Referring to Wagah Border (Lahore-Amritsar border), he reminded the attendees that the Wagah border is an artificial creation. For Sikhs, the border ends at Attari, the home of Sham Singh Attariwala, a commander in Ranjit Singh's army. He then went on to talk about the Partition, its excesses, and the violence inflicted on communities in what is now Pakistan. Lastly, he invokes 1984 when Sikhs had to relive the horrors of 1947. Connecting the history of Sikh Empire, Partition violence, and the anti-Sikh pogrom, the Granthi reminded the audience of Sikh suffering and survival especially in the context of that day, Shahidi Diwas and the sufferings of villages in Rawalpindi. Once his sermon ended, one of the elder residents was invited to recount the events of March 1947.

Mr Gandhi, slowly walked up to the microphone set up behind the Granthi to commence the remembrance. He narrated how the villagers began witnessing violence and abductions a few days before March 13. Having realised that large-scale violence was looming, the villages began preparing a resistance force to protect their homes and the weak. As the days passed by, news kept coming in more villages being hit by roving violent mobs massacring hundreds and abducting women. These fears were compounded by news of dear ones from these villages having been killed during the pogrom. As information about the imminent arrival of the mobs reached their village, women of the village decided to throw themselves into the village wells in case the resistance failed. This would prevent capture and preserve the honour of the

---

From the Partition of India (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998); Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 67-91.

[12] Name changed.

community. As it turned out, the resistance failed and a massacre followed, leading to the mass suicide of women. The ones surviving, as the well had filled up with bodies, were abducted by the mobs. Throughout this narration, Mr Gandhi's expressions changed and his voice began faltering, signalling a rise in his emotions. Eventually, he broke down into tears, "They wanted to wipe us off the face of this planet!". However, he and other survivors were able to cross the Attari border and seek refuge in Delhi, eventually establishing themselves at Bhogal. As he reminded the crowd, Sikhs were again attacked during 1984 and survived through their own bravery and good will of the military. With this his story ended and members of the crowd broke down in tears, perhaps connecting to tales they had heard as children. As Mr Gandhi returned to his seat, the Granthi reintroduced Prabhjyot Kaur who led the kirtan in honour of her son.[13]

It is difficult to say how long this practice can continue since only survivors from the time are still alive. With the passage of time, these rich commemorations may disappear, or continue in retellings by their descendants. But for now, we can consider questions of space, practice, and community in Jangpura-Bhogal. On March 13 every year, the Bhogal gurdwara, a religious space, becomes the site of commemoration for a refugee community. By recounting the events of March 1947, the space turns into an arena for a memorialization of a community's suffering, displacement from their homes, and arrival to Jangpura-Bhogal.[14] This localised retelling also connects to the decisive moment of Partition violence, its beginnings and spread in North-Western India. This is, to borrow from Kaur, 'a community of narrative'.[15] However, unlike a narrative revolving around the successful recovery of refugee lives, this is centred around the themes of martyrdom, survival, displacement, and rebuilding, connecting the event and space to local, urban, and national transformations. By expressing solidarity with Prabhyot Kaur's individual mourning, this community of survivors, a regional community expands and is subsumed into the neighbourhood community. Here violence elsewhere by unconnected groups that displaced and brought refugees to Jangpura-Bhogal is recalled amidst their descendants and neighbours. This collective suffering brings the neighbourhood together.

These instances illustrate a presence-absence dynamic at the heart of the commemorations. As the most organised forms of remembrance, commemorations valorise all forms of imagined communities, celebrate events or movements, forget, or silence pasts, or

---

[13] Fieldnotes, 13 March 2019.
[14] For another discussion on this event, see Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*.
[15] Kaur, *Since 1947*.

remember events that should not be forgotten.[16] As we can see, Jangpura-Bhogal's commemorations forget post-Partition migrant pasts, but also remember a traumatic violent event. Both address a local community: one to celebrate a neighbourhood history, and the other to never forget a history of suffering. This, however, is not the only domain of memory at play. Jangpura-Bhogal's neighbourhood community and its proclaimed brotherhood are produced through a more complicated process of remembering, un-remembering, and forgetting.

2. Recollections

1.3. Contentious Pasts

In March 2021, I returned to Jangpura-Bhogal after the COVID pandemic abruptly put an end to my fieldwork in 2020. I could see newer Afghan shops, the closure of earlier ones, and unfamiliar faces working in Afghan restaurants. Having returned after a year, I went with Rakesh to meet another Sikh resident who enthusiastically asked me about any new information I may have gathered about Jangpura-Bhogal's past *Aur bhai! Koi nai history pata chali?* "So my friend. Did you discover new interesting facts?" I told him that the mosque was briefly occupied by refugees who established a makeshift gurdwara in it. This statement transformed his expression: a subtle solemn nod and blink of the eyes signalled the recognition of an uncomfortable historical reality. A year ago, I was informed by a group of Sikh residents that the gurdwara was temporarily functioning *adjacent* to the mosque and that calls by Hindus to break down the mosque were resisted by the Sikhs. Curious about this fact, Rakesh asked him, "Why was the gurdwara in the mosque?" With visible discomfort, he reasoned that it was a temporary location while the original makeshift structure on Jangpura road was being transformed into a permanent structure. *Wo temporary wahan tha jab tak main building ban rahi thi. Jab ban gayi to uske baad waapas gurdwara shift ho gaya.* The conversation then immediately shifted to a discussion of local gossip and the BJP government's strategies in

---

[16] This is most evident in national commemorations or monuments. In the master narrative of the Indian National Movement, Chauri Chaura and Partition are considered aberrations in an otherwise peaceful Gandhian anti-colonial movement. Violence here is often attributed to either a betrayal of Gandhian ideals, or moments of madness. This divests the nation-state or nationalist leaders of responsibility, and a negative agency is assigned to those responsible for the violence. Similarly, the post-colonial state's commemorations through, for example, the Republic Day celebrations display military might and carefully crafted diversity. In these celebratory moments or processes, the state becomes the guiding light to infantile or unreformed citizens. Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory*; Roy, *Beyond Belief*; Pandey, *Remembering Partition*; Kaur, *Since 1947*.

Delhi and the nation against the ongoing farmer's protests. By doing this, he circumvented a more verbal acknowledgement and discussion around a problematic and documented past.[17]

A few months later, a new narrative of the gurdwara entered the discussion during a phone conversation. This was one of a sense of emerging community between original residents and partition refugees, emphasised in many subsequent conversations: Jatavs, unable to develop their Panchayat land due to limited finances, donated the plot to the Sikhs for their gurdwara. By doing so, brotherhood had been extended to newer arrivals, adding to the narrative of neighbourhood camaraderie.

As this instance illustrates, a fractured history following Muslim departure and emerging from refugee processes of settling-in is not acknowledged. How can the neighbourhood be characterised by *bhaichara* if the new minority occupies a religious site of the old minority? Perhaps, the narrated tale of Sikhs protecting the mosque can be attributed to its occupation and role as a temporary gurdwara for the Sikhs? We do not know. Rather than the 'facts' or 'truth', I wish to draw attention to the messy nature of these proclamations of the neighbourhood's pasts and presents.

Remembering Communal Violence

The examinations of Jangpura-Bhogal's past had invited great attention among my key interlocutors who wanted to see archival documents collected from the Delhi State Archives. Prior to this, I had inquired about a riot in 1928 that I found in the archive. Surprised at the existence of such an incident after seeing documentary proof, Ashok subsequently attempted to find someone who could tell us more about this past, and took me along with his father to meet Mange Lal, a Bhogal nonagenarian:

> Ashok Senior: And there was a Hindu Muslim fight, right? The one that happened over a cow in Bhogal?
> Author: In 1928.
> Mange Lal: Till date there has never been fights or arguments with anyone in Bhogal!
> AF: No it happened Babuji.

---

[17] Fieldnotes, 24 March 2021.

Ashok: He (pointing to author) has shown us documents that say there was a petition in 1927 and a riot in 1928 regarding cows.

ML: No it did not happen. We snatched the cow near the nala [Barapullah]. I was there that time. I was in that (involved in the event). Actually, when Eid happens then cows are cut. Now you know this Arab ki Sarai and electrician office, right? They had made arrangements for sacrificing cows there. The Muslims had been keeping a cow for sacrificing it there. So, then everyone [the Hindus] found out that it is for this (the cow is for sacrificing). So, when they [Muslims] started taking the cow there was a drain. A very big drain. It used to come from Kale Khan….no it used to come from the side of Lodhi Road. It is still there (reference to the Barapullah nallah) ……ya so they were there taking the cow. There were 4-5 of them. These [the Hindus] were 20-25 in number. There were Gujjars from Kale Khan. They were prone to violence. People from all corners of the area were there. They were violent. The moment they [Muslims] brought it [the cow]….they came a little forward and they [mob] hit them with sticks. So, when they were hit by sticks, they left the cow and ran away. So, a fight did not happen.[18]

From an initial denial of any fight happening in the space, Mange Lal eventually remembers and acknowledges the altercation albeit with a caveat. The story is recovered through assertive verbal cues by known individuals aware of the 1927 peition and the riot of 1928. An out and out 'riot' is replaced by a 'scuffle'.[19] As he narrates, 'there has never been a fight or argument in Bhogal'. In this narrative, the cow is stolen from the Muslim procession without any need of excessive violence. The only violence inflicted is the use of sticks by the Gujjars from neighbouring Sarai Kale Khan. Local hindus are merely involved in the snatching of the cow, inflicting no harm on the Muslims who ran away. The actions of the Hindus are a success. Violence is committed by outsiders from elsewhere and no riot takes place.

Such disjointed recollections are mirrored in the conversations around other communal instances. At one level, I am routinely presented a picture of Jangpura-Bhogal's communal

---

[18] 12 December 2018.
[19] I do not attempt to comment on 'official' classifications of 'riots' or 'scuffles'. As work on legal discourse and categories has shown, official definitions are often arbitrary and constructed out of particular symbols and meanings to 'assist' the judicial process. See for example, *Amin, Event, metaphor, memory.*

harmony. I am proudly told that the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its political party the Jana Sangh (now the BJP) were politically unsuccessful in Bhogal due to the neighbourhood's diverse social demography and the deep camaraderie among residents. *Bhogal mein nahin hua* (it didn't happen in Bhogal) is the response I often get to my inquiries about past instances of communal violence.

Author: They left on their own accord?

Dc: who?

Author: The Muslims who left from here.

Dc: Yes they decided to leave on their own. They did not want to go. Because their relatives were staying [non-Muslims of the neighbourhood]. The entire village stopped them saying that we all belong to the same village. Where are you going? It's a matter of 2-4 days and things will cool down after that. Because no riot happened here.

Author: Yes they did happen in other parts of Delhi.

Dc: Yes...here in Bhogal though...we did not let the Nizamuddin people go. The ones who left from here had no reason to go! Because we would participate in each other's family events. Everyone used to sit together. Everyone was together. It was exactly like this. Everyone was like family![20]

As we can see, the voluntary departure of Muslims out of fear, while understandable, is narrated as unnecessary. Since there has always been an enduring communal harmony in Jangpura-Bhogal, all residents, irrespective of their social or religious differences, were like family. Bhogal's public narrative of 1947 tells us that violence occurred in Delhi but not in Bhogal, qualified by phrases like *shantipriya log* (peaceful people),[21] *shaadi bya mein aana jaana* (participation in intimate family events).[22] A slippage in memory by Mange Lal, momentarily sheds light on pillaging of Muslim homes in 1947, *bahut loot paat hui* (a lot of looting happened). This memorial slippage emerged from an initial discussion of meat shops owned by Muslims. The reference to a Teli's house reminds Ashok's father of a neighbour who stole an oil press (*Kolhu*) from there. "Babuji as you remember in 47..." activates Mange Lal's memory to mention objects looted from Muslim homes. But this is an outlier in an otherwise

---

[20] DC, Interview, 11 August 2017.
[21] Jain Saab, Interview, 26 February 2019.
[22] DC, Interview, 11 August 2017.

uniform narrative about neighbourhood harmony and peace.[23] With Jain Saab, these contentious pasts are brought full circle by connecting the narrative to the last incident of anti-minority violence:

> Author: did rioting take place here [in 1947]?
>
> JS: why didn't it take place here?
>
> Author - so rioting took place here [in Bhogal]?
>
> JS: (nods head in disagreement) Here it was quite ordinary. Look till today even look at the records of Nizamuddin Basti, no one fought each other. Till this date no riots have taken place in Bhogal. Even at that time the riots that took place, happened outside Bhogal. People were living a life of peace, so there is nothing like that. Like the people who left, the ones who came from Pakistan started living in those homes. So it is like this. Meaning people from every community and status live in Bhogal. Till today they live together with a lot of love and affection…. The riots happened in 1984 also…nothing happened to anyone here.
>
> Author: Ya I heard no one died here…
>
> JS: Yes that for sure. Nor were there any major fights that someone would harm someone…
>
> Author: only shops and all…
>
> JS: (assertively) no not even shops and all were broken….maybe something minor to someone but my shop is here and I am sitting in a neighbourhood of Sikhs…

As this excerpt demonstrates, Jain saab situates Jangpura-Bhogal's social relations within the domains of brotherhood and camaraderie. Like other narratives, his one also attributes violence to an elsewhere, outside the spatial confines of the neighbourhood. The years of continuous living of different communities ensure an enduring harmony, in this telling. He substantiates it with first a comparison with a neighbouring Muslim settlement, Nizamuddin, pointing to peaceful relations between a Muslim majority and Hindu majority settlement. Second, within the neighbourhood, the presence of his shop in the Sikh part of Bhogal, and the absence of any communal discord ensures the persistence of a *bhaichara*. 1984

---

[23] Interview, 6 December 2018.

was the last major communal incident in the neighbourhood and luckily, for us, has a vivid local memory. Thus, we can interrogate this narrative further, but not for the evident dissonance between memorial claims and actual events. Rather, to understand the production of this narrative of *bhaichara,* its suppressions, and erasures.

Chauraasi mein yahan kucch nahin hua: 1984 and the Convivial Space

An average resident growing up in neighbourhoods with a visible Sikh presence invariably encounters 1984, an event embedded in Delhi's public memory. Growing up in Vikas Puri in West Delhi, which has a sizeable Punjabi Sikh and Hindu population, I often came across fleeting narratives and discussions about 1984. As children, we knew that violence had occurred against Sikhs. We were informed of family friends shearing their hair to escape identification by the mobs, people trapped in offices to ensure the safety of their Sikh colleagues, or Sikhs hidden in non-Sikh households. Stories circulated of Sikhs wrapped with tyres and then lit on fire, mobs forcefully taking off turbans and shearing hair. Sikh tarakki and their recovery after 1984 was attributed to their indomitable spirit and rigour. At the same time, rumours about Sikhs becoming rich from the compensation payoffs of 1984 served as an explanation for Delhi's wealthy Sikh population. This narrative often suggests unscrupulous methods of compensation claims, including over-reported or false deaths cause by the pogrom, an overstatement of the property damage, and Sikhs themselves burning cars, shops and properties in claims made to the state. *Sikhon ne apne truck jalae hain,* "Sikhs burnt their own trucks", a resident tells me.[24] Another narrative that has managed to persist is the pogrom's spontaneity. In this narrative, the pogrom becomes a 'riot' supported by tales of Sikhs first attacking Hindus.[25] Additionally, the alleged absence of sexual violence against women was considered uncommon for a planned event. Naturally among the Sikhs of the city, memories of the violence are still fresh. Many narratives often draw similarities between 1947 and 1984. The four days in the life of a city are thus, a contentious terrain of memory work.

In March 2019, I visited Jangpura A-park to meet the elder residents of the neighbourhood. As is common with middle-class neighbourhoods in Delhi, parks, streets, and other public spaces serve as sites of gendered sociality to diverse groups of residents and visitors. When I entered the park, Afghan kids were playing on the swings and being watched by the Afghan women's group sitting on the benches close by. Further ahead, I notice a group

---

[24] November 2018.
[25] July 2017.

of visibly middle-class 'local' women intensely discussing matters of the neighbourhood. The freshly manicured grass, the pruned trees, carefully laid out concrete paths, and the aesthetically pleasing stone benches were the perfect environment for these older residents to soak up the sun.

I approached a particular group of male residents who I encountered a month earlier at the same site to discuss the neighbourhood's history. However, they had forgotten me and therefore the usual round of introductions began again. Mr Gill, a Hindu descendant of migrants from Uttarakhand became the moderator, introducing me to everyone and guiding the questions to which others recalled their memories of Jangpura-Bhogal. They conveyed tales of the neighbourhood's sensory history, its idiosyncrasies, and stories of arrivals and departures. Mentioning the peaceful conviviality of the past, Deshraj, another Hindu and earliest resident of colony says, "that love is not there anymore". Disagreeing with him, all the men in the group continuously reiterate that there was and to quite an extent still is love between residents. A Kashmiri Muslim resident assertively argued, "No sir. There is still love today. Like Bhogal has more Muslims but it is the worst. We have always gotten love here".

Soon enough I mention 1984. *Maine suna hai ki chauraasi mein zyada kucch hua nahin tha?* "I heard that nothing much happened here in 1984?" Another resident immediately responds to say that people have never let anything happen here. This answer is countered by a Sikh resident from *Pishori Mohalla* who laughingly states, *mereko maar padhi thi*, "I was beaten up", leading the group to erupt in laughter. A man introduced as the *Pradhan* (Chief) interjects to deny any instances of violence. As they start arguing amongst themselves, others talk about violence taking place outside of Jangpura-Bhogal, mentioning the elsewhere sites of violence like Trilokpuri. The most emphatic statement is made by Deshraj who tells me *Humne to yahan macchar bhi nahin marne diya.* "We didn't even let a mosquito die here!". However, Mr Gill, sitting right next to me, looking visibly uncomfortable whispers, "No riots happened here in 1984. Don't raise this topic here". After this he took me to the side and began offering suggestions on how I should conduct my research. The discussion on 1984 was over. [26]

As this anecdote informs us, the memory of 1984 raises discomfort for residents who advocate a past and present conviviality in the space. Mr Gill seeing the brief disagreement between two residents ends discussions on this. Here the dramatic statement of 'not even a mosquito' being harmed highlights the notion of the convivial space. Such ruptures also need

---

[26] Group discussion, Residents of Jangpura-A, 5 March 2019.

to be silenced to advocate this idea of enduring communal harmony. This straightforward and simplistic explanation, however, needs to be complicated.

Broadly, there are two sets of narratives around 1984. The first, largely among the non-Sikh (and some Sikh) residents is that while shops, trucks and cars were burnt, *the neighbourhood stood by with the Sikhs*, protecting them from the 'outsider' roving mobs attempting to disrupt its social fabric. *Hum sab pehra dete the*. "We used to patrol" [the neighbourhood], "They were outsiders", are phrases I encounter about 1984. An example can be my conversation with Mrs X in Kashmiri Park who reiterates the neighbourhood combining against the 'outsiders'.[27] Or DC and Meherchand at the Ravidas Mandir who tell me that those burning the trucks were outsiders:

> What happened in 1984 was that Indira Gandhi was shot. Outsiders came to Bhogal. From outside they came to loot the shops, get some stuff. Someone took clothes, someone took shoes. And the Sikhs lived in our homes. Some trucks standing on the roads were also burnt. No one died. There was no one amongst the locals because everyone knew each other. 2-4 Sikhs didn't come. So, we delivered food to their homes. It was over in two to four days.[28]

These conversations in the parks, in homes, and on the streets, all point to a common narrative of 'violence by outsiders', and community patrols, elsewhere locations of the violence i.e., widespread killings and arson, in *jamuna paar* (beyond the Yamuna) places like Mongolpuri and Trilokpuri. These statements are invariably framed through notions of comradery in the convivial neighbourhood. Sukhbir Singh Kabli alludes to this in his remembrance of the tense period. Through familial contacts, he and his family managed to load their important belongings on a military truck and escape before the mobs arrived in Bhogal. Recalling the sheer scale of the violence and debilitating fear among Sikhs in the city, he tells me that their compound was saved through the actions of neighbours.

> Riots happened…actually the thing is this. There was a terror (*dehshat)* of the mob, there was fear (*darr*). The sky was black. Smoke would come from here. Sometimes smoke would come from there. So then we would know that some

---

[27] Fieldnotes, 28 December 2018.
[28] DC and Meherchand, Interview, 31 October 2018.

truck or car had been lit on fire…But it was not like here. Here there was brotherhood. Our neighbours in the surrounding area at the time, people did come to burn our house (within the Hotel Kabli compound). Our neighbours came and stood outside the gate. They told them 'Sardarji is not here, who have you come to burn?'. They said that they will burn the house. Our neighbours said that you can't do. We are sitting here. You can only go inside after killing us'. They were the colony residents. In those days people would often meet and sit together.[29]

Here, the neighbourhood comes together to protect a neighbour's home by preventing the mob from setting the compound on fire. This was due to a brotherhood emerging from peaceful co-existence and everyday social relations. The earlier conversation with DC and Meherchand also points to this. Sikh neighbours are given refuge in non-Sikh houses and supplied with the essentials in case they remain in their homes. The last element is the banding together of neighbours to protect Sikhs from outsider mobs burning and looting trucks and shops. A lack of deaths and limited damage is ensured through a neighbourhood conviviality forged through everyday life and feelings of community. The peaceful residents of a familial neighbourhood would never turn on each other. Unlike the Muslims who unnecessarily left on their own accord, the Sikhs remain and are assisted by their neighbours.

The second set of narratives, mostly among Sikhs, places local Congress affiliate involvement in 1984. I met Mr Gandhi and his cousin, long time Bhogal residents and former refugees from Rawalpindi in November 2018 to discuss the history of the space, the urban transformations that have taken place since their childhood, and the disorienting presence of Afghans in the neighbourhood. With some discomfort, I raised the point of 1984. Unfazed by my question, Mr Gandhi began narrating his experience of 1984, when on November 1, his supervisor at the Food Corporation of India sent him out on assignment to distribute government documents. Near Race Course Road (now Lok Kalyan Marg) in Central Delhi, a good Samaritan approached him to warn him of the violence, urging him seek safety. "Sardarji people will kill you. Please get out of here!" While on the number 520 bus heading home, he was surrounded with calls by co-passengers screaming "Kill the sardar, kill the sardar". The bus conductor and driver ensured his safety and dropped him off at Dayal Singh College at the far end of Lodhi road. He then used inside paths and roads to get back to Bhogal. Upon reaching

---

[29] Sukhbir Singh Kabli, Interview, January 2019.

back home, he was witness to the burning of his family's shop by the mobs as the police watched on.[30] As Mr Gandhi recalls, the violence that initially began on Mathura Road, eventually entered the neighbourhood.

The Sikh streets and public thoroughfares became the sites of systematic attacks on Sikh houses and property. The pre-planned nature of the attacks is evident through several instances recorded in testimonies and fact-finding reports suggesting that the mobs were aware of Sikh houses, vehicles, properties, and shops. Shops like the Sikh-owned Texla TV showroom located deep in Bhogal's Shastri market was broken into and looted.[31] In one major incident, a mob of about 2000 people alighted from a train at Nizamuddin Police station, just outside the house of a Sikh family in Jangpura-B.[32] While police inaction was heavily criticised in such reports, it was evident that the police were also complicit in supporting the mobs in carrying out their intended damage.[33] Gurdwaras were also a prime target for these mobs who succeeded in setting fire to the Lajpat Nagar gurdwara but failed in Bhogal. While they did manage to damage the gurdwara, circumstances prevented the mob from utilising their oil tanker to set the site ablaze. This was when the Hindu and Sikh residents stepped in to prevent the mob from completing their task and potentially possible destruction of Hindu residential buildings around it.[34] Arwant Singh recalls Sikh efforts to prevent unnecessary damage to numerous buildings and their efforts to protect the gurdwara:

Arwant Singh: Those trucks were there no, the *lalas* were all from the Congress. The Congress organized this and not the public. Like there were 50 of us. They would come and get the cars on the chowk. You know that road ahead? Near the chowk where the fruit lady stands. There in front of us the car, in front of they were shooting, the baniyas. 6 bore pistol…

[30] Fieldnotes, 11 November 2018.

[31] Affidavit of Ashwini Ray, Nanavati Commission, https://www.carnage84.com/affidavits/nanavati/H.Nizzamuddin/Ashwini_Ray.html, accessed, 31 March 2022; Ashok, Interview, 4 July 2017; Sarover Zaidi, A topography of survival: 1984 and the making of-street in Delhi, *Astrágalo. Cultura de la Arquitectura y la Ciudad* 1, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.12795/astragalo.2020.i27.10.; Citizens for Democracy, The Carnage, in *Report to the Nation: Truth about Delhi violence,* 15 (Delhi: Ashok Press, January 1985).

[32] Affidavit, Mehtab Singh, Nanavati Commission, https://www.carnage84.com/affidavits/nanavati/H.%20Nizzamuddin/mehtab-jodh.htm, accessed, 30 August 2021.

[33] *Nanavati Commission of Enquiry,* 77.

[34] Citizens for Democracy, The Carnage, 15.

Author: The Banias were fighting? They were ready to kill?

Arwant Singh: Yes sir. How will we know who is firing from above us? We just saw. Still we were saved and left for the Gurdwara. Nothing happened to our gurdwara. Vehicles were damaged. None of our people died.

Author: Ok no one died. Yes, that's what I had heard that no one died by trucks, shops and all….

Arwant Singh: Shops were looted. Now you see where our PNB (Punjab National Bank) is? From our street right in front of Masjid Lane. Boys put oil. Will anyone tolerate? A truck is burning, and they are saying burn this also. So, we said that no you will not burn this. The entire building will collapse, and we will also die. It will be everyone's damage, right? See we will suffer; the shopkeeper will suffer….[35]

Inquiries about those responsible usually encounter the response *Congressi the,* (They were from Congress) including locals and outsiders. This is also observable in statements and testimonies submitted to the inquiry commissions, the fact-finding reports, and police FIRs. Local Congress leaders and supporters assisted and directed the armed mobs towards Sikh shops, houses, and vehicles.[36] Without the guidance and attention of such individuals, it was impossible for the armed groups to know which houses, shops, or vehicles to burn. In another instance, Mr Gandhi points to one of the shops to identify the individual involved in local Bania and Jain meetings to deal with the 'Sikh situation'.[37] Similarly, in recalling the violence, Arwant Singh names specific shop owners, particular balconies and buildings that housed the 'insider' culprits. The violent attacks were also accompanied by other locals joining the mobs in looting the shops and homes. As I am informed, many of these people would either store the stolen goods on their terraces or bury them under other items to prevent detection. Once the recovery process began a few weeks later, the police found these goods and arrested the culprits. According to Ashok, those involved still lament the fact that the Sikhs got

---

[35] Arwant Singh, See also Zaidi, A topography of survival..
[36] Amit Bararia, Misra Commission; Affidavit, Gopal Singh, Misra Commission, https://www.carnage84.com/affidavits/mishra/H.Nizamuddin/Gopal%20Singh.htm, accessed 30 August 2021; Police Records: Police Station Hazrat Nizamuddin, Nanavati Commission, https://www.carnage84.com/details/psnizamudin.htm, accessed 30 August 2021; Statement of Kanwar Jit Singh, Nanavati Commission, https://www.carnage84.com/records/witness/witness.htm, accessed 30 August 2021; *PUDR and PUCL, Who are the Guilty?*
[37] Fieldnotes, 11 November 2018

compensation whereas they went to jail. This is a rare instance where a non-Sikh acknowledges local involvement in 1984.[38]

However, as narratives and other sources point out, locals did indeed assist Sikhs by providing them refuge and rations, stood by with them when faced with the mobs, and attempted to protect Sikh property. When the mob attacked the house in Jangpura-B, the Sikh family's Hindu neighbours provided them refuge and rebuffed calls by fellow residents to stop granting them asylum.[39] In one instance, neighbours rescued and provided refuge to Sikh families trapped in their houses and burning shops.[40] Haji saab, a regular to the Bhogal Mosque, and former resident emphatically states, *Koi chidhiya bhi nahin mari* "Not even a bird died". He attributes this not only to the military and its efficient handling of the crisis, but also the comradery among residents to ensure Sikhs would not be harmed.[41] Thus, an overarching idea of community is persistent in these narratives.

Residents emphasise the lack of deaths in Jangpura-Bhogal. *Koi Sikh nahin mara* (No Sikh died), *apne bande nahin mare* (our people did not die)*,* are statements I often encounter. They attribute this to the grit and bravery of Sikhs and their neighbours who assisted them in patrolling the streets at night. *Pehra dete the.* Civil society groups and Hindu residents also held peace marches to put the Sikhs at ease. These pickets to defend and patrol Jangpura-Bhogal were, according to residents, a marker of neighbourhood comradery.[42] After the army arrived and regularly patrolled the area November 3, residents felt a sense of safety and security. The long-term inhabitants of Pishori Mohalla in Jangpura Extension, like other residents, praise the professionalism and warmth of the military.[43] "The military came and told us that if the mob comes, we are standing in front of you. They will have to go through us to harm you".[44] Arif's ethnography highlights a similar overarching narrative of community, "a proud reiteration of an emblematic identity that is intrinsically tied to the locality".[45] Similar

---

[38] Arwant Singh, Interview, 5 February 2019; Ashok, Interview, 4 July 2017.

[39] Mehtab Singh, Affidavit,

[40] Gopal Singh, Misra Commission; Ashwini Ray, Nanavati Commission.

[41] Haji saab, Interview,

[42] See the report of the *Statesman* from 4 November 1984. PUCL and PUDR, Annexure 3: Official Pronouncements and News Reports on the Events, in PUDR and PUCL, *Who are the Guilty?*; Ashwini Ray, Affidavit, Nanavati Commission; DSGMC Arguments, Misra Commission.

[43] In one instance, they also saved a Sikh family trapped in a burning building. 'Thambis' saved Sikh family, *The Times of India*, 11 November 1984.

[44] Interview with Sikh residents of *Pishori Mohalla*, 4 February 2019.

[45] Yasmeen Arif, Communitas and Recovered Life: Suffering and Recovery in the Sikh Carnage of 1984, in *Wording the World: Veena Das and Scenes of Inheritance*, ed. Roma Chatterji (Fordham University Press, 2015), 160.

themes of a neighbourhood cohesiveness and conviviality emerge when discussing Sikh resilience and bravery to fend off the mobs and prevent a similar scale of damage as compared to other parts of the city.[46] Thus, coordinated and cohesive actions of residents maintain peace and serenity in the heterogeneous space.

Gyanendra Pandey argues that "Face-to-face local communities have to live with disturbing memories of this kind (violence) more uncertainly, and continuously, than nations and states".[47] This violence is portrayed through outsiders and elsewheres to produce a 'composite community'.[48] Yet how do we reconcile local involvement and the questions it raises to Jangpura-Bhogal's proclaimed *bhaichara*? The answer perhaps lies in another Sikh resident's recollection that highlights the complex process of memory work regarding contentious conflicts.

We had been talking about the history of Bhogal. Sitting outside his shop, this resident began narrating the history of the space, recalling that he had heard that a clash between Sikhs of Bhogal and Hindus of Lajpat Nagar in the 1950s in response to the Punjabi *Suba* movement (Chapter 3). Soon enough, the discussion veered towards *Chaurasi* where he recalls the chaos and fear among people. "I still remember it vividly even though I was only 5 or 6 years old". As he tells me, smoke had surrounded the settlement and roving mobs sought Sikh properties and spaces to burn, loot, and vandalise. Armed self-defence groups of the neighbourhood, along with the military did the rounds of the neighbourhood to ensure Sikh safety. As I raised the question of local involvement, he tells me to turn off the recorder. With a sombre and resigned expression, he tells me:

> There were outsiders. Some people from here were also involved. Why take someone's name, or not take someone's name. It should be finished.… Its not as if the Hindus from here were against us. The Hindus here were standing with us. If we did security patrols at night then the Hindus also used to do that. I remember. If 500 Sikhs were standing then 200 Hindus from here were also standing with them. So ist that we were saved by god's grace.

---

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] Pandey, Constructing Community, in *Remembering Partition,* 177.

[48] *Ibid.*

Thus, while acknowledging local involvement, he reiterates that it's not as if the Hindus were not standing with the Sikhs. In fact, according to him, most of the Hindus were with the Sikhs. "If 500 Sikhs were there, then 200 Hindus were also standing with them". Here, we see a process of reconciliation with the memory of a past rupture. Local involvement need not be revisited as the matter is over and people should move on. Now there is peace and brotherhood. To invoke an oft quoted Hindi phrase. *Gadhe murde kyun ukhaadna?* "Why dig up the past?".

The narrative of enduring communal harmony is produced through an active reworking of remembered pasts. Residents describe the 1928 Bakr Eid riot as a scuffle and attribute it to Gujjars from Kale Khan. The partition violence in 1947 occurs elsewhere, outside Bhogal, because such ruptures are not possible in the familial neighbourhood. In 1984, outsiders, the *baahri log* bring violence, vandalism, and looting to the neighbourhood. The very events of 1984, particularly neighbourly compassion at a testing moment in the neighbourhood's history reinforce the proclaimed ethos of Jangpura-Bhogal as a convivial space. Thus, Sikhs reconcile with insider involvement since peaceful co-existence must continue. A larger selective retelling that omits local involvement is necessary for preserving notions of comradery. Thus, the history of spatial proximity, expressions of convivial space at a crucial moment in time, and their narrative afterlives produce the idea of the diverse space. The fragile boundaries of community, brotherhood, or *bhaichara*, are then produced through incoherent, or disjointed remembrances.[49] We now turn to another element that complicates this proclaimed story of the neighbourhood: accretive historical erasures.

2.2. Forgetting Emigrant Histories

Masjid road signals the end of Bhogal and the beginning of Jangpura Extension, a liminal zone between the two neighbourhoods. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this was the end of the village where the Muslims resided. Turning left from Hospital Road or right from Central Road on to Masjid Road one reaches the Shahi Masjid. It is flanked on either side by a tailor shop and an auto-mechanic, and a side entrance to the complex on its right. Partition-era rehabilitation constructions that housed Sikhs from Mirpur eventually surrounded the mosque. In the present

---

[49] Henrike Donner and Geert de Neve, Space, Place and Globalisation: Revisiting the Urban Neighbourhood in India. In *The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India,* 1–20 (New York: UCL Press, 2006); Amy Mills, Boundaries of the nation in the space of the urban: landscape and social memory in Istanbul, *cultural geographies* 13, no. 3 (2006), https://doi.org/10.1191/1474474006eu364oa.; Massey, Places and Their Pasts.; Blokland, Celebrating Local Histories.

day, there is always a flurry of movement around the mosque. Young Afghans are seen hanging around before or after the *namaaz*, massive crowds during Friday prayers, prospective Afghan tenants using it as a meeting point, and the comings and goings of its madrasa's inhabitants. This thriving space that belies an obscure past.

We only know that it existed prior to Jangpura-Bhogal's settlement, appearing on pre-1922 cartographic representations, that Muslims of the settlement utilised it, and an official administrative committee managed the mosque and cemetery since 1927.[50] My first visit to the mosque to investigate its history met with failure. I went in looking for the *Imam* to talk about the space. Instead, I encountered his sceptical deputy who continuously asked whether I was from the media. Once convinced, he gives me a generic answer: the mosque has been there since Shahjahan's time.[51] During a later visit, after being rebuffed by the *Imam* who knows nothing about the history, I start bothering the *Muezzin* who guides me to Haji saab (who we encounter in Chapter 1) who is unable to provide information on its colonial patrons.

Figure 4.5: Shahi Masjid on Masjid Road. Source: Author

---

[50] See DSA/DC/24/1931. The administrator resided in *Gali Kasim Jan* in Old Delhi.
[51] Interestingly, when talking to Rakesh about Muslims settled originally in Bhogal, I am also told that the Masjid is from Shahjahan's time. The ruler is the go-to reference for people when talking about older unknown Muslim structures in the city. In 2012, I was conducting fieldwork on the remnants of medieval city of Siri in Shahpur Jat village and residents narrated that Shahjahan built the city. We could attribute this to Shahjahan's importance as the last Mughal ruler to build a significant settlement (Shahjahanabad) in Delhi.

The initial concern guiding queries about Muslims was to recover a history of a now absent population. Amid a scattered and fragmented archive, oral histories, I thought, were a crucial resource to recover this past. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this was an almost impossible task. We know that they were there but what were their socio-economic identities? What village/s did they come from? Were they present prior to the settlement?

The Kashmiris and Afghans, both post 1980s arrivals, are the primary Muslim populations in Jangpura-Bhogal today. In contrast to historic non-Muslim populations accessible through present-day conversations with their descendants, Bhogal's earlier Muslim populations can only be revisited through stories *about* them or their presence in the archive, but not through voices or memories of their own descendants. In the archive they are revealed as residents making building applications,[52] the tenants of Pir Zamin Nizami,[53] the culprits harming Jangpura's Hindu sentiments in 1927 and 1928, or as unfortunate evacuees like Chand Khan.

In March 2021, I went to meet Rahul, a descendant of an originally settled Jatav family from *Madarsa* village. My interlocutors had informed him about a young researcher from Germany working on Jangpura-Bhogal's history, and he was eager to meet me. At his home in Bazar Lane in Bhogal, he highlights Delhi's 'great heritage', pointing to the material traces of its rich Muslim past: an evident performance of his secular credentials to a researcher with a Muslim name. He then moves on to praise Bhogal's diversity by naming all the caste communities, Sikhs, Christians, Ravidasias, and Buddhists. Drawing from this, he is surprised that there was no Muslim settlement here, that such a diverse space was missing this minority. Quite naturally, he is visibly shocked to know that Muslims lived here prior to 1947. "How can it be then that there is no trace (*chhaap*) of them left!? Yes, the mosque and the road named after it is there, but why is nothing else left?" Later, while the two of us are smoking on his balcony and discussing the neighbourhood and political climate, he conjectures that perhaps these Muslim pasts have deliberately been forgotten. Saying 'maybe', I ask rhetorically, "it's not as if this is a communally charged space, right?" He responds approvingly that Muslims are everywhere in Jangpura-Bhogal, especially as tenants, and that the neighbourhood has never cared about this (that they are Muslims). He prefers the Kashmiris as they are more

---

[52] DSA/DC/348/P/1941.
[53] Pir Zamin Nizami to The Commissioner of Wakf, Delhi Province, Tis Hazari, New Delhi', 10 April 1974, DSA/Wakf/12/1974.

homely and of a Sufi persuasion compared to Afghans who have no connect to a shared culture.[54]

Amy Mills shows that the Kuzguncuk neighbourhood in Istanbul has witnessed a similar departure of its minorities. The twentieth century advocation of Turkish identity as 'Turk' and 'Muslim' has questioned the rights and histories of Armenians, Jews, and Greeks. Kuzguncuk's local memory is being actively reworked through new material forms of presences through popular culture, gentrification, and literary representations. "Kuzguncuk's contemporary landscape is one that recalls a particular historical memory and makes it seem incontestably real, even while the forms that signify this history are new and the landscape continues to be re-created in the image of collective memory".[55] As this history is rewritten and an idea of mahalle tolerance and comradery gains ground, the popular memory is influenced by nationalist memory that obscures events or processes that drove out the minorities, to promote a "narrative of seamless community".[56] Unlike the material landscape of minority religious sites like Churches suggesting continuity and conviviality, the present day belies the departure and absence of past minority populations. While their sites exist, the bodies utilising them are absent. This dissonance between landscape and representation, according to Mills, emerges from contested claims to space that deny minority rights to the city.[57]

This thesis had discussed various accretive Muslim material displacements, from Chand Khan's dispossession, the erasure of the Pant Nagar tomb, to the demolition of Noor Masjid, processes that, although protracted over years if not decades, are now completed. For Rahul, a Muslim past of the neighbourhood is shocking in the absence of traces signifying their presence. In contrast, he is aware of the different villages and non-Muslim communities historically settled. This points to how these past processes continue to affect Jangpura-Bhogal's present by establishing a foundation for a discursive narrative erasure currently underway. The absence generated by their departure in 1947 and the material displacements combine to produce diluted oral histories and un-remembering of Muslim populations. As I show below, un-remembering involves a complicated process of substitution, transferrals, and eventual displacement. First, Muslim departure is followed by the literal and narrative replacement with Partition era Sikhs and Hindus. Second, material displacements erase traces of Muslim material presence. Third, transferred memories omit Muslim presence for younger

---

[54] Fieldnotes, 24 March 2021.
[55] Mills, *Streets of Memory*, 81.
[56] Mills, *Streets of Memory*, 82.
[57] *Ibid.*

generations. With the passage of time, and the inherent connections between memory and forgetting, these dormant pasts must be activated, revealing diluted histories. Unlike the Sikhs of Rawalpindi who can honour martyrs on 13 March by recalling a tumultuous history, pre-Partition Muslims are absent and therefore, cannot recall their histories.

We return to meet Mr Vashist, who claims that his family has been present since 1907. During our conversations in 2019, he disavows narrated histories of original Muslim presence. As he informs me, the mosque did not exist prior to 1947. This was largely a graveyard used by various Muslims of the city. The land belonged to the Wakf Board and the Muslim settlement emerged through illegal spatial occupation. A Muslim was the manager of this space and took advantage of the land's alleged irrelevance, lack of state surveillance, and forged documents to claim area around the mosque as his property. Others took the cue from this and established their presence to facilitate a Muslim settlement. *Basapa badhta gaya*. "Settlements kept increasing". "If you go back in the records, all this land belonged to the Wakf board".[58]

Residents define Jangpura-Bhogal, at times poetically, as a heterogenous familial space through their use of abstract phrases like *bhaichara* (brotherhood), and *mil baat ke rehna* (living together).[59] If we recall, Kadimi Daadu's recitation 'What is the life of Bhogal' from the introduction, we are told of simple living, camaraderie between communities, and the material manifestations of that diversity.[60] The varied communities that were originally settled in the area, the arrival of migrant populations during partition, the presence of diverse religious structures like the church, mosque, gurdwara (Sikh temple), and a diversity of temples in a single neighbourhood, "so many temples, mosques, and gurdwaras"[61] are all invoked to assert the idea of the neighbourhood as an intrinsically heterogeneous space. "Every community has its own spaces".[62] However, such descriptions and recollections of a diverse history rarely mention Muslim presence in the past. Dormant memories of Muslims in the past must be activated through pointed questions like 'And Muslims?', "Someone said that Muslims used to live here?", that lead to a mention of graves found in the area, shops they owned, streets they lived on, and their 'peaceful yet unfortunate' departure in 1947.[63]

---

[58] Mr Vashisht, Interview, 9 March 2019.
[59] Kadimi Daadu, Interview, 18 August 2017.
[60] *Ibid*
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] Suresh, personal communication, 5 July 2017.
[63] Ahmad, Muslim pasts and presents.

Halal meat shops for example, are one such material trace of the Muslim presence. Bhogal's nature as an important market and a local Afghan-Kashmiri consumer population, has naturally led to the proliferation of several Halal meat shops in recent times. However, conversations with residents also inform me about earlier establishments. When I ask Harpal about their origins considering the absence of the Muslim population, he replies "We've been seeing them since we were kids. There is no Muslim settlement here. Bhogal does not have a Muslim settlement. Here, there is no basic Muslim settlement. But we have noticed the meat shop in Summan Bazaar since we were kids". In another instance, Mange Lal places two or three Muslim meat shops from the colonial period, disappearing after Muslim departure in 1947. Direct recall of Muslim lives, however, is much more difficult. In a rare instance, Jain Saab sheds some light on the nature of Muslim lives in Jangpura village:

> …After this the houses here (pointing to Masjid Road) were Muslim houses…And those people were nothing special. Some used to run *tongas* or did something else. They were very poor. Someone was Coach 1, someone was a *Bhishti*.[64] Approximately all of them used to live in the lanes. And after them, after the riots of 47 they left for Pakistan…[65]

This is the most comprehensive oral narrative about the Muslims. We get very brief insights into their location, socio-economic lives, and their eventual departure in 1947. The oral histories rarely automatically reveal Muslim presence. When asked about the Muslims, residents welcome these queries and acknowledge their presence, "yes they were there". Yet these stories do not reveal much about individual lives, names, or the villages they came from. Chand Khan, mentioned by a single individual[66] is otherwise absent like other Muslim names in public memory. In contrast, names, and origin details of non-Muslim residents, be it original allottees or partition refugees, routinely come up in my research conversations. For example, the names of Lala Meherchand, Alopi Pershad, Gauri Shankar, Samman Lal, Anoop Singh,

---

[64] A Muslim *biradiri*/caste historically associated with being water carriers. In Delhi, although declining, they have been active for the past three centuries. See Sarah Hafeez, "Bhishtis of Old Delhi: Age-old profession faces slow death", *The Indian Express*, 26 March 2017, https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/bhishtis-of-old-delhi-age-old-profession-faces-slow-death-4585846/; "These Bhishtis are keeping tradition alive, one thirsty stranger at a time, *Hindustan Times*", 19 May 2018, https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi-news/these-bhishtis-are-keeping-tradition-alive-one-thirsty-stranger-at-a-time/story-fHwHp2JDUe01JmzOFh6dwM.html.
[65] Jain saab, Interview, 26 February 2019.
[66] Kishan Lal, Interview, 28 November 2018.

Mangaldeen, Nanakchand are mentioned in different resident recollections. In one instance, my discussion with regular visitors to the Ravidas temple in Bhogal in 2018 informs me of the family origins of people sitting around us. "I am a Judbaghiya (from Jor Bagh), He is a Kushakiya (from Kushak), He is from Madarsa…"[67]

Figure 4.6: A locked dilapidated Muslim house. Source: Author.

Similarly, local narratives about Bhogal's settlement often list six or seven villages that were displaced and relocated in 1922, identifying these as the origins or sources of the neighbourhood: Aliganj, Jorbagh, Pilanji, Madarsa, Arab ki Sarai, Raisina, and Kushak. Ranjana Sengupta, Sohail Hashmi, and the archive inform us of the relocation of Khairpur, a Muslim village to Jangpura, to make way for the Lady Willingdon Gardens (now Lodhi Gardens). However, of the 19 narratives collected only one mentions Khairpur. That one instance is the narrative of Mange Lal, the Bhogal nonagenarian who is a rich source of information about forgotten events and stories. But he too does not associate Muslims with Khairpur village. The village is almost absent from public memory.[68] In other instances, my

---

[67] 31 October 2018.
[68] Interview, 12 December 2018.

attempts to recover Muslim histories lead to diverse accounts. The most coherent element in these narratives is that the Muslims were present in the neighbourhood. For example, DC informs me that the Muslims were not brought but 'already settled', unlike the other communities of Jangpura village. Other conversations describe Muslim residents predating the settlement; their arrival from Jor Bagh village; and the construction of the mosque:

> Author: So the Muslims used to live here. Did they also come from Jor Bagh?
> KL: Yes they also came from Jor Bagh. They came from the Karbala side. They got the Shahi Masjid made. A concrete mosque…now it looks bad because of attempts to enlarge it. The original mosque was quite pretty. If you ever go there, you'll notice an original gate. The entry is from there. Where the wall is made.
> Author: Yes, I've seen a small entrance next to the main entrance. Don't know where it leads.
> KL: It goes into the mosque. Some Muslims illegally occupied the space. Like it happens with Wakf Board land. It happens everywhere. It's nothing special. No land is left that the Wakf Board hasn't claimed. The ones doing it are Mohammedans, and the ones fighting are also them….[69]

Yet this instance is an outlier where Muslim origins are attributed to one village. Here, we run into the limits of the archive and memory. The mosque predates the settlement, but its foundation is linked to the presence of Muslims from Jor Bagh. The award statements during colonial land acquisitions indicate that most villages were mixed consisting of different castes and communities. With the foundation file untraceable, it is difficult to determine which villages in part or whole relocated to Jangpura. As a result, we are left to speculate about the possible origins of the Muslims. When these pasts are activated, residents like Kishan Lal also situate their presence within the vicinity of the mosque, attributing only a few houses in and around the site. A somewhat larger presence is not acknowledged.

---

[69] This is not an entirely inaccurate statement and observation. The Wakf Board is known to claim numerous Muslim properties across the city and is often embroiled in disputes with Muslims with control over them. *Mohd Ajmal & Ors. vs. M/S. AnjumanEKhuddam*, 106/16, Delhi District Court, 9 May 2016; *Anjuman-E-Khuddam Qabristan Dargah Hazrat Khawaj Baki Billa and Dargah Hazrat Akhundji and Ahata* vs. *Delhi Wakf Board*, Delhi District Court, 9 January 2023; *Shri Mohd. Akram and Shri Shafiquddin vs. the Delhi Development Authority and the Delhi Wakf Board*, Delhi District Court, 24 September 2015.
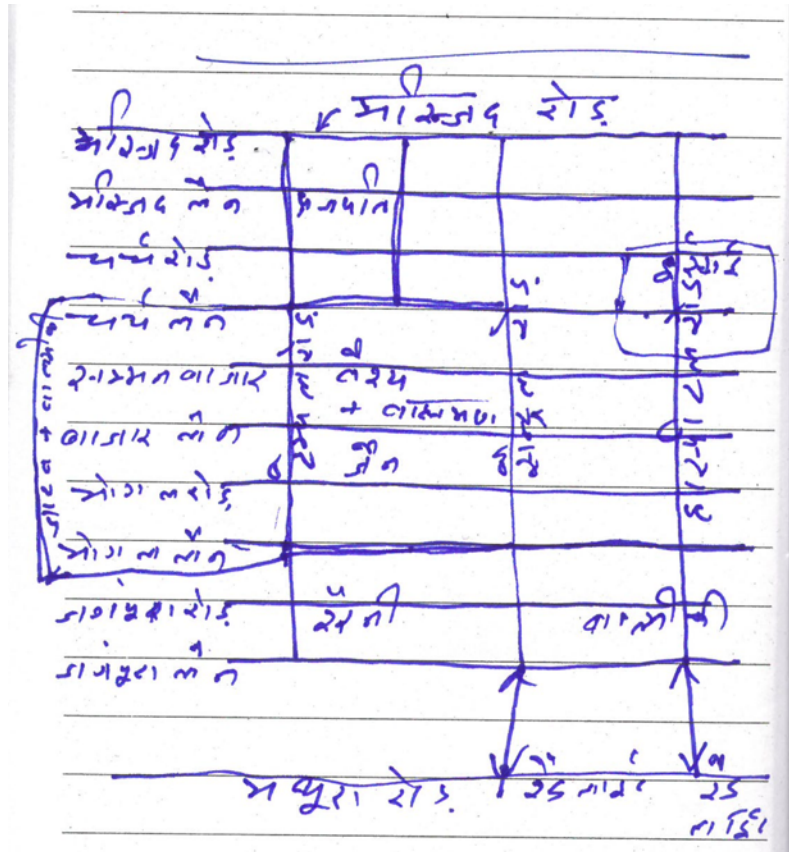
Figure 4.7: Historical Layout of Jangpura village drawn by Panditji

The positive story of neighbourhood diversity and amity is also marked by a conspicuous and telling absence of Muslims. Like the absence of Khairpur in narratives of origin locations for Jangpura-Bhogal, spatial memories of the neighbourhood do not automatically feature Muslim presence. While mentioning the communities settled, visual and oral recollections often leave out Muslims. Let's look at the layout drawn above by Panditji that lists the Jatavs, Balmikis, Kumhars, Sainis, Jains, Brahmins, Christians, and Banias. Barring major parts of Church Road, Church Lane, Masjid Road, and Masjid Lane, every other area is occupied by a particular community. Yet these four streets, where Muslims resided and were replaced by Sikhs, are relatively empty. Muslim presence in this historical layout drawn is missing. Residents highlight the problematic spatial segregation between lower and upper caste populations "Bhogal was settled along caste lines. Despite being innovative it had all the old contradictions".[70] Or draw attention to groups still present today and their discrete micro-localities as a mark of great urban planning.[71] Enquiries about Muslims are welcomed and do

---

[70] Ashok, Interview, 4 July 2017; Mange Lal, Interview, 6 December 2018.
[71] Jain Saab, Interview, 26 February 2019; Amma, Interview, 12 May 2017; Gauri Shankar, 25 December 2018; Mr Vashisht, 9 March 2019.

reveal their spatial location in the vicinity of the mosque, a past recovered through pointed questions like "Where did the Muslims live?", "Ok so if the mosque is made here [before 1947] then quite a few Muslims must also have been living here?" Yet invariably, these enquiries accompany a discussion of their departure, the arrival of partition Sikh and Hindu refugees and efforts of the Indian state to settle them in vacant Muslim houses and new tenements. "All the families of Sikhs that are living here are in the properties left behind by Muslims who evacuated and left".[72]

Residents do not acknowledge this erasure as these Muslim histories can be vaguely recalled through verbal cues, and therefore, technically are not forgotten. As a result, these diluted histories can seamlessly fit into the abstract narrative of the diverse space. Their efforts to substantiate narratives of the neighbourhood's enduring abstract harmonious past lead to particular examples of present-day populations in the neighbourhood, sometimes including partition Sikh and Hindus and often omitting Muslims. In this unsurprising slippage of memory, Muslims are not necessarily forgotten, but *unremembered*.

> So the Harijans were settled by the British on one side, Balmikis were settled on another side, Sainis were settled on one side, *Punjabis were settled one side, Sardars were settled on one side*,[73] Brahmins were settled on one side, Baniyas on one side. Meaning they did the allotment in this way that one caste, one community live in separate locations so that they do not fight.[74]

As this example shows, by mentioning post-partition Punjabi Hindu and Sikh refugees in the original allotments, a slippage in recollection unifies temporally distanced arrivals, and replaces Muslim residents from the time of neighbourhood settlement with partition refugees from several decades later. The spatial reconfigurations that partition brought about, when the refugee populations moved into empty Muslim houses and new constructions along Church Road and Masjid Road, reshape popular history and memory as well, evacuating Muslim presence before 1947 and anachronistically placing partition refugees at the founding moment of Jangpura-Bhogal, decades before partition was even an idea.

---

[72] Hari Ram Gupta, Interview, 17 July 2017.
[73] Emphasis mine
[74] Mr Vashisht, Interview, 9 March 2019, emphasis mine.

While there is a visible process of Muslim urban marginalisation with the post 1980s political landscape, the erasure discussed here is facilitated through Muslim absence, populations present, and replacements in inter-generational transferred memories. Unlike the relatively small number of Kuzguncuk's minorities still residing in the neighbourhood and other parts of Istanbul, Jangpura-Bhogal's original Muslim residents are completely absent. Yet, like the slow erasure of minority memories in Istanbul's Kuzguncuk, Muslim absence from Jangpura-Bhogal dilutes memories of them.[75] This subtle everyday forgetting through transferred memories eventually leads to young residents like Rahul being unaware of these histories and expressing visible discomfort when faced with this erasure. While this is a rare instance of a resident completely oblivious to the neighbourhood's Muslim history, it echoes what Johannes Becker calls 'temporal marginalisation'. In Jerusalem, displaced Palestinian neighbourhoods are vanishing from a collective memory about former Palestinian spaces.[76] Meanwhile, in Jangpura-Bhogal, this unremembering of Muslim populations building upon the material displacements of the past, could similarly lead to Muslims entirely vanishing from local memory. For now, they exist as diluted populations in recollections.

This evident dissonance between the archive and memory emerges through a selective historical reconstruction of the neighbourhood and its diverse past.[77] While justifying a past amity through the elision of ruptures, and references to heterogeneous peoples and spaces, narrative slippages erase memories of bodies now absent. This erasure, however, is not necessarily the result of a deliberate project of forgetting or demonizing the Muslim pasts of the neighbourhood.[78] The physical departure of Muslims and the accompanying material displacements discussed earlier, quite naturally and logically leads to the forgetting of details, their lives, names, and origins. Khairpur, one of, or perhaps even the main village where Muslims came from, disappears from memory; Muslims are remembered in an abstract sense on verbal cues; and they are forgotten when the neighbourhood's historical diversity is invoked, replaced by the Hindu and Sikh refugees in remembrances of the heterogenous space.

---

[75] Mills, *Streets of Memory*, 80-84.

[76] Becker, Past Neighbourhoods.

[77] Henrike Donner and Geert De Neve, Space, place and globalisation: revisiting the urban neighbourhood in India, in *The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India* (Abingdon, Oxon: UCL Press, 2006); Mills, *Streets of Memory*; Massey, Places and Their Pasts.; Blokland, Celebrating Local Histories and Defining Neighbourhood Communities: Place-making in a Gentrified Neighbourhood.

[78] Taneja, *Jinnealogy*; Mrinalini Rajagopalan, Postsecular Urbanisms: Situating Delhi within the Rhetorical Landscape of Hindutva, in *The Fundamentalist City? Religiosity and the Remaking of Urban Space*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad and Mejgan Massoumi (London: Routledge, 2011).

We might say then, that the ideal of the heterogeneous community emerges not only through experiential histories, spatial proximity, elevating or suppressing particular histories, but also through an unremembering of histories of absent populations. As material traces of their presence are slowly erased, Muslim histories get diluted and relegated to the distant margins of public memory, and their past is displaced from representations and recollections of the neighbourhood's diverse history.

3. Commentary

In January 2019, Mrs. Bedi, a resident of O-Block in Jangpura Extension, spoke at length about Jangpura-Bhogal's diversity, the presence of different religious communities in Jangpura-Bhogal and absence of communal discord. Arguing that this a peaceful space, she mentions that Mohammadans, Kashmiris and Afghans live here but there are no problems. As she informs me, Afghans mostly live in Bhogal but not much in Jangpura Extension as residents have reservations about Afghans owing to their lack of hygiene. This was a similar trope I had heard from other Jangpura-Bhogal residents who argue that Afghan presence directly translated to more *gandagi* (dirt) in the neighbourhood.

This disdain for a contemporary migrant group was not only limited to the Afghans. As Mrs. Bedi left the room, Jasmeet, their relative, who had joined us earlier, continued speaking to me. When hearing about my project, he wanted to discuss the potential expansion of the Delhi Metro towards the National Capital Region (to areas like Sonepat),[79] and the attendant migrant movements it would facilitate. For him, this a move in the wrong direction as outsiders coming into the city would also bring in crime. With limited resources available in the city, Jasmeet argued that "Delhi should not be made so accessible to people". He raised the example of Jal Vihar slums and the Tamil presence for decades, cultural differences with locals, and the settlement as a site of all 'illicit' activities. Highlighting the Afghan presence in Lajpat Nagar, he stated that no one can counter their presence since they rule the place. Despite political representatives raising issues about them, Afghans continue to live here. They seem to be very cash rich (although the source of the cash is unknown) and it has led to an explosion of rents and princes in Jangpura-Bhogal. Lastly, echoing similar statements I heard from other residents, Jasmeet tells me that Africans were driven out as people were sick of their presence

---

[79] Delhi Metro to be extended till Sonepat, *Business Standard*, 1 June 2017, https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/delhi-metro-to-be-extended-till-sonepat-117060101437_1.html.

and involvement in unscrupulous activities. While escorting me outside after our conversation, Jasmeet pointed to a man on the street engaged in a telephone conversation. "You see that black guy talking on the phone? He lives in Jal Vihar." According to him, alcohol, drugs, and weed are all available in Jal Vihar.[80]

For the Bedis, an enduring communal harmony in a diverse space has been disrupted by contemporary migrant groups. Afghans and Tamils, the newest additions to the space are the object of scorn. I address here the contemporary exclusions producing *bhaichara* and community. The narrative of an abstract diverse space is reworked in the present moment through micro-politics and symbolic erasures in everyday life.[81] As we will see, residents frame these contemporary exclusions by invoking urban transformations, demographic growth, congestion, 'cultural differences', and a propertied imagination.

Present outsiders

Central road in Bhogal market is a site to witness Jangpura-Bhogal's palimpsestic nature. Entering from Mathura Road, shops largely owned by Banias and Jains give way to businesses run by the postcolonial and contemporary arrivals i.e., Sikhs, Hindus, and Afghans. Here, the corner where Masjid Road is intersected by Central Road, signals the end of Bhogal and beginning of Jangpura Extension. Around this intersection, people can be seen having tea at a shop run by a Partition refugee from Multan, Afghans going about their everyday lives providing patronage to Sikh and Afghan run medical stores, restaurants, grocery stores, naanwais, travel agencies, and barbers. Young Afghan men are seen loitering at corners or parks at times briefly interacting with 'locals'. In the evenings, Kashmiri Park is flooded with 'locals' and Afghans using the open-air gym machines, mothers huddled in a circle on benches chatting while their kids play, and 'locals' on walks intermittently stopping to berate kids causing a ruckus.

On 18 February 2020, a fire broke out at one of the Afghan restaurants opposite Kashmiri Park. The video was posted on the *Jangpura* Facebook page by an onlooker. The caption stated:

---

[80] Fieldnotes, 24 January 2019.
[81] Talja Blokland, *Community as Urban Practice* (Malden: Polity Press, 2017), 45-46.

BREAKING: MAJOR FIRE BROKE OUT AT BLOCK 4 JANGPURA, OPP.
MODI PASTRY CORNER IN THE ILLEGAL AFGHANI RESTAURANTS.
DUE TO TUESDAY MARKET, THE RISK DOUBLES.
THESE RESTAURANTS NEITHER HAVE NOC FROM DELHI FIRE
SERVICE DEPARTMENT NOR FROM FOOD SAFETY.
ACTION MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

The comments that followed expressed disappointment at the situation but questioned the legality of the space and Afghan presence in Jangpura-Bhogal. There were calls of re-verification of Afghan documents and strict government action against these illicit activities. Residents questioned the availability of gas connections despite the fact that the restaurant was illegal. While the weekly Tuesday bazaar was also blamed for the increasing congestion and chances of such breakouts, these allegations were quickly dismissed by citing its historic presence and the lack of any fire outbreaks in the past. The administrator of the page reminded residents to focus on illegal practices rather than the Afghans. However, this discussion of Afghans overshadowed the primary conversation about the burning restaurant. A commenter argued that their presence, facilitated by landlords, and the freedom they got was in stark contrast to its absence in their own country.[82]

This, however, was not the first instance of questions raised on Afghan rights to residence and work. Many sporadic discussions on the *Jangpura* Facebook page often revolve around the Afghan presence in Jangpura Bhogal. For example, during the first COVID lockdown, pictures of Afghans violating curfew orders again elicited questions about their presence, that were repeated in WhatsApp group discussions.[83] Comments stated their exasperation at the foreigners who failed to follow government rules and orders, thereby putting everyone's health at risk, and there were calls to convince landlords to evict them from of the neighbourhood. The JRWA president, administrator of *Jangpura*, and other residents also tweeted Delhi police to garner attention and rectify the Afghan problem.[84] In the past, posts have also highlighted the irony that Afghans dirty the space that provides them refuge from war and persecution.[85] The odd instances of Afghans and others responding with allegations of racism are lost in the sea of comments that portray the image of a unsettling

---

[82] Jangpura, Facebook, 18 February 2020.
[83] JEWA, WhatsApp, 12 June 2021.
[84] Jangpura, Facebook post, 22 March 2020; Jangpura, Facebook post, 26 March 2020.
[85] Jangpura, Facebook post, 22 August 2015.

Afghan presence in the neighbourhood.[86] Most recently, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the rise of the Taliban led to solidarity protests and meetings in Jangpura and Delhi.[87] However, the potentiality of another refugee influx into the city invited resident anxieties about a potential rise of Afghan numbers into the neighbourhood. Again, there were calls to repatriate them and prevent further arrivals. Their 'loyalty' to India and their ability to strike deals with the UNHCR and Indian government were also questioned.[88]

A welcoming space

In most instances my conversations with Afghans would follow a similar narrative: The people in India and Jangpura-Bhogal are very nice. The neighbourhood is welcoming and feels like home because of the Afghan social and material infrastructure. I was consistently told that the rents and prices are high but there are no issues with locals. As mentioned in the introduction, a precarious refugee presence, my identity, and issues of language prevented more sustained and honest conversations. However, Afghans familiar with the language would slowly open-up to me.

Abdullah and Zubeida (encountered in Chapter 1) ran a grocery store on Masjid Road. They had been married for two years and met each other while employed as translators for medical tourists. Following the initial generic conversations of the neighbourhood's good environment, my continued presence at their shop finally revealed some fissures. Zubeida tells me that they mainly have problems with the Sikhs rather than the Hindus or Muslims: Efforts to damage the shop, Sikh and Afghan brawls, and attempts at robbing their store. However, she blames both the Sikhs and Afghans, with conflicts emerging due to their sustained interactions and the primary location of Afghans in and around the Sikh areas. The next day, I was again at the shop speaking with Abdullah. A Sikh gentlemen walked in to ask Abdullah if any potential Afghan tenants were interested in the rooms he was offering. Abdullah informed him that he found someone willing to pay 1200 a night. In response, the Sikh landlord turns aggressive to tell Abdullah, *Maine rate kharaab nahin karna. Teen kamre hain bhenchodh! 1650 minimum.*

---

[86] Jangpura, Facebook post, 4 March 2015; Jangpura, Facebook post, 25 May 2017.

[87] 'We have compassion but can't put Delhi at risk': HC on protests by Afghans amid Covid-19 pandemic, *Scroll.in*, 3 September 2021, https://scroll.in/latest/1004528/we-have-compassion-but-cant-put-delhi-at-risk-hc-on-protests-by-afghans-amid-covid-19-pandemic; Seraj Ali, 'Wake Up UNHCR': Afghan Nationals Protest in New Delhi, *The Wire*, 27 August 2021, https://thewire.in/rights/watch-wake-up-unhcr-afghan-nationals-protest-in-new-delhi.

[88] Jangpura, Facebook post, 19 August 2021.

Usse neeche nahin jaonga. Chal tu mereko bataiyo. "I do not want to ruin the rate. There are three rooms, damn it! 1650 minimum. I won't go lower than that. Anyway, you let me know."

Once the Sikh landlord left, Abdullah turns to me and says, "Now this man is asking for 1650 a night. How can a family, that has come here with so much difficulty for medical treatment, pay that?" He goes on to tell me that people in Delhi don't understand this and how difficult money is for most Afghans in the city. Other Afghans also cite financial issues by referring to the high rents and prices charged to them. Many of them inform me that despite being in the city for so many years, locals always try to overcharge them off thinking they wouldn't know, that they too are *Dilliwallahs* and know the ways of the city.

As mentioned earlier, Bhogal's proclaimed diversity elicits references to the different communities and religious sites in the neighbourhood, serving to illustrate the peaceful heterogeneity in the past and present. Yet, like the case of the 'missing Muslims' in recollections of the past, Afghans do not figure in claims of the neighbourhood's present diversity. When prompted with leading statements and pointed questions, 'and Afghans also came', responses present an abstracted, modular account of Afghan neighbourhood presence as just another link in the chain of urban arrivals. For beneficiaries of the booming rentier economy, i.e., the landlords and real estate agents of the area, the mention of Afghans is answered with anodyne phrases like 'Bhogal is a bouquet' or 'whoever comes here settles in'. When I ask Jain saab, the landlord of Abdullah and Zubeida, about the Afghan presence, he tells me: *Bhaisaab Bhogal guldasta hai! Guldasta kaise banta hai? Alag alag phool honge tabhi to guldasta bangea na?* "Brother Bhogal is a bouquet. How is a Bouquet made? The bouquet requires the presence of different kinds of flowers, right?"[89] In a similar vein, Harpal provides an interesting answer to explain Afghan and earlier Kashmiri arrivals:

> Harpal: Kashmiris started arriving in the 90s once problems started there. After
> that a lot of Kashmiris started coming. They used to come before that too. They
> used to work with shawls, with handicrafts….
> Author: And when did the Afghans start coming?
> Harpal: (smiling) Afghans…they started coming in late 90s when the problems
> in Afghanistan started. Afghans were also present before but they were less in
> number. But they started coming living in Bhogal itself. Started settling in

---

[89] Jain Saab, Interview, 26 February 2019.

Bhogal and in Lajpat Nagar. Earlier, Lajpat Nagar earlier only had a few but there are more in Lajpat Nagar. Specially, they used to live in Bhogal.

Author: Why is that? Do you have any idea?

Harpal: I don't fully understand it. Or maybe it has something to do with the water that Kashmiris and Afghans have Bhogal in their minds that it doesn't leave. Bhogal is still stuck in their minds. And still they say it that when they arrive, they first seek a room here and if they don't get it, they go somewhere else. The environment is good here. No one has problems here. Atmosphere….people from every culture come and settle here. Meaning they don't have any problems.[90]

Other landlords like Asha prefer Afghan tenants due to their ability to pay higher rents, acquiescence, and politeness, a point reiterated by property dealers. In addition, my attempts to find an apartment revealed another reason for their preference. The lack of a socio-economic base in the city would prevent legal complications around residency rights.[91] This familial neighbourhood is especially welcoming to families and individuals who follow the spoken and unspoken rules of the neighbourhood. Afghans are welcome as their Muslim-ness prevents them from drinking liquor. In contrast, 'Nigerians', a cover term for African migrants, are therefore excluded due to alcohol consumption and nocturnal activities.[92]

Thus, the discussion of Afghan presence generally serves as an occasion to assert the large-heartedness of the neighbourhood, how Bhogal has always been welcoming to people.[93] These claims have also reflected in media representations of the neighbourhood, particularly through the lens of Afghan food.[94]

---

[90] Harpal, Interview, 17 January 2019.

[91] Temple Properties, 9 March 2019; Sri Ram Properties, 15 November 2018; Fieldnotes 29 January 2019.

[92] Bani Gill attributes this to strategies to evade the surveillance state that singles out racialized black bodies and imposes a punitive and arbitrary documentary regime. See Bani Gill, In the Shadow of Illegality: The Everyday Life of African Migrants in Delhi (PhD University of Copenhagen, 2019).

[93] This also invites mentions of the brief stay of Irani and Iraqi Muslim populations following the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88).

[94] Chinki Sinha, Bhogal without borders, *The Indian Express*, 1 August 2020; Saxena, Inside Delhi's lil Afghanistan: Aroma of Kabuli pulao, murmurs in Dari.; Krishnan, A Guide To Delhi's 'Little Kabul', Built By Afghan Refugees With Love.; Balasubramaniam, The naanwais of Delhi: On the Afghan bread trail.; Shafi, Meet the Afghan naanwais selling naans, lavasas and roghanis at the Afghan bakeries in Delhi.

The Good Old Days: An Altered Neighbourhood

These positive generalities quickly change as conversations progress and turn to specific details of everyday living in Jangpura-Bhogal. In December 2018, I am walking around in Kashmiri Park, one of the main public parks located at the edge of Bhogal and the beginning of Jangpura Extension double story. In the early evenings, the park comes alive with Afghan mothers huddled around the benches near the swings as their children play. 'Local' men and women can be seen walking and chatting with their neighbours on benches, occasionally stopping to berate the noisy kids running around. Kashmiris and Afghans are seen 'hanging around' on the open-air gym machines and the benches around them. One hears Hindi, Dari, Punjabi, Kashmiri, occasionally English in loud and subdued conversations, laughter, happy and berating screams, and sounds of rickety swings or *jhulas* and open-air gym machines. These are momentarily punctured by the wider general soundscape of the city: honking automobiles, loud street vendors, and sounds of ongoing construction work.

I approach an old lady sitting on one of the benches right after I had finished speaking to an Afghan medical tourist sitting on one of the open-air gym machines. Let's call her Mrs. X. We start talking about Jangpura-Bhogal. She tells me that the neighbourhood is excellent except for the Afghans who have come and taken over the place. Born to Partition refugee parents in Agra, Mrs. X moved to this area in the 1970s after her marriage. She describes how things have declined since then. the park is no longer clean, and 'local' kids from the neighbourhood don't often come there anymore because Afghans have claimed the park. Referring to news reports about the unstable situation in Afghanistan that she watches on TV, she feels that Afghans first destroyed their own country and have now brought their problems along with them. In her opinion, the Indian government's ignorance about all of this, and the greed of local people for rent are facilitating the Afghan problem, that will eventually lead to the neighbourhood's doom. All this while, the Afghans are within earshot, going about their business of sitting and chatting in the park without any overt reaction to Mrs. X's laments and dire warnings about the dangerous Afghan presence.[95]

Through this vignette of everyday life, we see references to the contested nature of city spaces, 'locals' and outsiders, war, displaced populations, and an impending doom of the neighbourhood. Invoking the logic and idiom of xenophobic global populist discourses on migration and refugees, residents tell me about the drastic decline of a once convivial and

---

[95] Fieldnotes, December 28, 2018.

familiar neighbourhood. "We don't know who our neighbours are anymore".[96] "The neighbourhood will soon turn into Afghanistan!" is a phrase I often come across on Facebook. Invoking the phrase *bedha garg* (drastic decline), Mr Garg tells me that it no longer feels nice to live in the neighbourhood. Earlier the locality was much better when we knew everyone while growing up and it felt safe. When the Punjabi refugees came the market grew a lot and developed in a good way. However, while the business has expanded with the coming of even newer populations, the ethos of the space has changed:

> Like if you ask me whether the change in Bhogal is good or bad, I will say that Bhogal is changing for the worst. This is because many refugees have arrived here. Too many Afghans have come. Many people from Nigeria have come. We can't intermingle with those people. And we face difficulties. That's why I would say that Bhogal is changing for the worst.[97]

In another instance, Amma, the matriarch of a prominent trading family of Bhogal, talks about how the increasing Afghan presence has led to more interactions than desired. She rues the breakdown of caste hierarchies and separate spaces for different communities with the rentier economy and unfamiliar faces becoming a common site in the gali. Her family does not want to rent their properties to unknown people, especially Afghans as they want to prevent the neighbourhood's decline. She also expresses distress at the arrival of Tamils "Now so many *madrassis* have also started living here!" but recognises the impossibility of the neighbourhood's functioning without Tamil domestic labour.[98]

Residents recall the days when they did not need invitations to go to neighbour's houses, of a sense of a community that is slowly declining. Economic and material transformations, according to them, have led to a dilution of everyday social interactions. *Khoon ke rishte jhoote padh gaye hain. Ye Karl Marx ke shabd hain.* "Blood relations are thinning down. These are Karl Marx's words", Mr Gill tells me.[99] As I am told, these days people generally show interest only if they can get something out of such interactions, attributing a few reasons for this changing social landscape. In February, an old Sardarji joins my conversation with Abid saab, pausing to take a break and say hello to his long time Kashmiri

---

[96] Dinkar Garg, Interview 18 July 2017; Amma, Interview, 12 May 2017.
[97] Interview on 18 July 2017.
[98] The Wrecking of Delhi, *Economic and Political Weekly* 13, no. 25 (1978).
[99] Jangpura-A.

acquaintances. He tells us that the days of *bhaichara* and living together are declining. Parents do not care about kids and kids do not care about their parents.[100]

Most evidently, it is through the commodification of everyday material objects, particularly appliances, that have transformed neighbourhood interactions. Sanjha chuhlas or community tandoors so visible in the immediate postcolonial landscape have given way to small, commodified versions of tandoors at every restaurant, attendant change in consumption practices, and the decline in such spaces of sociality. Tandoori *rotis*, brought in by the Partition refugees have been replaced by the *chapati* or *phulki*, the historic consumption choice for locals in Delhi. Lentils, often available at the community tandoors could be made at home as everyday gas entered middle-class homes in the 1970s and 80s. Spaces run by the Bharbhujas or Harbans da Dhaba have shut down, partly due to deaths in their families, and the reduction in demand for such products. Televisions, often shared among gullies and neighbourhoods were replaced by individual sets. Thus, according to residents, the material transformations of the postcolonial and neoliberal eras have affected social life in the neighbourhood.

Residents also invoke transformations of the sensory landscape. Mr Y informs me that kids would often play on the roof and sleep there at night during hot summer days. "Cold cold winds used to blow!".[101] Attention is also drawn to the lack of people, vehicles, shorter buildings, a decongested pristine space that has since declined and is vanishing. "These days you can't feel the wind with all these buildings." They also refer to a negative contemporary urban soundscape: Honking vehicles, screaming voices, and loud construction sounds. The coming of the Kashmiris and Afghans, for Mr Y., drove people towards adding multiple storeys to their apartments, leading to claustrophobic constructions.[102] In addition, their ability to pay high rents and prices spells doom for the market wherein 'normal' people cannot afford many things. Mrs. J while sitting in Kashmiri Park points to Afghan women huddled on park benches and tells me, "You tell me how is their coming any good? How will we eat when Afghans pay so much? Nowadays you don't even see Indians in the park. You only see Afghans. They are everywhere".[103] Media articles about Afghan food and growing Afghan presence invite resident ire about the indiscriminate proliferation of their numbers in the neighbourhood.[104]

---

[100] Mr Z, 25 February 2019.
[101] Mr Y, Interview, 15 January 2019.
[102] *Ibid;* Jain Saab, Interview, 26 February 2019; Mr Gandhi, Interview, 11 November 2018.
[103] Fieldnotes, 17 January 2019.
[104] Jangpura, Facebook post, 23 April 2016; Jangpura, Facebook Post, 4 March 2015.

The alleged sources of these seemingly high cash flows bring the discussion to another dimension of this boundary work that also includes Tamils.

Consumption Practices and Ways of Operating

The laments about an unfamiliar neighbourhood are amplified by complaints about the conduct of nefarious activities (*dhanda*), a colloquial term for drug trade and prostitution. "Very soon all sorts of drugs will be available!". At the Bhogal Mosque, Haji saab's voice lowers, as he looks at an Afghan and turns to tell me, *Dhanda karte hain ye log*.[105] Based on historical instances, such claims reproduce widely held beliefs of Afghans involved in the Opium and Hashish (Afghan keef) trade.[106] This is observable through the heightened anxieties of residents on Facebook when discussing Afghans. The administrator while discussing the potential influx of Afghans highlights:

> Emotionally yes, we should help any other country who is going through such situation, their situation is really heartbreaking…On a local level I have seen people do not have problem with their refuge to out country but yes their lifestyle is. Drug peddling, prostitution, littering, aggressive nature are few points that people have pointed while talking to me in personal messages.[107]

The administrator was echoing concerns raised by other residents on this platform, and in my conversations about the growing frequency of amoral consumption activities and drug trade. "Soon you will start getting marijuana and hashish in the neighbourhood". Yet these categorisations are not only associated with Afghans as the Jal Vihar slums are notorious for being centres of illicit alcohol and weed.[108] Residents argue that these slums have partly been

---

[105] Haji saab, Interview, 6 November 2018; Jangpura, Facebook post, 22 June 2014; Jangpura, Facebook post, 25 February 2020.

[106] '19 Afghan drug peddlers missing', *The Times of India*, 2 January 1990; 'Afghan with 255 gm heroin held', *The Times of India,* 17 August 1984.
In a similar vein, most cocaine and other drug dealers in the city are allegedly 'Nigerians'. See Gill, In the Shadow of Illegality.

[107] Jangpura, Facebook, 19 August 2021.

[108] Police conducted a raid in August 2020 seizing numerous bottles of liquor. 'Three bootleggers arrested', Delhi Police South-East District Press Release, 24 September 2021. https://infopromotion.delhipolice.gov.in/Press_Release_Details_iframe.aspx?cid=k8WKn2AxTQc=;
13 held as Delhi Police cracks down on liquor, gambling, prostitution rackets , *DTNext*, 10 October 2021, https://www.dtnext.in/News/National/2021/10/10225115/1322833/13-held-as-Delhi-Police-cracks-down-on-liquor-gambling-.vpf.

the reason for the neighbourhood's decline, ruining the environment of neighbourhood by harming young men.

> Arwant Singh: The Pant Nagar slums are old but they have been given newer places twice. But they still come back. And you see here the route that goes behind, straight down the road. There you can buy as much alcohol as you want. No policemen say anything. Buy alcohol. Buy marijuana. Buy beer. Whatever you want. Buy hashish. Whatever. There are no policemen there. They don't let the policemen patrol inside (the slums). They have killed half of the young boys in the neighbourhood.
>
> Author: Jal Vihar?
>
> Arwant Singh: The alcohol. They drink and sell the spurious alcohol. So many boys of the Dhobis have died. Young young Sikh boys have also died. You get addicted right? Waking up at 4 in the morning to bathe and then go drink alcohol. Some just come under the train while crossing the tracks.[109]

As a resident informs me "Afghans mostly have three purposes for coming to India i.e., dry fruits, drugs, and prostitution. These Afghani women wear 'western clothes' under their *burkhas*".[110] Here, *dhanda* is used to suggest prostitution as a profession, a regular trope to 'other' diverse migrants such as women from the North-East of India and African women. Such allegations of illicit amoral activities have provided social sanction to the vigilantism of RWAs and Delhi government ministers to protect a 'moral' middle-class environment of the city.[111] In this context, nearby Lajpat Nagar's emergence as a major 'pick-up' spot raises RWA anxieties. However, as I am informed, the inability of landlords to expel Afghans has prevented

---

[109] Arwant Singh, Interview,

[110] Interview with resident, 17 July 2017.

[111] "Fear, hope in Delhi's new African enclave", *Hindustan Times*, 17 December 2021, https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fear-hope-in-delhi-s-new-african-enclave-101639680648608.html.; Shivam Vij, "We have been misrepresented, say angry residents of Delhi village in eye of AAP storm", *Scroll.in*, 25 January 2014 https://scroll.in/article/654761/we-have-been-misrepresented-say-angry-residents-of-delhi-village-in-eye-of-aap-storm; "The dark side of Delhi", *Telegraph India*, 25 January 2014, https://www.telegraphindia.com/7-days/the-dark-side-of-delhi/cid/1669463.; Ajay Kumar, "Cop draws flak for remark on N-E girls indulging in prostitution", *India Today*, 21 May 2015, https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/gurgaon-police-north-eastern-girls-prostitution-criticism-253934-2015-05-21.; Anuraag Baruah, "Delhi Police Falsely Charge NE Girls With Flesh Trade in FB Post", *The Quint*, 13 October 2016, https://www.thequint.com/voices/opinion/delhi-police-falsely-accuse-15-northeastern-girls-of-being-prostitutes-on-facebook.

a solution to the problem.[112] According to Anil, there is a particular reason guiding these activities i.e., their refugee status. In a forthright way, he tells me that desperation and illicit activities are a normal feature of refugee life since 'the hustle' is a crucial resource for rebuilding lives. Also citing the time of Partition refugees, any activity facilitating economic gain is considered a feasible option by refugees.

Linked to this is their culture of meat consumption, "they eat meat and it stinks!".[113] Meat consumption in general is not considered a problematic practice. In fact, the consumption of Chicken is widespread among Hindus and Sikhs in the city. This is evident through several *jhatka* meat shops in Jangpura-Bhogal often drawing customers from within the neighbourhood. Harpal's Chinese fast-food restaurant regularly sees orders by locals looking for a quick meat fix. The history of these othering strategies in the city can be traced to the late 1960s when the Jana Sangh's rise to power in the Metropolitan Council accompanied an aggressive political campaign to demonize *bade ka ghosht* (buffalo meat). Here, the consumption practices of Muslims and Dalits turned into 'practices of disgust' while the consumption of chicken and fish became acceptable.[114] In the present day, consumption of red meat (especially beef and pork) is often used as a trope to other Muslims and Dalit slum dwellers in the city. For example, when referring to the Tamil *jhuggis* that were removed from Jangpura A, residents point to their pork consumption. The consumption act, cutting up of the dirty animals close to vegetarian or clean spaces of the middle-class, evoked elements of disgust. "They used to cut them here only". "They would cut their insides". Thus, through their consumption and transactions in illicit, immoral, nefarious activities and goods, and aggressive social behaviour have brought out about, according to residents, a dirty lifestyle in Jangpura-Bhogal.

Questions are also raised about the legality of visa documents, associated rights to own or rent property, and the convoluted means of establishing slums. As the incident of the fire stated above highlights, Afghans run shops have often been questioned for their legality. "How

---

[112] Nigam, C. "Flesh trade hotspots mushroom in South Delhi". *India Today*, https://www.indiatoday.in/mail-today/story/flesh-trade-hotspots-mushroom-in-south-delhi-1634224-2020-01-06
Singh, S. "Parathas and sex! Moolchand serves both", *The Pioneer*, https://www.dailypioneer.com/2018/delhi/parathas-and-sex-moolchand-serves-both.html.
[113] Residents of Pishori Mohalla,
[114] Parveen, *Contested Homelands*. For a discussion on meat politics and Muslim othering outside Delhi, see Fachandi, Vibrant and Vegetarian Gujarat, in *Pogrom in Gujarat,* 153-184.
For a historical analysis of meat politics and how it inspires practices and memories of resistance, see Kumar, "Locating Dalit Bastis".

can they pay so much?" "Do they have the right papers?" In one incident, the JRWA president expressed disappointment at the landlords for allowing encroachments on public land by illegal Afghans. In other instances, rare cases of Afghans illegally obtaining Indian documents had allowed the idea to flourish that many of them follow a similar pattern. "Now many have gotten Aadhar and voter-id cards made also". Similarly, the material presence of the slums in Jangpura-Bhogal invites resident anxieties of the surreptitious means through which they were established, "You can get a jhuggi made by giving 500 rupees". This denunciation of slums is also substantiated by denying their historic presence and alleged lack of paperwork. For example, while referring to the Pant Nagar settlement residents argue that they are hardly 20 years old. "If they say they are older than that then they are lying".[115] This combination of tropes i.e., meat, illegal activities, and documents, echoes a larger xenophobic discourse about other groups like African migrants in Delhi.

These dystopian accounts of Afghan presence unwittingly draw comparisons with remembered pasts of other arrivals in the area. This nostalgia and lament functions also through invocations of a diverse past centred on arrival stories of earlier and Partition migrants who contributed to the social fabric of the space. Like the contemporary Afghan refugees, partition refugees also lived through a turbulent and very difficult time but are seen to have risen to the challenge and succeeded in rebuilding their lives. Ravinder Kaur has called this the master narrative of the Partition, through everyday forms of the past that are "popularly remembered versions of past events that tend to attain a mythical character of their own".[116] Here, irrespective of state support, middle class/upper caste refugees succeed in the recovery of individual and community lives.[117] Their arrival in the neighbourhood led to a positive socio-cultural transformation and heightened economic enterprise, my informants tell me. DC and Rakesh (descendants of those originally settled in Bhogal) assert that the arrival of the Punjabis i.e., partition refugees transformed the city's socio-cultural milieu. Their brash nature, shamelessness, coupled with their education and drive allowed them to progress much more than the locals, yet also taught the latter the tricks of the trade for tarakki. Like DC, Anil, son of a Partition refugee from Attock district, talks about the aggressive nature of Punjabis that convinced locals to think differently. In a similar instance, the Sikhs of Pishori Mohalla tell me

---

[115] Residents of Jangpura-A, 5 March 2019.
[116] *Kaur, Since 1947, 5.*
[117] For a greater discussion on the constituent parts of these detailed narratives as they unfold, see Kaur, *Since 1947.*

about how they taught so many things to locals. "We taught them how to do work, how to eat properly, how to live life".[118]

Thus, residents proceed with a normative comparison and evaluation of contemporary diversity, where a fallen and degraded present is replaced an abstract harmonious, moral, and familial diverse past. In contrast to a remembered refugee self-reliant and entrepreneurial spirit, the locally prevalent narrative about the Afghan refugees emphasizes how they receive financial and legal support from the UNHCR, and strike collusive deals with local landlords, property dealers, and even the Indian government to lead a comfortable life at the expense of local residents. As residents argue, "UN gives them money",[119] "Every Afghan gets Rs. 10,000 a month from the UNHCR".[120] This is substantiated by pointing to the callous attitude of property dealers in checking for requisite documents during tenancy occupations. Although property dealers assert that they always demand visa documents, residents argue that potential commissions and the greed of landlords often lead to callous documentary verifications "No one checks the documents!".

Apart from allegations of UN funding to all Afghans, some residents like Anil also attribute the question of vote banks as one of the major reasons why Afghans have not been driven out of the neighbourhood. One of the few residents unconcerned with the growing Afghan presence, and with a decade long involvement in local politics of the Jangpura constituency, he argues:

> Anil: If the Afghans are driven away, local politicians will lose their Muslim vote bank.
> Author: But there are hardly any local Muslims here.
> Anil: I mean Jangpura constituency my brother. Nizamuddin has so many Muslims! Now if local politicians take up the cause of residents and drive away Muslim Afghans, then why would Muslims vote for them.

---

[118] Residents of Pishori Mohalla, Interview, 4 February 2019.
[119] Mr Y, 15 January 2019.
[120] Jangpura, Facebook comment,
As mentioned in Chapter 2, the UNHCR since the early 2000s has been replacing cash payments with the idea of refugee self-reliance by providing loans for businesses or facilitating access to the informal labour market. Jessica Field, Anubhav Dutt Tiwari, and Yamini Mookherjee, Urban Refugees in Delhi: Self-Reliance can't be exclusively entrepreneurial, *IIED Briefing* (2017).

A similar argument is made for the persistence and proliferation of slums in and around Jangpura-Bhogal (Chapter 2). Tarwinder Marwah, the three-time Congress MLA till 2014 is held responsible for the illegal property constructions, encroachments, slum settlements as far as Ashram and Sarai Kale Khan. Municipal Corporators and other MLAs are seen as pandering to 'vote bank' politics and protecting the Tamils from the state. Thus, the connivance of migrants and their ability to negotiate with a variety of local and institutional actors facilitate their presence in Jangpura-Bhogal.

The residence of Muslim Afghans in Jangpura-Bhogal and the elsewhere presence of their non-Muslim counterparts leads to an equation of the 'Afghan' with the 'Muslim Afghan'. While residents are aware of groups like *Kabuli Sardars,*[121] discussions around Afghans invariably focus on the everyday practices and presence of Muslim Afghans residing in Jangpura-Bhogal. Sahil Warsi's brilliant ethnography of Afghan belonging in Delhi unpacks the multiple layers that define the Afghan self in the city. Questions of ethnicity, class, and legal status often determine intra-Afghan socialities. The initial upper-class refugee arrivals, now living in the Global North, are considered as ideal refugees by Afghan embassy officials, students, and businessmen. In contrast, the recent refugee arrivals are often seen as illiterate, uncultured freeloaders taking advantage of an internal refugee regime.[122] In a similar vein, a student not living in Jangpura-Bhogal but a frequent visitor to meet friends and buy Afghan products informs me that the contemporary refugees can easily live in Afghanistan but want to live elsewhere and be paid for it.[123] These differences in perceptions are also compounded by, as Chapter 2 highlights, the ethnic differences that play out in everyday life and residence patterns. Nearby Ashram is emerging as a Pashtun hub while Jangpura-Bhogal continues catering to Afghanistan's minority communities. However, for Jangpura-Bhogal's 'locals' these diverse identities and forms of association are collapsed into a singular notion of the Afghan.

Thus, a uniform category of the 'Afghan (Muslim) other' guides such utterances. The monetary abilities of medical tourists are superimposed on refugees. UN support for refugees is conflated with a universal assistance for all Afghans. Instances of drug trade and prostitution in the past colour perceptions of Afghan economic life. Lastly, the transitory nature of medical

---

[121] In popular parlance, *Kabuli Sardars* (literally Sikhs from Kabul) refers to Afghan Sikhs. Interestingly, the neighbourhood's association with Afghan Sikhs through Hotel Kabli has largely been forgotten in public memory.
[122] See Warsi, Being and belonging.
[123] Fieldnotes, 10 November 2018.

tourists and initial refugees shape the imagination of all Afghan presence as temporary. In a different vein, the Madrassi[124] presence collapses their social and material lives to the domain of illegality. Their difference, their seemingly recent presence, the materiality of their settlements built through encroachments on public land, and their practices and trades serve to other them.

The historical, material, and social histories and lives of these newer arrivals, are however, connected to another crucial element that guides these strategies of othering: property. If we recall Chapter 1, these residents benefitted from differentiated colonial and postcolonial property regimes. Liberalisation and a booming rentier economy facilitated their interactions with these newer arrivals, initiating a process of spatial adjustment. In the contemporary moment, the proclaimed diversity is mediated through property relations wherein newer arrivals, tenants, encroachers i.e., property-less, are disallowed and excluded from claims to space. They do not form part of the 'local community'.

The rules of the neighbourhood, its inclusions and exclusions are determined by a strong notion of property. As a result, the Kashmiris, also property owners, can be accepted in Jangpura-Bhogal. Recall the moment of narrative rejection when Anil asks me to remove the mention of Kashmiris and Afghans. Although their presence hardly invokes anxieties among residents, Kashmiris had recently come under fire due to the recent terror attack in Pulwama when a van loaded with explosives drove into a military caravan killing 40 CRPF soldiers.[125] As discussed in Chapter 1, the attack was attributed to Pakistan and organised flag burnings took place across the country, including Jangpura-Bhogal. In many parts of Delhi, Kashmiri Muslims were harassed and attacked. However, Jangpura-Bhogal did not report any incidents, a point that also emerged in my conversations with Kashmiris. This soon died down and Kashmiri Muslims continued to be part of the normative local community, linked to a strong propertied imagination. However, as they move away from the neighbourhood to seek safer environments in Muslim majority areas, their presence is also rarely mentioned in discussions of the diverse neighbourhood.

Material displacements of the past and their narrative afterlife replace Muslims with Partition Sikh and Hindu refugees to redefine the idea of a heterogeneous community, which is reworked in the present moment. First, it utilizes an abstract history of different arrival populations to advocate an ever-present amicable diversity. Second, this narrative of the

---

[124] A colloquialism for South Indian migrants.
[125] "Two years of Pulwama", *Hindustan Times*

inclusive heterogeneous space is reworked to simultaneously define the neighbourhood community and *exclude* Afghans and Tamils. It draws distinctions between a 'good' and a 'bad' diversity, between a positively diverse past and a dystopic present. The processes of a flourishing rentier economy, international refugee regime, labour demands of a neoliberal state and middle-class, while facilitating their stay, simultaneously exclude them from the diverse present.

4. Towards an Ending? Living Together

I end this chapter with a few vignettes of everyday life in Jangpura-Bhogal. They do not claim to be examples of 'real' *bhaichara* or conviviality. Rather, they point to the everyday reality of living together with difference.

Christmas Eve 2018

The Mathura Road entry to Central Road looked dramatically different from its normal state. The usual chaos of the morning had of course given way to an empty street devoid of vehicles. The entrance was secured by the classic yellow Delhi Police barricades and numerous police personnel. There was a substantial crowd heading towards St. Michael's Church by foot. As one reached closer to the Church, the poorly lit street gave way to lighted up houses on Church Road and the church decorated for Christmas celebrations. People from all corners of Jangpura-Bhogal were flooding into the small church, waiting to take part in the midnight mass. This included local originally settled Christians and later arrived Christians, including a family of Christian partition refugees from Lahore. As these families began entering the complex, some broke off to click portraits next to the lit-up Christmas tree and cross at the entrance. These people were joined by outsiders from nearby colonies, and other non-Christian locals including Afghans to partake in the midnight mass.[126]

Holi 2019

Harpal uploaded a video on Facebook shot from his balcony on Masjid Road. After wishing Happy Holi to the viewers, he gleefully tells us that he is recording the video for a particular reason. He switches the camera to show us a view of the intersection of Central Road and Masjid Road. There we see kids running around, spraying each other with water and lumping

---

[126] Fieldnotes, 24 December 2018.

water balloons at each other. Like most people during Holi celebrations, their faces are covered with colours making them difficult to identify from a distance. As he zooms in, we find out that these joyful kids, Harpal tells us, are Afghan. A little ahead of them, are some young Afghan men engaging in the same act with 'locals'. Harpal is visibly pleased by this, highlighting how Afghans have 'integrated' into society, partaking in a mainstream religious festival.[127]

Winter of 2019, Chacha Chai Stall

Run by a Multani refugee known only as Chacha, the tea stall, like most tea stalls in the city, always has customers and tea brewing. It serves a dual purpose of a business and Chacha's residence. Chacha sleeps on a cot in the room cum shop which also doubles up as a lunch spot for the Afghan naanwais next door. On a regular day, the naanwai's young male employees routinely come to the shop, open the fridge, take out their choice of 'soft drinks',[128] and then return to their shop. At some point during the day, they return with the bottles and deposit them in the empty case. No money is exchanged, and these transactions are a daily occurrence. Accounts do not need to be settled immediately. An informal arrangement due to spatial proximity has been reached. This, however, is an unsurprising phenomenon and is a common feature in many parts of the city. Usually, accounts are settled at the end of the day, week, or month.

These three snapshots could very well suggest some romanticised notion of *bhaichara,* a defence of Jangpura-Bhogal's secular credentials on my part. But that is not why I have included them here. We see here instances of religious celebrations and majority-minority intermingling. We see an informal economy based on spatial proximity. As has been extensively discussed in other parts of the thesis, these are normal sights in Jangpura-Bhogal. The various arrival populations participate in work, leisure, and celebrations. These activities often take place in professional, community, locality, or religious locales, at times intersecting, at times diverging. Actors and constellations come together at different points of time and space to produce the neighbourhood through its practices. There are disagreements, celebrations, exasperations, and boundary work. Naturally, these practices intersect with the rhythms of everyday urban life, religious or political events, economic relations, and varying configurations of power. Do we talk of super-diversity visible in European capitals with

---

[127] Harpal Singh, Facebook video 21 March 2019.
[128] A colloquial term for aerated drinks.

increasing global movements? Or do we see this as an illusion belying an increasingly fractured social fabric in today's India? Do we essentialise such neighbourhoods as exemplary instances of peaceful living or 'unity in diversity'?

For a direction, we could turn to Simone: "unless they succumb to atrophy, neighbourhoods must continuously remake their interfaces with external worlds; they must support the differentiation of inhabitants and their subsequent networks and affiliations with those outside worlds in ways that enable the continuous provisioning of new ways of doing things and the information required for adaptations".[129] It can be argued that Jangpura-Bhogal's residents are engaging in an act of socio-spatial adjustment, adapting to material and social transformations in urban space. And this is where we could possibly begin understanding the narrative of *bhaichara.*

According to residents *bhaichara* and 'community' form the ethos of Jangpura-Bhogal. Temporally distanced arrivals have contributed to the social fabric of the locality as we see today. The diverse processes of place-making: arrivals, departures, displacements, social and material infrastructures, and ruptures have been elemental to the production of the neighbourhood community. This diversity is enabled through the presences as well as absences emerging from Jangpura-Bhogal's history. In this chapter, we see instances of what can be called 'narrative displacements'. This present-day narrative of the neighbourhood is produced through disjointed articulations of the diverse space. Contentious pasts are either supressed or reconciled with. Communal violence is placed outside the spatial confines of the neighbourhood and the actors in such instances of violence are external to the space: visitors or outsiders. "All problems are solved together"*,* I am informed. In rare instances, when violence within and by insiders is acknowledged, the interviewer is reminded of the inherent principle of *bhaichara*, signalling a process of internal reconciliation with this reality. At the same time, we see a dilution of minority pasts, as their departure, material displacements, absence, and replacement lead to an unremembering of their presence and histories. Muslims are abstractly remembered as part of the heterogenous space through the mosque but forgotten in invocations of populations present. Yet their diluted histories can be recalled through verbal cues.

---

[129] Simone, "Afterword", 305.

In the present moment, constitutive boundary work leads to Afghan and Tamil exclusions. The abstract diverse space and its discursive articulation works to omit their presence in the social demography. This narrrative, now including Partition-era Sikhs and Hindus, continues to overlook recent migrant arrivals. Residents address the dramatic urban and global transformations by referring these recent movements. A continued demand for domestic and manual labour in the city, elsewhere processes of refugee displacement and a booming rentier economy facilitate these migrant presences. Xenophobic ideas of the 'Afghan' other, the 'Madrassi' combine with everyday interactions and popular perceptions. Slums as anathema to ideal urban space, strict differences between rights of landlords and rentiers, questions of 'legitimate' documents, consumption practices and 'illicit' economies add to their nascent presence, disavowing them from the 'diverse space'. However, the idea of *bhaichara* could undergo another process of reconfiguration as the neighbourhood continues to interact with local, urban, national, and global processes underway.

CONCLUSION

Whither the Delhi Muslim

From 23-27 February 2020, northeast Delhi witnessed a concentrated episode of anti-Muslim violence that many have described as a systematic and organized 'pogrom'. Muslim residents were violently attacked, their places of work looted and destroyed, and religious and spiritual spaces desecrated. The immediate context were widespread public protests from mid-December 2019 that had taken place in the city and across the country against the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act, and the related proposal to institute a National Population Register. The protests that erupted were mostly confined to the Muslim areas of the city like Shaheen Bagh, Nizamuddin, Jafrabad among others, attracting substantial support from a wide cross-section of the population. At the same time, mainstream media coverage and social media discourse joined the government's loud condemnations that labelled these protests, and the neighbourhoods in which they were taking place, as 'anti-Indian' and 'illegal'.

The protest sites were eventually cleared by the government, and a short while later the concentrated violence of the February 'riots' enacted another clearing, displacing about 2000 people from these neighbourhoods, confining them to relief camps and an uncertain future.[1] The large-scale violence meted out on Muslim bodies was accompanied by methodical desecration, burning, and looting of Muslim religious and spiritual sites and properties. Multiple reports have documented that these were no ordinary or spontaneous eruptions of popular violence, but were part of an institutionally organized plan, and that the police, MLAs, and key figures from the central government (including parliamentary representatives and bureaucrats) were complicit in the events.[2]

---

[1] Alasdair Pal and Devkyot Ghoshal, "Delhi's displaced scrape a living after deadly riots", Reuters, 4 March 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-citizenship-protests-displaceme-idUSKBN20R2FX. The aftermath of the riots has witnessed the harassment and arrests of numerous Muslims, lawyers, and activists. See The Wire, "Delhi Riots", accessed 16 August 2021. https://thewire.in/tag/delhi-riots.

[2] Official numbers state 53 deaths (including 15 Hindus), at least 250 injured, and an unknown number of missing persons. The build-up to the riots witnessed numerous inflammatory comments made by BJP leaders against protestors and Muslims in the city to polarise the electorate for the upcoming 2020 Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections. Within hours of BJP leader Kapil Mishra's threat to remove the protestors in North-East Delhi by force, violence broke out on 23 February. marked by systematic and organized attacks by armed mobs in Muslim majority areas and Muslim streets in non-Muslim areas. Farah Naqvi et al., *Let Us Heal Our Dilli: Eyewitness Report from North-East Delhi* (2020); *Report of the Fact-Finding Committee on the North-East Delhi Riots of February 2020*, Delhi Minorities Commission (New Delhi, 2020), https://ia801906.us.archive.org/11/items/dmc-delhi-riot-fact-report-2020/-Delhi-riots-Fact-Finding-2020.pdf s.

The timing of the violence in the immediate aftermath of the CAA-NRC protests was not a coincidence, they argued: Muslims were being shown their place *because* they had risen up in protest. The attacks on Muslim majority neighbourhoods showed how their already tenuous right to exist was contingent on their segregation and docility, the borders of which they had overstepped with the protests that had created a large, multi-religious opposition and inspired similar actions in many other neighbourhoods and other parts of the country as well. The threat that the protests posed, of a 'Muslim issue' sparking national solidarities and resistances, was successfully quelled through the February violence.

The idea of putting Muslims back in their place, confined to 'their' localities in 2020, reflects Delhi's particular urban experience. Delhi today is marked by a visibly segregated urban pattern and the growing intensity of anti-Muslim discourse in its public life. Most recently, this has manifested in the recent shift towards bulldozer politics as habitations of Muslims and the urban poor are being targeted by the BJP regime. In Delhi's popular imagination today, Muslim spaces are simultaneously spaces of suspicion.[3] They are invariably understood to be exceptional spaces, outside the 'normal' or 'regular' neighbourhoods of Delhi. These Muslim elsewheres of Delhi's public imagination are shaped and reinforced by the often invisible and extended processes of displacement that this thesis has explored.

The violent attacks of February 2020 took place on the fertile ground of eventful as well as non-eventful histories of Muslim displacement. They were facilitated not only by the recent visible and violent histories of Muslim marginalization under the BJP regime, but also through the longer histories of non-overt, at times unintentional processes of erasure, displacement, and replacement of Muslims in the city's mainstream spaces, in neighbourhoods like Jangpura-Bhogal.

> Historians as they write about the past have their feet firmly planted in the present. It is the debates of their immediate world that often provide them with questions and issues, the language, and the metaphors which they use in their research.[4]

---

[3] Kirmani, *Questioning the Muslim Woman*; Jamil, *Accumulation by Segregation.*
[4] Kumar, *The Present in Delhi's Pasts*, xi.

This dissertation is an inquiry into belonging in contemporary Delhi. It has been produced through a rich and diverse history of migrations, the formation of urban cultures, and transformations characteristic of a city on the move. In recent years, a small but growing body of research has shed new light on the complex and often messy realities of Delhi's city-making experiences between the 1960s and 1990s.[5] This dissertation has joined these efforts by turning its lens on one specific locality in Delhi: Jangpura-Bhogal. This has been done by examining the narrative of *bhaichara* through its migrations, infrastructures, conflicts, and memory.

I use the 'local' as a framing device (both physically and discursively produced) and apparatus of city-making to examine various kinds of subject formations over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I have documented how various social groups accessed, inhabited, and attached meanings to the neighbourhood, imagined the city, and how the neighbourhood shaped and moulded social relations, cooperation, and conflicts in Delhi. Jangpura-Bhogal is a highly diverse settlement in terms of class, caste, and religion. Entangled with major urban, national, global processes, it is an apt location from which to engage with the ongoing histories of Delhi's transformations. In this concluding chapter, I reflect on the four key observations about city making that anchor my study: (1) constitutive displacements; (2) accretive erasure and Muslim absence; (3) uneven bhaichara; and (4) neighbourhood histories.

The Displaced City

I am walking with Anil in the Jangpura-A park when a young Afghan boy politely greets us with a namaste while passing us by. After greeting the kid, he turns to me to say "Someone must have told him to say namaste. I feel so bad that these chilren and Afghans have to be scared and adhere to these social rules". After four years of constant interactions with me, he, and a handful of residents who are welcoming of newer arrivals, recognise the inherent bias against Afghans, Tamils, and at times Kashmiris. They reluctantly acknowledge past ruptures and present exclusions that continue to affect the neighbourhood, and how they, as concerned citizens, have had to ensure peace. Yet they emphasise that the numbers of such people are small.

Ironically, the park and its abutting wall separating it from banks of the Barapullah nala had replaced a Tamil slum cluster in the 1970s. During fieldwork, this park was the site of socialisation, and discussions of diverse migrations and love in the neighbourhood. However,

---

[5] Some notable books are Tarlo, *Unsettling memories*; Kaur, *Since 1947*; Kumar, *The Present in Delhi's Pasts*; Sharan, *In the City*; Parveen, *Contested Homelands*; Pati, *Properties of Rent*.

this public space emerged through the displacement of populations that have always been considered antithetical to urban planning ideals.

This thesis has examined the constitutive relationship between displacement and city-making by examining both arrivals/presence and departures/absence. As we have seen, Jangpura has been produced through both material and symbolic displacements enmeshed with processes of urban planning, communal violence, political assertions, infrastructures, state-subject relations, and memory work. First, the locality has witnessed continuous arrivals of displaced populations. The making of New Delhi was enabled and made possible by the displacement of populations to other parts of the city or north India. The resettled villages of Jangpura-Bhogal were joined by displaced partition refugees from North-West India, who replaced departing Muslims. Forced out by the insurgency, Kashmiri itinerants became residents. And Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban regime flocked to Jangpura-Bhogal and other parts of the city.

Second, the place-making practices of these populations were accompanied by displacements due to spatial-adjustments, political developments, and infrastructure needs of present and propertied populations. Petitions and communal violence in 1928 and in the late 1950s to establish Hindu religious or Sikh political spaces displaced minority claims to religious practices, or counter assertions of the Hindi language movement. Evacuee property, refugee rights, and a prolonged legal battle dispossessed former residents. Arbitrary bureaucratic classifications and refugee rehabilitation erased ruins, their meanings, and histories. Schools were denied place in neighbourhoods they don't serve, liquor stores cannot exist in a moral neighbourhood, and slums constantly make way for social infrastructures and city beautification schemes of coercive urban planning regimes.

A presence-absence dynamic is also visible in narrative displacements. We see articulations of a 'local' Dalit Buddhist history against 'outsider' Thai encroachers who they invited. By centering Ambedkar's importance to the existence of the Buddha Vihar, mobilising support and legal resources against Wat Bhogal as a Thai Therevada Buddhist centre and monastery, residents attempt to establish the site as a Navayana Buddhist space.

The *bhaichara* relies on a discursive project of memory work. On the one hand, residents advocate an abstract notion of a diverse space through its varied migrations and material presents. When substantiated, this narrative suppresses contentious histories, unmembers minority pasts, and displaces newer migrant groups along normative ideals of the

'local community'. The displacements documented are immediate and protracted. They build upon each other and at times operate separately. Some belong to a concluded past while others are ongoing. Regardless, they are crucial to the neighbourhood's production.

Accretive Erasures and Muslim Absence

"They have made graves everywhere damnit!", Mange Lal tells me. Archival evidence and oral narratives of Jangpura-Bhogal suggest that the Shahi Masjid predated the original settlement, and the area around it functioned as a graveyard for Muslims in the city. The colonial and postcolonial states, original residents, and partition refugees encountered graves littered across the area, as evidenced through a layout from 1938 (figure 1.4.). The Delhi Wakf Board's enquiries in the 1970s and 80s revealed that many such claimed graveyards either did not exist or had disappeared. They had been replaced by refugee tenement constructions, renovated buildings, roads, and shops.[6] These material traces of the past are almost gone.

The thesis has also documented a story of accretive Muslim erasure. Hindu residents disavow Muslim histories of relocation, religious practice and claims making in Jangpura. As the Hindu space is actualised through Muslim departure in 1947, individuals like Chand Khan are unable to recover their property due to a protracted process of material displacement. As refugees replace Muslims, an obscure Muslim tomb is erased and replaced by a Hindu religious space in Pant Nagar, again through a process sedimenting over decades. The Noor Masjid although rebuilt after its demolition, continues to be branded as an illegal structure due to materiality and origins in the efforts of a squatting population, thereby placing it outside the spatial-imaginary of Jangpura-Bhogal.

In the contemporary moment, memory and narrative strategies displace Muslim pasts and presents. Pre-1947 Muslim histories can only be recovered through remembrances of Bhogal's non-Muslims. With the complete absence of Bhogal's pre-1947 Muslims, the narratives reveal diluted histories, and un-remembering of Muslims, who are replaced by Partition refugees as being part of the 'diverse' neighbourhood. Moreover, residents mobilise

---

[6] For example, see DSA/Wakf/3919/1974; DSA/Wakf/3921,1974; DSA/Wakf/13/1974; DSA/Wakf/15/1976; DSA/Wakf/15/1976; DSA/Wakf/40/1976; DSA/Wakf /41/1976; DSA/ Wakf/39/1976; DSA/Wakf/38/1976; DSA/Wakf/39/1979; DSA/Wakf /128/1984; DSA/Wakf/127/1984; DSA/Wakf/125/1984; DSA/Wakf/125/1984; DSA/Wakf/127/1984; DSA/Wakf/19/1984; DSA/Wakf/126/1984.

the abstract narrative of bhaichara to exclude Afghan Muslims due to their difference and imagined transience.

Like Taneja I agree that "The erasure of the Muslim city of memory is the very condition for the possibility of modern Delhi".[7] However, as the thesis has shown, this erasure has often been gradual, below the radar, and at times unintended. This documented accretive Muslim erasure has been enmeshed within bureaucratic property and urban planning regimes, religious place-making, and memorial slippages of times. Here, pasts are forgotten not only through legal classifications or present disconnected populations. They are also forgotten through departures, absences, counter-memories, or claims replaced through new movements, events, and populations. These histories and processes come to affect the social and urban imaginaries and strategies of place-making in the present moment. This provides an understanding of the fertile ground on which current segregations, otherings, and expulsions of Muslims—spatial, legislative, symbolic, or social—are based on.

The Nature of Diversity

With the brutal second covid wave of 2021, Jangpura-Bhogal's residents began arranging services and resources for the poor in the locality. Colony WhatsApp groups revealed regular collection drives to purchase everyday essentials for the slum dwellers around Jangpura-Bhogal. These were organised by RWAs and local political activists. Residents would receive a message about a planned collection drive and a list of items to be purchased. Once the money was received, resident volunteers did the rounds near the *jhuggis* to deliver pre-made packets of essential food and sanitation items. The WhatsApp discussions would often raise notions of community and helping the disadvantaged, a mix of middle-class anxieties that both aid and patronise vulnerable populations. Influenced by this spirit of giving and helping, residents of Jangpura-A came to the rescue of a 'daughter of Jangpura', a victim of domestic abuse in the *jhuggis*. Through a dedicated and concerted collection drive, residents arranged money for her medical treatment and subsistence. Here, the *jhuggis* became part of the neighbourhood, a reality perhaps difficult to imagine without the experience of pandemic. Afghans who were provided for by the UNHCR through the BOSCO Bhogal Centre continued to fall outside of the normative 'local community'.

---

[7] Taneja, *Jinnealogy*, 257.

These instances of displacement and accretive Muslim erasure illustrate that minoritzation is a multiplex process conditioned by differing constellations that come together during particular moments of history. Relations between Jangpura-Bhogal's majorities and minorities have been examined through questions of religious practices, language movements, commercial relations, claims to religious space, or communal violence. Unlike the silent minority of the Indian nation state,[8] caste is celebratory element of diversity in Jangpura-Bhogal. Like religion, it is utilised to describe the genesis of Jangpura-Bhogal, drawing both praise and concern by residents. As we have seen, this diversity of different castes and communities was contingent on spatially segregated proximity. Jangpura village was strictly organised along neat micro-localities and social interactions occurred on Central Road, the market street. This segregated diversity continued in the postcolonial period as Sikhs replaced Muslims and were settled in their properties and refugee constructions. Contemporary spatial residence patterns, everyday interactions, and discussions of histories of other communities continue to reflect this reality.

As the thesis shows, residents define this diversity through an enduring caste, communal harmony. However, the lived realities of the neighbourhood show that this is founded on constitutive contestations and clashes rather than a romanticised notion of *bhaichara.* These are conditioned by social and residential networks, market relations, insider vs outsider rhetoric, and shifting notions of 'community'. Caste-Hindus and Dalits band together to produce a 'Hindu' community in 1928. Residents of Jangpura Extension define the inside and outside of the neighbourhood by protesting against the Jain school. Banias, Sikhs and caste-Hindus combine to forge economic life. Ravidasias and Buddhists while contesting over space, eventually band together to other Thai Buddhists. Narratives of communal violence relegate conflagrations to outsiders and elsewheres. Muslim departure is willing and not locally motivated. Sikhs and Hindus combine in 1984 to produce a social space. Local involvement must be reconciled and forgotten. These are not aberrations or contradictions, but essential to the formation of diversity. It requires displacements, erasures, forgetting, and exclusions.

Unlike other minorities in Jangpura-Bhogal, i.e., the Dalits, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims are largely denied belonging and claims to space. Barring the Muslims, most other minorities are rooted in market relations, historic residential proximity and socialities, and caste-histories. Large Sikh numbers and their social and commercial dominance

---

[8] Rupa, Viswanath, "Silent minority".

allowed them to assert a Sikh political space in the 1950s and enter the real estate business. Kashmiri Muslims, although not denied belonging due to a propertied imagination, are simultaneously leaving for Muslim-majority areas. Afghans Muslims contribute to a booming rentier economy but are othered through everyday narrative strategies. In showing Muslims as a weakened minority, I neither want to undermine other minority experiences by a process of gradations, nor generalise findings from Jangpura-Bhogal. Rather I wish to draw attention to historical processes that complicate understandings of diversity talk and more straightforward descriptions of post 1980s Muslim marginalisation.

Neighbourhood Histories

In *The Present in Delhi's Pasts* Sunil Kumar meticulously unpacks diverse micro-histories of Delhi, illustrating the entanglements of urban planning, colonial knowledge production, nationalist historiography, sacred space, and medieval monuments and villages. Delhi's history, as he informs us, has been framed at multiple scales: from the transnational practices of Turkic Sultans, colonialism, religious institutions, to the recalibrations of postcolonial and contemporary nation states, to urban bodies, and local memory. Delhi's present is layered with its various contested and changing pasts observable through material transformations and memory. A congregational mosque becomes the 'Might of Islam''; a sultanate victory tower becomes Bakhtiyar Kaki's staff; The 'secular' sports complex disrupts and erases earlier histories and practices of land use; naming inscribes the past on to the city's landscape; fundamentalist Islam seeks to transform and displace practices associated with Sufi saints; and the competing histories (Hindu vs Muslim) around a medieval village turned *Sayyid al-Hajjab* turned into *Saidlajab*, erasing its Muslim past.[9]

The result is, to borrow from Shahid Amin, "not an idealised past, but a contentious, ambiguous and variedly crafted historical past".[10] Kumar is able to do this through the specific methodological choices of archival research, oral history, and fieldwork. Inspired by such studies, my thesis has attempted to combine micro-history i.e., small-scale analysis to address and complicate meta-narratives of historical formations, with ethnographic fieldwork. This was done through an examination of material traces, histories of place-making and conflict, residential environments, memorial slippages, rhythms, and proclamations in everyday life.

---

[9] Kumar, *The Present in Delhi's Pasts*, 90.
[10] Shahid Amin, *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 90.

The methodological choices to interrogate this history of Jangpura-Bhogal were conditioned by the research questions, the limits of the archive, memory, and the field.

Jangpura-Bhogal's history is intertwined with the transfer of the colonial capital in 1911; communal skirmishes of the 1920s; Partition violence, displacements, and migrations of 1947; the linguistic nationalism of the 1950s; an implementation of technocratic planning ideals; the rise of neo-Buddhism; the functioning of an international refugee regime; the effects of the Kashmir insurgency; the post 1980s Hindutva landscape; the entangled nature of urban migrations and transformations of an expanding metropolis; emboldened middle-class urban politics; and the contested nature of urban memory. However, the locality is not merely a container of these larger histories. The neighbourhood's populations engaged with these developments through historically produced social, spatial, economic, and political constellations to craft space and belonging in the city.

I have illustrated how a continuous conversation between the past and present enriches archival research, fieldwork, and examinations of city-making. As we have seen, although communalism was deeply entrenched until 1947 leading to Muslim departures, Jangpura-Bhogal has paradoxically continued to be a space of temporary and continuous Muslim arrivals. While the effects of a post-1980s Hindutva landscape are unmissable in Delhi, Jangpura-Bhogal has followed a slightly different trajectory. Kashmiri Muslims can claim belonging through a propertied imagination but are also vacating the neighbourhood due to a larger urban phenomenon. Meanwhile, Afghans, although othered through everyday narrative strategies and an imagined transience, continue to populate the locality.

We cannot interrogate *bhaichara* without juxtaposing resident proclamations and the neighbourhood's 'factual' histories. Bringing claims of a heterogenous space into conversation with the archive and the field reveals that diversity is enabled through segregated living and its continuities, constitutive conflicts, and differing power matrices. Conflicts around space and practice frame religious diversity. Collectives of the diverse neighbourhood are produced through a history of shifting cohesions and uneven place-making abilities. Articulations of the heterogenous space overlook conflict, define a normative 'local' community, and un-remember minority pasts.

Therein lies the value of a contemporary neighbourhood micro-history. It allows us to map larger structural processes and movements initiated elsewhere and at multiple scales. While it does not reveal a comprehensive or 'total' history, it provides critical insights into the

displacements, absences, and erasures accompanying the making of the city. This fragment of the city is, as the thesis illustrates, is elemental to urban life through its historical, social, and spatial characteristics.

Countering displacements and erasures

Delhi, as is common with the modern urban condition, is an extremely divided, segregated, and exclusionary city. Its evolution, through the practices of multiple actors and institutions, has displaced diverse histories and populations. The thesis has especially shown the accretive erasure of Muslim spaces and histories, and they continue to face communal violence, displacements, dispossessions, and a demonisation of their pasts and presents. As a counter to this dystopia, there is a tendency to return to an ideal 'lost cultural city' prior to India's partition, the moment when Delhi began to decline. Kaur encapsulates the core tenets of this narrative that advocates stories of the "bylanes of old Delhi, leafy avenues of new Delhi and the colourful lives of dead emperors". This glorious past predated the arrival of "cacophonous outsiders" like Punjabis, Tibetans, Afghans, Biharis, Nepalese, and Malayalis, reflecting, according to Kaur, an inherent social class bias.[11]

I often encountered this narrative growing up in the city and in family discussions. When my doctoral research began, I noticed that the same narrative circulated among academic and civil society circuits as well: "Delhi has no culture". Unlike spaces known for 'handicrafts' such as pottery, metal work, or textiles, *anaaj mandis* (grain markets) like Bhogal had no culture, I was told. The Punjabis brought their 'brashness', 'shamelessness', and 'uncouth behaviour' to the city, signalling the decline of an Urdu *Adab* (politeness) and *Tehzeeb* (gestures), it was lamented. Muslims departed, the language and culture declined, and Delhi became a 'haphazard city. This narrative links culture to spatiality. *Purani* and Lutyen's Delhi were where the capitalised 'Culture' circulated. Allegedly, Delhi has never recovered from this decline.

This nostalgic project has manifested in the many public history initiatives that seek to preserve a vanishing composite culture and especially Muslim heritage. While admirable in their efforts to keep histories alive, these projects at times museumise Muslim spaces, communities, and practices devoid of a larger urban and national reality. The 'loss' of a literary Urdu culture overlooks the fact that the language continued to live on through the literate

---

[11] Kaur, "Invisible Delhi"

partition refugees and popular culture, or that Punjabi, like Urdu, was only recognised as one of Delhi's official languages in 2003. These remembrances do not address the histories of numerous urban villages (both Muslim and non-Muslim) that were swallowed up by Delhi's urban growth. They also scarcely pay attention to post-partition migrations that filled up government offices, physically built the city and are crucial to its functioning, and foreign populations celebrated for their 'diverse food cultures'.

The historical reality of Delhi's habitations, languages, and cultures does not always conform to these nostalgic imaginations. It is a city that has evolved through migrations, departures, spatial adjustments, varying configurations of power, cohesions, conflicts, and displacements.[12] Majestic Muslim monuments and ruins; cross-community solidarities and celebrations; the flashy *neveau riche* Punjabis, Jats, and Gujjars benefitting from commercial enterprises, land sales, and political opportunities; memories of the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom surviving in the streets of Tilak Nagar; the massive yearly *Chhat* celebrations of Purvanchali migrant labour; the incessant primarily Dalit and Muslim slum demolitions to achieve a world-class city aesthetic; and the continuing marginalisation of Delhi's Muslims, all comprise the city's pasts and presents. Thus, rather than using this past to recover a lost city or trace cultural decline, city histories should ideally address and understand these complex and varied historical realities.

---

[12] Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories*; Kaur, "Invisible Delhi", Kumar, *Present in Delhi's Pasts.*

Bibliography

Published Reports

Annual Administration Report for the Year 1960-61. Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Delhi: Municipal Press, 1962).

Annual Administration Report for the Year 1961-62. Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Delhi: Municipal Press, 1965).

Annual Administration Report of the Delhi Province for 1933-34. Government of India (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1935).

Beadon, H.C. *Final Report of the Third Regular Settlement of the Delhi District, 1906-1910* Punjab Government (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1910).

Bhalla, V. K. *Census of India 1981, Delhi: District Census Handbook. Government of India* (1982).

Chopra, Prabha. *Delhi Gazetteer.* Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (New Delhi: 1976).

Commission, Citizens'. *Delhi 31 October to 4 November 1984: Report of the Citizen's Commission.* Citizens' Commission (Delhi: 1985).

Comptroller and Auditor General of India. *Land Management in Delhi Development Authority.* Union Government: Ministry of Urban Development (2016)

Delhi Statistical Handbook 2021. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (2022).

District Census Handbook of All the Nine Districts: Village and Town Wise Primary Census Abstract (PCA). Government of India (Directorate of Census Operations, 2011).

District Census Handbook, Part C: Delhi. (1978).

First, Second and Final Reports of the Delhi Town Planning Committee. Government of India (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1913).

Gazetteer of the Delhi District, Part A.-1912. Punjab District Gazetters. Lahore: The Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1913.

Housing and Land Rights in India: Status Report for Habitat III. Housing and Land Rights Network (New Delhi: Habitat International Coalition, 2016).

Khan, Khan Ahmad Hasan. *Census of India 1931 Volume XVI, Delhi: Report and Tables.* Government of India (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933).

List of Items Resolved by DDA from 15 January 1958 to 29 September 1979. Delhi Development Authority (1979).

Lok Sabha Debates, 17 April 1978. Government of India (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1978)

Lok Sabha Debates, 25 February 1981. Government of India (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1981)

Lok Sabha Debates, 7 May 1986. Government of India (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1986)

Middleton, L., and S.M. Jacob. *Census of India, 1921: Punjab and Delhi Part I: Report.* Government of India (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1923).

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. *Press in India 1971, Part II* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1972).

Naqvi, Farah, Sarojini N., Navsharan Singh, and Naveen Chander. *Let Us Heal Our Dilli: Eyewitness Report from North-East Delhi.* (2020).

Narain, Radhka. *Some Aspects of Rural Economic Conditions in Delhi Province.* International Labour Office (Delhi: S.Chand and Company, 1935).

Census of India 1991, Part XII A & B: Village & Town Directory Village & Townwise Primary Census Abstract. (1992).

Bhalla, V. K. *District Census Handbook.* Government of India (New Delhi: Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 1986).

PUDR, and PUCL. *Who Are the Guilty?: Report of a Joint Iquiry into the Causes and Impact of the Riots in Delhi from 31 October to 10 November 1984.* People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), 1984.

Raj, Baldev, and Kuldip Chander Sehgal. *District Census Handbook.* Delhi Administration (1964).

Report of the Fact-Finding Committee on the North-East Delhi Riots of February 2020. Delhi Minorities Commission (New Delhi: 2020). https://ia801906.us.archive.org/11/items/dmc-delhi-riot-fact-report-2020/-Delhi-riots-Fact-Finding-2020.pdf.

Report on the Administration of the Delhi Province for 1927-28. Government of India (Calcutta: Central Publication Branch, 1929).

Report on the Administration of the Delhi Province for 1930-31. Government of India (Calcutta: Central Publication Branch, 1932).

Slum Clearance Demolitions Etc and Firing in Turkman Gate during the Emergency (June 25, 1975-March 21, 1977, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (1977).

Wood, Oswald, and R. Maconachie. *Final Report on the Settlement of Land Revenue in the Delhi District, 1872-77.* (Lahore: Victoria Press, 1882).

Newspapers and Magazines

Hindustan Times

India Today

Indian Express

Medical Tourism Magazine

Outlook

Scroll.in

Sunday Guardian

The Pioneer

The Quint

The Wire

The Times of India

Unpublished Theses

Ahmad, Saeed. "Daily Akhbar: Newspapers and Reading Publics in Delhi, 1945-1952". MPhil, University of Delhi, 2016.

Benjamin, Solomon J. "Neighborhood as Factory: The Influence of Land Development and Civic Politics on an Industrial Cluster in Delhi, India".PhD, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996.

Benjamin, Solomon J. "Understanding Urban Housing Transformations: A Case Study of Bhogal-India".MSc, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985.

Gill, Bani. "In the Shadow of Illegality: The Everyday Life of African Migrants in Delhi". PhD, University of Copenhagen, 2019.

Mehra, Diya. "Remaking Urban Worlds: New Delhi in the Time of Economic Liberalization". PhD, The University of Texas at Austin, 2011.

Riggs, Erin P. "An Archaeology of Refugee Resettlement: Delhi after Partition".PhD, Binghamton University, 2020.

Warsi, Sahil K. "Being and Belonging in Delhi: Afghan Individuals and Communities in a Global City".PhD, SOAS, University of London, 2015.

Books and Articles

Abbas, Khwaja Ahmed. "A Debt to Pay". In *Orphans of the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India*, edited by Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal. New Delhi: UBS Publishers, 1995.

Ahmad, Saeed. "Muslim Pasts and Presents: Displacement and City-Making in a Delhi Neighbourhood". *Modern Asian Studies* 56, no. 6 (2022): 1872-900. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X21000512.

Ahmad, Sohail, Osman Balaban, Christopher N.H. Doll, and Magali Dreyfus. "Delhi Revisited". *Cities* 31 (2013): 641-53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2012.12.006.

Ahmed, Hilal. *Muslim Political Discourse in Postcolonial India: Monuments, Memory, Contestation.* New Delhi: Routledge, 2014.

Alkan, Hilal, and Nazan Maksudyan, eds. *Urban Neighbourhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020.

Alter, James P., and Herbert Jai Singh. *The Church in Delhi.* National Christian Council of India, 1961.

Amin, Shahid. *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

———. *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Anjaria, Jonathan Shapiro. "Guardians of the Bourgeois City: Citizenship, Public Space, and Middle–Class Activism in Mumbai". *City & Community* 8, no. 4 (2009): 391-406. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01299.x.

Arif, Yasmeen. "Communitas and Recovered Life: Suffering and Recovery in the Sikh Carnage of 1984". In *Wording the World: Veena Das and Scenes of Inheritance*, edited by Roma Chatterji, 154-71: Fordham University Press, 2015.

Atkinson, Rowland. "Losing One's Place: Narratives of Neighbourhood Change, Market Injustice and Symbolic Displacement". *Housing, Theory and Society* 32, no. 4 (2015): 373-88. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2015.1053980.

Bandyopadhyay, Ritajyoti. *Streets in Motion: The Making of Infrastructure, Property, and Political Culture in Twentieth-Century Calcutta.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Barua, Rukmini. *In the Shadow of the Mill: Transformation of Workers' Neighbourhood in Ahmedabad, 1920s to 2000s.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Baul, Deepasri. "The Improbability of a Temple: Hindu Mobilization and Urban Space in the Delhi Shiv Mandir Agitation of 1938". *Studies in History* 36, no. 2 (2021): 230-50. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0257643020956624.

Baviskar, Amita. *Uncivil City: Ecology, Equity and the Commons in Delhi.* New Delhi: SAGE Yoda Press, 2020.

Becker, Johannes. "Past Neighbourhoods: Palestinians and Jerusalem's 'Enlarged Jewish Quarter'". In *Urban Neighbourhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies*, edited by Hilal Alkan and Nazan Maksudyan, 99-118. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020.

Bhan, Gautam. *In the Public's Interest: Evictions, Citizenship, and Inequality in Contemporary Delhi.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016.

———. "Planned Illegalities: The Production of Housing in Delhi, 1947-2010 ". In *In the Public's Interest: Evictions, Citizenship, and Inequality in Contemporary Delhi*, 44-94. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016.

Bhuwania, Anuj. *Courting the People: Public Interest Litigation Post-Emergency India.* 2017.

Biehl, Kristen Sarah. "A Dwelling Lens: Migration, Diversity and Boundary-Making in an Istanbul Neighbourhood". *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43, no. 12 (2020): 2236-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1668035.

Björkman, Lisa. "Becoming a Slum: From Municipal Colony to Illegal Settlement in Liberalization Era Mumbai". In *Contesting the Indian City: Global Visions and the Politics of the Local*, edited by Gavin Shatkin, 208-40. Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.

Blokland, Talja. "Celebrating Local Histories and Defining Neighbourhood Communities: Place-Making in a Gentrified Neighbourhood". *Urban Studies* 46, no. 8 (2009): 1593–610. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009105499.

Bopegamage, A. *Delhi: A Study in Urban Sociology.* Bombay: University of Bombay, 1957.

Bornstein, Erica. *Disquieting Gifts: Humanitarianism in New Delhi.* Stanford Studies in Human Rights. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012.

Brass, Paul R. "Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab: The Development of Social and Political Differentiation". In *Language Religion and Politics in North India*, 277-336. Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1975.

Brosius, Christiane. *India's Middle Class: New Forms of Urban Leisure, Consumption and Prosperity.* New Delhi: Routledge, 2010.

Butalia, Urvashi. "Honour". In *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, 172-245. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998.

———. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India.* New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998.

Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan. *History, Culture and the Indian City.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

———. "The Perils of Proximity: Rivalries and Conflicts in the Making of a Neighbourhood in Bombay City in the Twentieth Century". *Modern Asian Studies* 52, no. 2 (2018): 351-93. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x17000348.

Chatterjee, Anasua. "Narratives of Exclusion: Space, Insecurity and Identity in a Muslim Neighbourhood". *Economic and Political Weekly* 50, no. 52 (2015): 92-99.

Chatterjee, Ipsita. "Social Conflict and the Neoliberal City: A Case of Hindu-Muslim Violence in India". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34, no. 2 (2009): 143-60. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2009.00341.x.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Chatterji, Joya. "Of Graveyards and Ghettos, Muslims in West Bengal, 1947-67". In *Living Together Separately: Cultural India in History and Politics*, edited by Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy, 222-49. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

———. *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Chaudhry, Nirad C. *To Live or Not to Live: An Essay on Living Happily with Others.* New Delhi: Indian Book Company, 1970.

Contractor, Qudsiya. "'Unwanted in My City': The Making of a 'Muslim Slum' in Mumbai". In *Muslims of Indian Cities: Trajectories of Marginalisation*, edited by Laurent Gayer and Christophe Jaffrelot, 1-22. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Crowley, Thomas. *Fractured Forest, Quartzite City: A History of Delhi and Its Ridge.* New Delhi: Sage Yoda Press, 2020.

Datta, Anjali Bhardwaj. "Genealogy of a Partition City: War, Migration and Urban Space in Delhi". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019): 152-69. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1557028.

Datta, Ayona. "Mongrel City": Cosmopolitan Neighbourliness in a Delhi Squatter Settlement". *Antipode* 44, no. 3 (2012): 745-63. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00928.x.

Dávila, Arlene *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004.

Dayal, Maheshwar. *Rediscovering Delhi: The Story of Shahjahanabad.* Delhi: S. Chand, 1975.

De Neve, Geert, and Henrike Donner, eds. *The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India*. London: Routledge, 2006.

De, Rohit. "Cows and Constitutionalism". *Modern Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (2019): 240-77. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X18000422.

Donner, Henrike, and Geert De Neve. "Space, Place and Globalisation: Revisiting the Urban Neighbourhood in India". In *The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India*, 1-20. Abingdon, Oxon: UCL Press, 2006.

Dupont, Véronique. "Slum Demolitions in Delhi since the 1990s: An Appraisal". *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 28 (2008): 79-87. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40277717.

Fanshawe, H.C. *Delhi: Past and Present.* London: John Murray, 1902.

Fernandes, Leela. *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Field, Jessica , Anubhav Dutt Tiwari, and Yamini Mookherjee. "Urban Refugees in Delhi: Self-Reliance Can't Be Exclusively Entrepreneurial". *IIED Briefing* (2017).

Field, Jessica, Anubhav Dutt Tiwari, and Yamini Mookherjee. "Self-Reliance as a Concept and a Spatial Practice for Urban Refugees: Reflections from Delhi, India". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 33, no. 1 (2020): 167-88. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez050.

Fraser, Lovat. *At Delhi.* Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1903.

Freitag, Sandria B. *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Friese, Kai. "Afghans in India and One Hotel's Curious History: Bungalow in Bhogal". *Bidoun*, 2007.

Frykenberg, R.E. "The Coronation Durbar of 1911: Some Implications". In *Delhi through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, edited by R.E. Frykenberg, 225-46. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Fusfeld, Warren. "Communal Conflict in Delhi: 1803-1930". *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 19, no. 2 (1982): 181-200. https://doi.org/10.1177/001946468201900203.

Gandhi, Ajay. "Delicious Delhi: Nostalgia, Consumption and the Old City". *Identities* 23, no. 3 (2016): 345-61. https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2015.1034130

Gandhi, Ajay, Barbara Harriss-White, Douglas E. Haynes, and Sebastian Schwecke, eds. *Rethinking Markets in Modern India: Embedded Exchange and Contested Jurisdiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Gayer, Laurent. "Safe and Sound: Searching for a 'Good Environment' in Abul Fazl Enclave". In *Muslims in Indian Cities: Trajectories of Marginalisation*, 213-36. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Gayer, Laurent, and Christophe Jaffrelot, eds. *Muslims of Indian Cities: Trajectories of Marginalisation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Gayer, Laurent, and Chakraverti Mahajan. "Delhi's Noor Masjid: Tales of a Martyred Mosque" . 46, no. 10 (2011): 12-15.

Geva, Rotem. *Delhi Reborn: Partition and Nation Building in India's Capital.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022.

Ghassem-Fachandi, Parvis *Pogrom in Gujarat: Hindu Nationalism and Anti-Muslim Violence in India.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Ghertner, D. Asher. "Gentrifying the State: Governing through Property". In *Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi*, 45–77. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

———. *Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Ghosh, Anwesha. *Identity and Marginality in India: Settlement Experience of Afghan Migrants.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.

Ghosh, Archana, Loraine Kennedy, Jöel Ruet, Stéphanie Tawa Lama-Rewal, and Marie-Hélène Zérah. "A Comparative Overview of Urban Governance in Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai". In *Governing India's Metropolises*, edited by Jöel Ruet and Stéphanie Tawa Lama-Rewal, 24-54. New Delhi; Abingdon: Routledge, 2009.

Gill, Sucha Singh, and K.C. Singhal. "The Punjab Problem: Its Historical Roots". *Economic and Political Weekly* 19, no. 14 (1984).

Glover, William J. *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Graham, Stephen, and Colin McFarlane, eds. *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context.* Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2015.

Guerrieri, Pilar Maria. *Maps of Delhi* New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2017.

———. *Negotiating Cultures: Delhi's Architecture and Planning from 1912-1962.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Gupta, Narayani. "Delhi and Its Hinterland: The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries". In *Delhi through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, 137-56. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993.

———. *Delhi between Two Empires, 1803-1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Harcourt, A. *The New Guide to Delhi.* Allahabad: Pioneer Press 1866.

Harris, Richard, and Robert Lewis. "Numbers Didn't Count: The Streets of Colonial Bombay and Calcutta". *Urban History* 39, no. 4 (2012): 639-58 https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926812000429.

Harriss, John. "Political Participation, Representation and the Urban Poor: Findings from Research in Delhi". *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 11 (2005): 1041-54.

Hasan, Mushirul, and Dinyar Patel, eds. *From Ghalib's Dilli to Lutyen's New Delhi: A Documentary Record*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Hashmi, Sohail. "The Role of Partition in Making Delhi What It Is Today". *The Wire*, 15 August 2017.

Henderson, Lilian F. " 'Building the Church'". In *The Cambridge Mission to Delhi: A Brief History* Westminster: The Cambridge Mission, 1931.

Holston, James, and Arjun Appadurai. "Cities and Citizenship". *Public Culture* 8 (1996): 187-204.

Hosagrahar, Jyoti. *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism.* Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012.

Hyra, Derek. "The Back-to-the-City Movement: Neighbourhood Redevelopment and Processes of Political and Cultural Displacement". *Urban Studies* 52, no. 10 (2015): 1753-73. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098014539403.

India, Government of. *A Brief Historical Memoir of Delhi and Guide to the Points of Interest Together with the Official Programme in Detail of the Imperial Coronation Durbar of 1911.* Delhi: Government of India, 1911.

Irving, Robert Grant. *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. "The Hindu Nationalist Movement in Delhi". In *Delhi: Urban Space and Human Destinies*, edited by Veronique Dupont, Emma Tarlo and Dennis Vidal, 181-204. New Delhi: Manohar, 2000.

Jamil, Ghazala. *Accumulation by Segregation: Muslim Localities in Delhi.* First edition ed. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Jayal, Niraja Gopal. *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

———. "Reconfiguring Citizenship in Contemporary India". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019): 33-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1555874.

Jha, Sadan, Dev Nath Pathak, and Amiya Kumar Das, eds. *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*. New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021.

Johnson, David A. *New Delhi: The Last Imperial City.* London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.

Jones, Reece. "Sacred Cows and Thumping Drums: Claiming Territory as 'Zones of Tradition' in British India". *Area* 39, no. 1 (2007): 55–65.

Justice Nanavati Commission of Enquiry (1984 Anti-Sikh Riots), Volume I

Kaspar, Heidi, and Sunita Reddy. "Spaces of Connectivity: The Formation of Medical Travel Destinations in Delhi National Capital Region (India)". *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 58, no. 2 (2017): 228-41. https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12159.

Kaur, Ravinder. "Distinctive Citizenship: Refugees, Subjects and Post-Colonial State in India's Partition". *Cultural and Social History* 6, no. 4 (2009): 429-46. https://doi.org/10.2752/147800409X466272.

———. *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Keene, H.G. *A Handbook for Visitors to Dehli and Its Neighbourhood.* Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1882.

Kidwai, Anees. *In Freedom's Shade.* Translated by Ayesha Kidwai. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2011.

King, Anthony D. "Boundaries, Networks, and Cities: Playing and Replaying Diasporas and Histories". In *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City*, edited by Alev Cinar and Thomas Bender, 1-14. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Kirmani, Nida. *Questioning the Muslim Woman: Identity and Insecurity in an Urban Indian Locality.* Religion and Citizenship. New Delhi Routledge, 2013.

Koselleck, Reinhart. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Krishnamurthy, Mekhala. "*Mandi* Acts and Market Lore: Regulatory Life in India's Agricultural Markets". In *Rethinking Markets in Modern India: Embedded Exchange and Contested Jurisdiction*, edited by Ajay Gandhi, Barbara Harriss-White, Douglas E. Haynes and Sebastian Schwecke, 179-205. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Kudaisya, Gyanesh, and Tan Tai Yong. "'Capitol Landscapes': The Imprint of Partition on South Asian Capital Cities". In *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, 159-94. Taylor and Francis e-Library: Routledge, 2005.

Kumar, Akanksha. "Making of the 'New City': The Overlapping Structures of Caste and Class in Post-Partition Delhi". In *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*, edited by Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak and Amiya Kumar Das. New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021.

Kumar, Sunil. *The Present in Delhi's Pasts.* Gugaon: Three Essays Collective, 2022.

Kumar, Vijay. "Locating Dalit Bastis: The Sites of Everyday Silent Resistance and Works from the Late 19th-Century to the Mid-20th-Century United Provinces". In *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*, edited by Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak and Amiya Kumar Das, 119-43. New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021.

Lama-Rewal, Stéphanie Tawa. "Neighbourhood Associations and Local Democracy: Delhi Municipal Elections 2007". *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 47 (2007): 51-60.

Legg, Stephen. "Post-Colonial Developmentalities: From the Delhi Improvement Trust to the Delhi Development Authority". In *Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies of India*, edited by Stuart Corbridge, M. Satish Kumar and Saraswati Raju, 182–204. London: Sage, 2006.

———. "A Pre-Partitioned City? Anti-Colonial and Communal *Mohallas* in Inter-War Delhi". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019): 170-87. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1554472.

———. *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Lems, Annika. "Placing Displacement: Place-Making in a World of Movement". *Ethnos* 81, no. 2 (2014): 315-37. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2014.931328.

Liddle, Swapna. *Connaught Place and the Making of New Delhi.* New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Books, 2018.

Mackenzie, Colin. *Delhi: The City of the Great Mogul, with an Account of the Various Tribes in Hindostan; Hindus, Sikhs, Afghans, Etc.* London: Savill and Edwards, 1857.

Mamdani, Mahmood. "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism". *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 766-75. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3567254.

Masselos, Jim. "Appropriating Urban Space: Social Constructs of Bombay in the Time of the Raj". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1991): 33-63.

———. "Change and Custom in the Format of the Bombay Mohurrum During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1982 1982): 47-67.

———. "Power in the Bombay "Moholla", 1904–15: An Initial Exploration into the World of the Indian Urban Muslim". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 6, no. 1 (1976): 75-95. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856407608730711.

Massey, Doreen. *For Space.* London SAGE, 2005.

———. "Places and Their Pasts". *History Workshop Journal* 39, no. 1 (1995): 182-92. https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/39.1.182.

———. *Space, Place, and Gender.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Mehra, Diya. "Jangpura Triptych: Striated Settlements, Neighbourhood Activism, and Delhi's Residential Modernity". *Economic and Political Weekly* 55, no. 51 (2020): 57-67.

———. "Planning Delhi Ca. 1936–1959". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2013): 354-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2013.829793.

———. "Rwas and Political Process in Delhi". In *Participolis: Consent and Contention in Neoliberal Urban India*, edited by Karen Coelho, Lalitha Kamath and M. Vijayabaskar: Taylor and Francis, 2020.

Metcalf, Thomas R. "New Delhi: The Beginning of the End". In *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*, 211-39. London: Faber and Faber, 1989.

Mills, Amy. "Boundaries of the Nation in the Space of the Urban: Landscape and Social Memory in Istanbul". *Cultural Geographies* 13, no. 3 (07/2006 2006): 367-94. https://doi.org/10.1191/1474474006eu364oa.

———. *Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010.

Mithal, Sonal. "Government Officer Housing Precincts in Urban Lucknow: A Construction of Urban Exclusivity through Occupation-Defined Neighbourhoods". In *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*, edited by Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak and Amiya Kumar Das, 229-50. New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021.

Mukherjee, Aditi. "Re-Thinking Protracted Displacements: Insights from a *Namasudra* Refugee Camp-Site in Suburban Calcutta". *Contemporary South Asia* 28, no. 1 (2020): 58-73. https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2019.1666089.

Naseer, Tamanna. " Afghani Flavours in Delhi's Neighbourhood". *The Statesman*, 28 October 2015 2015. https://www.thestatesman.com/features/afghani-flavours-in-delhi-s-neighbourhood-99908.html.

Nayar, Baldev Raj. *Minority Politics in the Punjab.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Oberoi, Pia. "South Asia and the Creation of the International Refugee Regime". *Refuge* 19, no. 5 (2001): 36-45. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.21228.

Orsini, Francesca. *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Pandey, Gyanendra. "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?". *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 4 (1999): 608-29. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0010417599003072.

———. *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Pani, Samprati. "Of Basti and Bazaar: Place-Maing and Women's Lives in Nizamuddin, Delhi". In *Urban Neighbourhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies*, 52-71. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020.

Parveen, Nazima. *Contested Homelands: Politics of Space and Identity.* New Dellhi: Bloomsbury India 2021.

Pati, Sushmita. "Jagmohan: The Master Planner and the 'Rebuilding' of Delhi". *Economic and Political Weekly* 49, no. 36 (2014): 48-54.

———. *Properties of Rent: Community, Capital and Politics in Globalising Delhi.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Pernau, Margrit. "Riots, Masculinity, and the Desire for Passions: North India 1917–1946". *South Asian History and Culture* 12, no. 2-3 (2021-07-03 2021): 244-60. https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2021.1878789.

Pink, Sarah, Heather Horst, John Postill, Larissa Hjorth, Jo Tacchi, and Tania Lewis, eds. *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2016.

Planned Dispossession: Forced Evictions and the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Housing and Land Rights Network (2011).

Pless, Evie. *Livelihood, Security, and Access to Services among Urban Refugees in Delhi, India.* (2013).

Prashad, Vijay. *Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of a Dalit Community.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Qasim, Suraya. "Where Did She Belong: Stories on the Partition of India". In *Orphans of the Storm*, edited by Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal, 201-11. New Delhi: UBS Publishers, 1995.

Rajagopalan, Mrinalini. *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

———. "Postsecular Urbanisms: Situating Delhi within the Rhetorical Landscape of Hindutva". In *The Fundamentalist City? Religiosity and the Remaking of Urban Space*, edited by Nezar AlSayyad and Mejgan Massoumi, 257-82. London: Routledge, 2011.

Rajan, Nithya. "'No Afghan Refugees in India': Refugees and Cold War Politics in the 1980s". *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 44, no. 5 (2021): 851-67. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2021.1964048.

Ramachandran, Sujata. ""Operation Pushback": Sangh Parivar, State, Slums and
Surreptitious Bangladeshis in New Delhi". *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 7
(2003): 637-47. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4413218.

Rao, Nikhil. *House, but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898-1964.*
University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Ricœur, Paul. *Memory, History, Forgetting.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Roy, Srirupa. *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism.* Durham:
Duke University Press, 2007.

———. "Temple and Dam, Fez and Hat: The Secular Roots of Religious Politics in India and
Turkey". *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 48, no. 2 (2010): 148-72.
https://doi.org/10.1080/14662041003672486.

———. "When the Revolution Is Televised: Reflections on Media, Civil Society and Power
in Contemporary India". In *New Cultural Histories of India: Materiality and
Practices*, edited by Partha Chatterjee, Tapati Guha-Thakurta and Bodhisattva Kar,
437-63. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Ryzewski, Krysta. "No Home for the "Ordinary Gamut": A Historical Archaeology of
Community Displacement and the Creation of Detroit, City Beautiful". *Journal of
Social Archaeology* 15, no. 3 (2015): 408-31.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605315601907.

Sanyal, Romola. "Urbanizing Refuge: Interrogating Spaces of Displacement: Urbanizing
Refugee Spaces". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 2
(2014): 558-72. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12020.

Sarker, Shuvro Prosun. *Refugee Law in India: The Road from Ambiguity to Protection*.
Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Saxena, Prabodh. "Creating Legal Space for Refugees in India: The Milestones Crossed and
the Roadmap for the Future". *International Journal of Refugee Law* 19, no. 2 (2007):
246-72.

Schindler, Seth. "The Making of "World-Class" Delhi: Relations between Street Hawkers
and the New Middle Class: The Making of "World-Class" Delhi". *Antipode* 46, no. 2
(2014): 557-73. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12054.

Sen, Uditi. *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation after Partition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Sengupta, Kaustubh Mani. "Community and Neighbourhood in a Colonial City: Calcutta's *Para*". *South Asia Research* 38, no. 1 (2018): 40-56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0262728017725633.

Shadow of Fear: Harassment of Kashmiri Muslims in Delhi. People's Union for Democratic Rights (2002).

Shani, Ornit. "Conceptions of Citizenship in India and the 'Muslim Question'". *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (2010): 145–73. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X09990102.

Sharan, Awadhendra. *In the City, out of Place: Nuisance, Pollution, and Dwelling in Delhi, C. 1850-2000.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Sharma, Joyashree. "Living Like Friends and Neighbours: Everyday Narratives of the Neighbourhood". In *Neighbourhoods in Urban India: In between Home and the City*, edited by Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak and Amiya Kumar Das. New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021.

Sharma, Vanita. "Inherited Memories: Second-Generation Partition Narratives from Punjabi Families in Delhi and Lahore". *Cultural and Social History* 6, no. 4 (12/2009 2009): 411-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2009.11425870.

Simone, AbdouMaliq. "Afterword: 'Neighbours' as Neighbourhoods". In *Neighbourhoods in Urban India in between Home and the City*, edited by Sadan Jha, Dev Nath Pathak and Amiya Kumar Das, 301-08. New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2021.

———. "Relational Infrastructures in Postcolonial Urban Worlds". In *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context*, edited by Stephen Graham and Colin McFarlane, 17-38. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015.

Singh, Devinder. "Socio-Historical Background (1947-1964)". In *Akali Politics in Punjab (1964-1985)*, 13-40. New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1993.

Singh, Gurharpal , and Girgio Shani. *Sikh Nationalism: From a Dominant Minority to an Ethno-Religious Diaspora.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Singh, Harbhajan. *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism: Over 1000 Entries.* New Delhi: Hemkunt Publishers, 2000.

Singh, Pritam. "The Geography and Political Economy of Punjab: An Historical Overview of Punjab-Centre Relations". In *Federalism, Nationalism and Development: India and the Punjab Economy*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2008.

Srivastava, Sanjay. *Entangled Urbanism: Slum, Gated Community, and Shopping Mall in Delhi and Gurgaon.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Sundaram, Ravi. "A City of Order: The Masterplan". In *Pirate Modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism*, 1-27. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010.

———. *Pirate Modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2010.

Sutton, Deborah. "Inhabited Pasts: Monuments, Authority, and People in Delhi, 1912–1970s". *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 4 (2018): 1013-35. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911818000906.

———. "Masjids, Monuments and Refugees in the Partition City of Delhi, 1947–1959". *Urban History* (2022): 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0963926821001036.

Talbot, Ian. "A Tale of Two Cities: The Aftermath of Partition for Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957". *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): 151-85. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X05002337.

Taneja, Anand Vivek. *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and Ecological Thought in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018.

Tarlo, Emma. *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi.* London: Hurst, 2003.

Uberoi, Patricia. "'Unity in Diversity?': Dilemmas of Nationhood in Indian Calendar Art". *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 36, no. 1-2 (2002): 192-232. https://doi.org/10.1177/006996670203600107.

Upadhya, Carol, and Deeksha M Rao. "Dispossession without Displacement: Producing Property through Slum Redevelopment in Bengaluru, India". *Economy and Space* (2022): 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518x221073988.

Upadhyaya, Prakash Chandra. "The Politics of Indian Secularism". *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 4 (1992): 815-53. https://www.jstor.org/stable/312941.

Vanaik, Anish. *Possessing the City: Property and Politics in Delhi, 1911-1947.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Vijayakumar, Veerabhadran. "Judicial Responses to Refugee Protection in India". *International Journal of Refugee Law* 12, no. 2 (2000): 235-43.

Viswanath, Rupa. "Silent Minority: Celebrated Difference, Caste Difference, and the Hinduization of Independent India ". In *Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies*, edited by Steven Vertovec, 140-50. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015.

Weinstein, Liza. "State Interventions and Fragmented Sovereignties". In *The Durable Slum: Dharavi and the Right to Stay Put in Globalizing Mumbai*: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Weinstein, Liza, and Xuefei Ren. "The Changing Right to the City: Urban Renewal and Housing Rights in Globalizing Shanghai and Mumbai". *City & Community* 8, no. 4 (2009): 407-32. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01300.x.

"The Wrecking of Delhi". *Economic and Political Weekly* 13, no. 25 (1978): 1019-21.

Wylegała, Anna. "The Absent 'Others': A Comparative Study of Memories of Displacement in Poland and Ukraine". *Memory Studies* 8, no. 4 (2015): 470–86. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698015575175.

Xu, Fang. ""Pudong Is Not My Shanghai": Displacement, Place-Identity, and Right to the "City" in Urban China"". *City and Community* 19, no. 2 (2020): 330-51. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12491.

Yang, Anand A. "Sacred Symbol and Sacred Space in Rural India: Community Mobilization in the "Anti-Cow Killing" Riot of 1893". *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 4 (1980): 576-96.

Zaidi, Sarover. "A Topography of Survival: 1984 and the Making of-Street in Delhi". *Astrágalo. Cultura de la Arquitectura y la Ciudad* 1, no. 1 (2020): 135-45. https://doi.org/10.12795/astragalo.2020.i27.10.

Zamindar, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali. *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.